

The
CHRONICLE
of
**The College of
ST BARNABAS**

2017



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FOREWORD

The Very Rev'd Andrew Nunn, Dean of Southwark

Over the summer, whilst I had the time, I read the latest and final part of the Lindchester trilogy by Catherine Fox, 'Realms of Glory'. I suspect that amongst the residents of St Barnabas' College it is required reading and for those of us who are supporters of the College it is also an enjoyable read. Fox in many ways, and for this age, updates the Barchester Chronicles, with her take on the machinations of the Church of England, especially from the perspective of this imaginary cathedral and its diocese.

Trollope chronicled his 'Warden' and the old men he supervised. For those who have never been to St Barnabas' College it is nothing like that institution. Well, to be honest there may be some similarities but on the occasions when I have visited I have found a place which makes for good living, for a mixed and very able group of people living as a Christian community.

I love the way in which the writer of the Acts of the Apostles describes that first manifestation of the church:

All who believed were together and had all things in common; . . . they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts. [Acts 2⁴⁴, 46]

This image of the church, at its very best, is something that we all hope to find and in places like St Barnabas' College, we find signs of it. Perhaps that has something profound to teach us today as the church whether imaginary, as in Lindchester, or in reality in Southwark or elsewhere, seeks to live our vocation to be the body of Christ. As the church encounters new forms of the monastic life, perhaps the residents at the College, have something to teach the wider ecclesial community.



Our cover photograph shows the Chapel block having the roof re-tiled and the brickwork renovated. It is included with the kind permission of Valley Builders, the contractors for the East Wing Project.

EDITORIAL

Mrs Yvonne Gough

S*ummoned by Bells* (the blank verse autobiography of John Betjeman) will cause bells to ring in the minds of the residents of the College of St Barnabas. Surely, he would have loved this place for its architecture and the way in which various bells are an important and constant part of its life.

Three times a day the Angelus not only calls us to worship but to prayer. For the sluggards among us, the morning peal at five to eight acts as a melodious alarm clock! To answer our bodily needs, a harsher sound calls us to meals, a practice blast on the fire alarm at 2pm each Wednesday keeps us ready for an emergency and on the nursing wing, staff are called to those needing care. A sweeter sound is rung at the Eucharist and as a call to thank God at lunchtimes. Of course, the bell tolls as a farewell to members who have departed this life.

For a small group, bells have a pull to the Lower Chapel each week on a Thursday afternoon. Hymns and well-known songs are practised on the set of handbells, donated to the College by Wilfrid Browning. On Easter Day and Christmas Day, the highlight for the group is a rendering from the chapel balcony before the service.

All these bells enrich and order our lives. We thank God for them.



The 2017 Patronal Festival Sermon [Acts 14⁸⁻⁴⁰]

The Right Rev'd Dr Rowan Williams

'Not what thou art, nor what thou hast been, beholdeth God with his merciful eyes, but what thou wouldst be.' [The Cloud of Unknowing, chapter 75]

Words from one of the great mystical texts of the Middle Ages, words which speak to us of that most basic and important element in our Christian faith: trusting that God sees us with hope.

God sees us with the future in mind. God does not look at our record and God does not look at our present performance. Both of those are likely to be, in varying degrees, shabby, patchy and unsatisfactory, to put it mildly. God looks at what we would be, what we long to be. God looks at our desiring, and looks of course deeper than we can look, because 90% of the time we do not know actually what we want, what we desire. A great Roman Catholic theologian of the last generation said, "Christian morality is all about doing what you really want. The problem is finding out what that is."



Well, sometime in the first Christian century, Barnabas made the acquaintance of a rather unusual character. Small and nervous and short-tempered, extremely fluent, except when under high emotional pressure when he became just a tad incoherent, a profoundly difficult person to live and work with, by the name of Saul of Tarsus. Barnabas, in the name of the God he trusted and believed in, was able to see what this unpromising character desired. He was able to see that Saul of Tarsus longed, though he didn't know he was longing, to be a vehicle through which the Good News of God would reach the most unlikely and distant persons and societies imaginable.

There was a good deal that Barnabas might have spotted in terms of what Saul of Tarsus was and had been. He was exactly that difficult and rather obnoxious person I have just described, but he had been even worse; he had been a mortal enemy of the Good News of Jesus Christ and he had been a man imprisoned by his own righteousness. Somehow, Jesus Christ had persuaded him to let go of that. Confused and at sea, vulnerable and rather angry, Saul hangs for a bit in mid-air in the story of the Acts of the Apostles, until we are told Barnabas took him and introduced him to the Apostles – seeing what Saul could not see, seeing God's future in him; and, by building the bridges necessary to bring him into the full life of the body of Christ, making it possible for those hidden desires to come to fruition. Barnabas made it possible for Saul of Tarsus to grow into Paul the Apostle, still incoherent at times, and over-talkative, and short-tempered and all the rest of it, but nonetheless Saint Paul.

I do wonder incidentally whether, in the conventional translation from the Acts of the Apostles in our second lesson, Paul is let down ever so slightly gently. "*Paul they called Hermes because he was the chief speaker.*" [Acts 14^{12b}] The Greek might be less charitably rendered as "Paul they called Hermes because he could not stop talking!" Barnabas, whose magisterial silence comes through this reading, who reminded people of the great authoritative statues of the father of all gods in their temple, Barnabas had very little to say; but he saw a lot, and seeing is at least as important as saying in our faith and our growing discipleship.

So one of the things we are celebrating today about Barnabas is what he was able to see. He could see the desire in Saul; he could see the possibility that he might after all be a man longing to grow into a fullness not yet imaginable. This tells us that part of the apostolic gift given to the Church is the freedom to see at that depth, to see into where people's deepest desires come from, to see in them a longing turning towards the light, deeply buried under all the many layers of illusion, selfishness and darkness where we normally leave our deepest desires.

Even Paul himself had something of this. *Paul looking at him intently and seeing that he had faith to be healed said, in a loud voice, 'Stand upright'.* [Acts 14⁹] Paul and Barnabas, like Jesus himself, are interested in that deep longing, that hunger and thirst for healing, that is at the centre

of our broken humanity. The apostolic word goes to that deep place, that desires to be healed, to be at one, to be reconciled.

This community, gathered under the patronage of St Barnabas, this apostolic fellowship is called surely in prayer and witness to that kind of zeal and that kind of entry into the heart of a world which frequently does not know how hungry it is for healing. As we look around and listen at the moment, the world we see around us seems to be indeed a world that does not know what is good for it, does not know what to want. Listen to what people have been saying in this dismal election campaign, and you will on the whole have heard a great deal about what people don't want, but not very much about what they *do* want. As if people haven't got the courage, or the clarity or the freedom to speak from the depth of their being and say, "What we want is to be healed; what we want is to be reconciled; what we want is to grow in generosity and fidelity to one another, as a Church, as a society, as a world." We as Christians, we as ministers of the Gospel, can we go to that place and help our neighbours to find the courage and the clarity to say what they want, to speak out of that deep desire?

"But how do we know it is there?" we might say. "Look around and it doesn't seem to be what people want." We know it as an act of faith. We know it, because God has told us that he has placed his image in our hearts, the image of his Word, his Son; the image of the Son who looks to the Father with yearning and love; the Son who lives in peace and reconciliation and who, in his life among us on earth, makes real that peace and reconciliation as a promise for all of us. We trust that is how God is and that is how we are, and on the basis of that wild act of trust, against most of the evidence, we go on looking and listening and praying, seeking our prayer and our imagining of the world around to see through the tough carapace of violence and prejudice to that place in the heart where all God's children long for reconciliation and for healing; to accompany them in mind and heart as we pray, with all the risk that entails. Because to believe that about human beings is not particularly comfortable, let alone particularly obvious. It will cost us. It costs us in practical terms, for those who constantly put themselves at risk for the service of others. It costs us spiritually, because to be alongside the hurt and confusion of the world eats into our own souls too. Yet, with Barnabas, we go on making the same stupid mistakes over and over again and trusting that the image of God is real in our neighbours. And God is particularly fond of that silly mistake and gives us the strength to go on making it, thank God.

