

The St Nicholas Singers at the Christmas Tree Festival, seen from the High Altar

**The Parish Church of
St Faith, Great Crosby**

NEWSLINK

January, 2014

Worship at Saint Faith's



SUNDAY SERVICES

11.00am SOLEMN MASS and Children's Church
1.00pm Holy Baptism (*2nd Sunday*)

WEEKDAY SERVICES

Monday to Friday at 9.30 am Morning Prayer
Friday at 6.00 pm Evening Prayer

SACRAMENT OF PENANCE AND RECONCILIATION

The Clergy are available by appointment to hear confessions or to talk about any matter in confidence. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is always available in preparation for Christmas and Easter and at other advertised times.

HOME VISITS to the sick and housebound and those in hospital

If you, or someone you know, are unable to get to church and would like to receive Holy Communion at home, the Eucharistic Ministers are happy to undertake this - please call 928 3342 to arrange this. Likewise, to arrange a visit to someone in hospital or at home, please call 928 3342.

IN A PASTORAL EMERGENCY

Please telephone 928 3342 or a member of the ministry team.

JANUARY



**From the
Ministry Team
January 2014**

In all the great religions, the idea of pilgrimage has played an important part. Alongside it, there has often been the idea of the Spiritual Journey. These ideas meet, it could be said, in the journey of the Wise Men to the infant Christ at Bethlehem, which we celebrate on the Feast of the Epiphany. All this was the subject of one of the best-known poems of T.S.Eliot, which he published as a kind of ‘pamphlet for Christmas’. It begins - very appropriately for the start of a New Year - with these five lines:

A cold coming we had of it,
Just the worst time of the year
For a journey, and such a long journey;
The ways deep and the weather sharp,
The very dead of winter.

What many people did not notice was that those first five lines had quotation marks around them. Eliot had not written those lines himself; he had lifted them, unaltered, from a seventeenth century sermon of Lancelot Andrewes. It had, in fact, been preached on Christmas Day 1622, before the Court of King James, when Andrewes was Dean of Westminster.

There’s no doubt that Eliot thought that the prose of Andrewes ranked with the finest English prose, not only of that time but of any time. He also reckoned Andrewes to be a superb preacher. But it was simply Andrewes’ prose that had so greatly affected Eliot. It’s not too much to say that that sermon had affected Eliot’s soul.

‘The Journey of the Magi’ is a poem about the painful necessity of rebirth for us all – which is in itself a kind of journey from Death to Life – which Eliot felt he must describe in his poem in intensely personal terms. Peter Ackroyd, in his biography of Eliot, calls it ‘the poem of a convert’. It’s certainly a personal testimony to a journey Eliot himself had made.

As this month we celebrate and give thanks for the Feast of the Epiphany, perhaps those first five lines of Eliot’s poem may serve to remind us of that spiritual journey we all have to make, and which is often quite painful, although

Journeys end in lovers’ meeting,
Every Wise Man’s son doth know.

With my love, prayers and every blessing for the New Year.

Father Dennis

Many Thanks

Dear All

Apologies for taking so long to write this. I would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you who have supported the up and coming trip Emily is making to Malawi.

The recent quiz night was a huge success, and it was lovely to see friends from St Mary's and other Clubs and Organisations connected to St Faith's. The winners on the night were Mike and Helen and their team of parents! Well done!

Also the support we have received for our on-going Table Sales has been wonderful. Not only people donating items, but purchasing as well. And a huge thanks to Jackie Williams for baking and selling cakes at the back of church for Emily's Malawi Fund.

We are so grateful that St Faith's PCC has also agreed to support Emily financially with this programme. As Archdeacon Ricky Panter said, it will go a long way to support Emily in her personal and spiritual development.

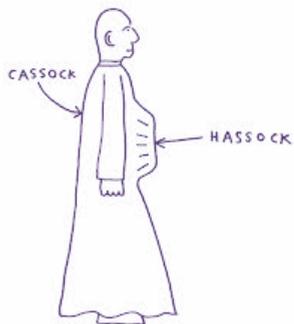
We are now looking to make the arrangements for Emily to fly out after her college course ends, which will be in June 2014. "Original Volunteers" have secured her place in readiness.

We will continue our fundraising in the New Year, so watch this space..... again, we are so overwhelmed by the love and support shown by the family of St Faith's

Thank you all

Much love

Judith and Emily xx



CartoonChurch.com

P.S...!

Just to let you know, at the time of writing, I took a call from Ormsby's of Scarisbrick, informing me that the new server's cassocks would be with us by the end of this week (Friday 13th!)

These were funded by the serving team sponsored canal walk, individual donations, and a generous donation from the Catering Team.

A huge thank you to all of you. Hopefully we will now look nice and smart for you all each Sunday, without gaping holes where buttons are missing, and cassocks not reaching ankles etc! Maybe now Emily and Luis will be able to move their arms more flexibly! (These kids grow too quickly!)

Judith



Talking of Trees...

The editor makes no apologies for filling several pages of this issue with words and pictures (these latter on the picture pages) reflecting the happenings at the Christmas Tree Festival.

Looking back on a long week of activity, it is absolutely clear that in terms of enjoyment, team spirit, attendance, income and sheer delight the fifth annual Christmas Tree Festival at St Faith's was the best ever. Elsewhere in these pages, Boss Lady (Margaret), Forces' Favourite (Eunice) and Organ Grinder (Rick) contribute their thoughts, leaving this writer to start the glitter ball rolling with a few of his own.

