

Holy Trinity Geneva Magazine



The global nature of Ascension and Pentecost

In the 1980s when my husband Alan and I were on the tutorial staff of Westcott House, Cambridge, an Anglican theological college which trained future priests, the liturgical highlight of the year was a Eucharist to celebrate Ascension Day, held, weather permitting, in the late afternoon outdoors in Westcott's delightful garden. The staff and students of the other colleges in the Cambridge Theological Federation were invited to what was each year a feast of sumptuous liturgy followed by a fairly sumptuous buffet. I believe that the tradition continues.

In those days a particularly striking touch to mark the end of the Eucharist was the ignition of four firework rockets one from each corner of the garden, to symbolise the Ascension of Jesus. It might be thought a little strange that, since in our New Testament classes we were at pains to demythologise the vertical language of the Ascension, we should have been so keen to remythologise it in the conclusion of our worship, but nonetheless those rockets were an essential part of the proceedings. They were not any old rockets such as you might find in a corner shop's assorted fireworks box. They came in fact from the professional fireworks firm Kimbolton Fireworks, whose

founder, the Rev Ron Lancaster, was a Westcott alumnus and who had morphed via being the chaplain and chemistry teacher at Kimbolton School into making fireworks for large-scale displays. So they were rockets of considerable size and power. As the Vice-Principal and the tutor responsible for worship Alan had the task each year of organising suitable ordinands to take charge of setting off the rockets safely. One particular year Alan thought he was on to a winner. The ordinand he chose for the role had served in an army, not indeed the British army, but certainly one within the 'British Commonwealth of Nations'. His military expertise would surely stand him in good stead.

However, as two of the rockets decided to take off horizontally rather than vertically we began to understand why the ordinand in question might have thought that a change of career from militant to spiritual was advisable. One of the horizontal rockets plunged safely into the wooded area of the garden where there was no one around. But the other headed in the direction towards where I and a number of others were standing. As we scattered in all directions, I think we surprised ourselves by how fast we could run to get out of the way. But afterwards as I was recovering my breath it seemed to me that it was a wonderful parable of what the Ascension was supposed to be about. No longer were we

supposed to stay gazing up into heaven: rather we were being scattered with power to be engaged in God's mission horizontally throughout the earth.

In this issue:

Ascension and Pentecost

*From our Northern
Correspondent*

The hidden dangers of Covid

Zoom services

Obituary Arthur Robinson

Rev Florence Li Tim-Oi

A letter to a departed father

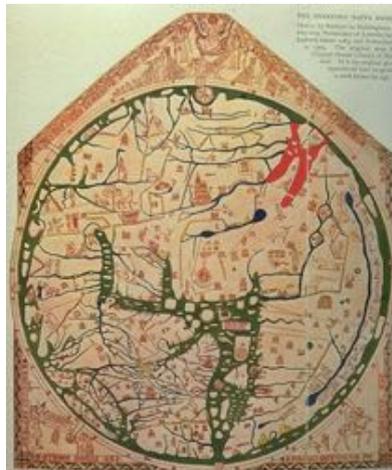
Archbishop William Temple caught exactly this in a well-known paragraph that comes from his *Readings in St John's Gospel*. He commented: 'In the days of his (Jesus') earthly ministry, only those could speak to him who came where he was. If he was in Galilee, men could not find him in Jerusalem; if he was in Jerusalem, men could not find him in Galilee. But his Ascension means that he is

perfectly united with God; we are with him wherever we are present to God; and that is everywhere and always. Because he is “in Heaven” he is everywhere on earth: because he is ascended, he is here now. Our devotion is not to hold us by the empty tomb; it must lift up our hearts to heaven so that we too “in heart and mind thither ascend and with him continually dwell”; it must also send us forth into the world to do his will; and these are not two things, but one.’

Some years later in the 1990s I found myself in the role of editor of *Partners in Learning*, a national ecumenical journal which offered resources to enable churches and congregations to explore and develop creative worship for all ages. Each year we offered a number of themes, linked partly to the time of year. One year, for the season of Ascension tide and Pentecost, our theme was called ‘East, West, North and South’, and we explored how the global nature of the church is intrinsic to the meaning of Pentecost. Even a cursory look at the story of Acts, with its list of people present in Jerusalem ‘from every nation under heaven’ (Acts 2.5) makes it clear that God’s spirit refuses to stay still – or to allow the followers of Jesus to do so. Quickly they find themselves journeying to far distant parts of the world, indeed ‘beginning with Jerusalem’ – but very soon the focus of Acts moves away from this city, and by the last chapter has reached Rome, considered the centre of what was then the known world.

Among the artefacts that we looked at in that *Partners in Learning* theme were a number of maps. Maps tell us a great deal about the perspective of those

who create them. There are a number of well-known medieval maps, such as the Hereford *Mappa Mundi*, which clearly present Jerusalem as the centre of the world. They feel deliciously ‘quaint’, and of course we are far too sophisticated to think in such terms these days... except that many of the Mercator’s projection maps created in the 19th and early 20th centuries do precisely the same, merely replacing ‘Jerusalem’ with ‘Europe’ or ‘Britain’ which were themselves now to be seen as the ‘centre’ of the world, at least in terms of everything that mattered!



The Hereford Mappa Mundi

Drawing on the efforts of other cartographers the ‘Peters Projection’ maps, which were developed in the early 1970s, aimed to try and correct the distortion of size presented by the Mercator’s maps, which oversized the temperate regions and undersized the equator. But even the early Peters Projection examples still tended to ‘centre’ the world on Europe. More recently efforts have been made to ‘centre’ the world on other regions – one of my own favourite examples, created in 1993, places the Pacific Ocean at the centre. (<https://manywaystoseetheworld.org/products/pcp32-paper->

[folded](#)) All of this can and should help us to look at our world with different eyes, in ways that most Europeans have not been used to.