Barnabas takes Saul by the hand and introduces him to the Apostles. Later on Barnabas introduces Paul to his young kinsman, Mark. Do you remember what a disaster that turned out to be? Barnabas continued to trust Mark when Paul stopped. Just as Barnabas had seen in Saul, that short-tempered, over-talkative, nervy man, the possible Apostle for the gentiles, Barnabas saw in his young cousin Mark, brash, shy, awkward, ambitious and, when it came to it, not very brave, one who would also be an Apostle and, tradition tells

us, an Evangelist. That cost Barnabas his friendship with Paul, as we know. It was not without risk, not without cost.

So Barnabas' way of apostleship was not a comfortable one. It was not just about trying to see the best in everybody (which is all very well but doesn't get you very far) but seeing the deepest, the God-given depth, a level at which the image of God lives in us, and that stirring of the heart towards ultimate love of the Father.

Not what thou art, nor what thou hast been, beholdeth God with his merciful eyes, but what thou wouldst be. God looks at the possible future in each one of us, in each member of the human race, to be in service and prayer and imagining. "Look with God's eyes," – a frightening prospect, a bold phrase, and yet that is exactly what St Paul himself encourages us to do, having the mind of Christ.

This community of St Barnabas is, I say it in hushed tones, a community of the not entirely youthful, at least physically; a community of people who have perhaps not been thinking a great deal about what they desire or long for in recent years, but a community which *lives*, to the extent that its members can stir one another up in longing and desire in the name of God, a community that keeps alive that image of God in the heart and longing to grow in service and in gift, longing to grow that deep penetrating imagination that Barnabas shows.

Ministry, we all know, does not stop, surplises hung up at retirement, and that accompanying in prayer and imagination, that stirring and opening of the heart in growth that goes on to the day of our deaths, that is what is fostered and nurtured in a community like this. That is its preciousness, living in the spirit of Barnabas who sees and serves, who introduces people to a desire and longing they don't even yet know they have. It looks at the unpromising human material around, and the unpromising human material in the world, with the hope that comes from God's own perspective and reality.

What we give thanks for in this community is the nurturing of that apostolic and Christ-like spirit, that hope, that depth of desire, that willingness to go on growing not only towards death but beyond it; an endless expansion of the heart to the endless riches of God our maker, who sees not what we are and not what we have been but what we long to be.

Central Block East Project – the Bursar's Perspective

Mr Paul Wilkin

In late 2008 the planning started to refurbish the whole of the central block, which was to include the kitchen block at the back, main chapel at the front and small chapel on the eastern end. We needed a new roof (lots of tiles to replace!). We needed to put in insulation, there was none! We wanted to put in double-glazing where we had a wood frame to fit it in. We also needed to upgrade and

tidy up the wiring in the loft space. It was like spaghetti junction without any lights!

The M & E Consultants suggested we consider a heat recovery system; the extracted warm damp air from each *en suite* would be passed through a machine (put into the loft space) which extracts the damp and then pumps the warm dry air back into the corridors. The planners liked that idea but on the advice of Surrey's Historical Buildings Advisor declined our double glazing request. However, on appeal this was overturned.

When we received the first estimate of costs we quickly decided this had to be a project split into two or three smaller ones. The Central Block West Project was completed in 2011.

In late 2014, the Council (Board of Trustees) approved the idea of updating the plans and costs for the Central Block East Project. Fundraising started in earnest with the help of the Dean of Westminster, a President of the College. Early 2016, we were almost ready for tender, five potential contractors were interviewed. Four provided good tender prices and after checking some costs, Valley Builders Ltd, from East Grinstead, secured the project. They proved to be an excellent company to work with. By now three of our sixty residents had joined the management/project team. Residents were briefed and work started in September 2016. The first thing to happen was the arrival of a temporary kitchen, the main kitchen would be closed for up to three months. All Residents have meals provided. "Expect more salads, for every meal" was the cry! The chefs were excellent, even when it was -5°C at 6-30 am in the morning to start breakfast.

The whole project took 32 weeks with practical completion agreed on 28th April 2017. At one stage there was scaffolding around half of the Central Block and a tin roof over the main chapel. We were extremely lucky with the weather, only two days lost due to frosts making scaffolding unsafe to walk on. Seven resident's rooms have been improved, also all the College Residents will benefit with the improvements to the kitchen, both chapels and the main block.

The project cost overall just over £900,000. It was funded by various grants from individuals and Trusts, a Homes and Community Agency grant, an Almshouse Association loan and our own reserves. We were delighted that the Bishop of Southwark, the Rt Rev'd Christopher Chessun attended a dedication service at the College on Sunday, 2nd July 2017. Invitations were sent out to all who provided funds, helped with planning and contractors, as the College's thanks for an outstanding project.

Central Block East Project – a Resident's Perspective

Prebendary Roger Bould

We were first made aware of the full implications of the project – its scope, duration and costing –by the Bursar at the Residents' Meeting in March 2016. He ended his informative announcement with a call for helpful involvement by the residents, firstly with "anything from a tenner to £800K"

and then with up to three volunteers to represent the residents, their views, questions and anxieties, as the project proceeded.

There was no need to check my bank statement to know I could do little about the required £900k but I was happy to volunteer, which I did at the end of the meeting – not least because the very next item on the agenda had been one standing in my name proposing that residents be given an opportunity to offer input whenever future work at the College affecting their well-being was being planned (a motion subsequently withdrawn in the light of the Bursar's request).

Before the work commenced Fr Frank Gough and Mrs Beth Gough (no relation) had joined me on the Project's Works Committee; we attended the meetings and did our best to fulfil our brief. This was made all the easier by the friendly and approachable nature of the main contractor's on-site foreman who was always available to answer our (and others) questions to explain difficulties.

The scaffolding surrounding the Chapel and other affected parts of the College caused little or no hindrance even though the external door from the Quadrangle to the Common Room had to be fenced off for Health and Safety reasons. The impact of this was greatly lessened by the fact that there was only one funeral throughout the duration of the project.

There was minimal disturbance to our regular round of daily worship. The Upper Chapel was closed from Monday 30th January until Sunday 26th February for the early mass and for any weekday 10-30 am masses usually held there. The Sunday 10-30 am service was held once in the Lower Chapel, once in the Library and once in the Upper Chapel. We said Evensong privately, as is our custom for Morning Prayer.

Meals were not affected despite early fears; the threatened mid-winter salads never appeared! Indeed, for the duration of the kitchen refurbishment and despite the cramped working conditions of the outside port-cabin, our regular menu was maintained. Meals arrived on time and as hot as ever, thanks to the extra efforts of our ever-cheerful chefs and catering staff.

Everyone was surprised and delighted with the minimal inconvenience caused by such a large undertaking, completed on time and within budget. What probably attracted the most interest was the creation of a tin roof over the Upper Chapel to protect it from the elements while the ceiling was being insulated, a ventilation system installed in the roof space and re-tiling taking place.

The crowning moment was when our Visitor, the Bishop of Southwark, came to preach at the Dedication Service on Sunday 2nd July. The text of his sermon can be found elsewhere in this edition of *The Chronicle*. The service ended with a glorious Solemn *Te Deum Laudamus*: a metrical version sung to the magnificent tune, Coe Fen.

I am sure that the Residents would want to join me in expressing wholehearted appreciation of, and gratitude for, so many people's vision, skill

and generosity in refurbishing this large and important part of our home so efficiently, thus ensuring that it will continue to be fit for its purpose for very many years to come.

Deo Gratias

KIRCHENTAG

Kirchentag... not just one day, but five consecutive days, every other year since 1949 it takes over a large German City for the best Christian festival that I have ever experienced. Debate and discussions on topical themes of the year, by the end of the huge last communion service on the Sunday it has been estimated that including day visitors 2,600 people have attended – all ages, but especially younger people.