It was so good to welcome so many folk into a warm, friendly and colourful church. So many of our visitors commented on the liveliness and warmth of the welcome, the beauty of the displays, the quality of the food and other things on sale, and above all the wonderful community effort and the supporting of so many excellent causes. When churches so often seem to ask people in only to make money out of them, the fact that entry and entertainment were free surprised and delighted many visitors, some of whom were seemingly strangers to this or indeed any church. In these difficult times, it is heartening beyond words to have shared in this enterprise. As one visitor put it: 'A wonderful idea, so well prepared by so many people, and just what a church should be doing for the community and those in need'. Couldn't have put it better myself...

There were as ever, at least for this doorman, entertainments en route. 'Is this a Roman Catholic Church?' asked one puzzled visitor. On being told it wasn't, he wanted to know what exactly we were, so I told him and invited him in. 'So you're not a Roman Catholic Church, then?' Sadly, not, I said again. 'Well, do you have a toilet then?' I showed him the way to our ecumenical facilities, and saw him no more. On a more touching note, a small boy with one of the many class parties from Waterloo Primary stopped me by the Prayer Tree and asked quietly: 'Please sir, is it all right if I pray in here?' On being gently reassured, he thought for a moment and said: 'Sir, where exactly can I pray, then?'

That prayer tree, on which visitors young and old hung their written petitions, was soon overflowing with heartfelt prayer for families, the sick, the departed, pets and more. But my favourite is the one which simply read: 'Dear God, please help me to find money on the floor'.

Picture the Christmas Tree Festival 2013



Four pages of photographs to accompany the various articles throughout this issue.

Groups and individuals decorating trees; the stalls being set out; the toys donated on the opening day's Toy Service



And one more thing. A visiting lady, recently moved to Waterloo, asked me if there was any memorial to our founder and benefactor Douglas Horsfall in St Faith's. I showed her various inscriptions and carvings, and discovered, to my amazement and delight, that she was a direct descendant of Mr Horsfall! I pointed her in the direction of the substantial Horsfall archive on the church website and she left, delighted, promising to be in touch.

Chris Price



And the Band Played on *Eunice Little*

It hardly seems possible that a year has passed since I was last writing about our carol service, but it has, and on Wednesday December 4th we were doing it again. And wow! – was it a great evening!

Once again we had the excellent military band as in the previous years, who started the proceedings with an overture of Christmas melodies, before accompanying the singing of six carols between the readings of the Christmas story and the lighting of our candle. Padre George Perera gave a gentle, reflective address, bringing together the D-Day landings, our monthly group meetings and the needs of those presently serving in Afghanistan.

These latter were also included in the prayers, led by Padre Nathan King of the Royal Welsh, who included those who will be so far from their homes and loved ones this Christmas.

The service concluded with a wonderful compilation of carols and music by the band, which kept everyone in their seats to give the players thunderous applause to end the concert.

It was once again a wonderful, uplifting evening, enjoyed by all and demonstrated by the very generous donations given to the retiring collection, roughly estimated at well over £300, to be shared equally between U.K. Forces Support, Combat Stress and BLESMA.

So not only do our thanks go to W.O.1 D.L. Mitchell and the Lancashire Artillery Band, but to all who supported the evening and throughout the year.

Our next meeting will take place on Wednesday February 5th, 2014, when our guest speaker at 7.30 pm in church will be Padre Nathan King, who will speak to us of his experiences in Afghanistan, so please join us if you can.

Happy Christmas to you all.

The Passing of a Peculiar Priestess

Obituaries on these pages are usually, naturally enough, those of our own church and community. However the editor could not resist this splendid recent *Daily Telegraph* tribute to a remarkable lady. As they say, you couldn't make it up...

‘Olivia Robertson, who has died aged 96, was the co-founder, archpriestess and hierophant of the Fellowship of Isis, an order devoted to the worship of the "Divine Feminine", which she ran from her haunted ancestral pile, Huntington Castle in Co Carlow, Ireland. A member of an old Irish Ascendancy family, Olivia Robertson had immersed herself in psychic and spiritualist studies from an early age, and had become convinced that God was a "She" after a series of visions. She continued to believe in a male God - until the Egyptian fertility goddess Isis paid her a visit. "She seemed to be made of crystallised white light," she recalled. "Her black hair was parted in the middle and she wore a violet and pale green dress, very modern, I thought. She seemed a cross between a queen, a ballet dancer and a gym mistress... We had a long conversation, but afterwards I couldn't remember any of it."

Later she was visited by an Irish goddess called Dana and felt an intense happiness: "Those visions made me realise that patriarchy had taken over religion, once the domain of matriarchs... and it had led to wars, greed and exploitation of the Earth."

By coincidence, around the same time that Olivia had her realisation, her brother, Lawrence "Deny" Durdin-Robertson, "21st baron of Strathloch", an ordained clergyman in the Church of Ireland, had also become convinced that God was a woman. An honourable man, he at once proffered his resignation to his bishop, who assured him that "there was no need".

In 1976 Olivia, Lawrence and Lawrence's wife, Pamela, set up the Fellowship as a movement to worship "Isis of the 10,000 Names". "At the end of an Aeon and the beginning of the space age, the Goddess Isis is manifesting as the feminine expression of divinity," Olivia declared.

Huntington Castle was the ideal headquarters. A rambling, castellated pile, complete with suits of armour and the heads of an array of wild beasts (including a crocodile shot by Olivia's mother), it soon attracted a following of what Olivia called "ordinary Irish psychics". Running out of room upstairs, she and Lawrence created an underground temple in the castle dungeons, with 12 shrines (one for each sign of the zodiac) and five chapels (each consecrated to a different goddess). There, Olivia and her brother would perform elaborate rituals (with an extempore liturgy described by one witness as "the kind of thing you sit through at weddings when couples insist on writing their own vows"), he in blue robes, crook and tall blue hat, she in multicoloured gowns, her wild mane of dyed black hair topped with a brass coronet, brandishing a sacred "sistrum" — made of small cymbals set in a wooden frame.

