

## Diary dates for May and June 2011

12 <sup>th</sup> May	10.30 Council Meeting
18 <sup>th</sup> May	11.00 Julian Meeting – George Dobinson
2 <sup>nd</sup> June	10.00 Ascension Day
12 <sup>th</sup> June	11.00 Pentecost
15 <sup>th</sup> June	11.00 Julian Meeting – George Dobinson
26 <sup>th</sup> June	11.00 Celebration of the ordination to the priesthood of The Revd Canon Roger Gilbert 40 years ago



## Prayer of the month

Almighty God,  
in Christ you make all things new:  
transform the poverty of our nature  
by the riches of your grace,  
and in the renewal of our lives  
make known your heavenly glory.

## Collect for Epiphany 2



## Prayer focus

To reflect on the life of our church here in Dinard; on what we can do to make St Bartholomew's a warm and welcoming place for those who come through our doors; and on how we can renew and sustain our witness to what makes Christianity so vital a faith in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## The Newsletter

## St Bartholomew's, Dinard



May, 2011

## Services

**Sunday 11.00** Holy Communion (with hymns)

**Thursday 10.00** Holy Communion (said)

A warm welcome to all who worship with us.  
During the service there is a Sunday School.  
After the service coffee is served.

**Priest-in-charge: The Revd Gareth Randall**

For further information concerning baptisms,  
marriages or funerals:

 02 99 46 77 00

e-mail : [gareth.randall@nordnet.fr](mailto:gareth.randall@nordnet.fr)

Website : [www.stbarts-dinard.org.uk](http://www.stbarts-dinard.org.uk)



May, 2011

Dear Friends,

***Life abundant***

One of the powerful images of Easter is that of the empty tomb. The tomb in question belonged to Joseph of Arimathea. It had not been previously used and was empty when it was first opened on Good Friday in order to lay Jesus' lifeless body to rest therein. According to John's gospel, when Mary Magdalen arrived at the tomb on that first Easter at dawn, it was once again without an occupant!

The events of Easter are about life and death and new life. Easter is a celebration of the triumph of life over death which inspired St Paul triumphantly to proclaim, 'O death where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory?' - 1 Corinthians 15 v55 (AV).

Christians believe that our life is a gift of God and as such we should respect and value all life. But we also believe in life after death, that when we die, as die we all must, we will also enjoy eternal life for like Jesus, we too will one day be resurrected and rise up to the life of the world to come.

Christians believe in eternal life: life whose values will never fail nor corrupt. We do not have to wait till the resurrection of the dead to enjoy eternal life. It is a belief that can give light to the way we live our lives now. Set free from the fear of death and our mortality, we can live life to the full according to Christian values. As St John tells us, Christ the Good Shepherd has come that we, 'his sheep', might enjoy life in all its fullness (10 v10).

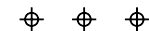
Amen.

***Father Gareth***



**Notices**

- **Tournebride Monthly Lunch 7<sup>th</sup> May** at the Relais de Tournebride - a good opportunity for British and French folk to meet. 14€ includes an aperitif, a four course meal, wine and coffee. **Mike Baber** 02 99 73 56 06/[annebabber5050@aol.com](mailto:annebabber5050@aol.com)
- **Banque Alimentaire** Helen Morgan wants to thank everyone who continues to support this essential charity work going on among the poor folk in Dinard.
- **Organ Appeal** raised 2045€.
- **Lent Appeal** 368.90€ was raised to support work among children preparing for and recovering from operations in Madagascar.
- **Easter Flowers** 160€ were donated in memory of loved ones to defray the cost of our flowers in church this Easter.
- **Sponsored Brass Cleaning** raised 380€.
- **Lent Bring and Share Lunch** Thank you to Helen Morgan for again organising our weekly lunch following our Lent Bible Studies.
- **Easter Lunch** - our thanks to Val Carter for organising the chaplaincy Easter lunch at the Kyriad hotel this year..
- **Deadline** for submission of material for the June Newsletter is **midday on Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> May**
- **Church Finances for March**  
Income: 2330€ Expenditure: 3358€



**Personal Column**

Congratulations to Corrie and Gerard Stein who will be celebrating the Golden Jubilee of their marriage on May 5<sup>th</sup>. The following Sunday, May 8<sup>th</sup>, Corrie and Gerard are inviting us all to join them after the service for a glass of wine and nibbles in the transept.