There are events all over the city – its hospitality in the surrounding vicinity, its transport system and of course a great deal of comradeship and - light and various Christian hymns are being sung all over the city at all times.

Having been on the UK Committee I have been every time since 1981, and that meant times in Berlin, Cologne, Stuttgart, Hanover, and Hamburg. Most prominent cities have hosted the event, including more recently Dresden and Leipzig on the Eastern side.

We have a UK Committee - about 500 guests attend each time from all over the world a number of Africans came – and at earlier events we have had as many as 250 from our shores. The difficulty is always the timing – late Spring or Early Summer – because we long to take younger people to join the various, though serious community – with regular excellent Bible studies other Theological and political debates, artistic and musical culture – but all at a time when young people are engaged in various exams in our universities.

The city is taken over in its churches and halls – and weather permitting outside as well. Among its speakers, many of whom are world known – Angela Merkel always speaks to an overfull hall, relayed to others outside – and other predecessors like Helmut Kohl and Schmidt and Richard von Weizsäcker all took their turn. Our chief Episcopal presence those days has been Nick Baines, Bishop of Leeds, who speaks good German. People like Paul Oestreicher former Canon of Coventry are normally present.

Each Kirchentag brings us to date with a new 'Hymn' or song book, with a mixture of new and old. There is massive brass playing all over the place, and other 'songs' tend to be a sort of serious German Christian pop – light, joyful, alternative and seriously catching!

There have been two ecumenical Kirchentags – in Berlin and München – and this year, 2017 there is a special festival part in Berlin and part in Wittenberg , because this is a very special Lutheran year.

It is a very special experience – all are welcome and invited and it is not expensive. Although obviously it is a German event, most serious meetings are

translated into English, and there is always an international centre providing meeting space and light refreshments every day. I shall severely miss my connections at every Kirchentag since 1981.

Canon Paul Rose

FAR EASTERN DIARY of Olive B Hitchcock MA DipEd

Miss Olive Hitchcock, who lives in the nursing wing of the College, has a treasured possession which she allowed the editors to borrow. It is a beautifully type-written hardback book of forty-five pages with her paintings and black and white photographs. Within the brown, well-used cover is the record of the three years she spent in the Far East from 1945 to 1948. Her opening paragraph begins:



"This journal begins on the 6th June 1945, just before sailing for Ceylon on the P&O liner, Strathmore, then a troopship. We arrived a little late at Glasgow station to find it raining and had to wait for transport to take us to the dock. I had travelled from London with Mrs Remane who was going to the same office in Kandy . . . Everything connected with our sailing was so secret that nobody knew what we had to do but eventually the Navy took us over and we finally arrived on board."

At the end of the journal she indicates that this was compiled from letters written home, probably after she had returned to this country in 1948 and, of course, her family and friends would have known the background to the events she detailed. Olive does say that she started work two days after her arrival in Kandy at the SACSEA headquarters in the Peradeniya Botanical Gardens. The initials stand for the Supreme Allied Command South East Asia. At that time, the Supreme Allied Commander was Lord Louis Mountbatten, then known as Prince Louis of Battenberg. They worked six days a week for eight hours a day and Olive describes how tiring this was in the tropical heat. However, despite the difficult conditions under which they lived, the young people, including forces personnel, seem to have lived a hectic social life with picnics and long walks as favourite pastimes.

In August, the Japanese surrendered and soon after the headquarters was moved to Singapore. Both there and in Ceylon, Olive met missionaries and other Christians, as well as attending the local Anglican churches. Her time in Singapore was also short-lived as the Foreign Office was relocating the headquarters back to London. She could have returned to England but decided to accept a post at the Church Missionary Society Ladies College in Colombo where she taught for some months before becoming the acting-Principal of Gampola High School. She was also persuaded to lecture for a time at the nearby University. Olive describes vividly the life of the school as well as the holidays she was able to take in India. After two years she began

to have health problems which did not respond to treatment and it was decided that she should return to this country. She left Ceylon at the end of February 1948 but not before taking part in the celebrations that marked Ceylon's independence when the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester represented the King. Olive arrived in Liverpool in the fog, journeyed by train to Euston and spent her first night on English soil for 2 years and 9 months.

The Ladies College had been founded in 1900 and Olive had joined the staff in 1946, the year Mabel E. Simon was appointed Principal. Olive was then a teacher and the new Principal's trusted and able advisor. In her unobtrusive manner, she was more than responsible for maintaining the fine balance required in those difficult years, with its increasing government control over education and the inclusion of Christianity in the curriculum. Together they worked out solutions to the numerous problems of organization necessitated by the educational policy shifts of successive Governments. During this time, she wrote a very detailed and informative account of the Ladies' College, "*Haec Victoria Nostra Fides*", covering the period 1900 to 1955. In 1964, Olive went back to the College, succeeding Ms Simon first as acting Principal, becoming Principal in 1966.

Olive's period as Principal (because it was relatively short) is often seen as a period of transition but it was filled so competently and effectively as to be noticed only as continuity not a space. With unassuming efficiency, she carried the school through the years immediately after Ms. Simon's departure, setting the groundwork for the Principal who would follow her. Her sensitivity to the changes taking place in the wider society was reflected in the unobtrusive manner in which she introduced a greater degree of cultural openness and in her willingness to move in the direction of indigenization. It was a subtle shift away from the colonial ethos.

In her quiet way, she encouraged greater involvement with national concerns, a move that her successor, Sirancee Gunawardana, developed further. In 1968, Olive handed over an efficiently organized school to her successor that enabled Mrs Gunawardana, as the first Sri Lankan head of the College, to integrate it further into the larger social and cultural life of the country.

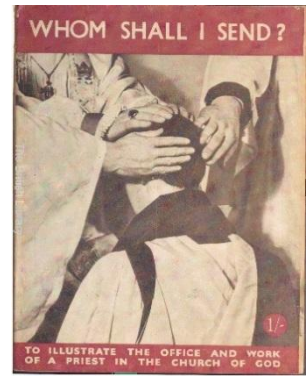
Mrs Yvonne Gough

The Far Eastern Diary will eventually be deposited in the archives of the Church Mission Society.

FIFTY YEARS A PRIEST

On the 17th June 2015, Keith Blackburn celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of his priesting at Southwark Cathedral. His sermon on that occasion in Hereford revealed the "revolution" that had taken place in the attitude of the Church of England to God's question to the prophet Isaiah – "Whom shall I send?"

Those words were the title of a careers pamphlet published in the 1950's by SPCK, describing the office and work of a priest. It was aimed at schoolboys and it hit its mark with the young Keith. He took part in a selection conference in 1958, attended by sixteen candidates of which fifteen were sixth formers plus one graduate. It is telling that not one mature person was included! Equally amazing to us in 2017, is that the pamphlet argued that one priest could care for 1,000 people, enabling every house to be visited and known by the priest. It was claimed that 24,000 priests were needed to do the caring job of the church.



Keith contrasted this pamphlet with Paul's words in Ephesians 4¹¹⁻¹³ [AV] – "He gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers....to equip the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ". Modern translations omit the comma after saints so that it is no longer "the top people" delivering the ministry of the church. Rather they are *to equip the saints for work of ministry*, the saints being all the baptised. So we move from the priest delivering the ministry to the priest enabling the whole people of God to deliver the ministry. This change has happened over the period of Keith's ministry: from hierarchies to teams, from vertical to the horizontal, from spectator to participant.

This change is illustrated by looking at the post of Archbishop of Canterbury. Between 1800 and 1960 there were eight incumbents, six of whom had been headmasters! From 1961, the next five had been involved in ordination training. The appointment of the present holder, Justin Welby, was a step into the unknown, his being neither of these things but instead experienced in the world of commerce and industry, as well as the parochial ministry.

