

November 2017

Passchendaele 100: thoughts from Father Charles

Menin Gate

At the entrance to the city of Ypres in Belgium stands the Menin Gate. It is a vast white monumental construction built in commemoration of those who went 'missing' during the various battles that were fought on the Western Front during WW1 in this relatively small area of Flanders. The Gate spans the route to the frontlines, and stands beside the bridge over the canal, a bridge crossed by hundreds of thousands of troops journeying to the front.

The Gate, built in Portland stone, is large enough to bear the names of 54,392 names of men who fell but were never found. However, it was not large enough to hold all the names. A further 35,000 are recorded at the nearby Cemetery of Tyne Cot. And a further 12,000 names, of those never found, are located at other local Cemeteries such as Messines Ridge, Buttes and Polygon Wood.

These names represent some one hundred thousand (plus) who died, but whose bodies have not been retrieved, during the battles that raged through the very few square miles that comprised the Ypres Salient, and culminated in the Battle of Passchendaele. This is a battle of which the centenary is this year and, after 99 days of conflict, concluded on 10 November 1917.

It is a battle of notoriety. Not simply because of the numbers – whether it be casualties (on both sides), tonnage of high explosives, or number of shells – but also the conditions. Constant shelling churned the clay and destroyed natural drainage, and this linked with the unnaturally high rainfall, created a quagmire of mud and water that consumed men, horses, mules and tanks.

A Shocking Account

This is a shocking account. One which has been repeated in a number of other First World War Centenaries: Gallipoli, Jutland and The Somme. These remembrances of the First World War are important for us to acknowledge and reflect upon.

This year, whilst walking through the Tyne Cot Cemetery my attention was drawn to the inscription on a gravestone which read:

“He gave his life in the belief that this was the war to end all wars”.

In the 100 years since the Battle of Passchendaele there have been nearly 200 major armed conflicts in our world.

Our Acts of Remembrance

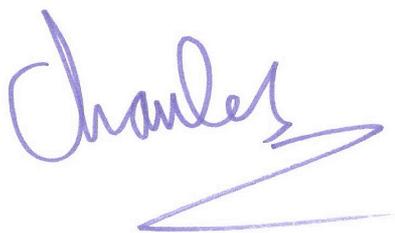
These acts of remembrance are important and ones that we should stand to acknowledge and reflect upon. Included within these events, of the First War, are all those subsequent wars and conflicts, and of those that continue today. It is also important to reflect that, 100 years ago, it was typical for battles to be confined between armed combatants along 'ribbons of war'. Since then wars are increasingly geographically spread over wide lines and not even confined to geographies, consequently, civilians and support services are frequently on the frontline – both accidentally and deliberately.

November, commencing with the Feast Day of All Saints and the Commemoration of the Departed on All Souls, and the events of both Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday (11 and 12 November consecutively) provides a month for reflection and consideration. This may, for some of us, be attendance at specific events such as the Whiteladies Road War Memorial on Friday 10 (at 1045), the Remembrance Sunday Parish Mass at All Saints (Sunday 12 at 1045), the Cathedral Fauré Requiem Mass (Sunday 12 at 6.00pm). For others it may be during the November weekly Requiem Masses where we bring those we have loved and who have had an impact on our lives to our minds and commemorate in the Eucharistic context.

For others it will be through the reading or re-reading of history or the deep insights provided by literature or poetry. Or it may be through quiet contemplation, reflection and prayer.

Whatever your chosen approach, I do urge you this year to reflect on this subject, question meanings, values and purpose. And also to hold in your prayers all who put their life at risk through the armed and uniformed services, all civilians who find themselves caught in the 'frontline' of current conflicts.

With prayers and blessings,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Charles". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Can you Remember?

Yes, I still remember
The whole thing in a way;
Edge and exactitude
Depend on the day.

Of all that prodigious scene
There seems scanty loss,
Though mists mainly float and screen
Canal, spire and fosse;

Though commonly I fail to name
That once obvious Hill,
And where we went and whence we came
To be killed, or kill.
Those mists are spiritual
And luminous-obscure,
Evolved of countless circumstance
Of which I am sure;

Of which, at the instance
Of sound, smell, change and stir,
New-old shapes for ever
Intensely recur.