## Readings in church

### **May 1**

Acts 2 v14a, 22 - 32  
1 Peter 1 v3 -9

### **Low Sunday**

Psalm 16  
John 20 v 19 - end

### **May 8**

Acts 2 v14a, 36 - 41  
1 Peter 1 v17 -232

### **Third Sunday of Easter**

Psalm 116 v1 - 7  
Luke 24 v13 - 35

### **May 15**

Acts 2 v42 - end  
1 Peter 2 v19 - end

### **Fourth Sunday of Easter**

Psalm 23  
John 10 v1 - 10

### **May 22**

Acts 7 v55 - end  
1 Peter 2 v2 - 10

### **Fifth Sunday of Easter**

Psalm 31 v1 - 5  
John 14 v1 - 14

### **May 29**

Acts 17 v22 - 31  
1 Peter 3 v13 - end

### **Sixth Sunday of Easter**

Psalm 66 v7 - 18  
John 14 v15 - 21



## Call Centre Conversations (2/4) Samsung Electronics

Caller: 'Can you give me the telephone number for Jack?'  
Operator: 'I'm sorry, sir, I don't know who you are talking about.'  
Caller: 'On page 1, section 5, of the user guide it clearly states that I need to unplug the fax machine from the AC wall socket and telephone Jack before cleaning. Now, can you give me his number?'  
Operator: 'I think you mean the telephone point on the wall'

*Ron Frankel*

## Notes from the Council - April 2<sup>nd</sup>

Our Lent Bible study followed by the Bring and Share lunch displaced the Council meeting from its regular Thursday morning spot to the following Saturday which is why the March meeting took place in April this year! It was preceded by a service of Holy Communion – a church which prays together stays together.

Mindful of our stewardship and our heritage, finance as ever was a major part of our deliberations with the Moynihan bequest still very much to be resolved but our thanks are due to Brian Cordery whose razor-sharp legal mind is gradually cutting through a wilful complexity to rival the Gordian knot.

Careful of our stewardship and responsibility for our heritage, David Morgan presented the accounts, highlighting our euro deficit which is more than balanced by the healthy state of our sterling income and investments. Claude François wisely pointed out the need for a diversity in our investment portfolio

Thoughtful for our stewardship of our past inheritance, John Davey was invited to the meeting to give a presentation on the present state of and future needs of our organ. His Power Point presentation made clear the health and needs of appropriate maintenance and repair. Eric Lambert voiced the Council's clear commitment to this essential and integral part of the fabric of our worship at St Barts.

The Church AGM on 17<sup>th</sup> April, Palm Sunday, would mark the end of another year of our Council's stewardship and our Synod Reps would then need to be elected for a three year term.

Our meeting ended as it began, in prayer.

*Father Gareth*

## Desert Island Books 5

Robinson Crusoe: number five. The Concise Oxford Dictionary: number four. An Animal Encyclopaedia: number three. Star Names: number two.

In an earlier article, I instanced a gardening catalogue, a railway timetable or a cookery book. My nomination for the final and definitive number one is also not an ordinary book: it is the 'Star Atlas' edited by A.P.Norton. It is a sheer coincidence that Arthur Norton had been a teacher at my grammar school, the Judd School, Tonbridge, a good twenty years before my time so I never knew him. The Norton Star Atlas is universally-known among astronomers; but its place at the top of my list depends on several factors, purely personal.

