

FR HOYAL WRITES

MARY'S MONTH

May is Mary's month, and I
Muse at that and wonder why:
Her feasts follow reason,
Dated due to season-

Candlemas, Lady Day:
But the Lady Month, May,
Why fasten that upon her,
With a feasting in her honour?

Ask of her, the mighty mother:
Her reply puts this other
Question: What is Spring?
Growth in every thing-

All things rising, all things sizing
Mary sees, sympathizing
With that world of good,
Nature's motherhood.

Well but there was more than this:
Spring's universal bliss
Much, had much to say
To offering Mary May.

Gerard Manley Hopkins

Not the poet's finest, perhaps, but serviceable and always a useful introduction to things Marian at this time of year. And I am glad that May has this association, albeit not an ancient one.

In more recent decades Candlemas and the Annunciation have rightly reclaimed their primary focus on Our Lord himself. For most of us Mary's great feast of 15th August (the Assumption) comes at the time of patchiest church attendances. In any case it tends to get rather short shrift from many of those Anglicans who are even aware of it,

and the same goes for the Conception of Mary on December 8. The theologically reluctant can at least find refuge in the feast of her Nativity (8 September) as the 'old' ASB 1980 did. No one can feel theologically threatened by the mere fact that Mary of Nazareth was born!

May gives us a more generous and less contentious chance to honour the Lord's mother without too much dispute. At All Saints this year we have the opportunity to do so on Tuesday 8 May at 7.30 pm as host to the diocesan Church Union Walsingham Festival, at which Fr Peter Cobb is kindly preaching. Another chance comes with the Walsingham National Pilgrimage on the Spring Bank Holiday Monday 28 May – as the day after Pentecost we would once have called it Whit Monday. And the now upgraded feast of the Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth on 31 May provides eirenic scriptural ground on which to base a further May celebration of Mary's special role within salvation history.

I am so grateful to be priest-in-charge of two churches where people are glad to hear the Angelus and Regina Coeli recited, and where images of the Virgin Mother are a natural aid to devotion. And I have to say that I am not among those Anglicans who feel miffed by the papal definitions of the Assumption and the Conception. I personally find them helpful, though I do not feel we need to depend on them. To my mind they are interesting clarifications from a Roman viewpoint of the essence of convictions held in both East and West for many centuries.

Certainly there is room for discussion, but if you think that Mary in the fullness of her redeemed humanity is heaven through the merits of her divine Son I rather think you count as pro-Assumption in principle. And if you are squeamish about observing the Conception of Mary, think of all those good, scholarly Anglican divines who were at pains to ensure that the Conception of the BVM was returned to the Church of England calendar in the 1662 Book of Common Prayer. They must have thought there was something special about Mary and the circumstances of her conception as the future mother of the Saviour. And so do I, viz that God graciously prepared the Virgin Mary to be spiritually fitting for her unique role as Theotokos. As the Prayer Book clearly maintains, the incarnate Son is born, not simply of a virgin but of a *pure* virgin, and that *without spot of sin*.

It has to be said too that, for all their antipathy to pre-Reformation Mariological excesses, many 17th century Anglican divines, like Cranmer before them, firmly held to the *perpetual* virginity of the Blessed Virgin Mary as a sound and ancient doctrine. They were not impressed by literalistic Reformation pressings of gospel references to the brothers and sisters of Jesus. True, the tradition is not unanimous throughout the history of the Church, but it is certainly the one which has officially prevailed for Catholic and Orthodox alike.

If, as we gladly do, we call her the Blessed Virgin Mary, her most official Church title, it is not because we must deem her ever-virgin. Otherwise, why bother with *Virgin* at all as part of her continuing title? But I don't expect universal agreement. No matter. The point is hardly de fide.

Whatever your particular feelings about disputed issues, I hope you will let this May be Mary's month with you in ways that are both consonant with your own convictions and, in the spiritual company of his blessed mother, will bring you closer to the Son she conceived by the Holy Spirit.

Following last year's success, perhaps too you will think about joining us for this year's parish pilgrimage to Walsingham 7-11 August. Young people will again be able to attend the Youth Pilgrimage running at the same time. Wherever you stand on particular issues, time in England's Nazareth is likely to do you a lot of good.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Hoyle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

CHRISTIAN AID WEEK *Following last year's highly successful collection, we hope to collect (in pairs) outside Sainsbury's 9am to 5pm Saturday 19 May. If you are willing to help for an hour, please add your name to the porch list.*

THE WORD FROM ALL HALLOWS

People have asked for news in the magazine from time to time about our sister church in Easton.

