

### Diary dates for October and November, 2015

5 <sup>th</sup> November	10.00 All Souls Service of Remembrance
8 <sup>th</sup> November	11.00 Remembrance Sunday
26 <sup>th</sup> November	10.30 Council Meeting



#### Prayer of the month

O Lord, we beseech you mercifully to hear the prayers,  
of your people who call upon you;  
and grant that they may both perceive and know  
what things they ought to do  
and may have the grace and power  
faithfully to fulfil them:  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

*Collect for Trinity 16*



#### Prayer focus

The current migrant crisis.



#### Verse of the Month

God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. *John 3 v17*



### 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)



October, 2015

Dear Friends,

*A quiet spirit*

October – the Autumn – as Keats once wrote, ‘Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness’.

And October ends with All Hallow’s Eve, Hallowe’en, the Eve of All Saints’ Day. Back in our Celtic past, here in Brittany, it was Samhain, the festival marking the end of one year and the beginning of another. In popular folklore, a time when unquiet spirits, ghosts, were free to roam the earth and frighten folk.

Well so much for ‘Trick or treat’ that has even reached the streets of Dinard but, at this time of endings and new beginnings, I am minded to ask what it might mean to have a good death, to rest in peace.

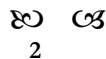
Certainly, there is the facility in the Anglican Church for ‘Ministry at the Time of Death’ though it is the exception rather than the rule for me to be called out as someone lies dying.

It is ‘good’ to be with those we love as they are dying, to have a chance to say good-bye, to hold their hand in death, to pray with them at the hour of their passing.

To my mind, the words of Simeon echo meaningfully – ‘Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace.’

And may we all, in due time, rise in glory.

*Father Gareth*



**Notices**

- **St Bartholomew's Lunch** on 30<sup>th</sup> August raised 629€.
- **Raffle** at the lunch raised 132€.
- **Braderie Stalls** in Church garden on 23<sup>rd</sup> August raised 290€.
- **Organ Fund**  
The estimated total cost of the work is 76,577€  
Money raised so far 72,375€  
Money to be raised 4,202€  
One outstanding bill - any liability for TVA.
- **For sale** – Yamaha Digital Piano YDP – 101 with stool 800€  
ono ☎02 99 58 02 24 after 19.00
- **Deadline** for submission of material for the November edition of the St Bart’s Monthly is **midday on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> October**
- **Church Finances for September**  
Income: 8,660€ Expenditure: 8,254€



**Readings in church**

<b>October 4<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>18<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity</b>
Job 1 v1, 2 v1 - 10	Psalm 26
Hebrews 1 v1 -4, 2 5 - 12	Mark 10 v2 - 16
<b>October 11<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>19<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity</b>
Job 23 v1 - 9, 16 - 17	Psalm 22 v1 - 15
Hebrews 4 v12 - 16	Mark 10 v17 - 31
<b>October 18<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>St Luke</b>
Acts 16 v6 - 16a	Psalm 147 v1 - 7
2 Timothy 4 v5 - 17	Luke 10 v1 - 9
<b>October 25<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Bible Sunday</b>
Job 42 v1 - 6, 10 - 17	Psalm 34 v1 - 8
Hebrews 7 v23 - 28	Mark 10 v45 - 52

## Quotations of the month

On the whole, human beings want to be good,  
but not too good, and not quite all the time.

*George Orwell quoted in the Independent*



### Billboards 2 - 3/6

*The following is from our Church Warden, Bill:*

#### *In a repair shop window*

We fix anything  
Please knock  
The bell doesn't work.



### Blond jokes 5/5

*courtesy of my sister-in-law, Lin*

A friend told a blond man that this year Christmas would be on a Friday

The blond man replied, "Let's hope it's not on the 13<sup>th</sup> then!"



#### **'Oh what transport of delight ?'**

Train on fire  
Passengers alight

*Geoff Carter*

## Notes from the Council September 3<sup>rd</sup>

The meeting opened and closed in prayer. It was my birthday and afterwards we went to a local restaurant to celebrate.

But first, we were pleased to look at the Organ, the encouraging fact that we now have less than a five-figure sum to raise to settle the cost of our centennial renovation of our Alfred Oldknow instrument. The possibility of an inaugural concert was considered on 11<sup>th</sup> November – Remembrance Day – and the opportunities for further fund-raising at the Silent Movie – a Charlie Chaplin film – on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> September at the start of the Dinard Film Festival; a Christmas Bazaar on Saturday November 29<sup>th</sup>; and a collection at our Carol Service on 20<sup>th</sup> December.