There is a certain amount of reading matter in any atlas, but the heart of this book is a series of maps. But instead of outlined countries, mountains, rivers, towns and so on, a star atlas has pages of – dots. Yes, there is the Plough, Orion, Leo, Scorpio and all eighty-eight of the star groups throughout the sky.

Each one of those dots carries a wealth of information, depending on the size and completeness of the atlas. Norton's is not a specially big atlas, but there is information about the size, age, stellar type and life-history of many thousands of stars. Imagine a wide-angle photograph of a vast crowd of people, with comprehensive personal details about every individual. The star map gives a bird's-eye glimpse of the universe, in the same way as a large or small dictionary will give a view, more or less detailed, of the English language. And just as the contents of a dictionary are not fixed, but grow with the passage of time, so astronomical information is never static but increases with time.

## Unholy smoke?

*The following was sent to me by Victor Pumfrett:*

A lawyer purchased a box of very rare and expensive cigars, and then insured them against, among other things, fire. Within a month of having smoked his entire stockpile of these great cigars, the lawyer filed a claim against the insurance company. In his claim, the lawyer stated the cigars were lost "in a series of small fires". The insurance company refused to pay, citing the obvious reason, that the man had consumed the cigars in the normal fashion.

But the lawyer sued and won!

Delivering the ruling, the judge agreed with the insurance company that the claim was frivolous. The judge stated nevertheless, that the lawyer held a policy from the company, in which it had warranted that the cigars were insurable and also guaranteed that it would insure them against fire, without defining what is considered to be unacceptable "fire" and was obligated to pay the claim. Rather than endure lengthy and costly appeal process, the insurance company accepted the ruling and paid \$15,000 to the lawyer for his loss of the cigars that perished in the 'fires'

After the lawyer cashed the check, the insurance company had him arrested on 24 counts of arson. With his own insurance claim and testimony from the previous case being used against him, the lawyer was convicted of intentionally burning his insured property and was sentenced to 24 months in jail and a \$24,000 fine.

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## Film Review of the month

### *'The Bridges of Madison County' – Clint Eastwood 1995*

Though not immediately obvious, on reflection, I was struck by the parallels between this film starring Meryl Streep as Francesca Johnson and Clint Eastwood as Robert Kincaid and that quintessentially English film, 'Brief Encounter'.

Both are flash-backs; both occur over a short period of time; both are the result of a chance meeting; both are love stories involving people of a certain age (as the French might say); both are fundamentally moral with loyalty on the woman's part to husband and children outweighing what amounts to 'the real thing' – the inexorable attraction of soul-mates.

That said, the differences are many: 'Technicolor'; time and place and accent; a more physical affair 'judged' through the eyes of her now grown-up children whose own relationships are not without problems.

Both films are challenging, asking us to ponder what is truly important in life – 'we are the choices that we make' Francesca says wisely. Robert is a particularly attractive, sensitive, gentle photographer who has so much to offer this unfulfilled housewife. But she knows that what is tempting will ultimately ruin not only her but all the people she loves. This is a mature love story where love does not conquer all but where self-knowledge allows her to deny what they both want in order that 'the right thing' be done.

Oddly enough, 'The Bridges of Madison County' is a surprisingly Christian film where self-sacrifice is 'the right thing' – but as we know, particularly at Easter, sacrifice is never without cost.

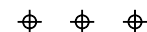
*Gareth Randall*

There are more stars than people. Our own galaxy, one out of at least a hundred million, contains twenty or thirty stars for every man, woman and child on earth. And there is a far greater variety of stars than there are sorts of human beings. Study of a star map is a jumping-off platform for the most extreme mind-stretching excursions into the universe.

The pursuit of any inquiry in Astronomy, the Queen of the sciences, can be likened to those opening seconds of any Star Trek episode: as the titles appear on the TV screen, and that spaceship has receded into the distance, that's it. Never mind the actual narrative: the story is nothing.

So how better could one spend a few years on a desert island than to boldly go (despite the split infinitive) where no one has ever ventured before? It is that plunge into the infinite that epitomises the study of Astronomy.