At first locals in the tiny village of Clonegal were horrified. "They thought we were all witches. It absolutely freaked them." The strange happenings at the castle began to attract curious tourists to the village, as well as bands of New Age spiritualists who, several times a year, converged on the castle to pray, meditate and perform in pagan dramas and tableaux. Visitors included Van Morrison, Hugh Grant and Mick Jagger, while Brigitte Bardot's sister made two stuffed canvas dragons for the temple.

The movement did not ask too much of its followers. "Some religions preach poverty, obedience and chastity," Olivia explained. "We believe in love and beauty and have no truck whatsoever with asceticism." By last year the group was said to have up to 30,000 members in 90 countries, including (surprisingly) 46 Muslim nations. "The point about the Fellowship of Isis is that we don't interfere with anybody's religion, they have all got something to offer," she explained. "The only thing we don't like is people being boiled alive or burned or having their heads chopped off, that type of thing."

Family ancestors were said to include Scota, legendary queen of the Scots, and Cesara (also known as "Mrs Benson"), a niece of Noah who, watching the Ark sail past from the top of Mount Leinster, called to Noah: "It's a soft day." Other notables to whom the Robertsons claimed to be related included the Wicked Lord Rosse, founder of the infamous Hellfire Club outside Dublin, where he and his fellow club-persons were said to have roasted his butler.

Despite these connections, for the first eight years of her life Olivia Robertson led a somewhat humdrum existence in suburban Reigate. This all changed in 1925 when her paternal grandmother died and left Huntington Castle to her father. It was not long after the Civil War - a risky time for an Anglo-Irish family to return to Ireland. "The IRA had occupied the castle, and treated it very well," she recalled, "although they locked the cook in the dungeon, and court-martialled the butler."

As an Archpriestess of the Fellowship of Isis, Olivia Robertson travelled to distant temples around the world. In 1993, when the Parliament of World Religions met in Chicago, she was chosen as the representative of "neopagans" and walked in procession at the opening ceremony alongside Chicago's Roman Catholic Cardinal.

Olivia never married. Her brother Lawrence made his "transition to spirit" in 1994. Announcing her death, the Fellowship of Isis website enjoined the Goddess Isis of 10,000 Names to "bless and keep her as she makes her journey into the next Spiral of the Cosmic Web".

Sir Stig and Crosby Castle

(Or how to get out of washing up for 18 months)

Rick Walker, at the editor's request, pens this account of the remarkable machine he designed and built, and which entertained the crowds at the recent Christmas Tree Festival, as



well as raising a goodly sum for the Waterloo Partnership. For those unaware of the facts, the edifice was dressed up as a castle, and a helmeted knight gestured at the front! Ed.

Just after Easter 2012, Rosie and I were attending a steam rally at Banks in Southport, watching traction engines, saw-mills and assorted loud and noisy machines of a bygone age, each beast more oily and steamy than the last. Then, as we left we heard the sweet sound of music coming from the corner of the field. We investigated and found the source.

There was a small wooden musical box producing music equal to that of the mythological sirens who enticed boats on to rocks. It was love at first sound!

Just turning the handle of his wonderful contraption for a few minutes fired my imagination and made me determined to build one. The only problem was where did I start?

Luckily Google came to my rescue and within a few days I had a collection of drawings and instructions that gave me the courage to have a go. I should now explain that common sense was rapidly deserting me through the window and what was originally going to be a copy of a 32-note mechanical flute, was now destined to be a 64 key Busker's organ, with 100 pipes plus glockenspiel and percussion.

The next 18 months saw DIY on a grand scale. No time for telly, reading, or any other relaxing hobby such as washing up, but time needed to understand folding bellows, MIDI interfaces, spring making, electronic switching, bourdons and stops, and the difference between vibrato, celeste and tremolo.

Those who saw the result during the Christmas Tree Festival will have their own thoughts (as do my neighbours) but I am secretly rather proud of my efforts, and if I am allowed a few more weeks' holiday from washing up I shall be introducing some more subtle tones and controls into the organ. Rosie and I have now joined B O G A which as I am sure you all know is the British Organ Grinders Association, and we look forward to many, many hours handle turning as Sir Stig takes his castle around charity events.

So the next time you see a lonely guy churning away at his musical organ, spare a thought for his poor wife who has spent more than her fair share of time doing the chores!

Rick Walker



And Finally...

Since the Tree Festivals began five years ago, I think 2013 must be hailed as the best yet. From the first sponsor arriving to decorate the trees on Friday 29th November until the last tree was dismantled, the furnishings replaced and the floors swept to a needle-less perfection it has been fun. We worked a lot, panic, only slight, sold a lot and laughed a lot.



Ladies of the St Faith's Jam Factory line up; children from St John's CE Primary and Merchant Taylors' Stanfield in full voice; the church well filled for one of the evening choral events



I think the punters enjoyed it too, having read many of their compliments in the visitors' book. Choirs almost by the score, all in excellent voice, carol singing and the finale on Saturday morning when the Liverpool Saturday Music School gave a roof-raising sound to a filled church, standing room only being solved by a row of chairs in the rear stalls. What a splendid occasion and one to be remembered with 'good cheer'. Will there be another Tree Festival, who knows!

Margaret Houghton

All and sundry will want to offer huge thanks to Margaret for her tireless efforts in palling and presiding over the Christmas Tree Festival. The reports elsewhere in this issue make it clear how much we all owe to her and her team. Ed.