At the Keble Conference in 1960, John Robinson spoke of taking the lid off the Church's ministry to release the potential so long stopped up. He described three inhibiting lines:

- 1 the professional (the ordained ministry only for those who made a living from it)
- 2 the distinction between clergy and laity (neither fundamental nor native to the life of the church)
- 3 the gender side (church not yet a body in which there is neither male nor female)

The Southwark Ordination Course (SOC) started in 1960 and some of those already trained were encouraged to find jobs in the world, being worker priests, NSMs, chaplains, etc.

For Keith, this involved 26 years working for the LEA in secondary schools, focussing on pastoral care. He contributed two books to the literature on pastoral care, lectured widely and, in 1982, helped set up the National Association for Pastoral Care in Education. He draws attention to a book by Kathleen Bliss (*We The People* [SCM 1963]), in which she wrote, "All Christians are called to minister to the world but clergy are entrusted on behalf of us all with the exceptional means of confirming forgiveness, the means of

illumination and grace in scripture and sacraments and maintaining the church with the fullness of faith."

Returning to Ephesians 4¹¹⁻¹³ we read, "Until all of us come to unity of faith, knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity to the measure of the full stature of Christ." The aim of schooling and training is that people should come to maturity. In the Church, this means making mature Christians living in the present and helping to shape the future, being rooted in prayer and active in service and fellowship.

Fifty years ago, men were recruited in answer to the question 'Will this person be able to run a parish on their own?' Now the question is whether the person will be able to work in a team? The ministry of the church is for all the baptised, whether lay or ordained. The ordination service of the Methodist church in Singapore contains the following:

We are not ordaining you to ministry – that happened at your baptism; to be a caring person – you are already called to that; to serve the church on committees, activities or organization – that is already implied in your membership; to become involved in social issues, ecology, race, politics, revolution – these are laid on every Christian. We are ordaining you to something smaller and less spectacular:

To read and interpret those sacred stories of our community so that they speak to people today; to remember and practise those rituals and rites of meaning that, in their poetry, address people at the level where change operates; to foster community through word and sacrament that encounter with truth, which will set women and men free to minister as the Body of Christ.

Keith responded to God's question nearly sixty years ago, thinking that he was joining a professional group of men to deliver ministry. Since then, we have seen priests both men and women, young and old, some stipendiary others not. God still asks, "Whom shall I send?" Our answer made perhaps years ago ("Here I am, send me") has to be renewed each day as we are all led by the Holy Spirit to minister in response to the call and the love of God.

Fr Keith Blackburn

TOMORROW, IT'S "FULL STEAM AHEAD"

How do you explain the principle of steam locomotion to a generation born long after the Steam Age is over? Not easy. One mystified little boy after a school visit to the Bluebell Railway which included a turn on the footplate asked, "But where is the engine?" to which a brave adult replies, "If you lift up the bonnet of a car you see the engine; what you see here is a bit like a "kettle on wheels". Maybe this explained very little and certainly it does no justice to the majesty and mystery of the steam engine. However, it reminds us of the huge



distance we have travelled technologically in quite a short time.

Meanwhile, fascination with the Age of Steam seems to grow day by day. Locally, the original railway line from Lewes to east Grinstead was opened in 1882 by Lord Sheffield and other landowners and local farmers of the area to carry their produce up to London (one milk churn, it is said, always bore the label "Buckingham Palace"). In common with other similar projects the line failed to flourish, suffering competition from developing road transport and finally closed in 1958, ahead of Dr Beeching's assault on the national system.

Two years later, in 1960, the line re-opened to a changed rôle as a "preserved" line from Sheffield Park to Horsted Keynes. Gradually, over the years, as money permitted, land was brought back, buildings restored, track relaid and the line now provides a return journey of 22 miles. It took nearly twenty years to achieve the last two miles into East Grinstead in 2013. This year, in seven days over Easter, during the visit of Flying Scotsman, the number of visitors who were attracted to the railway was in the region of 20,000.

This achievement has not come easily and resistance to the project has taken many forms. Its earliest days began with British Railways' failure to take seriously an enterprising approach by four schoolboys who proposed the re-opening of the line. This was just the beginning and from then on there has been a steady refusal of the Bluebell to give into obstacles of any kind, some of which were truly formidable and judged insuperable by some. The most recent example of this determination was the call to raise £4 million to complete the last two miles from Kingscote to East Grinstead. The project involved the disposal of many tons of council rubbish that had been deposited in a deep cutting in the 1970s. The work was completed and on 23rd March 2013 the first passenger service ran through to East Grinstead to connect with the national network.

So what is the position today and what is the railway's future? The basis of its success is its 700 strong volunteer staff on which the whole enterprise depends. Coming from all walks of life, some travel long distances to fulfil their railway duties. Some have previous railway experience, but most are just fascinated by the whole project and want to be involved. They train to be signalmen, station staff, guides, track and loco maintenance staff, rebuild Victorian and Edwardian coaches, train as engine drivers (three sisters who are qualified to work on the footplate drove Flying Scotsman for one of the days of the visit in April).

Since joining up to East Grinstead in 2013 the Bluebell's potential development and opportunities have grown. A day out on the line can be enjoyed in many different ways. Being one of the first preserved heritage lines, it has one of the finest collections of steam locomotives and with carriages from the 1870's and others which were preserved straight out of service from British Railways.

The long-term future of the Railway seems assured if the surge of public interest is any indication. In any case the Bluebell is not lacking in its own

individual attractions, including the superb countryside through which it passes and a variety of events which take place over the year, not least, in the Christmas season.

Future plans already in hand include the Accessible Steam Heritage (ASH) project, which will develop understanding of “kettles on wheels” for both present and future generations. This project has been awarded a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund of £1.1 million to revitalise the way the railway exhibits its locomotives. It will show how steam engines work, together with footplate access by pedestrians and wheelchair users to static locomotives. Visitors will also be able to take part in footplate driving experience based on a mock-up of Stepney, alongside the original 1875 engine. This exhibition will open in the Spring of 2018.

All this reflects an impressive dedication to a venture that attracts people who, like myself, welcome a refreshing contrast to their normal life routine. As a porter at Horsted Keynes and a guide on the trains, I am with a wide circle of people who are similarly motivated and enjoy meeting visitors from home and abroad, as I do. I like to think that the railway and its flexible demands keep me in contact with a wider world and, in its way, adds to the richness of College life.

Fr Robert Raikes



Exchanging the token, allowing the Flying Scotsman to travel on a single track section



Clearing the Imberhorne cutting of rubbish



Schoolchildren in the signal box

REGULAR COLLEGE ACTIVITIES

College life centres on the daily worship in the College Chapels but there has been much else to interest and occupy the residents.

Theology Group Sessions:

2016

September Meeting cancelled because of a College outing.

October The expected speaker was unable to attend because of a railway strike. Fr Michael Moore kindly substituted and spoke of *the Life and Work of Bishop Gore*.

November Fr Richard Hayes spoke on *St. Ignatius Loyola and his teaching*.

2017

January The Warden showed a film on Mont St. Michel.

February Helena Kojevnikov spoke on the Russian monastic revival.

April The Rev'd Sebastian Harries spoke on *Selection and Training for the Priesthood today*.

May Fr Richard Hayes gave a second talk on *Ignatian Spirituality*.

June The expected speaker asked to postpone his talk until another date. Sir Hugh Beach kindly substituted and talked instead on *Principles for an Anglican Interpretation of the Bible*.

July The expected speaker asked to postpone his talk because of a change in travel plans. Fr Michael Shields spoke on *the Prophet Mohammed and the Islamic religion*.

In the Autumn of 2016, a **Bible Study** was started. While it has been difficult to find a regular slot in the College's programme of activities, it has continued to meet fortnightly. It started by looking at the prophecy of *Malachi* and has continued with the *Acts of the Apostles*. Lasting an hour, its discussions include a devotional look at the passages and their application to the 21st century.