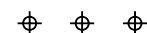
*Donald Pankhurst*



### **Kids see things differently**

*This is the 5<sup>th</sup> of a seven month series kindly sent to me by my former vicar,  
Father Peter Bevan*

**Dressing up** - A little girl was watching her parents dress for a party. When she saw her dad donning his dress suit, she offered this wise advice "Daddy, you shouldn't wear that suit." "Why not, darling?" "You know that it always gives you a headache the next morning."



## Saint of the Month St Briec – 1<sup>st</sup> May

How often have you confused St Briac and St Briec? If you key in the wrong place on your sat nav, you may well find yourself well out of your way for St Briec is the city which hosts the cathedral of our neighbouring diocese in Cote d'Armor, Department 22.

Born into a well-to-do pagan family around 409AD, Briec, like Malo and Briac after him, was a Celt but, in his case, he was a native of Brittany. Receiving the best of education, even as a youth my source says this of him, that he 'donna dès ses tenders années marques d'une grande sainteté' – lucky lad!

Like Malo and Briac, Briec needed and found a saintly master and spiritual guide. His was St Germain d'Auxerre whose principal pupil he became. St Germain ordained him to the priesthood and took him on journeys throughout France whereby Briec made astonishing progress in wisdom and understanding but it was his compassion for the poor that distinguished him throughout his life.

Fired by the call to bring the gospel to his homeland, Briec came home around Christmas where his family was happily engaged in celebrating the midwinter festival. By his respect, eloquence and miraculous acts, he convinced not only his parents but their neighbours of the need to convert to the faith in the one true God. Thereafter, he built churches in the area, appointing priests to care for the people.

Consecrated bishop, Briec was responsible for enthusing and educating many young Christians, establishing monastic communities which were centres of relief for the poor during times of great hardship. At the age of 70, he embarked on further missionary activity in Armorica during which he was successful in converting local rulers including Rigual, a former British prince and now Lord of a local

## Recipe of the month Honeyed Chicken Tray Roast

- ✓ 2 onions cut into wedges
- ✓ 4 carrots, trimmed and cut into chunks
- ✓ 400g parsnips, trimmed and cut into pieces
- ✓ 500g new potatoes
- ✓ Herbs to flavour
- ✓ 2 tablespoons of olive oil
- ✓ 4 skinless chicken breasts
- ✓ 1 lemon (half cut into chunky slices and half juiced)
- ✓ 2 teaspoons of clear honey



- Preheat oven 190c Gas 5
- Place vegs in a large shallow roasting tray,
- Sprinkle with herbs and drizzle with oil.
- Season and toss with oil
- Roast for 15 minutes,
- Remove from oven
- Push chicken breasts and lemon slices between veg.
- Mix lemon juice with honey and drizzle over everything,
- Turn once to coat well
- Return to oven and cook for a further 35 - 40 minutes.

*Victor Pumfrett*

## Quotation of the Month

'Only two things are infinite: the universe and human stupidity.

*Albert Einstein*



### **Worms – a sermon illustration**

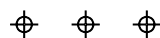
The following was sent to me by Maria Rossi, a former colleague at Dame Alice Owen's School who is the Head of Drama. It illustrates the danger of asking questions of a congregation when you think you know the answer.

A priest decided a visual aid would add impact of his sermon. He therefore placed four worms in four jars. One contained alcohol; one cigarette smoke; one chocolate syrup; and one good clean soil.

At the end of the sermon, the priest drew the congregation's attention to the facts: the worms in the jars containing alcohol, cigarette smoke, and chocolate syrup had all died while the one in the good, clean soil was very much alive.

So the priest asked his congregation what they could learn from the facts. Immediately, a hand shot up and a strong voice from the back pew was clearly heard to say, 'As long as you drink, smoke and eat chocolate you won't have worms!'

Not quite the diet the priest was seeking to encourage!