Being Victor Meldrew

This month's rant from our regular moaning correspondent



There is one advantage to the editor having few articles to publish in Newlink and that is that he has to ask for submissions, thus giving people the chance for a public Rant. Being a "Grumpy Old Man" in the Victor Meldrew mould I am always more than willing to oblige and rage about an assortment of topics. A friend, yes I do still have some, once told me that the Grumpiness Quotient increased as the testosterone level reduces; I don't know about that but what follows is just another of my current pet hates.

Motorists - Well not all motorists but a fair number. I don't like driving but from time to time I have to. It is not a pleasure but a chore to be endured. When I first learned to drive in 1965 roads were not as crowded and drivers seemed to be more courteous, even to learners. I have to admit that I did not drive a great deal because I spent more time at sea than ashore but I did hire cars during some of my leave periods. After I passed my driving test whilst at marine college in Glasgow I did not drive again for over a year as there was no point buying a car and you could not hire one until you had held a full licence for at least a year. That struck me as odd. I passed my test after 12 lessons without any other driving but at least I had been in a car during the preceding weeks. After a year, when I could then hire a car, I had not driven for a year and so my driving was rusty but I was classed as "an experienced driver" and car hire companies would trust their vehicles to me.

During the 1960s driving in town and country was comparatively easy because there was less traffic. I may be mistaken (it's a memory thing) but roads also seem to have been better maintained. Today roads are crowded and repairs are neglected. Courtesy goes out of the window when an individual closes the vehicle's door and switches on the engine. Have you ever noticed how many vehicles do not appear to be fitted with indicators? I thought that working indicators were part of the MOT and if they are fitted a great many motorists do not seem to know where the switches are. The only time when some care to use the indicator is when they wish to move into the safety gap you have left between

yourself and the vehicle in front, and then it is after the move has started. If I leave a gap it is to provide me with a margin to avoid hitting the motorist in front if that vehicle brakes suddenly, it is not an invitation for the idiot in the adjacent lane to occupy that space. This frequently happens when you are in the inside lane and the driver in the outside lane notices that the person in front is turning right. Instead of waiting it is a sharp left turn into the safety gap you have left and then a signal to show you that they are on their way; you already know that because it is you who have left the safety margin into which they are then heading. The offending driver will then return to the outside lane ready to undertake the same manoeuvre at the next junction where another vehicle is turning right.

I am sure that you have encountered similar drivers on crowded motorways where all three lanes are moving at the same speed but with slightly different timing. There is always some driver, with fewer brain cells than his/her vehicle has wheels, who believes that he/she can, by such manoeuvres, make progress through the mobile car park which is what places like the M6 become on a Friday afternoon. These people are not new to motoring, they have been there since at least the 1960s as writing this reminded me of the black & white television public information films of that period. You can now discount my earlier statement that drivers of the 1960s were more courteous than they are today - selfish idiots have always been on the roads and always will be, I just don't want them on the same roads as me. In order to try to counter such behaviour the Central Office of Information commissioned the classic motoring films about "The Weaver Bird" and "Reginald Molehusband".

The Weaver Bird public information film concerned lane discipline on motorways and, remember, motorways were a lot less crowded then than they are now. However, there is always somebody who believes that he/she has more right to the road than you as he/she has a faster, bigger, more expensive, etc., vehicle than you; or maybe it is just a bigger ego.

Reginald Molehusband in his Austin 1100 was the worst parker in town. The film introduction went *"This is the story of Reginald Molehusband, married, two children, whose reverse parking was a public danger. People came from miles just to see it. Bets were laid on his performance. What he managed to miss at the back, he was sure to make up for at the front. Bus drivers and taxis changed their routes to avoid him."* Then Reginald got it right and became a good parker. Certainly he did have fewer vehicles around him and traffic wardens were less prevalent than they are around the streets of Crosby and Waterloo. Despite the film Reginalds and Reginas still persist so maybe it is time for a reissue. Like me, have you ever returned to your correctly parked vehicle in a car park to find that somebody has parked their car as close as possible to yours in order to give themselves plenty of room to exit their own vehicle? Why is there never a nasty parking warden around when you really need one?

Back to the motorway. I am sure that everybody who has driven on one has noticed the slow driving race between a pair of HGVs which seems to go on for miles without any winner. One HGV driver will decide that he/she can overtake the vehicle in front because that vehicle is going at a speed 1 mile per week slower; so the race begins. Up hill and down dale it goes on for mile after mile as queues of traffic form behind the pair in an effort to make use of the remaining outside lane.

Then there is the motorist who hogs the outside lane of a dual carriageway because he/she is turning right about 5 miles further on and wants to get ready for the turn. Lane indiscipline or have we turned continental and now drive on the right without anybody telling me?

Using a hand-held mobile phone whilst driving is an offence but then you have to be caught and the chance of that happening seems negligible. Stand on any major road, the junction of Crosby Road and South Road is a favourite place of mine, and you will see at least one offender each minute. Whilst driving you will often see them when they whizz past, hand set firmly held against the head, or they may be seen in your rear view mirror as they tailgate you. When the law was introduced people were given three months in which to get used to the ban, but that has resulted in the present disregard for the law. If a law is valid it applies immediately, and there should be no "get out of jail free" period otherwise people will treat the law with contempt. But then that is our politicians for you; sorry, politicians will form the subject of a future rant. Using a mobile phone is not illegal nor is driving a car, however, using a phone whilst driving a car is illegal and the solution is to destroy both together. Crushing the car with the mobile phone in it (and in my view the offender) would prevent any reoffending.