Of course, the basic problem with all flat maps is that they are seeking to convey in a two-dimensional form our ‘globe’ which is a three-dimensional body. And so, one of the questions we explored in that *Partners in Learning* theme was what does it mean to think of the world as a globe, and which point, if any, on the surface of a globe can be seen as its centre? The answer we gave was ‘nowhere’ – and I think that was and is the right response.

We are, or perhaps should be, more conscious these days of the nature of our world as a ‘globe’, because human beings have been granted the privilege, unknown before the 1960s, of seeing the world in all its beauty and fragility from outer space. There was a prayer that we used in the theme written by an ecumenical group in Strasbourg which reflected that:

Lord, this is your world,
North and South, East and West.
Beautiful, varied, complete,
interdependent, whole.
Humans having seen it from afar,
Turning, hanging in space, a
miracle.
Give us a new vision.
Forgive us our pride, our
blindness,
Our foolishness.
Lord, we are unfaithful stewards.
Open our eyes.
Give us a new will, a new vision.

So the message of Ascension and Pentecost is surely that our Christian faith is a global faith in this deeper understanding of the word ‘global’. Perhaps it is a message that strikes us in a new way this particular year. One of

the side-effects of the coronavirus crisis and the need to use digital means of communication – even to enable our worship – is that we have experienced a strange kind of de-centring. On Thursday 7 May Alan presided for Holy Trinity’s 10 a.m. Thursday BCP Eucharist from our home in Dorset. The preacher was in Vienna, most of the congregation were located in Geneva or *la France voisine*, but there were also people present in Rome and Marseilles. It was both opportunity and challenge. Where was its centre?

One of the reasons that I, and many of us, cherish the city of Geneva is because it is home to many of those organisations such as the UN, WHO, ILO, UNHCR, which for all their flaws, are a visible symbol of the ‘global’ nature of our world and the need for global justice and human equity. The following prayer by the United Reformed Church minister Heather Pencavel – which I first came across back in those *Partners in Learning* years – is discomfoting but thoughtful. I don’t agree with every word in it (!), but it is worth reflecting on in these difficult days, in which we can be sure that our future must and will be different in some significant ways from our past:

God,
 You have always seen planet earth as a globe.
 You made it that way,
 Spherical, on purpose, to dance and spin
 To the rhythm of the universe.

It is we who have been flat-earthers
 Afraid of falling off the edge,
 Afraid to venture far outside
 The walls we build
 Of colour, race and culture
 Creed and custom,

Always persuaded that our ways are best,
 Evangelical in promoting western ideas –
 Big Macs and big Bibles – everywhere.

And now
 Convinced by our own discoveries,
 First of foreign markets eager for our wares,
 And then of unfair competition
 From, exploited children in Chinese carpet factories
 Or making electronic goods
 Putting our local factories out of work,
 We find ourselves beginning to believe
 That – incredibly – the earth is round
 For a reason!

Help us, God of wisdom and mercy,
 To trust your wisdom and believe your Word,
 Who made the heavens and the earth to be one universe
 Beautiful beyond imagination
 Founded on covenant love and justice.

Show us how to build a global community
 Redeemed and restored by that same love
 Expressed in justice
 In fair working practice and just trade
 In peaceful government and mutual care.

Through Jesus Christ, whose arms spread wide at Calvary
 To express the global nature of unending love.

Clare Amos



HTC’s ‘Northern Correspondent’ writes...from ‘Loch Down’

Greetings to you all from the Highlands of Scotland, where, in common with many other parts of the world, we are in lockdown. Though it is rumoured that we may soon be liberated at least a little.

Now, like everyone else, Geraldine and I had various plans which involved travel, all of which are now on indefinite hold – possibly for a couple of years. The immediate effect of this has been felt upon our garden, which I do not believe has ever been quite as weed-free and well-watered as it is just now. This could, of course, be due to the presence of S. Fiacre who presides imperiously over everything, having journeyed with us



S. Fiacre of Breuil, in our garden

from Strasbourg days (he is sculpted in the same sandstone as the beautiful Cathedral in that city), before arriving in Inverness, Geneva, and back again to the Highlands.

S. Fiacre is an interesting saint, though probably one better known after an interval of several

centuries! He came originally from Ireland, where he had been educated in a monastery in County Kilkenny and after ordination became Abbot of the community. However, he was finding that his reputation for holiness and wisdom was drawing crowds to the monastery and he wished to find greater solitude and silence. He left Ireland for France in the year 628 and found his way to the ancient province of Brie, to the village now named in his honour in the present-day *Département de Seine-et-Marne* in the *Île-de-France* region. There, the local bishop, who knew of the Irish monks through S. Columbanus, granted Fiacre a plot of land in the woods where he was to build a hermitage. There he led a life of great austerity until his death on 18 August 670, building not only his hermitage, but an oratory in honour of our Lady, and a hospice where he cared for travellers. In particular, he cultivated a garden where he grew medicinal herbs and other vegetables. He had a reputation for healing those afflicted with various diseases. In addition to being a patron saint of gardeners, he has a number of other specialities, including being patron saint of sufferers of haemorrhoids – it is said that Cardinal Richelieu venerated his relics in hope of a cure.

So apart from an encouragement to spend more time in the garden, what may we learn from the present situation of our own isolation, though, unlike that of S. Fiacre, ours is not voluntarily chosen?