The problem of the ivy around the church porch was discussed; the possible sponsorship of the church garden to be explored; the need to service the boiler in the church flat identified; and the surplus of books in our Library resolved.

Essentially, I'm pleased to report that St Bart's is in good heart with the finances in a healthy state and the possibility of further opportunities for young folk to be explored in November after I have had a chance to reflect on how best we might proceed.

In the meantime, the Standing Committee will have met to review our church fees and the dates for next year's meetings have been agreed.

*Father Gareth*



## Northallerton Methodists go cyber

Sunday August 9<sup>th</sup> 2015 saw an innovation in the morning service at Brompton Methodist church. Two weeks previously, Vera, our oldest member, had celebrated her centenary but circumstances meant that she was unable to do so here in Brompton as she had hoped. Although she still lived alone, for some years she had been collected by family in Portsmouth and taken there for a couple of winter months including Christmas. Last time she needed to visit a doctor who strongly advised that she was not to return to living alone. A number of her family members did travel to join in her special weekend and were tasked with the brief to check amongst the cyber active there, if there was a chance to form an Internet link up as we, the congregation, were sad that we would not be able to help her celebrate her birthday, but where there's a will, there's a way.

A mix of telephone calls and home-based trials resulted in our unusual morning service. One reason the day was chosen was that our planned preacher was one of our own members and so things could be worked happily with her co-operation, just as well because our Internet link is via a wireless connection to her home Internet provider. It is not unusual for us to have PowerPoint presentations digitally projected as part of our worship, but this time, there were two projectors in use, the second being linked by Skype to the home in Portsmouth where an unsuspecting Vera was sitting with a granddaughter. She must have been placed facing a screen and web cam, but with no idea as to why or even if they were working. About 15 minutes before the start of worship, the system went live, there she was, projected onto the front of our church and at the same time, our signal must have appeared on the screen in front of her as she suddenly spotted it and exclaimed, 'it's the chapel' then 'look, there's Basil'. This was the first she knew of the project which had been planned for her. Then there was the disbelieving look on her face when someone turned our web cam so

## Alzheimers by any other name ?

*How good a grasp have you of English slang ?  
Below are five examples that may make you smile  
or scratch your head !*

- 1 If he is *ga-ga* it means that he is *doo-lally*.
- 2 If she is *crackers* or *cuckoo* it means that she is *bonkers*.
- 3 If he has *lost his marbles*, it means the same as he's *ga-ga*.
- 4 If she is *all there with her cough drops* then it means that she is definitely not either *ga-ga* or *doo-lally*.
- 5 And *senior moments* are reserved for those over 60 !

*Bill Hughes*



## Dictionary Definitions 2/5

*These gems were sent to us by Trish and Tony*

COMMITTEE:

A body that keeps minutes and wastes hours.

DUST:

Mud with the juice squeezed out.

EGOTIST:

Someone who is usually me-deep in conversation.



### Adieu ?

What would a daddy buffalo say to his boy as he was leaving to go to work ?

Bye, son.



### *Buffalo humour*

The above joke inspired Geoff Scott to pass on this gem from a recent trip to America. Travelling in a car, one of his American relations asked him whether he knew the difference between buffalo and bison. Without a pause, Geoff simply quipped with a statement they failed to get – “Yes, you can wash your hands in a ‘Bison’.”



### **Kids in Church 2/7**

*Peter Campbell forwarded these little gems to us !*

A little boy was overheard praying: 'Lord, if you can't make me a better boy, don't worry about it. I'm having a good time like I am.'



### **Edinburgh Festival**

*David Morgan supplied us with this gem from the above:*

I removed all the German names from my mobile last night – now it is Hans free !



20

that she saw her image on the chapel front wall. She decided that she wanted us to keep the system live for the whole service, and so even though she was not in our building, she enjoyed morning worship in the church where she had been for most of her life.

Needless to say, the first action of the congregation was to sing a belated 'Happy Birthday' to her as we do to celebrate the occasion for all our members. For us it was wonderful to see her enjoying the morning worship, especially the time when she was able to drink her morning cuppa, just a pity that at this stage in the link-up, we could not hear the comments she so obviously made to her family, but we do know that when worship was over and we could have a short chat time, that it had been a wonderful and much appreciated thing for Vera (and also for us). Modern technology and those who are able to use it, made such a wonderful experience for all involved, and worship by a congregation in two parts only about 300 miles apart, but what is that to God ?