The **Poetry Group** continued to meet monthly with topics including *Romance*, *Free for all*, *Kings & Queens*, *Philip Larkin* and *John Donne*. At one meeting with title *What am I? Who am I?* the following limerick was heard:

A thoughtful young fellow said, "D**n!"
 It pains me to think that I am
 a being that moves
 in predestinate grooves;
 in fact, not a bus, but a tram!

The weekly **Art Group**, led by Mrs Michelle Redgrave-Moore, has continued to flourish. It now has two books of its paintings in the College library. Other regular activities included the monthly **Film Club**, the fortnightly **Extend Class** (keep fit in a chair), the weekly **Handbell Ringing** (which played before two of the major services in College Chapel), a fortnightly **New Testament Greek Class**, the monthly **Music for the Ears**, the fortnightly **Model Railway Club** which seemed to have had different trains running at every meeting, putting the Bluebell Railway in the shade in this respect, and, during the winter months, the weekly **Snooker Club**.

Mrs Sue Alfrey, the College's Pastimes Co-ordinator, has arranged less regular activities including tea parties (to some of which relatives and friends were invited), visits to a nearby private craft centre, iPad instruction classes, the making of a quilt (raffled at the Patronal Festival Open Afternoon) and of cards (sold in the Common Room) and a visit to the Dormansland Baptist Church for an afternoon concert.

The College has continued to meet informally for drinks before Sunday lunch, other than during Lent and Advent. More formally, the College Clergy Chapter meets twice a year, as does the Residents' Meeting, and a Library Committee meets quarterly.

The Editors

The Friends of St Barnabas

In addition to the above, the College has continued to benefit from the work of *The Friends of St Barnabas*, which was founded in 1994. Under the chairmanship of Mrs Cynthia Taylor and with an indefatigable group of helpers, they continued to man the weekly College Shop and arranged the following attractive programme of activities:

2016

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| 12 th November | Autumn Fair |
| 17 th December | Christmas Party |
| 20 th December | Sussex Cantorum Christmas Concert in College Chapel followed by a candlelit reception |

2017

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| 19 th February | Sherry Party |
| 11 th May | Day outing to Loseley Park |
| 1 st June | Garden party with afternoon tea at the home of Richard and Rosemary Williams |

3 rd July	College v Friends putting & croquet – at which the Residents and the Friends tied this year
22 nd July	Piano Recital given by Hiromi Okada, Professor of Piano Performance at Tokyo University
13 th August	Readings by Timothy West and Prunella Scales, with tea
23 rd August	Day outing to Polesden Lacy

The Editors

St Barnabas College: Evensong and Thanksgiving 2nd July 2017

The Right Reverend Christopher Chessun, The Bishop of Southwark

I am grateful to the Warden for inviting me to preach on this day of celebration and thanksgiving. We have come together this evening to give thanks for the completion of the latest phase of the major renovation that the College has been undergoing and it is a privilege for me to stand before you as your Visitor. I have tried to give meaning to the rôle of being Visitor by doing precisely what the word implies, visiting the College regularly; but I realise today has a special quality about it.

As we are all aware, some acutely, the work has been concentrated on the eastern section of the main College building as well as the whole of the central block, including the Chapel and kitchens, all of which has been re-roofed. Extensive restorations and improvements have taken place. The historic character has been sensitively retained, due honour being paid to the craftsmanship of the original stone and brick which has been restored. Beneath the surface, modern, environmentally friendly structures and systems have been introduced so that new technology will reduce the cost of running the building and make it yet more comfortable. The oldest buildings in the College are now fully up to the needs of the twenty-first century.

To make this happen has called for organisational abilities, along with great skill from the many different building specialists who have contributed to the work, and great generosity from the donors who have supported the enterprise purposefully. The Appeal, to which the Dean of Westminster kindly lent his beaming countenance, has drawn in contributions from many different quarters. Particularly, substantial sums were received from the Homes and Communities Agency, the Garfield Weston Foundation with additional help from the Almshouses Association. Many people in different ways have made contributions, all gratefully received, all valued by God. If I read the College web site correctly, for example, one of the fundraising assistants here, Vicky Jones, went not just the extra mile but considerably beyond that by undertaking a sponsored freefall from 15,000 feet!

The works that have now been completed are a great lake of energy fed by many small and larger streams of generosity and skill. Some of the contractors and donors involved are here tonight: I should like to express gratitude on behalf of the Church and Diocese as well as all who have been

blessed by what you have done. You have left an enduring legacy that will be serviceable to many generations to come.

I understand that there will now be a pause for breath before the cycle of planning, fundraising and works begins again, as there are some small but important works that need to be done quite soon; and then, perhaps after another pause for celebration and recuperation, there will be a final push to refurbish the East range. So we may, God willing, look forward to at least two more celebratory Evensongs on a similar theme!

Solomon, in dedicating the Temple, said: 'Even heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you, much less this house that I have built.' I wonder if some of you, in the silence of this Chapel, have ever found yourselves thinking: 'Thank God that God is larger than this College of St Barnabas, larger – thank God – than the Church of England, larger than anything of our own imagining or comprehension. I, for one, am immeasurably thankful that I exercise my ministry as Bishop in a Church which claims to be only one part of the one holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, for this is of the essence of Anglican identity and spirituality.

That sense of the greater whole of the loving purposes of God is worthy of our deepest reflection. It is important not just for our spiritual health and wellbeing, it is important because it leads us to a deeper understanding of God's covenant with us. Solomon celebrates in this passage the God who keeps covenant with his people and is faithful to his promises. In his new house, where his name will be known and found, God himself will meet with his people, his presence will be among them, and the people will make their prayers to the Lord, whatever may be their need. And so my brothers and sisters as we give thanks this evening for the very good works which have demonstrated great skill and generosity and helped to equip this College for a bright future, it is my hope that we shall ask the Lord to enlarge our vision and sympathies likewise. May we dare to put our trust in Him alone, the One who has already declared his loving purposes to us, the One who helps us in nothing to be anxious, the One who gives us sufficient grace and strength and nourishment for the journey.

'Even heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you, much less this house that I have built! Have regard to your servant's prayer and his plea, O Lord my God, heeding the cry and the prayer that your servant prays to you today.' [I Kings 8²⁷⁻²⁸]

Address at the Requiem for Canon Roger Davison

The Rev'd Prebendary Graeme Rowlands

*"Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life,
and I will raise them up on the last day." [John 6⁵⁴]*

Father Roger had one funeral sermon – the ship always dropped off the edge of the world. He would talk about a child standing on a beach, seeing

a ship pass over the edge of the horizon, and how, when we grow up, we understand that the ship is still there though it has sailed out of sight. It was a very good illustration the first 400 times he used it: after that it began to pall. One day, he said testily to the organist "You can't expect me to invent something new just for you every time". But this ardent desire to teach, to make things simple for people, came from the faith by which he lived, the priesthood which was the very essence of his being. For me, as for so many others, Fr Roger taught us that being a priest is not the playing out of a rôle, doing a job which begins and ends each day: it is what we are at every moment and we display that essence by being ourselves.

So let me begin at the altar. He was always in Church first; you could feel the attention and care with which he prayed. The Office remained an essential part of his daily routine until the day he died: the reverence with which he celebrated mass every day, and latterly, with which he received Holy Communion, was tangible. He always taught by example.

But this was not the creation of a personal Catholic dream world: his service of the altar meant his care for God's house and sacrificial love of his people. His training at the Maples before the war displayed itself in many a pelmet and altar frontal. He had a natural artistic eye for colour, for graceful lines, for tall and tapering candles – and those monuments live on, not only at Tonge Moor and Higham and Chelveston, but in the dozens of other places where he inspired young priests, often paying for those furnishings out of his own pocket.

