

Most of us regard June as the beginning of summer but this year we have already had above average or even record temperatures in March, April and May that, at times, felt like summer. I wonder, does that mean that summer is going to be even hotter or are we going to have a miserable, wet, stormy one to make up for it and refill the reservoirs? Personally, I don't really like hot weather, temperatures in the low 20's Celsius would suit me fine, although I would like some sunshine and enough gentle rain to keep things fresh and green, but maybe that's too much to ask! Whatever the weather though, there are lots of things to look forward to this summer.

We begin with one of the best. June 1<sup>st</sup> is 'cake celebration day', a day to celebrate all sorts of cakes (especially our favourites) and the way they make us feel all cheerful inside. There's one cake however that gets a special mention today – the Jaffa cake. In 1991 McVities who make Jaffa cakes won a court case against what was then H.M. Customs and Excise who wanted to charge VAT on Jaffa cakes claiming that they were chocolate biscuits which were subject to tax, although cakes were not. McVities pointed out that biscuits go soft when stale but cakes go hard and since Jaffa cakes go hard they must be cakes! The judge agreed and Jaffa cakes were not taxed – a great day for British justice and Jaffa cake lovers everywhere.

Cakes have a wonderful effect of cheering us up but next time you feel that the world has it in for you and you've been thrown to the lions, if you can't take consolation in cakes try taking some inspiration from the prophet Isaiah and from what happened when King James I tried to entertain his court on June 3<sup>rd</sup> 1605. Although James was notably pious and supported the translation of the bible into English, the 'Authorised Version' or 'King James Version' which many of us grew up with, he wasn't one for animal welfare. He kept a zoo at the Tower of London and had trapdoors fitted so that he and his courtiers could watch various live animals being thrown to lions for entertainment. On this occasion however, after dropping a few pieces of mutton into the cages to whet the lions' appetite, a live lamb was lowered on a rope but instead of tearing it to pieces the big cats just stared at the lamb and when it tottered up close they simply nuzzled it as if in loving sympathy. Bloodlust thwarted the lamb was hauled back up to safety. Perhaps James should have taken note of Isaiah's prophecy, 'The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together,' (Isaiah 11:6). Sometimes even the lions can be on your side!

There are times however, when the only way to cheer yourself up is to say, 'Oh forget it!' and just take some time out. In the film 'Ferris Bueller's Day Off' released in June 1986, Ferris did just that. For one glorious day he set about indulging in happiness and freedom in every way he could. Ferris' idea of having a good time included nicking a Ferrari and leading Chicago in a parade and sing-a-long of 'Twist and Shout', and while not advocating theft the sheer joy of unfettered freedom that the film engenders still inspires die-hard fans to take the day off on 11<sup>th</sup> June to just enjoy themselves and get away from everyday cares. It is something that we all need to do every once in a while, even Jesus took time out to go off on his own, to recharge mentally, physically and spiritually.

So, this summer follow Jesus' example and take time to be by yourself and with God.  
Janet.