*John Marshall*



### **Frittata**

One of the joys of having folk to stay is the chance to master a new, quick, easy and tasty recipe that uses up the cooked, left-over veg. This one I owe to my sister-in-law, Lin.

All you need is oil; a finely chopped onion; the left-over, cooked veg; 2/3 eggs; a little milk and some salt and pepper.

Simply soften the onion in a little oil, add the chopped veg and bring to heat, pour in the eggs, milk and salt and pepper that you've previously mixed, cook on a low light till almost set, then flash under the preheated grill. Well tasty !

*Gareth Randall*

5

**‘The Living Bread’**  
**A sermon from my friend, the Revd Peter Bevan**  
**for Trinity 11 – 16<sup>th</sup> August**

For the first three Sundays in August, we have been journeying with the Lectionary through Chapter Six of the Gospel of John, in which he develops the rich theme of the Bread of Life.

Nowhere is bread more part of daily life and culture than France, a country dear to my heart. Paris is about to suffer a baguette crisis: up till now half the city’s bakers stayed open by law in July and August. Those who weren’t had to put up a notice saying where the next available boulangerie was. As with the duty Pharmacy, so with the duty bakery. A tradition existing since the French Revolution in 1789 is about to be broken. All bakeries can now close at the same time. Quelle horreur! What next? Baguette fights in the street? Not as dangerous as throwing cobblestones, however!

Historically, there is more to bread than just nutrition. “Breadwinner” means “wage-earner”. “Putting bread on the table” means the providing necessities of life. “Companion” comes from the Latin *cum pane*, “with bread”. The sharing of bread in hospitality can lead to friendship.

In John’s meditation on Jesus, the Bread of Life, and His life-giving qualities, there is a subtle change in today’s passage as Jesus describes himself as the Living Bread. “I am the Bread of Life” is a declaration. “I am the Living Bread” is more of a reassurance, of the abiding presence of Jesus in the life of believers.

John’s gospel has no Institution Narrative of the Last Supper. Matthew, Mark and Luke have words of blessing and consecration: “This is my Body”; “This is my Blood”; “Do this in remembrance of me”.

**Odd Words**  
**Good-natured**

I came across the phrase ‘good-natured’ in book the other day, used to describe one of the characters. Now I wonder what exactly ‘good-natured’ in practice might mean.

‘Good’ as an adjective is invariably positive unless used ironically or sarcastically or ambiguously. Essentially, to be good is to be properly what and who one is meant to be: a good loaf of bread I guess is invariably well bred !

‘Nature’ as a noun here refers to character – the sort of person one essentially is - nature in this context being one’s essence. Good-natured is more in the vein of Rousseau than Augustine. The notion of the innocent savage or the Orthodox view of the innocence of childhood as opposed to the doctrine of original sin.

But if good nature is not something we have from birth, from our parents, then perhaps good nature may be a gift of a loving God who graces us with this virtue, this quality.

I love the idea that there are folk out there who are by nature good, goodness coming readily to them, behaving well to others instinctive, being part and parcel of what makes them them.

So should you come across a good-natured soul, cherish him or her – their friendship is worth more than rubies !

*Gareth Randall*



## Questions To take away from ?

The Conservative Party unexpectedly, according to the vast majority of opinion polls, won the General Election in the UK on 7<sup>th</sup> May. One lad in Colchester, Michael Topple, was 18 on 8<sup>th</sup> May so, understandably, he was unable to vote on this occasion.

Currently, there is talk about the referendum that the Prime Minister, David Cameron, is proposing with regards to UK membership of the European Union. Whatever your views may be, there is the question of who is entitled to vote.

Given that 16 and 17-year-olds were accorded the privilege of so doing in the Scottish referendum (did you have a vote ?), it is a matter for debate whether young people of this age should be enfranchised. One speaker commented that not to do so would be 'to take away from them the right to decide on their future.'

Really ? It occurs to me in logic that you can only take away something from someone if they have already got it to take away. Yes, these young adults are at present unable to vote – that's true – but can you remove what they don't yet have ?