All Hallows keeps active and in good heart. The Electoral Roll currently stands at 35. Congregations are modest in size - typically 25 adults and five children at the 10 am Parish Mass on Sundays. But there is evident growth, and there is always a good feel about the worship, both on Sunday and at Wednesday's mid-morning Mass, when there are often between ten and 15, and sometimes more. Wednesday is always sociable and busy, being the day for cleaning and maintenance, and also for gardening. There is no doubt that All Hallows' engagement with its parish at large and its profile more widely have also been growing. Of late, with the help of kind supporters from All Saints we have put on a number of sales and open days providing local people with an opportunity to look round and meet members of the congregation.

Emergency repairs to the tune of some £10,000 were carried out following my arrival in 2004. In the wake of an unsuccessful 2006 bid for support from English Heritage, our 2006 application for a major repair grant recently borne fruit: the offer of £219,000 towards extensive restoration work to repair or renew faulty roofs, cracked walls and damaged stonework. Other grants are currently being sought for work the EH grant will not cover, more especially a much needed new heating system. The aim is to make a lovely Sir George Oatley church – Easton's hidden gem – sound, warm, inviting and waterproof, at the same time engaging the interest and goodwill of the local community to the mutual benefit of church and parish. Social, pastoral and evangelistic aims are very much a factor in the ongoing restoration programme envisaged.

This is a huge undertaking for a church with a small congregation. We are now looking to form a working group to oversee different aspects of the project, such as liaising with EH, architects, contractors, and diocese etc, actively commending the project and its possibilities to the community, and promoting additional fund-raising and securing further grants. Any All Saints members willing to offer their support and skills are asked to contact me.

One problem at this exciting but challenging time is that of finding new church wardens. Lynn Box and David Ratcliffe have been invaluable at All Hallows but some time ago independently signalled their need to step down this May. So far we have not identified church members who feel able to take on the role. Another difficulty is the approaching retirement on health grounds of our parish treasurer (Roger Dawes) after 14 years' wonderful service. It is never easy to find a treasurer. We should be glad of prayers as we seek successors.

In the immediate future we look forward to hosting the joint All Saints/All Hallows confirmation by Bishop Andrew on Tuesday 1 May, and to sharing with All Saints in the annual Glastonbury pilgrimage on 16 June. And we particularly invite All Saints members who happen not to have been to All Hallows to come and visit. You will be most welcome.

Richard Hoyal

APCM 2007

Churchwarden Micawber on the parish finances

Turning to the accounts, I must first apologise: they are being presented by the 'B' team. Norman, as PCC Treasurer, could have spoken far more effectively. Father James has already presented a most compelling case. Today you have the facts and figures before you, and I am afraid that you are going to hear a statement of our general situation from the equivalent of Mr Micawber. If you have

questions I shall answer them if I can, otherwise they will be noted and the message from a demob happy Norman is that our service agreement promises a reply within 21 days.

Secondly, I should explain that although these are the accounts for 2006, I intend to abandon protocol, bring you up to date and speak of the future.

The figures that principally concern us all are on page 20, and are as follows.

Total incoming resources £84,241

Total resources used £87,138

Net movement in funds, or in my language the difference between those two figures, is a minus balance of £3,141. We have overspent by just over £3k and that is the good news. Our projected deficit was approximately £9,000. Father James' sermon effectively brought in £6,000. May I strongly suggest that you all read the follow up article in the March Parish Magazine, because the bad news is this:

(1) That £6k was a one off. Only three people increased their standing order, so the impact on our regular income was small. Specifically, using last year's figures, our daily income was £210, our daily expenditure was £230. After Fr James' sermon our gift aided monthly standing order income went up £80. This is enough to cover the shortfall on four days in each month. And we are not ungrateful, but we must continue to assume that there will be a deficit in 2007.

(2) The share (or quota) has gone up by approximately £8k for 2007. It seemed to your representatives, the PCC, that it would be wrong to commit to spending money that we do not have, so we have set our 'share' standing order at £4k per calendar month. It should be nearer £5k. But even with an optimistic forecast of a £3k deficit this year, that additional £8k would have meant a deficit of £11k. Even I can do that sum.

(3) A £3k deficit is optimistic because even managing the share in this way, other costs will rise. And there will be specific costs: already this year we know we have to pay £3k to have the electrics tested; this is a legal requirement. We have just heard that work is needed on the lightning conductor. These are bills that must be paid.

(4) Longer term, the share will continue to rise. And so will the gas and electric bills and our other expenses. Another Quinquennial inspection is looming. The dreaded words 'Health and Safety' have entered the Visitation questionnaire: as night follows day there will be a hefty financial impact.