And finally, the motoring litter lout. Smokers who are also drivers appear high on the list of such offenders. The cigarette butt, still burning, tossed out of an open window is not uncommon, nor is the empty cigarette packet. I am sure that you have noticed little piles of ash and cigarette butts in car parks where our smoking motorist has decided to tidy his/her vehicle to the detriment of the environment. Their vehicles must smell like ash trays so why can't they leave the ash and butt on the floor of the vehicle. It is just discourtesy and selfishness, but then that is what all of the bits above are about. The "Me" society is alive and well, and on a road near you.

There is a great deal which could be written about bad motoring, especially the disregard for speed limits in built-up areas, where lives are endangered because the nut holding the wheel can only think of himself/herself. Sadly the politicians (yes them again) do not seem to believe that if you kill somebody whilst driving a car it is not really serious. If you kill somebody on the road when driving carelessly it should be at least manslaughter. A motorised road vehicle is a dangerous weapon and only truly competent people should be allowed to drive one. The driving test is not fit for conditions on modern roads and should be made more rigorous, with retesting every five years or so. Passing a test once, maybe after many previous failed attempts, does not make for a competent lifelong driver. It makes for a lucky one and the rest of us need to be lucky to keep out of the way whilst that driver is on the road.

There is a great deal more to rant on about concerning motorists but, in the end, it boils down to selfishness and the "Me" culture which afflicts many in our modern society. Anyway, that is it for now so I am off to try to find if there is a course of Testosterone Replacement Therapy (TRR) available on the NHS.

Denis Griffiths



Letter to the Editor



May I say how moved I was by the obituary of Bert Galloway for whom I had a very high regard when he was here and we served on some committee or other together. It was so interesting to read the 'rest of his life' too!

I also much appreciated Denis Griffiths's 'uni' article! And, as you know, I much appreciate the whole mag - by far the best of any I know.

Frances Briscoe



My Cathedral Placement

It was as part of a discussion with Fr. Simon regarding how long I'd been a member of St Faith's, when I mentioned that I had worshipped at St Faith's for 30 years and been a Reader at the United Benefice for 14 years, that Fr. Simon suggested it might be beneficial for me to experience different churchmanship and worship in another place. I thought this was an excellent idea as this had already been mentioned to me previously on one of my meetings, and I felt that maybe it was about time I did it!

However, when Fr. Simon suggested the Cathedral might be the ideal place for my placement, I must admit I felt quite nervous, but I also wondered if there would be anything for me to do there as, other than attending main events and meetings and the occasional tour, I thought the cathedral was more of a place for visitors and bishops, and not a "working church"; but I was soon to discover how very wrong I was!

After discussions between Clare Kerrigan, PA to the Dean, Canon Richard White, Canon for Mission and Evangelism, Fr. Simon and myself, a placement was arranged for me to mainly shadow a few people and groups at the Cathedral from early October to the end of November 2013, and I looked forward to this with eager anticipation. My crammed "placement rota" bore witness to the huge amount of work going on in the cathedral, there was plenty of events and services which I could attend, and such a huge and potentially exhausting variety!

After discussion with Canon Richard, he felt that it would be good for me to shadow Canon Paul Rattigan, who is the newly appointed Canon for Discipleship. Excellent idea! As soon as I met Paul I could see he was a very spiritual and colourful character, renowned for his taste in brightly-coloured clerical shirts, many of which have been lovingly made for him by friends. In fact, he is known so well for his bright shirts, that people will comment if he is wearing something more "regular", saying that next time they see him they expect his attire to be as bright as his personality!

Colourful shirts aside, I soon found Paul to be a very spiritual man with lots of exciting



Children at the Prayer Tree; the military band take a bow after the services support carol service; the St Nicholas Singers entertain; Rick Walker has a young assistant handle-turner at his busker's organ



Lots more pictures and words in the online edition

ideas for mission and evangelism. As well as attending a large variety of services and events, I spent a good amount of time shadowing Paul with the Alpha course, and Richard with Farsi Alpha and Zone 2. I must admit that, being of the Anglo Catholic tradition, I felt rather intrigued about doing an Alpha course as this has always been thought of as having more of an evangelical ethos, and I had no idea what Farsi Alpha was! I also attended Chemin Neuf, led by Rev Tim Watson, Assistant Curate at the Cathedral. This was an incredibly moving and uplifting small service, enhanced by Tim's gentleness and spirituality. I've given a brief overview of these below and next month.:

The Alpha Course

This is an opportunity for anyone to explore the Christian faith. It's relaxed, low key, friendly and fun. It's a place where people can come and ask questions, delve into issues and look for answers together. The Course consists of a series of talks looking at topics such as "Who is Jesus?" and "Why and how do I pray?" After each talk we divide into small groups for a time of discussion.

Alpha is a practical introduction to the Christian faith for everyone especially those wanting to investigate Christianity or wanting to brush up on the basics. A simple meal is provided each evening.

I really enjoyed attending the Alpha course, made some lovely friends, but also gained some more weight with the delicious food, often with seconds!

The group discussion was a good opportunity for people to express their thoughts and feelings, with open discussion and honesty, and many found this a great help in their spiritual journey. By the end of the course everyone in my group said they really enjoyed the Alpha meetings, and felt strengthened and loved by God and part of a supportive Christian community, which was a new experience for some. I would certainly recommend an Alpha course for anyone who wanted to explore their faith, or who may be at the beginning of their spiritual journey.