*Gareth Randall*



School humour 2/7

Why did the banana go to see his doctor ?  
He wasn't peeling well

*Pauline Eyre*

In John we cannot discern a pattern of worship, but as the commentator Stephen Smalley has said in his book *John: Evangelist and Interpreter*, there is a sacramental dimension, contributing to our understanding of the Mass and Holy Communion. For example, in verse 23: "The people ate the bread after Jesus had given thanks". In verse 11: "Having given thanks, Jesus distributed the five loaves and two fishes". Everyone was fed; a powerful sign of Jesus' identity as true prophet and provider of Living Bread, not from Moses, but from God the Father.

Sign is a recurring motif in John. Sign, Symbol and Sacrament are deep words in line with the Word made flesh, the material bearing the spiritual, the temporal bearing the eternal.

Where is the Living Bread to be found today? Surely in the life of the Church, in *us*. We become what we receive. We receive the Bread of Life, so we become Living Bread. More than just the Host is received. We ourselves are remade through grace; we become sacramental ourselves, through caring, kindness, goodness, charity.

As with any sign, there is more to this than meets the eye. More than kneeling at the altar rail and being fed ourselves (wonderful as that is), there is a responsibility which comes from receiving our Lord in bread and wine. Why else are we told "Go in peace to love and serve the Lord"?

We may not be feeding the five thousand, though every church community has the responsibility as the disciples whom Jesus sent to fetch the boy with the loaves and fishes. Those who are fed by the Lord should feed others in His name. Amen.

*Father Peter Bevan*

### Odd thoughts

As usual, the Newsletter prompts thoughts – two, in this case, from August.

I was brought up as a kid to believe that ‘to take the name of the Lord thy God in vain’ was to use the name of the Almighty as some form of expletive. Subsequent reading makes me wonder whether there might be an additional sense in the usage.

The case in point was a memo or instruction, issued (as it happens) over the signature of a senior RAF officer, who had known nothing about the paper concerned. His response was: ‘Has someone taken my name in vain?’ – i.e., falsely representing the author of the instruction.

It strikes me as only too horribly plausible to suppose that ‘to take God’s name in vain’ might indicate a person saying ‘God says this’ when actually God says nothing of the kind. A sobering thought – and, I feel, on a level with mistaking God’s will for one’s own.

The second was the line about St Peter’s inverted crucifixion. For one thing, I’d never before heard the reason for the inversion. For another, it set me thinking about atypical crosses.

If you’ve ever been in Greece or Russia, or in many Balkan countries, you will probably recall that the Orthodox Christian cross isn’t quite the same as the Western church’s. Instead, it has a small extra cross, set low down, and not straight but on a diagonal.

Then, of course, there is the famous Cross of Lorraine, symbol of the Free French during the Second World War and consisting of two horizontal cross bars, the upper shorter. The most that history seems able to tell us about this one is that it was used from early Crusader times and was the symbol of the Dukes of Lorraine.

### *Extra Film Review of the month ‘The Babadook’ – Jennifer Kent 2015 Certificate 15*

I don’t do horror films but this one, a DVD present, came highly recommended by my generous friend and kind former colleague at Owen’s, John Johnstone. It also got a rave review by Mark Kermode on the BBC News Channel film slot on a Friday evening.

So is this Australian movie scary? It is. Is it a horror film? Probably. Is it a psychological drama? Absolutely. If I were a Hindu, I’d be asking questions about illusion and reality. If I were a psychiatrist, I want to know the root cause of the disturbance and chart its expression in violent upset.

Well, ‘The Babadook’ is essentially a two-hander (if you don’t count the dog) with Amelia (Essie Davis) as the mum and Samuel (Noah Wiseman) as her six-year-old son. Some six years earlier, speeding to the maternity hospital, heavily pregnant with their son, her husband driving is killed in a car crash. Now we see the one-parent family not coping with the grief and the anti-social behaviour on the part of Samuel whose school can’t cope with his challenging behaviour.

Enter ‘the Babadook’ – at first simply a mysterious book that like all good pop-up fairy stories has a dark and sinister side but as the film unfolds, the manifestation becomes tangible – or is it?

After some ninety minutes of increasingly scary tension and shocks, the film ends happily ever after – or does it?

*Gareth Randall*





*Film Review of the month*  
**'Elephant Boy' Robert Flaherty/Zoltan Korda – 1937**

Having the bulk of my collection of my DVDs here in France on the shelves in hall of the chaplain's flat is an advantage when at a loose end ironing ! It's May. The night before, my friend, Phil, had told me he'd been to the British Film Institute on the South Bank near where the Scotts have an apartment to see a free showing of the 'Elephant Boy'. So I thought I'd revisit a film I'd not seen in years.

