

10th April 2023

Gone

"The things which I have seen I now can see no more."

William Wordsworth, *Ode: Imitations of Immortality*

On a trip last year to the "Horse of the Year Show" in Birmingham's National Exhibition Centre, my wife and I watched a show-jumping event. Of course, we took lots of photographs. One of the huge fences was right in front of us, a great place for a picture. So, after a few rounds, I was ready for my moment. As a big, grey horse headed for the jump, I had my camera steady. Gallop, gallop, jump, in the air, "click", and on to the next fence. (That's the big grey horse, not me, you understand ...) Excellent! But when I looked at the image later, there was a beautiful photograph of the fence, with not a horse in sight. The truth is, the big grey horse had gone too fast, and I missed it out of the picture altogether.

Easter always goes too fast for me. Forty days of preparation through Lent, study programmes to participate in, then Holy Week services to be part of; thinking, being ready, praying, heightening awareness, expectation, self-examination; and it's Easter, greetings are exchanged, faith is celebrated, hymns of praise are sung, joy is shared. And then? It's over, done, finished for another year. Click! And it's gone, not captured in a photograph, not pinned down, not fixed in an image. Gone! "The things that I have seen I now can see no more."

But on the Monday after Easter Day, I offer you this thought. Just as I don't need a photograph of a horse in mid-jump to remember the pleasure that was the Horse of the Year Show for me, I don't need a definitive picture of Easter 2023 as a reminder of its effect. Seen or unseen, Easter has changed me – again! Nothing can take that away. I'm renewed by Easter, and I can't capture *that* in any photograph.

A prayer for today

*Now let the heavens be joyful
and earth her song begin,
the round world keep high triumph
and all that is therein;
let all things seen and unseen
their notes of gladness blend,
for Christ the Lord has risen,
our Joy that has no end.*

From "The Day of Resurrection" by St John of Damascus (c.675-c.750)