Farsi Alpha

Farsi Alpha is the same Alpha course, but especially for our Iranian brothers and sisters, who have come to the UK for many reasons, and have an interest in Christianity again for a variety of reasons, but mainly to explore the Christian faith. The course is mainly led by Canon Richard White with the assistance of an interpreter. Richard, or whoever is leading the session, will say a sentence in English, and this is then interpreted into Persian, although many of the group already spoke excellent English. It was a privilege to be part of the group, to witness their growing faith, and a wonderful experience to attend the service at which 47 Iranians (and one Brit!) were all baptised, many by full immersion, in the Lady Chapel.

Jackie Parry



Chronicles of a Choirboy



Readers will be sorry (or maybe not in a few cases) to read the final instalment of Graham Barry's story. There is, however, an annotated photograph to follow when space allows

Pat Clawson's original offsidiers were Wendy Sainty, a somewhat uninhibited Park School girl; Dorothy James, a Central School girl; and Sarah Norton, Seafield Convent, who sent me my first Valentine (first and only one for a long time). Their group expanded with another Streatham House girl, Pat Davis, who annoyed me by telling Pat Clawson I was staring at her (Pat Davis) (of course I was actually staring at Pat Clawson); and yet another Streatham House girl (Streatham House was a private school where you sent your daughters who weren't bright enough for grammar schools), Margaret MacDonald, a year or so older than us who suddenly took a shine to George Pass and, bingo! she was one of us. She was tall, at least a head taller than George, and had a long plait at first, till she had it bobbed. She liked me and I liked her and she told us dirty jokes and lent me *The Crowthers of Bankdam* (hard cover) from her parents' collection.

She looked so grown-up, she'd been pursued by an older guy at church, and he even asked her mum if he could take her out. She preferred our George, even writing him young girl love letters beginning *Dearest Darling Gorgeous George . . .* which he proudly showed us, needless to say.

And there was tall, slim Jill Davidson (Merchant Taylors'). Her family used to own the Clavier Café until her little brother died (leukaemia, I think) and her mum committed suicide by hanging herself from the landing stairs. They sold up and Mum and Harry took it over, but she and I never talked about it. I liked her and she liked me, but I never forgave her for expressing a liking for Stan Spencer (never mind that he was one of my best mates) at a church pantomime outing we went to in Southport.

I guess by this time I'd more or less got over Pat Clawson. Another Merchants girl, Pat Amery, who I made vague overtures to when we had a Sunday School outing/coach trip, took the bait and joined a group visiting me with a sprained ankle, and suddenly by default I had a girlfriend.

This was not easy. It's not like at parties where you put the lights out and start necking, you've got to make the moves and most of the time you're either in the movies or in public, and I was never comfortable with including my family in my affairs. I could count on one hand the number of kisses and there was zero fumbling. And she wasn't part of the gang. In the end I lost interest and so did she.

After we left the choir we used to attend Evensong and sit in the back with the girls. It wasn't so automatic to attend church when you weren't a member of the choir and the Sunnyside Road crew were a bit sporadic. I suppose I felt very daring not going to Mass, but I'd enjoy the laid-back feeling of Evensong. However, sitting there with someone like Margaret McDonald I'd tend to be whispering and giggling, anathema to the sidesmen who

were actually sitting in the same row most of the time, and doing their best to add a touch of decorum to the occasion. I can even remember sitting reading S.J. Perelman's Crazy Like a Fox and impressing Margaret with my tittering. Maybe that was why she lent me The Crowthers of Bankdam. But after one especially disturbing session which got up the nose of one George Pratt, he approached me afterwards and told me if I couldn't behave myself he'd get the sidemen to throw me out.

Quite right too – but I exploded with indignation. How dare this person whose sole claim to fame was that he was Mr Pratt's son tell me what to do? He didn't normally come to our church anyway, since they lived in Wallasey somewhere

Worse, he was going out with buxom Barbara Skinner, after her previous relationships with Peter Howarth and Jimmy Pincock. It was almost like accusing immigrants of taking our jobs and raping our women. Somehow my heart was no longer in the whole thing.

(Playing cello, but only like some dilettante in my comparative dotage, I seem to concentrate, naturally enough, on Bach's Cello Suites. The version I use is edited by one George Pratt. I've googled him, and the timing seems right and the age, but there's no clear link. From that family, though, it's not unlikely. Funny, that.)

As our interests in girls moved away from the church, so did everything else. Gradually the guys were drifting into the workforce, and my interests were being diverted beyond A levels and the Upper VIth to taking exams for the Civil Service, not to mention Tony Barrow's shenanigans with Everyman.

At one point Mr Houldin tried to remount the choir's review, with me and my guys taking the roles previously filled by Peter Howarth and his ilk, but we only convened once. We were no longer in the choir – though we were still in the Scouts – so there was no direct link. I remember asking him several weeks later what was happening with it and he said the idea lapsed because none of us turned up again. I guess we needed wet-nursing. I think maybe our voices didn't crack it.

By then even Scouts had lost its appeal. I'd been working toward achieving the Queen's Scout award, the ultimate status, and I was just one badge off, as was George Pass, as always my competitive partner, but now he'd joined the Merchant Navy. I asked him if he wanted me to wait and go for it with him, and he said yes. But in the end that idea lapsed too.

A levels were intervening, life was intervening, Stan had long given up, as had Dave Mawdsley. I could barely be bothered donning the uniform anymore and I'd largely arrive late in civvies.

Not with a bang but a whimper . . .

A few years later a group of us was walking down College Road and we passed a much older Mr Houldin strolling along slowly. The others hardly took any notice of him, but I slowed down to chat, genuinely pleased to see him, as he was to see me. He told me that

our lot were the most loyal group he ever had. I was impressed. I'd never thought of it like that. When I caught up with the others I told Dave Mawdsley and he said, ungraciously, he probably says that to everybody.

I don't think so.