And some are sparkling, laughing, singing,
Young, heroic, mild;
And some incurable, twisted,
Shrieking, dumb, defiled.

Edmund Blunden 1936

Briefly, Edmund Charles Blunden was born in London in 1896, moving with his family to Kent shortly afterwards. He was educated at Christ's Hospital and Queen's College, Oxford. Blunden was commissioned into the Royal Sussex Regiment in 1915 and served in France and Belgium from 1916 to 1919, fighting on the Somme and at Ypres. He was awarded the Military Cross.

Fr Charles has include this poem for two reasons; one, because there's an unlikely combination of war as horror and also the incidental pleasures of people together – this is a characteristic of Blunden's writing. And two, because as a child he met Blunden – though at the age of ten or eleven the significance was somewhat lost, but the subsequent 'value' of his poetry (to Fr Charles' older self) seems consequently greater.

The World, the Flesh and the Devil: thoughts from Father Charles

A Triad of Evil

In catholic moral tradition, the teaching is that ‘the World, the Flesh and the Devil’ are the three primary sources of evil. They are sometimes described as the enemies of the soul. Last month (October) I discussed the topics of the world and the flesh.

‘The Devil’, which is the evil frequently sanctified and idealised, and stands at the top of the ‘triad of evil’, I said I would leave for future reflection, and this I will do in a return to the topic of evil in a future month.

I previously concluded with an observation of Thomas Aquinas, who in *Summa Theologica*, suggested that “*evil only succeeds by disguising itself as good*”. It seems to me that this is the very peak of success for a personified Satan – and a thought worth of reflection.

DIARY DATE FOR THIS YEAR’S ACT OF REMEMBRANCE

The day before Armistice Day has been chosen for our Act of Remembrance at the St John’s war memorial on the junction of Apsley Road and Whiteladies Road this year.

Armistice Day falls on a Saturday but our Act of Remembrance has become so important for the 200 local schoolchildren who attend each year that we have moved the short service and wreath-laying ceremony at 10.45 am to the previous day, Friday, November 10.

Most of the names on the memorial are those of former pupils of the nearby St John’s Church of England Primary School who died in the *First World War*.

During this year’s Act of Remembrance Fr Charles – and other clergy from *Churches Together in Clifton, Cotham and Redland* – will remind those gathered at the memorial that November this year is the hundredth anniversary of the end of the Battle of Passchendaele.

One of the bloodiest episodes of the First World War, it was fought from July to November 1917 for control of the ridges south and east of the Belgian city of Ypres in West Flanders. The Allies finally recaptured the village of Passchendaele but by then around a third of a million British and Allied soldiers had been killed or wounded in some of the most horrific trench warfare of the conflict.

Prior to the two-minute silence at 11 am on November 10 *The Last Post* will be sounded by bugler Sergeant Major Martin Dove of the Bristol Army Cadet Force's Corps of Drums and the silence will end as lone piper Bob Smythe from the City of Bristol Pipes and Drums plays a lament.

It is expected that wreaths will be laid this year by representatives of local residents, businesses in Whiteladies Road, Avon and Somerset Constabulary and local schools.

Brass players from Redmaids' High School – which, following a recent merger, now includes pupils of the former Redland High School – will accompany the singing of the hymn *I vow to thee, my country* and the *National Anthem*.

IN THIS MONTH....NOVEMBER 1920

An excerpt from the Vicar's (Canon Gillson's) Notes.