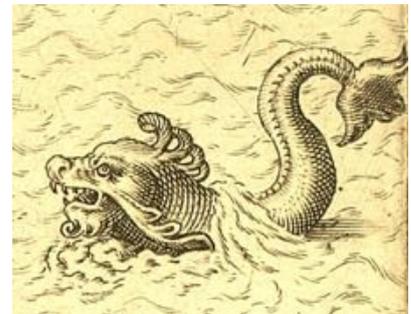
Certainly, there has been no shortage of suggestions from Christian people and ecologists and many others! It is very easy to allow ourselves the luxury of superficial thinking in this area,

and to think that somehow or other, after the quelling of the pandemic, people will be nicer to their neighbours, or that governments will support national health systems more, or that we shall all use less fossil fuel than before. We might indeed *hope* for such outcomes but are they worth the sheer *human*, not to mention the *economic cost* that the pandemic has brought?

One thing clearly that we have learnt, if we did not already know it, is that we live in a global village. Within a matter of a few days, a virus which had been previously unknown prior to its discovery in a far-off province of China was a threatening reality everywhere on the surface of the earth. That at least should give us cause to think. As should the fact that an organism on the edge of life (as one definition of *virus* has it) can bring the world to a standstill and effectively undermine so much human achievement and hubris. A virus particle, or *virion*, can only be seen under an electron microscope, and is one hundredth the size of the smallest bacterium.

Now something that I have valued during the virus-enforced lockdown is the way in which it has been possible to join in various acts of worship around the world as one is unable to participate physically in the local church. And on Saturday last, this also meant that I was able to join with a large number of others, most though not all from HTC, in Dr Clare Amos' most enlightening Bible study on *Creation*. I particularly enjoyed this opportunity, as one of the many things that I knew that I would miss on leaving Geneva was a chance to be at Clare's

regular Saturday morning studies. In this recent session, Clare drew attention to the place of sea-monsters in creation, whilst looking at the wonderful psalm 104, and spoke about the 'unruliness of creation.' Creation is not all sweetness and light – there are beings whose place we do not always understand, including Leviathan, the great sea-monster, who indeed may be a symbol for something else altogether.



At the opposite end of the scale in creation is the virion, a particle of protein and ribonucleic acid whose business is transacted at the cellular level. Why should such a thing exist? Well, we have no complete answer to that question. Though it would seem that virions have an intermediary role in the evolution of creation. So it may well be that we wouldn't be what we are without them! We may well *not be* in the future something that we do not yet know without them, either! But like everything else in creation, there is the potential for something to go astray – *all creation*, we say, is affected by what we call symbolically *the fall*. There is an inherent fragility in the business of God's work of creation, redemption and transformation. It just *has* to be like that for the tension that is creative to exist at all.

And of course, from there we might explore how God is involved in this, how God shares

in the suffering, the groaning of all creation as it is brought to birth (cf. Romans 8²²⁻²⁴). A groaning that S. Paul seems not to be afraid to ascribe to the Holy Spirit.

No one can doubt that we are living through a *crisis* of proportions that most of us have not seen in our lifetimes. We usually use the word crisis in a negative way – a perceived threat. But there is a more positive sense to the word also, stemming as it does from the Greek word κρισις which amongst other things means *judgement*.

Which almost takes us back to where we began! Some Christian people and some ecologists have spoken about the current pandemic as being a *judgement of God* or a *judgement made by nature* because of the way that we behave. I do not think that this crisis is any such thing. But it does call *us* to make decisions, to make judgements. Being in lockdown gives us an opportunity to reassess our priorities, and to live more fully in the present moment. A Cistercian writer, reflecting on the lockdown, speaks of it as a chance to follow the Psalmist's call to *be still and know that I am God* (Psalm 46¹⁰).

That, of course, was the call that S. Fiacre answered back in the 7th century, and many people down the centuries have sought to answer that same calling in different ways over twenty centuries of Christian life. One of the things that I have noticed, even here in the (relatively) quiet Highlands, is how it is now possible to *hear* so much more of our wild birds. They can be positively raucous sometimes! Even if you do not have a garden, there are ways in which we can be far more aware of the present moment and of God's presence *in that moment* when we do not have so much inner and outer noise to block that awareness. At present, we don't have to think so much about *what comes next* in our lives. At this time, we can focus on *what is now*. The reality of that moment is, as the Psalmist knew in the next verse of the psalm I quoted, that *the Lord of Hosts is with us*. And the *Lord's judgement* – as we celebrate during these days of Paschal triumph – is *always* a judgement of *love* not disaster.

Geraldine joins me in sending her love, and we pray that you will all in these strange days have a truly blessed Whitsuntide,

Alex Gordon



Alex at home in his 'retirement' chair

The hidden dangers of Covid-19

On Saturday 14th March the lockdown due to the coronavirus, as it was then known, started to be felt here in Switzerland and in France.

Parkrun in Divonne, France was cancelled. This is a free weekly 5km timed event which started in the UK 15 years ago, and now takes place all over the world. Participants – runners, joggers and walkers - turn up at 9h00 local time where their Parkrun begins and can participate without having to enrol beforehand.

I was due to be tail walker that day and, as a volunteer, had to arrive early to help set up the start and finish line, put on a fluorescent top and be ready to do my job. It is a friendly, social event and a lot of people finish their 5km and then wait to cheer others who come in after, which can be up to 45 minutes after the first finisher. Then there are always people who go for a coffee together before going home.

I heard that all 8 Parkruns in France were cancelled so I found myself with the luxury of a free Saturday morning. I hurriedly took our bedroom curtains down and took them to the cleaners, saying, as I dropped them off, that I hoped that the dry cleaners would still be open on Wednesday 18th March when I was due to pick them up. The lady who served me laughed and said that of course they would be open ...

I then went home to spring clean said bedroom.

All went well until I stood on a stepladder at the foot of the bed to dust the spot lights high (very high) above our bed. I leant over to use the feather duster on them and time slowed down as I felt myself lose my balance.