### **Phrases in French (2/9)**

**'Faire une tête à queue'** Quand une voiture heurte un obstacle qui la renvoie dans la direction opposée à celle qu'elle suivait précédemment, on dit qu'elle fait une tête à queue.

When a car collides with an obstacle that reverses its direction then the car 'a fait une tête à queue' (has spun round).

canton. Given a grant of land by him, Briec established a church and monastery which was later to grow into modern-day St Briec, the cathedral eventually being established there in 844.

Rigual had become like a son to the old saint so when he lay dying, the saint, despite his own imminent death, made the journey to his bedside to enable Rigual 'à mourir saintement.' Shortly afterwards, surrounded by his 'enfants selon la grâce', Briec too died in 502 and my source identifies him as one of the saints most renowned for their active charity to the poor.

*Gareth Randall*



### **Flower arranging Classes**

In preparation for the forthcoming Flower Festival there will be four sessions of classes for folk interested in honing their skills in flower arranging. Classes will be held at Diana Wilson's home near St Lunaire and will be conducted by Victor Pumfrett. The dates will all be on a Tuesday: 7th, 14th, 21st and 28th June

If you are interested in attending please contact Victor on 02 99 73 99 14 or [victorbarry@orange.fr](mailto:victorbarry@orange.fr)



### **Church Bulletins**

*The 5<sup>th</sup> of a 12 part series from Pam and Chris Rowland*

- Irving Benson and Jessie Carter were married on October 24th in church. So ended a friendship that began when they were at school.
- At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be 'What is Hell?' Come early and listen to our choir practice.

**Chaplain's Report  
2010 - 2011**

Today is my fourth annual report to you as your Priest-in-charge.

Our Chaplaincy Council has met six times this year and at each meeting, we have considered the finances, fabric and matters concerning the life and development of the church. David Morgan will talk in detail about the financial situation but let me simply say that the financial health of our church reflects our spiritual well being expressed in our committed stewardship of St Bartholomew's.

The fabric of the church is being cherished and maintained. Outside new, strong, metal grilles protect the stained-glass windows. The leak from the roof in the Library toilet has been plugged. The display of spring flowers in the church garden has been enhanced by a wealth of tulips. A new electronic piano as a back-up to the organ in memory of Joyce Hughes and Henry Spenceley is in the process of being purchased. Two new kneelers and three new metal flower stands have been donated to the church.

Of course, a church is not simply a beautiful building but also a gathering of people. Last year, without naming them, I thanked all the folk involved in the many activities that make the dynamic life of our church possible. Today, without undervaluing the work and witness of so many of the faithful folk who are our members of our church, I would like to take as read those necessary thanks on your behalf for making St Bartholomew's a thriving Anglican church here in Brittany.

Today, let me thank the Standing Committee: our Wardens, Doreen Collier and Bill Hughes, David Morgan, our treasurer, and David Norris, our secretary. Without them the church could not function; without them I could no do my job.

***Words from the King James Bible (3)***

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. Galatians 5 v22 - 23*

The Fruit of the Spirit in Paul's letter to the Galatians was the subject of our Autumn Bible Studies from 2007 to 2009: ten sessions to cover the nine fruit with a starter on the Holy Spirit himself. The Authorised Version differs from our pew Bibles – The New Revised Standard Version (NRSV). It lists them as 'love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control'.

Fruit as any gardener knows takes time to grow and to ripen. Similarly, it can take a lifetime for us to become mature in our faith. So if, on reflection, you feel you still have a long way to go to demonstrate such fruit, you are at least demonstrating a degree of humility in your spiritual self-assessment.

But it is the fourth fruit, 'longsuffering' (Gk 'μακροθυμια' 'makrothumia'), on which I want to focus. 'Longsuffering' is a compound word: the adjective 'long' modifies the noun 'suffering'. 'Long' suggests a sustained period of time – something that lasts weeks rather than days, years rather than months. 'Suffering' implies experiencing something that is uncomfortable, unpleasant, painful. There is a sense that 'suffering' is to be endured with fortitude and without complaint - the principle of the 'stiff upper lip' inspired by Stoicism and enshrined in the ethos of the English Public School.