At Kelham, with its daily cold showers, he had also learned the benefits of communal life and priestly discipline and the lived by it in the Company of Mission Priests. Higham was the last house of the discalced observance where we were given £10 spending money per month; we were in silence until 9.30 in the morning and after 10.30 at night; on the day off we sang Morning Prayer at 7.00, assisted at Mass at 7.30 – then if you had not invented anything to do, the Father would find jobs for idle hands. Fr Roger's culinary skills were legendary and he could make a little go a very long way. Nothing was wasted. One Monday morning, as the clock struck 9-30 for the staff meeting, we found him spooning up the minced remnants of Sunday's joint from the kitchen floor; there had been a little accident so he picked out the big bits of glass, put it into another bowl and topped it with some delicious mashed potato. That was lunch – and we are still alive to tell the tale.

But it was fun – we were constantly laughing about things – he had an eye for those quirky details in people's lives, an amazing memory for their aches and pains, a genuine care for what they were and what they might become. He also had very powerful guardian angels, many a time backing into other cars at junctions, crossing four lanes on the motorway, jumping the odd red light.

He almost knew those who knew the Apostles, certainly in terms of Walsingham, and his death is the end of a particular era. But what God has achieved through him continues to flourish and to grow and to change lives.

This ship has not dropped off the edge of the world – it has gone over the horizon. The life he lives now is simply a continuation of what he received and offered here – for "those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life". It is in that faith and by that confidence we make this offering for him.

A Tribute given at the funeral of Alan Hewison

David Hewison

Alan Stuart Hewison [13th April 1930 – 20th May 2017] was born in Newcastle, Tyne and Weir. The only child of Evelyn and Stuart Hewison, he remained proud of his roots all his life, occasionally bursting into songs from the North East or talking in a Geordie accent. Bonnie Bobby Shafto's silver buckles were a feature of family life as were the fishies in their little dishes which arrived when the boat came in. His enthusiasm for singing was part of his pastoral work with older people, organising sing-alongs in care homes, and getting out the song sheets at Christmas time as part of the family's festivities.

Alan had a rich and varied life in which four main strands are apparent: his love of the sea; the personal nature of his faith; the importance of art and of making; and the value of family and relationships.

Although his father owned and ran a garage when Alan was born, he had originally been a merchant navy engineer, serving in both the First and Second World Wars. When called up for National Service it seemed natural that Alan should join the Royal Navy. His posting into the Navy's educational department sowed the seeds for a later career. Subsequent civil service in the Admiralty in London allowed no real scope for his sociability, playfulness, or engagement with people and he acted on a suggestion from his Youth Club leader to be ordained so that he could truly be of use to others. The pull of the sea remained however and a few years later, married with three children as a curate in Farnham, he realised that to make ends meet a shift away from parish life to a commission as a chaplain in the Royal Navy was the way forward. He served in shore establishments as far apart as Cornwall, Scotland, and Hong Kong as well as at sea in the Navy's largest aircraft carriers and smallest minesweepers, sailing across the Arctic Circle and the equator, from South America to China and to the North Sea where he served under the Captainship of Prince Charles who, he noted, was not only a very good skipper but also had a soft spot for tomato ketchup! Alan - interested in family history - once landed from a rubber dinghy onto Papa Westray, a tiny island in the Orkneys, in search of something called Hewison's Well, which turned out to be a standpipe! Coming very close to death from an uncontrollable fever in a small boat in the South China Sea, too far from land to get help, was a fundamental religious revelation. It shaped his Christian witness and his attitude to his own death, astonishing his treating doctor by saying how excited he was at the prospect of dying because of what he knew was coming next.

In the late 1960s the family had settled just outside Plymouth in a small village and Alan bought a small sailing dinghy which we used in races around the bay each week. In addition to his chaplaincy work and sailing, he developed his skills as a potter and then as a silversmith. When his commission in the Navy ended he re-trained as an art teacher but his dream of getting a job helping budding young artists to paint was somewhat dashed when his first teaching post was in a metalwork department in a soon-to-be-closed secondary modern school with some very difficult pupils. Nonetheless, he grasped the opportunity to learn a new skill and to make the best use of the materials and equipment to which he had access. When the school closed, he was able to teach fine arts in another one, though he was

irritated by the increasing interference by government bureaucrats into the task of teaching. Retiring a few years early as a result, he continued to paint and to work with clay and wood, becoming more and more accomplished in watercolour, listening to his favourite New Orleans jazz and classical music as he did so. During this time, he continued to serve in nearby parishes, taking services whenever he was asked.

He had met his first wife Margaret, the mother of his three children – Paul, Catherine and David – at the church youth club prior to ordination. A young nurse from Plymouth, her father had been in the Royal Navy, she was a good foil to his tendency to act as an only child, reminding him that family life had demands to be met and bringing her robust, earthy humour to match his. They had many good years together, but the relationship broke up after the children left home and she died some years later. There followed a period of acute loneliness, very hard for someone as sociable as Alan but after some years he met Dorothy on a walking holiday – someone who matched him, and was a match for him, in so many ways. Her father been in the merchant navy, but she enjoyed many of the same things. She understood the value of a personal faith and brought with her a lively humour and a playfulness that bonded well with his. She too loved the sea and cruises became a feature of their life together, as well as a place for them to hone their table-tennis skills. Alan made jewellery for her, putting his silver-smithing to a particularly happy purpose.

The relationship with Dorothy delighted the family and allowed a flourishing in Alan's later life. It helped him to bear the long illness and untimely death from cancer of his eldest child, Paul, just a few years ago. The move from the West Country to the College of St Barnabas shortly after this provided Alan and Dorothy with a new base in which to continue old delights: painting, walking, cruising and being part of a community. Residents here will have noted Alan's interest in roses and his adoption of the task of 'dead-heading' in the grounds here – something he'd first done some 50 years earlier in his own garden. As he became older and so less active, his world began to shrink and he became quieter but he retained his capacity to notice and be amused by the curiosities of life, sometimes pointing out little absurdities in case we had missed them and at times showing his irritation at the annoyances that came along. He was looking forward to more of what life could offer when he became ill on a cruise in April and his swift decline as his own cancer took hold feels too sudden for those of us left behind, despite his excitement as to what was to come, and our relief that he didn't have to suffer. He leaves a big hole because he was a big character.

We say goodbye to him, with love.

Address at the Requiem for **Mary Johnson, 1923-2017**

Dr Mark Byford

The gospel reading [John 14^{1-6, 27}] is very apposite as we remember the life of Mary Johnson, who lived so fully through more than nine decades. So much has changed in the world since her birth in the 1920s. And yet the Christian qualities, the humble faithfulness and deep respect for the priesthood that was the chosen vocation of her husband Tony, and in due course of her