I had put a chair on the bed, as well as a tray with a couple of ornaments on it and a couple of pictures which I had already cleaned. I didn't want to fall on them so I managed somehow to push myself away from the stepladder over the objects below and fell on to the pillow end of the bed, bounced (even though the bed is NOT a bouncy one) on to the floor whacking my leg on the sharp and hard edge of the bed as I went.

It was a good thing that the bedroom was all cleaned apart from the light, as I saw stars. I had a huge bump and a cut on my shin which was bleeding quite heavily, and a smaller wound on my knee with an extremely painful knee cap.

It took a while for my head to stop turning, but I had to get up to put a pressure dressing on the shin to stop the bleeding and prevent the bump increasing in size. The knee didn't need any first aid apart from regularly putting a cold pack on it and on my shin over the following days.

In the end I couldn't kneel on that knee without pain for four weeks so it was a good thing that church services were cancelled too from that weekend and I could follow HTC services sitting on a chair in front of the computer! I can't help feeling that I might have recovered from Covid-19 more quickly. It is to be hoped the scabs and scars will have disappeared by the time we all meet in church again.

As the nights have become shorter, Pierre and I are appreciating the continental system of shutters as the curtains are still in confinement as I write this, in spite of Pierre having gone to collect them on the Tuesday afternoon at 15h00 when we heard that all non-essential shops should close at 18h00 to prevent the transmission of the virus.

Elizabeth Laravoire



ARTHUR ROBINSON

30 November 1935 – 10 May 2020



Arthur Robinson's recent death at the age of 84 marked the end of a long association with Geneva and with Holy Trinity, as well as other, predominantly anglo-phone, institutions in the area.

Born into a working-class family in Mansfield in Nottinghamshire, Arthur succeeded at school to the point of winning a place at Cambridge University, where he read mathematics in Queens' College. After graduating in 1958, Arthur trained as a teacher and entered the teaching profession, first working at Wellington College in Berkshire and then at Atlantic College in

South Wales. He moved to the International School of Geneva in 1972, where he remained until his retirement, apart from a year on exchange at a school in New Mexico. He worked first at the International School's La Grande Boissière campus, where he became Head of Mathematics and Computing, and later at La Châtaigneraie.

Before coming to Geneva, Arthur had married Julie Downie in 1967, having met her when he was a passenger on an aeroplane on which she was working as an air hostess. The clergyman who married them, John Llewellyn, was a friend. Arthur relished opportunities to tell the story of how John had threatened, in conducting the marriage service, to improve on the conventional sense in the emphasis of the words by asking Julie the question, incredulously, "Will you take *THIS* man to be your lawful wedded husband?"

Julie and Arthur had adopted Huw and Wendy by the time they moved to Geneva, where the family settled into the Pont-Céard apartment complex in Versoix. They continued to live there for more than a quarter of a century. Julie loved cooking, and it was a treat to be invited to share in demolishing a splendid Sunday roast leg of lamb with five or more vegetables, including the crispest roast potatoes in Christendom.

Arthur himself was no cook. He once served me a dinner, Julie being absent, consisting of a grilled sausage sitting lonely and ungarnished in the middle of a large dinnerplate (which admittedly may have been warmed). But he was very adept at operating a corkscrew and keeping the wine flowing, and he always turned a willing hand to

restoring order in the kitchen when the guests were gone. In later years he formed a taste for English celebrity chef TV programmes. His interest was to remain strictly theoretically oriented, although he was not above giving some culinary advice when he thought it was called for.

Arthur took early retirement in 1995 after suffering a heart attack and subsequently a stroke. Desiring to live somewhere with a little more cachet, perhaps, than Pont-Céard, Arthur and Julie purchased and moved into a *maison de village* in Sciez, near Thonon, in 1999. The house came with a sizeable allotment where Julie and various friends and acquaintances grew vegetables, and a chalet which was then bought, renovated and lived in by an old friend, Pat Blake. Roast dinners and bonhomie, happily, translocated to Sciez along with the Robinsons.

One of Arthur's fellow students at university, George Mitchell, became a life-long friend. George's annual visits to Geneva were highpoints and holdfasts in Arthur's life. They were occasions for discussions about life and mathematics that could bedazzle others present at the dinner table, all the more so as the evening wore on and the corks popped.

Apart from mathematics and teaching, it was music that mattered most to Arthur as a satisfying pursuit. He loved listening to music, but above all he loved singing. Blessed with a beautiful mellow baritone voice, he was a stalwart for some years of the Holy Trinity choir, and sang, until illness prevented him from doing so, in the Foundation Choir (which is loosely associated with the International

School), and the Geneva Amateur Operatic Society's Choral Group. More recently he sang with the Sciez village choir. His commitment as a choir member could be counted on, and he was a great colleague in the bass line-up.

Always a handsome chap (something that Julie was unabashedly proud of), Arthur was bemused to find that he bore an uncanny resemblance to the dodgy used car dealer Arthur Daley, played by actor George Cole, in the ITV drama series *Minder*. After Julie's death in 2015, Arthur grew a beard. It suited him rather well, although most friends were surprised to see it appear. It gave him a distinguished air when neatly trimmed, but when allowed to grow a little unkempt it gave him a more intellectual wild look, or even rakish. A Holy Trinity friend Roy Damary, when visiting Russia, came across a small icon depicting a bearded Saint Nicholas which was the spitting image of the bearded Arthur, much to the latter's delight when presented with the icon by Roy.

After being diagnosed with cancer more than a year ago, Arthur benefited greatly from the assistance of friends and family. Fortunately, although his medical condition entailed considerable pain, medication was effective in controlling it.