'Longsuffering' parallels 'patience', from the Latin 'patior', 'to suffer'. From it, we derive the word 'passion' whose meaning is most clearly seen in the phrase 'the Passion of Christ'. And there we have it. The gift of being made in the Image of God is that we are conscious beings open to feel both pleasure and pain. Let's enjoy the one and endure the other.



There are two rooms around the inner courtyard of the temple with a 6 to 8 metre high Buddha in each room; plants, flowers, fruit and vegetables placed in front of the camphor wood statues (think of all the “Deep Heat” pervading from that !) and everybody finding either a cushion or a corner to meditate from (for no matter how short a time) and express their thoughts, concerns and desires in their own manner; nobody speaks, everybody is “speaking” inwardly.

My next trip, this forthcoming week will be to the Middle Temple in London – quite another temple, one of course very important to lawyers, with a great deal of hustle and bustle, but probably no incense and indeed a very different dynamism.....

*Caroline Xueref*



### **Imperial Male Voice Choir**

At St Bart's, Saturday 28th May. Complementary Pimms and nibbles on the lawn from 17:15. Concert starts at 18:00. Internationally renowned London choir, performing songs from folk to classics, via music from the Shows. 15€ per reservation, 10€ for pensioners and 12-18s, children free. Contact Lynette Jarvis at [ljinfrance22@yahoo.com](mailto:ljinfrance22@yahoo.com) or 02 96 41 29 65.

Also performing at L'Abbaye de Léhon, Dinan, on Sunday 29th May at 18:00, where they will be joined by the Dinan School of Music and Sue Hardiman's l'Orchestre d'Harmonie. Reductions available if attending both concerts.



But there is a fifth member of the Standing Committee whose presence we are without today – Sybil. Sybil Fagg is our Reader and it is on her I want to focus in today’s chaplaincy report. At Easter 1995, my first chaplaincy here, I was welcomed by Sybil and steered gently through the maze of Paschal services. In each of my annual chaplaincies thereafter, it was Sybil who brought me up-to-speed, welcoming me into the worship and pastoral care of our folk of which she was key.

In their excellent article in our Easter Newsletter, Marjorie and Stafford Crane paid due tribute to our friend Sybil. Let me content myself by quoting what they write at the end: Sybil ‘was instrumental, with others, in helping to keep the church running smoothly, especially in those times when services were temporarily suspended during winter periods. She and other senior members of the church are part of the history of St Barts and we take pride and pleasure in their achievements each time we enter the church and witness the substantial congregations that are often evident today.’

Let me content myself by saying on our behalf that we valued her smiling face welcoming folk to the service and saying goodbye to us at the door.

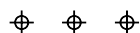
Let me content myself by saying on my behalf that I valued her mature, deep-rooted faith in Christ and her unstinted, selfless labour as my colleague.

Sybil is a very special person who has been key to the life of St Bartholomew’s, her church. We can cover the jobs she did but we cannot replace the person. The altar she purchased as her bequest to us is and will remain central in our worship, a permanent reminder of the lady we love.

But before I end, let me formally offer our congratulations to our Church Warden Emeritus, Julian Thompson, who will receive the Royal Maundy Money from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II at the service at Westminster Abbey this coming Thursday. His selection by Bishop Geoffrey is an honour to him and to us, his church.

Finally, let me conclude by certifying that the fabric of the goods and ornaments of the church are in good order and I commend my report to you.