son Michael, defined Mary from that decade to this. However much the world moved around her, that faith provided her with a "true north" throughout her life. As many letters testified, Mary was a woman of faith, and someone whose words were considered and thoughtful. Yet she was not ostentatiously pious and could be quite to the point if she thought someone was being obtuse or plain wrongheaded. Although very humble by nature, she was a discerning judge of many things. Yet she was unfailingly considerate and courteous. Mary always backed up what she said with actions, often demonstrating a steely determination and an incredible capacity for sheer hard work. The Johnson household was organised with a military precision that set Tony free to focus on the cure of souls in his parish, able to schedule a profusion of parish activities in the sure knowledge that his supper would be served at 7 pm sharp. His was a vocation whose value she was deeply committed to, not simply as a loving wife, but from a deep belief that the life of a priest was one of the most profound and testing commitments to follow Christ as the way, the truth and the life. Beyond her many household duties, Mary's belief in the importance of service alongside her husband found its expression in her mobilisation of countless groups in successive parishes, whether it was the Flower Guild, the Mother's Union, the Sunday School, the Young Wives, the Women's Institute, the PCC or working parties for everything from lampshade making in Mill Hill, to kneeler sewing in Sherborne Abbey. Beyond her excellence in the craft of needlework, she was a woman with an innate artistic sensibility. For she not only galvanised many pairs of Sherborne hands to sew, she also painted all the designs and artwork that formed the patterns they were to follow in their great work. She had contemplated going to art school, but the pressures of the War meant that she opted for teaching instead. She was an accomplished watercolourist, whose Christmas cards and holiday paintings were a constant revelation for their recipients. Her creativity found other outlets too. She, not Tony, was the DIY expert in the house. Her sense of humour was equally inventive and economical. Pam, her cousin's daughter, recalls a birthday present, a model boat, that seemed so worthy but rather dull, until she realised that Mary had used half the box to smuggle a lot of sweets to her as well. Our own children remember Mary for her kind words and great encouragement, but also for jokes whispered in their ears on the sofa that sent them off into fits of conspiratorial giggles. Now I have got this far without majoring on Mary's relationship with Tony, but it is simply impossible to relate her life's story properly in his absence. They first met only weeks after the outbreak of the second world war, when she was just sixteen, and although they were not to be married for another ten years, that marriage lasted for no fewer than sixty-three years more. So close were they that our children had a collective noun for them: Grannypa. Theirs was a simple, unpretentious and beautifully unconditional loving relationship. What made it special beyond words was that it was expressed through the life they shared in the Church, with Christ at its heart. They really did exemplify that new commandment that Christ shared with his disciples in the passage in John's Gospel immediately before the verses we heard read today, "Love one another as I have loved you". The warmth of their love for one another was so willingly and effortlessly shared with those around them. So now Tony and Mary are together again, after a brief few years apart, robed in white in the presence of that loving God, who will wipe away every tear from their eyes. That oneness that marked their lives on this earth, has surely found its ultimate fulfilment in

heaven, in that mansion specially prepared for them, just as they so often prepared their own home to receive others.

LET GOD BE GOD

It did not prove easy to find a title for the five Lent 2016 addresses. The chosen option was deliberately ambiguous: "The Nourishment of Faith". Did it mean "What builds our faith?" or "How faith builds us up.?" Four addresses emphasised Scripture, Canon and Tradition - especially Tradition - as nourishing our faith. The first address, reproduced here, was given the title: "Let God be God."

The clergyman was shaking hands with members of his congregation at the church door after evening service. "Oh, Vicar," said one admiring parishioner, "You do give us such excellent sermons. How do you manage to preach so well?" "My dear lady," the Vicar replied, "I take immense trouble with preparing what to say to the children at Sunday School. I go home when the class is finished and over a cup of tea I simplify it and preach it at Evensong."

What that story reveals is more valuable than the story itself. The good lady's comment and the Vicar's reply that his adult sermons were less profound than his talks to the Sunday School - these features speak volumes about people's attitude to religion: they want it, and they often get it, all too easy and over-simple. My experience once after preaching a sermon in my village church about Genesis, suggesting that the six-day creation story was not so much a literal statement but a picture, even a myth, of God's creative purpose - my experience was an encounter afterwards with an angry parishioner: "Why did you tell us that about Genesis? Why did you upset my simple faith?" When I tried to explain....."No, Vicar, I don't want to know; I don't want to think about my religion; I want it to be simple, from the heart," she said. Yet she went off, climbed into her sophisticated car, did all the un-simple, complicated things like switching on, depressing the clutch, reversing, turning to drive away - all far from "simple" but, because it was not religion, quite acceptable.

But, I thought to myself, at least I got a reaction from one member of the congregation - and a much better one than the often-heard remark as I stood at the church door: "Thank you, Vicar, for a lovely service you have given us". I must confess that used to make me inwardly very cross: my answer was, "Thank you for saying it was a lovely service but it was your service, your duty, your worship of God, and that is what counts."

All this set me thinking. What can it be that motivates people to go to church, to be religious? Some time ago there was a TV feature on a South London suburban church and, in the programme, the members of the congregation were asked, one by one, why they went to church.

"I feel it helps me," said one. "I need the support it gives," said another. "I feel better after going," said a third. "Sometimes I don't feel I want it so I don't go but when I do want it I do but I don't always get it" said someone else. "It keeps me in touch with the great padre in the up above," said a retired Lieutenant colonel.

Not one person questioned said he went to church to worship God. All, in their varied answers, were equally self-centred. All went for what they could get out of it. Not one person in that programme even suggested that that church's worship - or, shall we say, the worship offered here in this chapel - is not for us, for what we can get out of it but that it is for God, for God alone and for his glory. What has happened? People, with the best of intentions, have turned the whole matter upside down: instead of offering something to God, they expect religion to do something for them. My thesis is that religion is not for our benefit but primarily for God.

Over 70% of people questioned at random would say they believe in God but that high proportion will not be found in church on Sundays because the church has, let's face it, largely failed to offer a Christian gospel with a cutting edge. Instead of Christianity as a crusade, it so often offers Christianity as a cushion against a harsh, real world. The paradox is that the most effective publicity men - the evangelists, the famous preachers who can pack a football stadium with eager and willing Gospel listeners - are often engaged in the "soft sell" - Christianity to satisfy you, to give you uplift, to take away your problems, to straighten out your life: all this rather than Christianity for God's sake and his alone.

A religion that offers inducements, even high-minded inducements, is no real religion. The man in the street knows this: he points the finger at the churchgoer who, he says, is looking for an easy answer, who conforms to social or class habits, who is looking for an escape from real encounter with life, who wants a kind of fire insurance against the day of judgment. I had in last week's mail a publisher's catalogue of religious books: nine out of the ten listed on "Religious Life" were about what religion can do for "you" - not about "What can you do for God?"

To describe religion, as I am trying to do, often bothers sincere and dedicated Christians. "Surely," they say, "Jesus offered many benefits to his disciples - forgiveness, life, hope, the promise of heaven?" The answer is "Yes, he did," but Jesus' offers are not meant to lead to a cosy self-centredness. There is a weakness in a religion which tries to do good to you, to help you to feel confident or secure, as its main aim. Perhaps the all-pervasive western consumer society in which we are cocooned has turned religion into just another commodity, an investment for those who are made that way. Our American cousins seem to fall for this more than Europeans. That is maybe why James Thurber, Ogden Nash or Bob Dylan point up the problem best of all. It is at its most acute when religion is made to offer us 'certainties' about life and destiny. The most subtle attack there is on 'faith' is to turn it into certainty! 'Faith' is an elusive word; it is not what the schoolboy said in his

essay: "Faith," he wrote, "is believing in something you know is not true." Nor yet is 'faith' to be construed as 'certainty.' "Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine", they sing - verging on the arrogant, almost blasphemous - when there are no certainties in this world except the inevitability of death.

Jesus did, indeed, offer many benefits to his disciples but they are less obvious than they seem. "I am come that they might have life". Yes. But he also said, "He who loses his life shall save it." When two of his closest friends asked for special privileges in the Kingdom, places of honour near Jesus in the Kingdom, he refused them. And the other ten were angry with those two - not because their service of Jesus was unselfish but because they had not thought of the request for themselves.

As for suffering, pain and loss, Jesus promised that in this world we will suffer. This is the price of our growth to real maturity. If religion means anything, it must entail the purest and most selfless attitude to God that we can achieve. Nothing less is good enough for him; and any benefit accruing for ourselves is a 'spin-off' from that primary endeavour: to let God be God.

Canon John Laird

Who touched me? [Mark 5²⁴⁻³⁴; Luke 8⁴²⁻⁴⁸]

The Warden

Meditating on those occasions when Jesus *turns* to someone, this one stands out as startlingly different from the others. Usually Jesus speaks to the person directly. Here he is *asking* for the one to whom he has turned but cannot find. Instead of addressing a person, he speaks to a situation. He knows what has happened, but he searches for the individual.