Arthur's daughter Wendy and her husband Drew had him to stay for extended periods after stints in hospital, and he had the support of his son Huw and partner Ying, and their children Patthida and Vanessa, from their home in Thailand. His near neighbours in Sciez, Sally and Richard Elliott, and their children Cathy, Sam and Gabi, were always there for him,

as were Bill Heckel and Tim Perrin, and Simone and Nick Meyer.

Arthur was blessed with love and care from all of them, and from others. Some memories of Arthur provided by Bill, who knew him through the Holy Trinity and other choirs, and spent a great deal of time with him in his last years, are recounted below. We at Holy Trinity can in turn consider ourselves blessed to have enjoyed Arthur's friendship and fellowship during a good portion of his happy and fulfilling life.

A funeral service has been held at the crematorium in Bonneville, with the intention that it be followed by a memorial service in Holy Trinity at a later date, to be fixed depending on the exigencies of measures related to the coronavirus pandemic.

Philip Thomas

MEMORIES OF ARTHUR ROBINSON

I knew Arthur for most of my life here, both in Geneva and in Messery, France, a small village not far from Sciez. My first show with GAOS was in 2001, when I still lived in Geneva (without a car), and as Julie was in charge of the cast bar for the show, she and Arthur would give me a lift back to town after the performances. I also knew Arthur from singing with the GAOS Choral Group and, later, the Foundation Choir as well as the Holy Trinity choir. But it was when we moved out to "the country" that I got to know the Robinsons well, for I was one of those who grew vegetables on their plot of land. Julie would come down to the garden to give helpful advice, and Arthur was always ready to offer a glass of liquid refreshment after a hard day's weeding. But I got to know Arthur much better when I

became director of the Foundation Choir, for which Arthur served as secretary and treasurer in addition to being a stalwart of the bass section. And when he gave up driving after Julie's death, I would take him to and from rehearsals every week.

Arthur loved to talk (and I loved to listen), so during those weekly rides between Sciez and Grand-Saconnex I learned much about Arthur's life, his interest in choral singing, the origin of the Foundation Choir, his time at Atlantic College and his move to Ecolint, where he was instrumental in the development of the mathematics portion of the International Baccalaureate. Inter alia! And during the past six months, when he returned to his home after having been hospitalized and then spending a convalescent period at his daughter's on the other side of the lake, I became his wheels not only for choir practice but also for medical appointments, bank rendezvous, visits to the tax office in Thonon and many other outings. (It got to the point that when Arthur and I would walk into the Crédit Agricole office in Sciez the young girls at the counter would start to giggle, anticipating our comedy routine.)

Tim and I enjoyed a regular series of lunches with Arthur in local restaurants. I also spent a certain amount of time watching television with him at home. As noted, he did love culinary programs ("The Hairy Bikers" was a favourite), but parliamentary debates were the top. Over the months we watched the demise of poor Theresa May and followed the ups and downs of Brexit and, in recent weeks, the coronavirus pandemic. Ever the teacher, Arthur took pains to explain the workings of Parliament to a poor ignorant

Yankee as well as the backgrounds of many of the speakers. But he always did it with enthusiasm and a sense of humour. In fact, I think our respective senses of humour meshed quite well, which is why I always found our interactions enjoyable and never a chore. (We had developed a whole driver-passenger routine, part of which entailed my saying: "Here we are, sir", to which he would inevitably reply "Thank you, my good man".) He was fully aware that he could occasionally be a bit grumpy (trying to negotiate the twists and turns of the French social security system on his somewhat chaotic computer or attempting to come to terms with a smartphone were not the happiest of experiences), but we inevitably parted on good terms. In short, Arthur became a very good friend over the years. And I miss him already.

Bill Heckel



Bodmin is at the heart of Cornwall, with links to both coasts and its own ancient moorland. One of the three patron saints of Cornwall, St. Petroc, established Bodmin in the 6th Century. It became known as the 'place of the Saints', or Bosvena in the ancient tongue. It is steeped in the long history and heritage of Cornwall; the county town where laws were made and upheld. It is half way along the Saints Way pilgrimage path connecting

Padstow with Fowey that ultimately led through Brittany to Compostella.

Revd Paul Holley, whom many of us in the Holy Trinity family will remember from his time here in Switzerland, became Team Rector of the Bodmin Team Ministry in 2016. The team incorporates five churches, including St. Petroc's in Bodmin (pictured below), which is the largest parish church in Cornwall, and one of the 300 'large churches' of the Church of England. The churches of Lanivet, Lanhydrock, Cardinham and Nanstallon all have their own appeal and distinct histories. Four of the churches are Grade I listed. In 2018, the team established Bodmin Way as a social enterprise to help develop the pilgrimage route through an entrepreneurial approach to mission, supporting this very poor part of the UK.

It had been hoped to launch this very special discovery of Cornwall, its history, landscapes and heritage in September of this year as, in Paul's words, 'a pilgrimage for friends from Switzerland and France'. However, due to the uncertainties surrounding travel during this summer of the Covid crisis, the project has had to be put on hold till 2021, but we are all encouraged to keep this possibility in mind for next summer's plans.



**Rev. Florence Li Tim-Oi –
first Anglican Woman Priest
5 May 1907- 26 February
1992**



*'I am just an earthen vessel with
God's treasure inside me'*
Florence Li Tim-Oi, 1987

How many of our readers are aware that the first woman priest in the Anglican communion was Chinese and was appointed in 1944? And furthermore, how many of you are aware of her strong association with Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Geneva?

At her birth on 5 May 1907 in the fishing village of Aberdeen on Hong Kong island, her father called her Tim-Oi 'Much Beloved', to demonstrate that he valued her as a daughter even if others preferred sons. At that time, in that culture, a bowl of ash could be at hand to smother unwanted new-born girls. Her parents, both Christians, often hosted Bible studies and worship services in their home in China.

