

You can't believe everything you read about people you don't really know.

Getting on for two decades ago, reports hit the press that Prince Charles had had a major row with his brother Prince Edward over some filming made at St. Andrews University where Prince William was a student. Prince Charles was said to be "incandescent" with rage! At the time this was all blowing up, a friend of mine who I trust completely, happened to have stayed overnight with the Royal Family. This friend witnessed the two princes embracing, kissing and being completely at one with each other – thus completely discrediting the reports in the press.

It has often occurred to me that we only know public figures – whether they be television, film or theatre celebrities, or politicians, through what we read or hear about them through the media. I think we are often given an artificial picture of what someone is really like.

On Saturday 15th February we learned that the very well known and loved television personality Caroline Flack had taken her own life. This news created shockwaves across the country and there are calls for TV, press and social media to be held to account. I remember Caroline as an absolutely outstanding competitor on Strictly Come Dancing – she came across then as a very hardworking and gifted dancer with a very engaging personality. It is devastating to think that she was a victim of the fame and success that eventually led to her being vilified by parts of the press and some members of the public via social media.

We ask "why can't the tabloids be brought under control?" And we have to resist such pleas with the danger of losing the right to free speech which is such a vital cornerstone of our democracy. However, we all have a choice as to what papers we read and how much we get caught up in opinions expressed via social media.

"Pray, don't find fault with the man that limps,
or stumbles along the road.
Unless you have worn the moccasins he wears,
Or stumbled beneath the same load"

From "Judge Softly" by Mary T. Lathrap

A word of thanks - Our project to improve the balcony at St. Mary's Church is nearly complete now and it is going to make a huge difference to visibility for people who sit there during services and school events. The project to repair the windows at All Saints Church is well underway and should be complete by the summer. We are very grateful to those of you who have given donations towards this projects and helped to make them possible.

A weekend of Prayer - On Saturday 28th February 9.00am – 9.00pm and on Sunday 29th February 12 noon – 7.00pm All Saints Church in North Wootton will be open for prayer. There will be various parts of the church dedicated to prayer for different areas of life; some personal, some for our locality and so for our world. We will offer resources for you to use as guides for your prayers if you wish. Or you can simply come along, sit and be still. Please feel to join us at any time during this weekend of prayer.

James

