

16th February 2022

Trips

**“The ship is anchored safe and sound, its voyage closed and done.
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won.”**

Walt Whitman, O Captain! My Captain!

As I've indicated before, throughout my childhood – in the summer school-break and at New Year – every holiday was spent at my granny's in Paisley. The jaunt south meant a 130-mile trip from home. I have no great recollections of the preparations for the trip, but I have many memories of the journeys there – and home again.

In my early years, we travelled by train, a five-hour journey in a rattly, smoky and smelly steam-train. I loved it. When my dad got a car, it was even more exciting, especially taking a ferry across the Clyde at Erskine or Renfrew. When I was learning to drive, I drove all the way from Fort William to Paisley – and back – with my dad's wisdom as my guide. We once came home by bus, and I was sick! So I'll say no more about that!

Once the trip was done, south or north, everyone was happy, and we settled into our family home. In Whitman's terms, the Gordon ship was “anchored, safe and sound, its voyage closed and done”. But it was *never* a “fearful trip”. The wonder of the long journey was always a joy.

There are times in life when we can get either over-anxious or over-excited about what's going to happen next. So much so that we project ourselves into the future with all the pleasures *and* anxieties that brings. Of course, anticipation and expectation are important and can “keep us going” till the new thing arrives. Worries and anxieties play their part too, dealing with a problem, making plans, sorting things out. We can't stop looking ahead, nor should we. But when that takes us away from the present, when we live in a world of “what might be”, when the “object won” is our only focus, then we're in danger of missing what might be helpful and fulfilling – right now. The journey matters as much as the goal.

The trip might be hard, or it might be pleasurable. The journey might be troublesome, or it might be exiting. But one way or another, we have to give ourselves to the trip. We have no choice. The destination will come soon enough. We will feel good when we get there. But the trip is for now.

A prayer for today

“Every moment of the journey, I will be with you, my child.” Thank you, God. Amen

An original reflection by @ Tom Gordon

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