Tim-Oi much admired Florence Nightingale of 'Lady of the Lamp' fame, whose birth bicentenary was widely celebrated on 12 May this year. When, still a student, Tim-Oi was

baptised she chose the Christian name Florence little knowing then that the Church had spurned her heroine's vocation to the priesthood (see note 1).

In 1931 she attended the ordination of a British woman as a deaconess in Hong Kong Cathedral. In the course of that service the bishop asked if a Chinese lady was also willing to commit herself to the Chinese church. It was then that Florence decided to respond to that call to ministry and was eventually made a deacon ten years later, on Ascension Day in 1941. Soon after she was given charge of the Anglican congregation in the then Portuguese colony of Macao, thronged with refugees from war-torn China.

When a priest could no longer travel from Japanese-occupied territory to preside for deaconess Florence at the Eucharist in Macao, Bishop Roland Hall of Hong Kong asked her to meet him in free China. Amazingly they both succeeded in completing their separate hazardous journeys to the rendezvous within 20 minutes of each other! On 25 January 1944 he ordained Florence in order that she could fulfil all the heavy additional ecclesiastical responsibilities that he no longer could. In 1946, after the war had ended, she surrendered her priest's licence to deflect controversy but did not renounce her Holy Orders. For the next 39 years she served the cause of Christianity faithfully under nigh impossible circumstances including the terrible Maoist persecutions. She was singled out for abuse because of her ties to the English 'colonialists' and her role as a female priest. At one period she was sent to live in a rural commune where she raised

chickens and rabbits. But, despite severe hardship and indoctrination, her Christian faith never wavered and, indeed, enabled her to survive.

Her sister, Rita Lee-Chui, lived for many years in Geneva and was a regular worshipper in Holy Trinity in the 1980's. Rita worked tirelessly to bring members of her family out of China. Finally, at the end of the 1980's Tim-Oi was also permitted to join Rita who by then was living in the large Chinese community in Toronto, Canada. In 1984 Florence was reinstated as a celebrant priest. She spent the last eight years of her life there serving her parish and encouraging the acceptance of women into the priesthood. She lived long enough to see the consecration of the first woman bishop. She also made a documentary film in 1987 '**The Return to Hepu – Li Tim-Oi Goes Home**'. It was during the course of the making of this film that she and Rita, her faithful chaperone and companion, were able to pay a visit to our church.



Rev. Li Tim-Oi, her mother, Bishop Mok, her father, Archdeacon Lee Kow Yan after her ordination as Deacon by Bishop R. Hall at St John's Cathedral Hong Kong on Ascension Day 22 May 1941

This outwardly frail Chinese lady, possessed of an inner toughness and unshakeable Christian faith, has made an enormous impact on the Anglican

and Episcopalian scene. The very quality of her ministry in China and in Canada and the grace with which she exercised her priesthood helped convince many that the Holy Spirit could work in and through women priests. Her contribution to the church far exceeded the expectations of those involved in her ordination in 1944. She herself once remarked that

'Christianity was the gift of the West to the East and my ordination was a gift from the East to the West'.

We at Holy Trinity have indeed been greatly blessed by that gift and many members of our female congregation have been made priests (see note 2). Florence died in Toronto in 1992 but her legacy continues to grow. The General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada in 2004 authorized *'the inclusion of the Rev. Florence Li Tim-Oi in the calendar of Holy Persons on February 26, the date of her death'*.

A memorial service in Canada a year later included the following collect: -

'Loving God, giver of all good gifts. Fill us with your grace that we, like your servant Li Tim-Oi, the first woman to be ordained an Anglican priest, may entrust you with our destiny. May we, with her same forbearance in the face of adversity, witness to you in all things; through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen'.

The Li Tim-Oi Foundation, of which her sister Rita was a founder member and trustee, exists to carry on her ministry by enabling women in the 'Two Thirds World' to train for Christian work in their own

countries. The Foundation was launched by Archbishop Donald Coggan at St Martin-in-the-Fields Church, London in 1994 on the Golden Jubilee of her priesting, two years after her death. The Archbishop also dedicated a Prayer Board in her memory and a meeting room there has now been named after her. Being on the doorstep of Soho in London, St Martin's has a large Chinese congregation to this day.



Bishop Barry Rogerson formally names the 'Florence Li Tim-Oi' variety of dahlia. In 1994, Bishop Rogerson ordained the first group of women to become Anglican priests in England.

Perhaps the most touching gesture of all was to name after her a new dahlia, a symbol of the beauty of God's world, to celebrate the centenary of her birth on 5 May 1907. The Rt Rev. Barry Rogerson, Bishop of Bristol, who ordained the first Anglican woman priest in England in 1994 incorporated the following prayer into the dahlia dedication service on 6 September 2008: -

'Father we give you thanks for the beauty of your creation which you allow human ingenuity to advance, we name this dahlia Florence Li Tim-Oi, in memory of one of your servants who led the way for many to follow, for the

great benefit to your church and communities throughout the world.

Bless O Lord this offering that through it Florence's memory may be rekindled and her example followed in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.'

Surely every woman priest should plant a Florence Li Tim-Oi dahlia in her garden to acknowledge her debt to this forerunner of her calling? I personally found it a great privilege and delight to know Rita and to meet her sister Florence.

Valerie Offord, May 2020

This is an update of an article by Valerie Offord which first appeared in the HTC Newsletter no. 388 September 2010

Note

1. Both Florence Li and her namesake Florence Nightingale have a memorial window in St George's Episcopal Church, Dayton, Ohio. The Florence Li Tim-Oi window displays the Chinese flag and her reading a Bible as well as a chicken to symbolize the suffering she endured for her service to Christ and his Church.

2. The Diocese of Europe and, in particular, the chaplaincy of Geneva has nurtured a 'serenity' of women priests since the time of Bishop Rogerson. The list could well form a quiz question - how many women priests has our church inspired and produced?