It was a real misfortune that torrents of rain kept so many people from coming to hear the Bishop of Northern Rhodesia in the Parish Hall. In point of fact just about 300 people were prevented; at least the hall would have held that number more. The Bishop was more than kind and gave us of his very best. He warned us of the great evil that threatens Central Africa through the British Government establishing "forced labour". Early in the [World] War [1] the government took the Bishop of Zanzibar's pamphlet, re-named it "The black slaves of Prussia" and scattered it broadcast without charge. Now they are themselves promoting forced labour, which the Bishop assured us is sometimes worse than slavery. Strong representations are being made to the Government and the Bishop of Zanzibar has published another pamphlet exposing the evil, which we ought to get and study. The Bishop went on to tell us of the native's great desire for education and his special joy in mathematics; he hails the approach of the missionary because he hopes he will establish schools, not because he has any interest in, or desire for, the Christian religion. He told us that the situation for the native tribes at the present moment is fraught with the greatest danger; owing to the mere presence of the white man the native is changing rapidly, and nothing can prevent it. The old institutions and foundations of the native life are breaking up, and unless we give them the sure foundation of the Catholic faith the natives will suffer in all ways by the white man's coming. The bishop described the methods of the work and some of its great difficulties: the size of the Diocese, as large as Germany before the war. The number of languages; the smallness of villages, sometimes only six huts; the difficulty of travelling owing to the want of roads. We broke up with the sense of having gained new material and openings for our prayers; a more urgent need for our work; and certain that a wet walk was but a small inconvenience for the privilege of having listened to one who is such a noble example of a Catholic in deed as well as in word; we get rather tired of the latter.

Kenneth D Smith MA (Mus) LRAM

Ken Smith gave his first Organ recital aged 13, at St Mary's Church Nottingham, where he lived. From a musical family, he had organ lessons from the age of 12 to 18, but otherwise would tell you he is largely self-taught. After National Service in the RAF, in Cyrenaica, he took an MA in Music at Keble College, Oxford, where his tutor was the distinguished composer Edmund Rubbra. Ken spent five years as Assistant Director of Music at Wrekin College, then a further five as Head of Music at Sir Thomas Rich's School in Gloucester (the first such appointment at the school since 1666). Ken's next job brought him to Bristol, where he was Head of Music for thirteen years at St Matthias College in Fishponds.

In these years he became Director of the newly founded Clifton Singers, taking liturgical music to churches that would not otherwise have been able to host it, "giving the buildings the music they deserved". At this time too he started coming to All Saints, and was of the congregation when the post of Director of Music fell vacant in 1978. He has filled it with conspicuous success ever since, for a total of 28 years, longer than the tenures of Kirby or Fry, though a tablet in the St Richard Chapel tells us that Cedric Bucknall was organist for 45 years (1876-1921). Soon after coming to All Saints, Ken took early retirement from St Matthias, when it was taken over by Bristol Polytechnic. Some retirement.

The choir expanded on his appointment, boosted by some Clifton Singers, and it was an exciting time for the choir. Ken headed a formidable team which included John Guy as Deputy Organist and Diarmaid McCulloch as Deputy Choirmaster. Richard Ashby took over as Deputy Organist in 1981, when John Guy left.

The Alternative Service Book (ASB) was published in 1980, soon after Ken's arrival. With typical fair-mindedness he looked for the best in it, and set about creating a series of Alleluias, one for each of the Sundays and major feast days in the ASB, which readers will recall had years 1 and 2. Thus he created well over a hundred such verses, using mostly hymn tunes for the Alleluia, so the congregation could join in, and Anglican chant or a chorale tune for the verse, which the Choir sings in harmony. Not a few of these are Ken's own compositions, attributed by him, with his usual modesty, to such whimsical composers as 'Cheap Round and Penny-Keep', 'Spoof and Thule' or 'E Pericoloso Sporgersi'. This set deserves to be published, and it is to be hoped that one day it will be.

At the same time Ken also created Responsorial Psalms for the major Feasts and devotions of the liturgical year, including five for the Easter Vigil. Most of the responses are Ken's composition, and other components, tunes from hymns and plainsong tones and endings, were borrowed from here and there, in the tradition of composers through the centuries, including the great JS Bach. "Much more intellectually and musically satisfying than any

published
collection of responsorial psalms”, a colleague recently commented.

The total achievement is formidable. Ken wrote some himself, then used not only well-known hymns, but lesser known tunes, chorales, folk songs, drinking songs and such from his extensive knowledge of 1,000 years of European music. Then he borrowed from the best of Anglican chant, a miniature form that distils some fine English musicianship, and Plainsong, the bedrock of Church music. Thus the publication of the ASB became the catalyst for a union of music and liturgy at All Saints that we are extraordinarily fortunate to have, and which illuminates the readings with originality and sensitivity. The music is for all, yet includes the best from the best composers (JS Bach, SS Wesley, Stanford etc). Ken has fitted words to music with real skill and his usual attention to detail, to enhance the drama and import of the whole. And yet this occupies little time in the liturgy, just a pause to put a highlighter (as Ken himself might say) through the Psalm response or the Alleluia Verse.