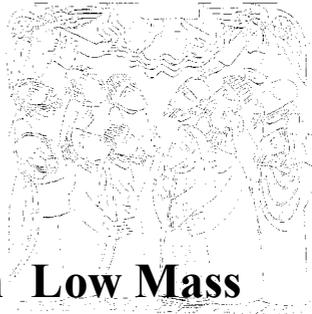
And there are other considerations. We have budgeted to break even, but the PCC feels a commitment to paying the share in full. They have managed to pay off what we owed from 2003. This was done by using money designated by the PCC for repairs. This money paid off the 2003 quota debt; it has paid the 2006 deficit of £3,141. Assuming deficits similar to the 'real' deficit of 2006 (approximately

£9,000), there is enough left to cover 2007 and 2008. And that's it. Two years. There are no other reserves.

Nevertheless, the PCC, acting on your behalf, feels that we have a commitment to pay the 2007 share in full. And the PCC feels an equal commitment to repaying the repair fund. There are twenty one members of the PCC; there are nearly 160 names on the electoral roll. This is our church, this is our parish. The PCC can represent the electorate, on your behalf and on behalf of those not here today the PCC can take sensible and informed decisions, but to balance the books AT ALL we need the help of every one of the people on the electoral roll. To pay the 2007 share in full and to repay the repair fund we need more than your help, we need an ongoing commitment from every one of us to increase our day to day income. Two years.

ASCENSION DAY

Thursday 17th May



7.30 & 10.30 am Low Mass
7.30 pm PROCESSION
& FESTIVAL MASS

Refreshments afterwards. Come and join us in celebration of Christ who lives and reigns.

BISHOP MIKE HILL We are delighted that the Bishop of Bristol is our guest at 9.30 am and 11 am on Pentecost Sunday, 27 May.

IN THIS MONTHMAY 1884

OUR PETS, an article from the Children's Corner.

Who shall say where instinct ends and reason begins? The hero of my present tale is Charlie, a very handsome Bantam, belonging to our much esteemed village Carrier. When Charlie was about six months old, a hen was bought for him, quite his match in point of beauty. Not long after the hen disappeared, and it was feared she had met with an untimely end. Search was made for her, but to no purpose. The poor bird was shut up where she was least expected to be. It so happened that in the barton she most frequented, there was a shed chiefly used for old barrels &c., and generally kept open in the daytime. The things not being wanted, it had been locked up exactly three weeks and a day. On turning the key, out walked the hen with eleven chickens following her.

Unhappily as soon as she breathed the air, the long fast or anxiety proved too much for her. She gasped out a little kind of cluck, and fell down dead. Charlie, wonderful to say, at once understood the sad plight of his motherless children, for he gathered them under his wings, as the hen would have done, and took them to the warm kitchen, where he had been reared and made a great pet of. The next day, and indeed, until the eleven were quite grown up, it was the prettiest sight possible to see Charlie scratching away for his family in the barton, or gathering them under his wings. He has had another wife since then, and several broods have been reared: but Charlie takes to himself all the nursing, never letting the hen interfere in the least. He is very fond of his master, and strange to say, always calls him in the morning, varying the hour according to the time of year. This being February, he flies up to his master's window at half past

five, and taps with his beak until he is let in. The other day his master did not see him in his wagon until they had got quite to the end of the village. Charlie's friendly crow, as much as to say, "Here I am you see," made him turn round to perceive Charlie upon one of the boxes. There being no help for it, he was taken on to the town, and consigned to one of his master's huge pockets. In the coffee-tavern, where the latter always takes his lunch, Charlie was produced, and allowed to perch on his knee, where he crowed away, and eat from his master's mouth or plate, much to the amusement of the company. Dear little Charlie's children are never killed, but always given away to people likely to make pets of them.

Jack Metford, 29.i.1916 - 29.iii.2007

Thank you all for being here in this chapel of St Augustine, which meant so much to my father. In his last years he always missed my mother Edith, but the people who are here show why he still had much happiness: his family, his church family from St Monica's and from All Saints Clifton, his colleagues from the University of Bristol, his friends from earlier years, and the many St Monica friends who talked with him about music and painting and books and theology and theatre and the gardens. He kept all your cards and letters, and he often talked and thought about you all.