The Rev. Marie Wilson took charge of our chaplaincy in January 2020 at the start of our current interregnum. The Rev. Sue Nightingale, one of the first volley of women Anglican priests

in the Diocese of Europe recently preached at our online service. Julia Lacey, who has been an online godsend during these unprecedented lockdown times, is to be ordained shortly and take up a post in England.

Sources

<https://uwaterloo.ca/renison/lusi-wong-library/florence-li-tim-oi-memorial-archives>

www.stgeorgeohio.org

www2.anglican.ca/faith/worship/FLTmem

www.litim-oi/letter

www.litim.oi.org

www.ittakesonewoman.org

Further study material

The Return to Hepu- Li Tim-Oi Goes Home Documentary film produced By Robert Browne and issued in 1988

Ted Harrison Much Beloved Daughter – Florence Ki Tim-Oi DLT paperback 1985.

Florence Li Tim-Oi Memoirs - Raindrops of My Life Anglican Book Centre, Toronto 1996.

Anglican News Service Anglicans mark 70 years since ordination of first woman priest 8 January 2014.



Mike Romig remembers his father



It's been more than a month now since my father, Frederic Andrew Romig – Rick, Fred, Papa, Gogo, Grandpa – left us following a sudden heart attack.

Every day I think of him. At times it hurts, I cry and miss him. At times it makes me smile, I feel his warmth and care. At times I wish it was a bad dream and at times I feel at peace.

It has been incredible feeling the support around us at this time, from my family, from friends and from people we lived near and haven't seen for decades. It shows me how much I take for granted the wealth that are those social bonds that are there and too often forgotten or ignored.

What Papa created as a life, coming from an orphanage outside of Washington DC to being a director at the United Nations father of four, and an inspiration to many, is just incredible. As we all do, he had his faults and difficult parts, which also made him more human. He otherwise would have seemed strangely superhuman. He died with hardly a single white hair on his head. He always had his UN smile pasted on in any picture. And he had a memory like an elephant ... at least for the stories he repeated so many times we

could recite them alongside him.

I have been getting used, in these past weeks, to being able to speak with him whenever I see a sunset, or when he appears in dreams, and it's still very weird. But I know he is there. I know he is part of me and I am him. I know I am carrying on his dreams and legacy of creating a more sustainable human society on earth. I have him to thank for the 3 incredible siblings who I walk this earth side by side with. And the mother who still worries about us all, even as we scrum together to be there for her.

I cherish this picture of him, the day he received his Swiss nationality, proud as ever to be accepted as a member of this country he loved so much and which gave him and us such an incredible life. Thank you for having brought us here, Papa.

And may you rest in peace,
Frederic Andrew Romig
12 August 1950 – 21
February 2020.

The Romig family were active members of the Holy Trinity congregation in the 1990s

ZOOMING AHEAD !

On Thursday, 12th March I was returning, via a funeral in London, from a shared 'Learning Community' experience in Bristol with representatives from seven other dioceses on 'Every Day Faith' and empowering lay people. With about 80 in the conference, bouncing ideas off each other and packed like sardines in a local restaurant in the evening, concern about Covid-19 was barely in evidence.

When I touched down in Geneva and had a quick meeting with Fred and Jo in Edwards before trundling my suitcase into choir practice, the atmosphere was very different. The previous Sunday had seen a big drop in congregations and just one child at Junior Church. We were awaiting advice and guidance from the bishops, the RC church in Geneva had cancelled all services for two months, a number of people were anxious, but churches were taking different decisions. The choir attempted social distancing without great success and blissfully unaware that singing increases the risk of transmitting the virus. Although we had already decided to postpone all social gatherings and cancel the coffee time, we left expecting to sing as usual on Sunday.

The following day was one of the most stressful I have experienced. There was the decision not only whether or not to stop all the services, but also whether to hold a long-planned Council meeting to start drawing up our Chaplaincy profile, facilitated by Sandra Cobbin from London, due to fly out that day. In the event, we decided to go ahead with the latter on-line, using Nicholas'

Everything Is Going to be All Right by Derek Mahon

How should I not be glad to contemplate
the clouds clearing beyond the dormer window
and a high tide reflected on the ceiling?
There will be dying, there will be dying,
but there is no need to go into that.
The poems flow from the hand unbidden
and the hidden source is the watchful heart.
The sun rises in spite of everything
and the far cities are beautiful and bright.
I lie here in a riot of sunlight
watching the day break and the clouds flying.
Everything is going to be all right.

Derek Mahon is Irish, born in Northern Ireland in 1941. He studied at Trinity College, Dublin and the Sorbonne in Paris and worked in North America, Belfast, Dublin and London. He has published a number of poetry collections and currently lives in Co. Cork.

company Zoom account, and towards the end of the day, together with our locum chaplain, Fred, Mark, Jo and I decided unanimously to cancel the church services for Sunday, 15th March.

What to do next? Our first and most obvious thought was to pre-record and stream a service from the church with our locum priest and some form of choir. This was the route many churches had taken, including Emmanuel. Armel, exploring ideas for something to do with the Young Adults' group suggested 'Spiritual Communion'. Clare Amos seized on this and, researching around the Diocese, found a more modern version being used by a chaplaincy in Spain, which she cleared with Bishop David. Partly as a result of the success of our Zoom Council Meeting we rapidly acquired our own Zoom account. How large did it need to be? Would we exceed 100 people calling in? A team was born to construct our first live, on-line Spiritual Communion service for Refreshment, Mothering, Laetare Sunday, whatever you prefer to

call it. Alan and Clare prepared the liturgy, Mark found suitable recorded music, Nicholas acquired our account, Aylwin was our chief technical support, Julia found people to do the various readings and introduced our service, Jo handled the communications, Ben and Armel helped with the technical back-up, roping in Fred for the services, and Michèle provided general support. We had one meeting on Zoom during the week to decide who should do what and a rehearsal on Saturday. It would be an under-statement to say that it was somewhat chaotic! We discovered quickly that having more than one person talking at once unless they were speaking into the same microphone was disastrous, so we had to mute everyone not directly involved. Live music didn't really work, so we had to find and incorporate music that was already recorded. Incorporating it smoothly proved tricky. Attempts to play music and show images simultaneously defeated us. Very small noises made by unmuted people both sounded very loud and

interrupted the main speaker. Some of the internet connections, particularly from France, where Armel and Julia were initially hosting, proved unstable. Sitting with his back to the light made one person reading almost invisible.