1. Her anonymity

This poor woman's situation is doubly awful. Not only is she suffering so badly, and has done for so long, but she is a social outcast. Ritually unclean all the time, she would have lived almost as much as an outsider as the lepers. The extent of her shame is almost impossible for us to imagine in a culture when medical problems are the substance of reality television and advertising speaks quite openly of such things. Not only would she have been confined to her home, but she would have been 'untouchable', someone whom others would have seen as making them also 'unclean'. Her hope of a cure was to do with much more than being rid of the symptoms. This was about her place in society, even among the members of her own family. The desperation of someone in her situation must have been appalling.

Clearly, one of the reasons why she wanted to remain hidden was to avoid the reaction of the crowd. Discovery would have brought yet more humiliation. For those who are already isolated, whether by disfigurement, deafness or other medical or psychological conditions, there is nowhere more lonely than a crowd. It was better to remain apart for every possible reason. Most of us will have some way of identifying with that. There comes a point where being part of the crowd is more trouble than it's worth. Just to be left alone is all we need and hope for. Yet there can also come a point where our isolation is a pain beyond bearing, however solitary we are most of the time.

The poor woman's illness and her loss of a proper place in society would have led to yet more reprisals when she was discovered in the crowd. But despite that her situation also drove her on in hope that Jesus would succeed where all the others had failed.

2. Her faith

The Gospel writers cast her as a woman of great faith – a shining example of those who ask with trust that Jesus will act, however tenuous the claim upon him. It becomes praiseworthy that people should approach Jesus despite having no right to do so. The Centurion does not consider himself worthy to have Jesus visit his home and yet when he asks for help Jesus commends him to everyone. As with the Centurion, it's a measure of the woman's faith that she bothered, that she didn't just give up and let Jesus go past. She may have been desperate, but deep within her was the vestige of the conviction that Jesus really did hold the key to new life for her. So she fights her way through the crowd and brushes her fingertips against the hem of his clothes, literally hanging by her fingernails. *Just the merest touch will be enough.*

3. Her motivations

I wonder what she expected or hoped for. Presumably, that Jesus would remain unaware of her existence but that she would find her health restored. To have Jesus *turn* to her was not on the agenda! Her assumption must have been that she would remain anonymous, go on her way quietly without fuss, relieved of the burden that had afflicted her.

Trying to put ourselves into her position, it is interesting to ask whether she may also have had any other motivations. Certainly, the less anyone knew about her presence in the crowd, the less she would be dragged back into the public gaze, only to be driven away again. But there may also be other, rather less heroic motivations. Perhaps she wanted to remain on the fringe, not just of Jesus' garment but of the encounter with him, because she wanted to avoid the commitment that seemed inevitable when people were confronted with him. No one seemed to avoid being drawn in by him;

not in a threatening way, but in a way that left them forever changed by the encounter.

This woman's life had been so blighted that she had very little left for initiative. She had probably lost the will and the social skills to engage with other people, even if she had wanted to. Twelve years of segregation would have taken their toll. She was exhausted with it all; the demand to enter into a new and demanding relationship might simply have been too much for her.

Most people have moments like that.

4. Jesus turns

Mark is the only Evangelist to record the fact that Jesus felt the sensation of power issuing from him. Perhaps that was a gloss that he put on it as the only explanation for Jesus turning round. But in one translation it says that he knew this "in himself". It's an interesting parallel with the experience of the woman who felt "in her body" that she was healed. This is an incredibly deep communication between the two of them – both aware at the deepest level that something profound has happened.

It's an astonishing counterbalance to the incredibly fragile brush of her fingertips against him. The merest touch was enough. Perhaps that's the real point of the story. It shows that when there seems no hope, when we are 'hanging on by our fingernails', it takes only the slightest encounter with Jesus to bring transformation.

The disciples have not yet grasped this, and in any case they are too caught up in the demands of the moment. They don't begin to understand why Jesus has asked the question. It has all been so discreet. The woman has slipped away quietly before she is spotted. But Jesus turned and 'looked all round to see who had done it.'

So, there is nothing for it but to own up. Perhaps from a safe distance she can see that everything has stopped and Jesus is casting about him for an explanation. She knows he is looking for her. And so she comes back ...

afraid of what will happen in the crowd (because no one else will know yet that she has been healed);

afraid perhaps of the disciples, who weren't above sending people away with a flea in their ear;

afraid of Jesus rebuking *her*, of all people, for presuming to call on his life-giving power.

5. Jesus' response

Jesus' response must have come as the most exhilarating relief. He doesn't tell her off. There is not the slightest suggestion that she has done anything wrong by coming out into the crowd to find him; nor by drawing healing

from him; not even by slipping away again without saying 'thank you'. He goes even further. He calls her his daughter. Her relationship with him, wafer-thin though it was, is all that is needed for her to be one of his own.

It is the completion of her healing as she is restored to her place in society and begins her new life for ever in relationship with him.

6. The apostolic element

Jesus also used opportunities such as this to teach that we do not live for ourselves alone, but that our prayers should have an apostolic dimension. So it is particularly appropriate that we find in Luke's account of this story that *she declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched him, and how she had been immediately healed*. Her private admission to Jesus admission of her anonymous faith turns into an act of public witness.

Of course, this was to her advantage. Everyone would know that she was an outcast no longer. She could return to society and lead a normal life for the first time in years. But out of even that comes good for others. Not much later, Mark says that "wherever he went, into villages or cities or country, they laid the sick in the market-places, and begged him *that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak*; and all who touched it were healed." [Mark 6⁵⁶] The woman's act of witness bore fruit beyond anything she could have imagined.

7. Conclusion

All in a few brief moments. Awful though her situation was, and despite the fragility of what was literally her last clutch at a cure, the unnamed woman was restored in every sense.

Jesus turned and looked for her, and knew in himself that a new person's relationship with him had been formed.

Turn your gaze upon us, O Lord,
and enliven us again;
look with welcome and compassion
that we may be healed
look with forgiveness and judgement
that we may be restored and made whole,
set free from all that hinders our love for you.

COMINGS AND GOINGS SINCE THE LAST ISSUE

New Residents

Fr Herman Annis	26 th September 2016
Fr Keith Blackburn	30 th September 2016
Fr Robin McDowall	26 th April 2017
Fr Campbell Snow	21 st July 2017

Moved away

Fr Wilfrid Browning	26 th January 2017 [died 24 th February 2017]
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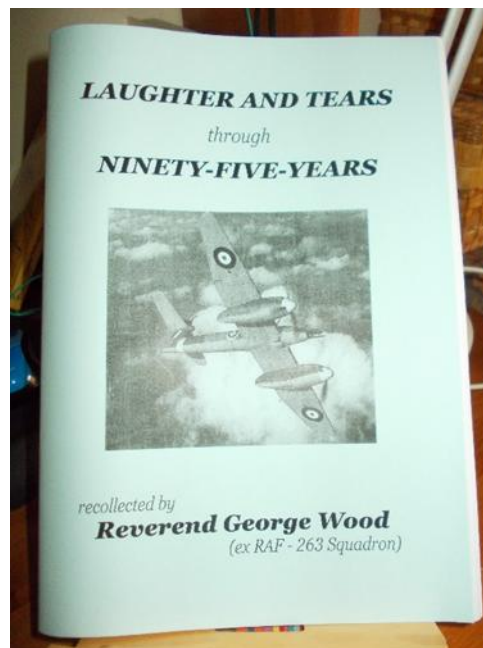
Those who have died

Mrs Marjorie Hyde	26 th February 2017
Fr Alan Hewison	20 th May 2017
Fr Roger Davison	22 nd May 2017
Mrs Pam Waller	22 nd June 2017
Mrs Mary Johnson	19 th July 2017

✠ May they rest in peace and rise in glory

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The Rev'd George Wood, a resident of the College of St Barnabas, has written an account of his time as a fighter pilot with the RAF during World War II. Copies of his booklet are available from the College, price £6-50 (including postage and packing), the proceeds going to the College.



The French Government awarded Fr George Wood the *Legion d'Honneur* for his contribution towards the liberation of France.

Pease send your cheque,
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