In 1994, 40 years down the track, I was in England on long service leave, and attended Sunday Eucharist on impulse, now a confirmed agnostic. The altar had been brought down into the nave! There was a preponderance of girls in the choir! Worst of all, at a certain point you had to shake hands with the people round you! Whatever happened to dignity and decorum?

Well, to be fair, what an improvement on all counts . . .

But all that was as nothing compared to the fact that there was not a single face I recognised. Most out of character, I spoke to the priest as he farewelled everybody at the door and introduced myself. He didn't seem impressed; even less so when I mentioned Willy Hassall (who I knew had had a stroke or something similar many years before), but he called over one of the sidesmen who'd been there forever, but who turned out to be someone who never even joined the Cubs. There was an after-service tea and coffee gathering in the parish hall run by someone from way back when, but I didn't recognise the name so I didn't go. Apparently Pat Clawson still attended, but not that week.

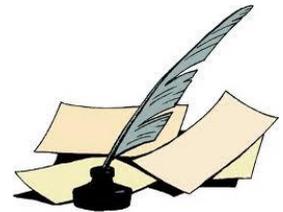
So it had taken just 40 years for an entire, thriving church community to turn over approaching the turn of the century.

Plonked in the centre of those wonderful grounds, completely overwhelming them, they'd built a house, maybe a curate house (*the vicarage! Ed*). It was a particularly vile suburban house, totally destroying the ambience, completely out of character. Before, the curate had lived in one of the mansions like the vicarage in College Road, the house next to George Pass, whose mum rather improbably owned it. Couldn't they simply have shared? Those wonderful church grounds besmirched, the centre of all our activities, not least a whole summer of practising gym on the Scouts' wooden horse with Jim Burgess's connivance, until we were masters of the flying half-arm (even me).

All fallen, alas, to the Philistines.

Graham Barry

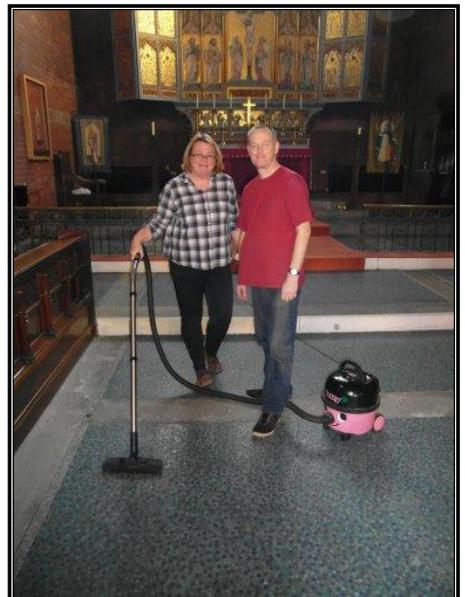
Registering the Past



The latest in the endless sequence of extracts and comments culled from the service registers of our church picks up the story in 1923. This writer's promise to flit more rapidly through the pages is helped by the paucity of interesting comments: the clerics continue manfully (no women priests are even contemplated, needless to say) to serve the congregation and the parish



The Liverpool Saturday Music School fill the church on the final day; Kirsty lights the second Advent candle; in the afternoon the sponsors dismantle and dispose of their trees; Mike and Helen (and others!) sweep up the needles and re-order the church



with the full array of services. Sundays continue to see the early celebration at 8 (anything between 25 and 60 attending), Mattins at 10 (seemingly just the officiant present), Sung Eucharist at 10.30 (usually just the celebrant communicating, with anything from 150 to 200 attending), a similar number at the 3 pm Children's service, and Evensong at 6.0 pm (still the best-attended service of the day, but now attracting around 250 to the pews.) There are daily weekday celebrations, usually in the early morning, mostly with single-figures recorded as present. All these are served by vicar 'J.B.' (Brierley) and curate 'T.H.F.' (Florence).

There are few marginal comments, and the weather features less frequently now. As we move into Lent, the pattern is sustained. J.O.Coop and D.G.Fee Smith are among the few visiting clergy, with a striking appearance by the splendidly-named A.G. De la Pryme' one Sunday in Lent. 'F.J.Liverpool' confirms one Lenten weekday, and there are extra 'Lenten Services' appearing.

Palm Sunday saw a commendable total of nearly 700 attendees, and during Holy Week there were extra daily evensongs, with Gerald E. Jones preaching, and attracting between 70 and 100 people. There were 177 at Maundy Thursday evening's Lenten Service, 163 at Good Friday's Three Hours' Devotion, and on Easter Day 350 communicants and a total of no fewer than 1163 total attendances. And, almost unnoticed, at the Good Friday 9.00 am Children's Service, the vicar records 902 present!

Resisting the temptation to probe deeper, we move swiftly through a succession of weeks and months to the 1923 Patronal Festival, fully celebrated through from the eve of the feast day, to the Sunday within the octave and the days following, with eight services recorded in red. Later, the familiar name of C.C.Elcum (of the foundation days and often subsequently) is seen on Harvest Thanksgiving. All Souls' Day was 'very wet'. St Andrew's Day (November 30th) is a Day of Continuous Intercession. And so Advent leads on into Christmas and another 'first'. There is a recorded midnight Holy Communion on Christmas Eve, with 163 present.

After this heady event, there is no watch night service as 1923 becomes 1924. For most of the succeeding weeks and months, the margins are filled with the painstaking record of collections, and the faithful logging of 'Preventive and Rescue work'. However, the monotony is broken on March 11th when Albert Liverpool signs in for the first time. Albert David succeeded F.C Liverpool (Francis Chavasse) the previous year. 666 people (no, not the Mark of the Beast!) are recorded as hearing him that Evensong.