It was released in 1937, two years before WW2 was declared, fourteen years before I was born. It stars Sabu, then a thirteen-year-old stable boy who landed the starring role in this retelling of the Kipling tale – 'Toomai of the Elephants'. Charming and sweet, sad and sentimental, natural and playful, with a sharp edge and a happy ending. It combines humour and pathos, drama and some excellent cinematography filmed on location in India.

It is very much of the British Raj. The measured articulation of Wilfred Hyde-White as the Commissioner sets the tone and William Hudd as the hunter, Peterson, is very stiff upper lip, upper class, a leader of men with a sense of humour and underneath a caring, compassionate heart. But it is a combination of the love of a boy and his elephant and the wildlife photography with an original sound track of music composed by John Greenwood which makes the film so engaging.

'Elephant Boy' is from another world now lost to us like the British Empire. Innocent yet knowing, a curious balance of what's real and a fairy story – a children's story for adults who may remember what it was once like to be young when tweets and twitter were strictly for birds.

*Gareth Randall*

And the PS that I can't resist: Back in 1943 or so, when de Gaulle was being more than usually temperamental, Churchill commented to a colleague: 'Everyone has his cross to bear – mine is the Cross of Lorraine...'

*David Boggis*



**Sir Winston Churchill in Dinard**

Some years ago I was staying at the Hotel des Bains in Dinard with a group from the UK. I was talking to the owner who told me that this was where Sir Winston Churchill had stayed for his painting holiday. They could not advertise the fact because his room had been transferred to the next-door house. Apparently he used to eat and drink at the hotel bar.

An Internet search confirmed that Sir Winston Churchill had indeed had holidays in Dinard and Pleurtuit in the late 1920s. I wonder if anyone can verify this or whether he ever worshipped at St Bartholomew's.

*David Wheldon,*  
*Christchurch*  
*Dorset*



**105-year-old Jam**

It was a real pleasure and delight to spread on bread and butter then taste some jam I bought at the St Bart's Braderie stall in August made by Roger Berry's mum who is now 105 ! Congratulations.

## Personal Column

Our congratulations to:

Daniel and Marion Buckingham who were married here in church on 5<sup>th</sup> September;

Nicolas and Ashwitha Guillon who were married here in church on 12<sup>th</sup> September;

Johan and Ebba Werner who were married in Le Château du Grand Val on 20<sup>th</sup> September;

Kasey and Catherine McMaster who were married in Le Château du Grand Val on 26<sup>th</sup> September.

Our sympathy on the death on 14<sup>th</sup> September of Ronald Frankel MBE, former Honorary Consul to St Malo and Dinard, to his wife Laurette, son Michael and daughter-in-law Josiane, and his grand-daughters Sarah-Emily and Melanie



### All the light we cannot see Anthony Doerr

Robert Pierpoint recommended I read the above and I'm enjoying it so much that I'd like to pass on his excellent recommendation. Set partly in St Malo, partly during the 2WW, 'All the light we cannot see' is an excellent read and if anyone would like to write a book review of it for 'St Bart's', then I'd be delighted to publish it.

*Gareth Randall*

## No parking

It would interest me greatly to know how many fellow readers of this newsletter – who by implication are attenders at St Barts – have the same problem as I do. Trouble finding parking on a Sunday.

August is dreadful, and the Sunday of the Film Festival makes parking impossible, likewise. But I hadn't expected to turn up on the first Sunday of September this year and find it impossible to track down a parking space. Nothing else for it: I simply had to turn round and drive back to my home in Matignon. Luckily that's only half an hour down the road, but I believe other churchgoers come from farther afield.

It may be that there's something we can do about it – provided enough people are affected. That's why it seems to me important to find out how many other people have trouble getting parked on a Sunday.

If, say, we amounted to just a dozen motorists, then I believe we might have a case for approaching Dinard town council and asking to have *half* a dozen spaces reserved, inside reasonable walking distance of the church, for l'Eglise Anglicane.

The reason I emphasise reasonable walking distance is that I am personally afflicted with a bunch of discs in the lower back that aren't there any more. I can walk just so far, but no further. I bet other people have similar semi-handicaps, or worse.

Can I beg for some feedback on this one, please? Given enough interest, it might be possible to take it further.