Metford is a Somerset surname, but there are Metfords both sides of the Bristol Channel and Jack was born in the Rhondda, the eldest of three. His father never fully recovered from the First World War, and the main influence was his grandfather, who was active in the Society of Friends. These Metfords were business people, and when Jack turned out to be clever there were benign plans for articles with the local solicitor. But Porth County Grammar School changed that. A new headmaster realised that modern languages were the future, and on a visit to Geneva, admiring

the statue of Calvin, he met a teacher of Spanish. So Jack took Spanish, French, and English Literature, a lifelong love. You might think the Rhondda would lead to Cardiff University, but Jack chose Liverpool, where the Professor of Spanish was the revered E. A. Peers. He met Edith on their first day in the department.

Jack was sending home part of his State Scholarship, so there was often a choice between a cup of tea and the bus fare to his digs. But he and Edith went to concerts and theatres and art galleries, as they did throughout their lives together. He was Secretary of the Students' Union, and together they got their Firsts and went on to their Masters. He won a Harkness Fellowship which took him to graduate work at Yale and Berkeley, she trained as a teacher, and they planned to marry when he came back; but the year was 1939. Jack had worked in Quaker refugee camps and decided he could not now be a pacifist. But when he reported to the New York consulate, somebody realised that he spoke Spanish and Portuguese, and directed him to the Censorship Department in the Bermudas, then to the British Council in Brazil. It was probably the Intelligence Service, but all he ever said was that his war years were covered by the Official Secrets Act. When he came home and married, he stayed on with the British Council; then in 1946 the University of Glasgow decided to have a lectureship in Latin American studies. The Principal had been Vice-Chancellor of Liverpool, and remembered this former student with the practical experience and the glowing references. I found them in his files: they all mention his ability to get on with all kinds of people.

Ten years on Jack returned to Metford home territory, as Senior Lecturer and Head of Department of Spanish at the University of Bristol. He said

he was shown a room in the Wills Memorial Building: it contained a desk and chair on a square of carpet. ‘Well, Metford, there’s your Department.’ As the Department grew, so did the carpet, and he knew he had arrived when it covered the floor. ¹ He became Bristol’s first Professor of Spanish in 1960. His generation expected to teach everything about Spain and Portugal and Latin America: language and literature, history and art, starting with Spanish emerging from Latin and ending with that day’s headlines. He campaigned for his subject: he encouraged first-generation students like himself; he visited schools, gave courses for teachers, briefed businessmen, and was on call for the BBC whenever a revolution happened, which was often enough to pay for family holidays. He also named a range of sherries for Harveys, and had to do it again because Harveys thought the names didn’t sound Spanish enough. ²

Jack retired in 1981, and thankfully moved from Latin American crises to Christian art. As a good European, he was very pleased when his *Christian Lore and Legend* was translated into Lithuanian. He and Edith travelled, and entertained their family and friends, and worked for All Saints and for the diocese. These happy and productive years were disrupted, in 1993, by the stroke that robbed her of mobility. Jack was always protective, and he felt powerless. It was a blessing when she came to St Monica’s, and another when he moved to Westfield. He was on hand to care for her, he had practical support and a community of friends, and he could use his abilities in chapel services and illustrated talks and discussion groups. In the

¹ Sean Gill, appointed to a lectureship in Theology many years later, asked his Head of Department if the broken lino on his floor could be replaced by carpet. ‘Carpets are for Senior Lecturer and above.’

² Chris Harries, now a Senior Registrar, says that when Jack was Dean of Arts, a visit at the right time prompted just two words: ‘Greetings! Sherry?’

last few weeks, he revised his notes on the paintings in this Chapel, and Poetry Club inspired him to draft a new interpretation of Milton's sonnet 'On his blindness'. Old professors never die, they only change their research field.

As Jack's own health declined, he faced operations with courage and humour, and his lifelong anxieties lessened. He even started saying 'When can you come?' instead of 'Wait until it's more convenient for you'. I never quite understood why he deferred the visits that he so much enjoyed, but I think it was mostly that he wanted everything just right for his guests. He would be very pleased that we have such a perfect day. We shall all miss him, but we shall remember him: generous, precise, alert, interested in every subject and every person he met, and a Christian for whom faith, hope and love were the centre of life.

Gillian Clark (nee Metford), April 19th 2007

Churchwarden's Notes

23/3/7 The Priest in Charge and the Senior Churchwarden today severally left Bristol for foreign parts, with fulsome apologies for abandoning me but no diminution of purpose. I am from henceforth to be known as Elijah. Moreover, I have just learnt that the clocks go back this weekend, so not only am I on duty at 8 am on Sunday, but it will really be 7 am. How many of you remember Double Summer Time?

25/3/7 Well, low turns out for all three Masses, plus a few slightly sheepish late arrivals for this and that suggest that I was not the only one to need reminding. At least I remembered to adjust the central heating clock, or this am would have been unsupportable.