Nothing special stands out during Lent and Holy Week, apart from the name of C.C.Thicknesse (a familiar name, but I'm not sure why) at the Good Friday Three Hours. There are over 1,100 in church for the 7 Easter Day services, but only (!) 370-odd communicants, as the 10.30 service is still of course non-communicating. The Easter Offering (a key part of the incumbent's stipend in those days) totalled the respectable total sum of £42.0.11.

An entertaining juxtaposition occurs on June 3rd. Bootle Deanery Chapter Holy Communion at 8.00 am is followed by 'Reception of the Fiery Cross' at 7.15 pm. This latter turns out not to be a Chapter of the Ku Klux Klan but the beginning of a DAY OF INTERCESSION FOR THE CONVERSION OF ENGLAND TO THE CATHOLIC FAITH; however, it is unlikely that the Bootle worthies would have been impressed, if their present-day counterparts are anything to go by. Incidentally, there is also a 'Midnight Holy Communion' that night, with just 11 present. Heady days again!

Then, on June 26th, we read of a United Corpus Christi Service at 8.00 pm: it is not communion

and attracts 309 stalwarts. Soon after, on July 3rd. G. Hardwick Spooner (Archdeacon?) is present for the 'Unveiling of the James Jones Memorial Window'. Two days later, our first incumbent, T.H.Baxter, presides at an unspecified Requiem: he had himself just two years to live before his death in 1928. Nothing else is deemed worthy of annotation in the months that followed. The Patronal Festival, falling on a Monday in 1924, attracts just over 200 bottoms on the pews. The year's final highlight is on the Third Sunday in Advent, when 198 people are present at the 10.30 am Sung Eucharist to see 'James Walthew Waugh Window unveiled and dedicated'.

There was another midnight service on Christmas Eve, although still not called a Mass. 146 communicated and 186 attended. Because the service occurred in the first hours, presumably the strict fasting code didn't apply; the next two morning Sung Eucharists had just the usual one communicate each. 1925 slips quietly in with the unvarying worship pattern maintained. Once into Lent, we read of a 'Parochial Mission Celebration' service at 6.30 am on Wednesday March 4th (41 turned up). It is Lent, and the subsequent weeks featured a series of Thursday night 'Service and Address' entries.

It is easy to overlook another new name recorded on Passion Sunday, when alongside the officiants at the afternoon Children's Service is recorded the name of Mr Houldin – George Houldin, a great name in the story of St Faith's, and about whom the records will have plenty to say in subsequent years. His appearance on the scene seems as good a place as any to end this month's trawl.

Chris Price

Catholics may let C of E share communion



The ban on Anglicans receiving Roman Catholic Holy Communion could be relaxed as part of moves to bring the two Churches together after centuries of division. The Most Rev Bernard Longley, the Archbishop of Birmingham, signalled that restrictions might be "reconsidered" as a result of "deeper sharing" between the two Churches. Although he insisted he was expressing a "personal view", the Archbishop's comments will be closely watched as he is the senior Catholic cleric responsible for dialogue with Anglicans.

For centuries, the issue was a source of deep and bitter division between Protestants and Catholics. In the 16th and 17th centuries Christians from both traditions were killed, in part because of disagreements over transubstantiation - whether the bread and wine in communion was really transformed into the body and blood of Christ or was simply a symbol. In an interview with the Church of Ireland Gazette, the Archbishop said that it was a source of "pain" that the two churches still could not share communion.

But he pointed to a Vatican document from 1993 as well as a paper produced by bishops in the British Isles which allow non-Roman Catholics to receive sacraments in very special circumstances, including if they are in danger of death. "I could imagine and foresee one of the fruits of our ecumenical engagement as moving towards a deeper understanding of communion and a deeper sharing between our churches," he added.

The Rt Rev Christopher Hill, the Anglican Bishop of Guildford, welcomed Archbishop Longley's comments and said that the influence of Pope Francis could mean that the time is ripe for change.

The Parish Directory and Church Organisations



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Mrs Lynda Dixon, 928 7330

SACRISTAN

Mrs Judith Moizer, 1 Valley Close, Crosby. L23 9TL. 931 5587

ASSISTANT SACRISTAN

Mr Leo Appleton, 23 Newborough Avenue, Crosby. L23 3TU. 07969 513087

SENIOR SERVER

Ms Emily Skinner, 1 Valley Close, Crosby. L23 9TL. 931 5587

CHILDREN'S CHURCH

Sunday 11.00 am in the Church Hall. 924 1938

CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER

Mrs Linda Nye, 23 Bonnington Avenue, Crosby. L23 7YJ. 924 2813

BAPTISM BOOKINGS

Mrs Joyce Green, 14 Winchester Avenue, Waterloo, L22 2AT. 931 4240

BEAVER SCOUTS

Thursday 5.00 – 6.15 pm Mike Carr 293 3416

CUB SCOUTS

Thursday 6.30 – 8.00 pm. Mike Carr 293 3416

SCOUTS

Thursday 8.00 - 9.30 pm. Mike Carr 293 3416

RAINBOWS

Monday 4.45 - 5.45 pm. Geraldine Forshaw 928 5204

BROWNIE GUIDES

Monday 6.00 - 7.30 pm. Mary McFadyen 284 0104

CHOIR PRACTICE

Friday 7.15 pm - 8.30 pm.

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Chris Price, 17 Queens Road, Crosby. L23 5TP. 924 1938



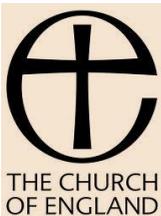
Many thanks to all contributors who have filled our pages this month. Keep up the good work please!

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