Sunday morning, 22nd March, dawned. It was the first experience of being on Zoom for many people and, although most had seen each other within the previous two weeks, their delight at being able to see and, to a limited extent, talk to each other, was manifest. By and large the problems of Saturday seemed to have been solved thanks very particularly to Aylwin's ability to find technical solutions and Nicholas' ingenuity in finding ways round Zoom limits. We decided to have the service completely open, a team carefully monitoring to remove any potential hackers. We were delighted to welcome over 100 people from different parts of the world and to have succeeded in running the service from three countries, the UK, France and Switzerland.

Coming close to our ninth week, experience has allowed us to move forward and experiment with new things. Palm Sunday incorporated a little drama 'Going on a Journey', leading us into a Holy Week journey of Compline, our first Eucharist for Maundy Thursday, a Good Friday Liturgy with three external preachers, and our second Eucharist on Easter Day. The music has progressed from public recordings, to music played and recorded by Mark and Claire, Joanita and Irene, several instrumentalists, including young people, and virtual choir recordings both by the choir and junior choir, accompanied and

unaccompanied. A video-recording is about to be produced. A solution has been found to playing music and showing images simultaneously. Our services have been led, not just from the UK but from Sydney, Australia. Zoom's feature allowing the host to highlight certain people has been used and we have welcomed and incorporated its improved security features, so people cannot join without first going through an admittance process. There are further features that might enable us to make secure provision of more activities/material for children during services. We have been delighted to welcome people from different parts of the world, some old friends able to join us from a distance, some new people.

We have not only been able to continue with a Sunday service, but have re-instated BCP Eucharist on a Thursday, continued with various forms of prayer at midday three times during the week and introduced a 'social hour'. This has all been in addition to countless meetings, which have kept Building Tomorrow moving and allowed us to complete and send our Vacancy Pack to the Diocese.

What have we learned and what have you appreciated and would like to keep (retain?) from this experience as we look to an eventual, although probably not very imminent, return to the church? We would like to hear your thoughts.

Mary Talbot



Alex with the HTC retirement tree!



Due to the ongoing restrictions imposed by the Corona virus situation all regular church services are suspended until further notice.

However, the church is open daily for private prayer with the proviso that not more than five people may be in church at any one time, respecting the 2m distance.

Quote from Alice Morse Earle (American writer)
'Every day may not be good but there's something good in every day'

Church officers

Locum Chaplains:	<i>contact through church office</i>
Music Director:	Mark Charles 079 744 5175
Junior Choir Director:	Claire Charles
Church Wardens:	Frederick Samuels 022 738 7326 Mary Talbot 022 736 0052
Verger:	Christine Damary 022 774 2320
Sacristan:	Gill Howie 022 733 83 72
Council Members:	Carol Brown, Mark Charles, Mike Gunton (Treasurer), Nicholas Hacking, Gill Howie, Jo Kitson, Julia Lacey, Ann Shazell, Aylwin Zabula
Archdeaconry Synod Representatives:	Clare Amos, Lameck Jaston, Ursula McGregor, Swamikan Raja
Youth Ministry Coordinator:	Armel Ayegnon ayearmel@yahoo.fr
Safeguarding Officer:	Pierre Laravoire. 022 755 2155 *****
Church Office:	Michèle Walker, Secretary. 022 731 5155

admin@holyltrinitygeneva.org
Mon, Tues, Thurs & Fri. 8h30 - 12h30

Church activities*

Holy Trinity choir:	practice Thursdays at 20h00 Mark Charles 079 744 5175
Junior choir:	practice Sundays after the 10h30 service Claire Charles
Craft group:	Fridays in the church hall 14h15 - contact Annemarie Hester 022 782 6689
Small-time worship:	Wednesdays from 09h30 In the church hall, contact Amanda Dawson 022 751 2968
Young people:	(11-13 year-olds) contact Innocent Mugabe mugabeinnocent@yahoo.com
Junior Church:	Sundays 1, 2 and 3 contact Anitha Beulah 022 731 4211 / 078 323 8184
Healing prayer:	Fridays 12h15 in church Christine Damary 022 774 2320
Pastoral care:	Christine Damary 022 774 2320 Gill Howie 022 733 8372 Sheila Mathewson 022 774 0469
Social group:	Gill Howie 022 733 8372 Beryl Allardyce 022 776 1479
Church archives:	Valerie Offord 022 777 1858
Development project:	Mark Charles 079 744 5175
Pledge fund:	Ursula McGregor 022 342 3227

*most are currently suspended - call contacts for details

Editorial committee:

Jane Brooks, Jenny Buffle, Rosie Buffle, Lindy Carmalt, Margaret Jacquard,
Elizabeth Laravoire, Brenda Stewart

Please send letters or articles for inclusion in the Magazine to The Editor
either by regular post to
Jenny Buffle, 12 Chemin La Parisaz, 1291 Commugny or by email to jjbuffle@gmail.com

Deadline for receiving articles for the autumn edition 11 August 2020