*David Boggis*



I don't know when I died or, finally, what did for me. I'm not sure whether it was the loss of blood having bled profusely. I'm not sure whether the pain and abuse produced a fatal heart attack. I'm not sure whether the skinner took pity on me as he worked downwards towards my waist, whether he severed a major blood vessel or pierced a vital organ. All I know was that one minute, there was pain and that the next, I was at peace - nothing.



It seems as if I'm outside my body, free, moving rapidly through the darkness toward a distant light. There, in silhouette, I can see a familiar figure, waiting for me. As we come together, my heart misses a beat – it's Philip – once more the lad I remember meeting a lifetime ago on the banks of the Jordan. He takes my hands in his then hugs me strongly to him. I am whole again and he leads me home.



### *How sensible ?*

The sound of the sea,  
the dance of the sea,  
the smell of the sea  
makes Dinard for me  
a good place to be.



## **The Bartholomew Gospel**

### **29 Martyr**

*'Lord Jesus, ' he cried out, 'receive my spirit.' Acts 7 v59*

You don't have to read this chapter. What comes next is not nice, not pleasant. Just skip the next bit – I understand.



Polymius had a brother, Astyages, himself a king. When Astyages sent word that he, too, would very much like to see me, in my innocence, I thought that this would be one more excellent opportunity for evangelism. It was - but not in the way I was thinking. With a light heart, I journeyed eastward to Albanopolis and the sea.

What I did not know was that Astyages was an inveterate pagan, hostile to the new faith to which I was a witness. He was devoted to the worship of Astaruth, long-established in this land. It was to him that the priests of the Temple of Astaruth had fled when I exorcised the demon, Becher.

My welcome, then, was not what I'd expected. I was seized, bound, beaten and dragged before an angry king. The priests of Astaruth denounced me to him. The king refused me leave to speak. I was thrown into jail overnight - a stinking, dark cell with little to eat or drink. Early next morning, I was led out to be executed.

Since king and priests regarded me as a magus with a degree of power in the spirit world, they determined to deal with me in a manner that would profit them and pain me. Flayed from my body, they believed my skin in their hands would hold a certain virtue in their rituals. Take my clothes from me, you take away my identity, what makes me a man; take my skin and you take what makes me me.

To be flayed is degrading. To peel off our skins strips us of what allows us to touch and to be touched, to connect and to be connected. To be skinned alive demonstrates a careless contempt for life - that in God's eyes we all have value. To do so sends a clear message about what those in power think about a gospel of love in which the Word became flesh.

So I was stripped and, in the full glare of the sun, fastened to a pole. By midday, the sunshine and the heat had had the desired effect of softening me up for the skinner's knife.

Who would have thought the pain from so small a blade could be so sharp?

Spread-eagled, hands and feet fastened, head fixed, I was fit for the work in hand. The skinner was painstaking in his effort to separate my skin in one piece from my flesh. Slowly, surely, deftly, starting with my head, he carefully removed my skin. Like someone skilfully peeling an apple, he did his job.

I bled. I screamed. I fainted. I was ignored. I had something they wanted from me and they had the power and the skill to take it from me. And they did!

In my pain I found hope in half-remembered words from the book of Job: 'I know that my Redeemer lives and at the last, I shall see him in the flesh face-to-face though my skin be taken from me and I die.'



I moved in and out of consciousness. Conscious, the pain became unbearable. Unconscious, the pain became jagged, distorted images in

my mind, the stuff of nightmare. But the body and mind can only take so much before the nerves grow numb. It was then, in this island of calm as I grew increasingly detached from my bleeding, bloody body, that I experienced the vision which Jesus had promised when first we'd met.

'You'll see heaven opened and God's angels going up and down upon the son of man.' I did and they were beautiful. Jesus as I remembered him before the crucifixion. Angels, beings of light, moving lightly, gracefully up and down what seemed to be a stairway connecting earth with heaven. Angels surrounded Jesus in light and one, seeing me, came and placed his hands on me, gently on my head. I felt a cooling, inner peace flow through my flesh on fire and my numbed mind. I felt calm, at one with him, at one with the God whom we served. I felt I'd been washed clean, renewed. Raphael had healed me.



They could take my smile from me -  
And they did.  
They could treat me shamefully -  
And they did.  
They could take my life from me -  
And they did.  
But I was not dismayed, ashamed:  
I'd been true to the faith,  
Practised what I'd preached,  
A belief in Christ the Cornerstone,  
The rock on whom I rest.