*Father Gareth*



**Church Council**

With the recent elections at our AGM in April, the following are now serving members of our Council:

Doreen Collier	Churchwarden; Joint Vice-Chairman
Bill Hughes	Churchwarden; Joint Vice-Chairman
David Norris	Hon. Secretary
David Morgan	Hon. Treasurer
Geoff Carter	Synod Rep
Paddy Vidal Hall	Synod Rep

Tristan de Champchesnil	<b>Eric Lambert</b>
Brian Cordery	John Marshall
Christopher Curtis	Anne Payan
John Davey	Corrie Stein
Claude François	<b>Diana Wilson</b>
Chris Hughes	

ex officio Julian Thompson, Churchwarden Emeritus

*Father Gareth* (Chairman)

country to another; I have not been able to travel to areas such as Bhoutan or Urghour or even Szechuan (notwithstanding the desire or even the promise of pepper and tea....) and to see with my own eyes that life in a metropolis does not compare to a rural evolution, even if I can easily imagine that to be the case.

But I do see that every time I go to Beijing, Shanghai or Hong Kong that our own potential complacency about life being what we want it to be and remain is unfounded or ill-justified, because we are a part of a fast evolving planet with different values, perspectives, needs and beliefs and that we need to take that into account if we want to continue to grow. “One man’s meat” is of course “another man’s poison”, but also our vision of life and our certainties need to be put in perspective with the fact that we are all different and no one can have the assurance that we or they are ultimately right. That is the beauty of going towards others and quietly observing.

During my most recent business trip to Shanghai which lasted for 30 hours “on the ground”, I was able to find a way to suggest to my Chinese contact that 20 minutes in the sunshine and more particularly in a Buddhist temple 150 yards away from our meeting room, would be a good way of getting a breath of fresh air as we were to be cooped up in negotiations from 9 am to 6pm. This was just a half truth, as I already knew the temple on Nanjing Road from previous visits and have found it inspiring on each occasion. One passes the gates and can go into relative silence (all other things being equal in a city where there are nearly 20 million people and half as many cars living alongside you....(!), take a few incense sticks, says prayers for loved ones in which ever language you want and have the certainty that the God you wish to pray to will be listening in that location full of thought and warmth. With so much goodness around, there is clearly space for everybody.

## Travels and thoughts

As part of my professional life as group legal director of a French company, I travel a great deal to keep in touch with my extended legal team and to negotiate our many contracts around the world. As an illustration, since the beginning of this year (which comprised 90 days as of the end of March) I have spent 34 days “on the road” or rather in the air, as I have visited 11 countries (Switzerland, UK, US, Belgium, Portugal, New Zealand, Australia, Singapore, Germany, India and China) during that period and some of those countries twice.

During that period, I have also experienced several seasons in those three months (which for somebody who prefers the “sheltered” climate of St. Malo, is bodily a bit confusing). I find my travels to be, as I grow older, physically more strenuous, but at the same time, ever more precious as the experience enables me to understand that we live in a constantly changing and interesting world and thus we learn that life is not to be viewed and perceived “from our own window” as the French say, but rather that we “live and learn”. I believe that the learning curve is always upwards and learning is a most precious asset.

This was brought home to me this past week as I travelled to Shanghai. I have been to China on several occasions and each time my “flabber” is absolutely and ever more “gasted”. Even if I go there once a year or even every six months, the country changes dramatically from one trip to another. When you fly in and approach to land, the density of the population and buildings is overwhelming. I have flown in to New York nearly a hundred times; the visual effect when landing at JFK is nothing compared to the extent and breadth of seeing a major Chinese town from the air with its dynamism exuding upwards, only to be met with its cleanliness on the ground (but the same does not necessarily go for the air pollution....!). That does not mean that I am able to compare from my own experience one region of this extremely vast

## Pancakes and Organists

Reading the article by Rev. Paul Topham certainly stirred the memory cells. No doubting who were the two Methodists who were ‘ashed’. I suppose rather more unusual an event in the mid 1990’s in St. Barts, than it would seem nowadays, when we have a much larger and more denominationally diverse congregation. I also recall the Shrove Tuesday pancakes in the flat. We arrived to meet Lynne Savage and Elizabeth Hannay in the foyer and Elizabeth, very au fait with French custom etc. informed us that there was a tradition of arriving masked, whereupon, she produced masks which we donned before ringing the doorbell. Those who knew Elizabeth know that we had little choice other than to comply!!

