



Discovery and rediscovery

It started last year with listening to Desert Island Discs. The comedian David Baddiel was on, and he described how as a teenager in the 1970s, he was listening to something that he thought was beautiful. Then he found out that it was by the band 'Genesis'. Even as he found it beautiful, he also knew that as a teenager in 1976 he really shouldn't like it: "the last thing you should be is a Genesis fan". He was into punk rock and listened to John Peel. And yet he couldn't help liking it.

Luckily, I am no longer a teenager, though I do remember that phenomenon. I suspect it only applied to boys, but there was very much a desire to have the "right" taste. I recall for example agonising over which CDs that I should bring to university; I envisaged people examining it and using it to assess my personality. I probably even thought that my selection fusing Radiohead, Sting and the Beatles was something that might impress girls. It's somewhat tragic now that I look back on it.

But anyway, this 'Desert Island Discs' recommendation struck home: I thought I'd give 'Genesis' a whirl and so I bought "Wind and Wuthering", as suggested by this middle aged comedian (yes, an old fashioned one that comes in a box, and has sleeve notes and everything). And it was great.

But the best bit about it wasn't just the discovery. It was a reminder that I enjoyed listening to music; not only that, but I had well over a hundred CDs carefully

arranged (in alphabetical order of band for pop music; composer for classical music; and internal to each band, the albums are placed left to right in chronological order... this is probably too much information, but it explains the situation rather too well.)

The Genesis album led me back into music I had bought but which I hadn't listened to in years. First, it was anything listed near "G": Peter Gabriel, Marvin Gaye and the Housemartins, but then I started picking out anything; what is this "Goodbye Yellow Brick Road" by Elton John actually like? Didn't he do some good stuff in the Seventies?

Suddenly, I'm not listening to Five Live in the car any more, but I'm scooting through songs I'd left behind long ago, or perhaps never really listened to in the first place. Yes, there was a new purchase initially, but most of the pleasure I've got in the last nine months has come from things I've already bought.

And it got me to wondering. Our lives are strewn with things we thought would be worth it but haven't got around to. What TV programmes are on your 'recorded' file tucked somewhere inside your TV but you haven't watched them? What books are on your shelf which you haven't tried?

A search for the new is good, but so too is a rediscovery of the old; and the old can bring enormous pleasure. There are gifts that we already have; they just need rediscovering. And they don't cost a penny.

Jan 2019 Thought. for the Train is a short column by the Rev'd Robert Stanier, vicar of St Andrew and St Mark, Surbiton, for people to read on the train. You can also read "Thought for the Train" at www.surbitonchurch.org.uk.