Thank you for re-electing me. You must be crackers, and I am touched. The APCM was improved by a hive of activity in one corner, where the Demon Twins were teaching Ecclesiastical Knots to the Sacristan. Fr Boss spoke highly of their commitment and industry, but they reminded me of Mesdames les Tricoteuses sitting by Madame La Guillotine. The Heavenly Twins had a follower today, a young gentleman with a large box of chocolates. They offered me one, massive giggles, I find I have an empty wrapper. But they did then let me have a real one. There was a new hymn tune at the 9 30 today, with one very wiggly line in it. By contrast, the psalm at 6 pm had some very long flat lines and I ran out of breath.

Well, it's been a long day and I have peaked. See you all tomorrow.

1/4/7 Palm Sunday. I think people deliberately get out of synch with All Glory Laud. I was playing sheepdog right at the tail end and I could stay with the choir. Not looking forward to refolding the donkey cope

2/4/7 7 am: Orange fireball sun low over the Downs, and a female blackbird on the lawn outside Church; 7 pm incredibly bright orange ditto. How can an orange football produce white light? Mind you, by then I was chauffeuring all four archangels, so deviations from the norm are to be expected.

4/4/7 Decided to buy petrol. Running a Volvo on faith, hope and the Holy Spirit is a bit chancy. Cleaned silver. I was always good at crochet, but what I achieved with the chains of one of the thuribles was spectacular. The Youngest Thurifer had to untangle me, to a chorus of 'Take these chains from my heart (well, left wrist) and set me free'. Beginning to panic over provision of feet, especially since Fr Boss asked me how many I had collected and then wanted to know how many bodies they were attached to. I am no Hannibal Lector.

Psalm 102 very interesting ornithologically:

I am become like a vulture (1) in the wilderness, like an owl that haunts the ruins (2);

I keep watch and am become like a sparrow (3) solitary upon the housetop.

(1) Presumably waiting to provide some nice dry bones waiting for to pneumonia.

(2) Presumably a barn owl.

(3) I though sparrows hunted in packs and favoured hedges, but they may have been as scarce in David's time as they are now or they may have acquired different habits to suit different habitats, the way French robins are very wary of humans. Mind you, I have a new inhabitant in my back garden. It *could* be a wren with a straight tail, or it could be a sparrow that is very small, has a very long slightly bent tail and is of a solitary disposition.

5/4/7 Nature Notes continued: went to collect Sacristan and found Rat. Subsequently, on leaving Church with somewhat tired Sacristan, left it propped against Midnight while I unlocked the car doors. On hearing voices, I looked up, to find that a solicitous dog walker was asking if she felt OK; we suspect that the empty Communion Wine bottle clutched for recycling purposes in her left paw probably added colour to the image of destitution and debauchery. Shame really; can't get the staff.

7/4/7 Carefully removed film of wax from interior of Church so that we can lavishly replace it this evening. I want my wand back. Must remember to collect barbeque contraption: it cannot be wheeled down as its nuts fall off.

Nb Idle thoughts of an idle Churchwarden: first, personal adornment. I have an earwig found in the baptistery at Christmas; I also have a purple headed pin; but if anyone has found a green amber drop earwig, please bring it to me as I know whose it is. Also a black hat that I thought I had in safe keeping. Not doing well, am I? Second, matches. Do not buy *Bryant and May* matches. Many do not ignite at all, but those that do burn down ever so fast and one's fingers are in danger before one lamp is lit. *Waitrose* matches are good for all three votive lamps.

Mirabile dictu, I have finished my Lent Book. I never started my Christmas Book and failed half way through my retreat book, so you get the picture. It contained a challenging thought: 'there is no limit to what can be achieved so long as one does not mind who gets the credit'. Yes, that's one in the eye for me and no, I cannot cope with more than one thought at a time (unless I am dealing with personal adornment and matches, of course!) so it may have had lots more to offer but that is all I am left with.

8/4/7 Easter Day. Yes. Alleluia.

9/4/7 Parish Walk day ... we were divided into two parties. There was the party that arrived at 11 30 am, employed a defective map, misunderstood the signs, went round and round in circles and climbed down a Precipitous Slope, thus gaining one precious hour of health giving exercise, and there was the party that arrived at 12 15 with an OS map and somehow got to Paradise Bottom at exactly the same time but with minimal effort.

15/4/7 7 55 am There is a jay on the lamp post opposite Church.

Otherwise a merciful oblivion has fallen over the past two weeks. I think I have attended Church now and then, but if not, I am still represented by my daemon, a white fluffy teddy.