The reference he made to my playing the organ doesn’t tell the full story, so here goes.

We had friends coming over from England for a short stay, and they were to be with us over the Mothering Sunday weekend. As they lived very near to a daffodil grower, they undertook to bring plenty of these over to decorate St. Barts for Mothering Sunday morning. (They arrived with a large holdall crammed full). During the Friday, Paul rang to speak to Wendy and say that he now had a funeral for the Saturday afternoon and the family were bringing flowers for the service, so could Wendy and friend delay the daffodil arranging until later in the day. No problem said Wendy, then turned to me and said Paul needs to speak to you, she said afterwards that at the time she couldn’t think what the plans re the flowers had to do with me. It transpired that the family wished to have a hymn for the funeral, and therein lay the problem, as Lynne Savage, who was organist, was unavailable as she was expecting the arrival of a school party at that time. (They ran their home as what they termed a children’s hotel). Paul, having visited us, knew that I had a keyboard in our cottage, so wondered if I would

stand in for Lynne. Now I had never even sat on an organ stool nor had I played in public so I was not very sure about the idea. However, I asked which hymn, and to my horror, the only version I could remember, was in a not very easy key. Paul was very understanding, and we agreed that I would try to find a version in a key I would be happy with, and also, that I could be in church in time to have a private session on the organ, to see if I could manage. If either of these two factors failed, then so be it, the funeral would have to be organ free.

So that is how my sitting at the organ began, and from then on, from time to time, I was called upon by Lynne, if she needed a stand-in. When the Savage family moved to Ecuador, we had a brief spell when there was no-one on the spot, to play, but Sybil knew a few who would give an odd Sunday, so for a while I was used all the time in France, but then, someone met Barbara Birchall, recently widowed, and who said she wished she had a piano to ease the loneliness, so she was asked if she had ever tried an organ. She had not but was pleased to try, and so Barbara became our organist. However, as soon as we arrived, she would ask me if she could still play some Sundays, and however hard I tried, I could not persuade Barbara, that she was the organist, I was only someone willing to play to give her a break if she so wished.

Sadly, eventually, health problems meant that Barbara's family persuaded her to return to England to be near them, so that they were in a better position to care for her. At this point I cannot remember just how long there was no-one living in the area to take over, but I seem to think it was not long at all before the Dobinson's changed status from U.K. residents with a French home, to become resident in France, and so Ann filled the position left by Barbara.

Another memorial service for which I was asked to play, by another of our Locum Chaplains, was for an English man, resident in France but with a French wife. There was a son who was British, but otherwise, all

the others at the service were French friends and neighbours. Who was responsible for the hymn choice, son or widow, I cannot say, but whoever it was selected four, all very British. Our chaplain was certainly not known for his singing talent, quite the reverse, but on this occasion he made a valiant attempt, as he and the son of the deceased, were the only two singing any of the hymns.

There was the time Ann rang to ask if I would play for Good Friday, there will only be a couple of hymns she said. That was the time when we had ten and just to add to the interest, a lens fell out of my spectacles during the second hymn and Wendy had to dash off to where we had parked to find my spare pair. Julian and Doreen both obliged by lending their glasses to see if they would help, and so with a borrowed pair, I was able to squint through the next hymn to keep the service flowing.

So there it is, my memory bank as stirred into action by the article by Paul.

*John Marshall*



### **Organ Appeal**

In the January Newsletter, I wrote an article regarding launching an organ fund to encourage donations towards the purchase of a keyboard to be played when the main organ was not in use.

I am delighted to say that we have raised the necessary money approximately 2000€ to fund the purchase of a new keyboard. I would like to thank those who have already given donations in memory of loved ones, in particular my wife, Joyce and Henry Spenceley.

*Bill Hughes*  
*Church Warden*