It will come as no surprise that Ken the composer is a miniaturist. He readily admits that his composing mechanism seems to work on a small scale. But it works extraordinarily well. His anthems which set ‘Tu es Petrus’, ‘Domine Non Sum Dignus’ and above all ‘Stay with us Lord’ are gems of their kind. The last of these is an exquisite setting of the wonderful conversation on the road to Emmaus. Ken brings them out for performance, with diffidence, and not often enough.

We sing his Carol Mass every Christmastide, based on seasonal tunes, and harmonised for the choir at his request. In Lent and Advent we sing his arrangement of the Marbeck Mass (‘too late to be true Plainsong’ he will tell you). He has also written for All Saints settings known to the Choir as ‘The Cowbell Mass’ and ‘The Donkey Mass’, both simple enough for congregations, with a fine economy of material and taut construction.

Have we mentioned the five Regina Coeli settings to hymn tunes, which we sing in Eastertide? Or how the tension builds in Lent with his series of Verses before the Gospel in A flat, building to the final eight-part “Christ for our sake” on Palm Sunday and Good Friday? The descants he writes for the Choir, because many published descants are mediocre?

Parishioners will recall Ken’s annual one hour programs of Advent Music and Readings, with hymns, anthems, readings and poems under a particular theme. They may not realise that the Lenten anthems would be likewise grouped: for instance in one year there were six different settings of ‘O Sacrum Convivium’; another year the whole of the Palestrina ‘Stabat Mater’, in sections; Lassus Responsories; settings of ‘Ave Verum Corpus’; anthems all by JS Bach.

You will by now be getting the idea: in a relentless search for good quality music Ken will write, rearrange, translate, rewrite and adapt anything. He will borrow hymn tunes from his large collection of hymnals, because they are better tunes, or better harmonisations. He will translate from Latin so that we may enjoy the appropriate plainsong for a feast. Anthems can come from anywhere, and Ken has no hesitation in requiring the choir to sing in Welsh or Russian, to its dismay. What a brilliant idea to remove “Now Brethren be Patient” from the Brahms ‘German Requiem’, translate it and use it as an anthem. Or to sing the final Amen from Messiah as an anthem, on its own.

The present write is not competent to remark on organ playing (having only just discovered how to pronounce diapason) but knows that Ken will transpose at sight for the convenience of choir or soloist, improvise so that you would swear the music had been written, and disguise the misbehaviour of an organ so you would scarcely know it was coupling promiscuously. “His other amazing skill is the ability to re-harmonise the last verse of any hymn which he does frequently and to great effect, many are absolutely brilliant”, as a colleague put it.

Ken has spent a lifetime teaching, and the choir in particular has had the good fortune to hear his parenthetical remarks on the music and composers, during rehearsal. With his usual modesty, Ken says he goes to choir practice expecting to learn something from the assembled singers, and indeed much talent has assembled on Thursday nights in the Parish Room and, afterwards, the Alma Tavern.

Ken sees the best in everyone, so he always expects far more of the choir than it believes it is capable of. He is almost always right, with the result that the choir has had 28 years of getting away with murder in its ambitions, of amazingly varied repertoire, full of interest, and some wonderful music making. The Choir’s full and sufficient reward is the 100 Watt beam Ken bestows on it for a job well done. Should something go awry there appears the look that turneth to stone, but never, ever, any recrimination after the Dismissal.

If there is one thing Ken loves as much as teaching it is sending up teachers. Spectacles removed, eyes screwed tight shut, he will deliver a wonderful donnish pronouncement, and then roar with laughter at the pomposity of academics, himself included.

“Not a lot of people know that” is one of Ken’s favourite self-effacing catch phrases. Probably not a lot of people realise that Ken knows the English Hymnal virtually by heart: hymn numbers, words, harmonies, names of tunes, and also the reason for and location of the hymn name, for Ken is also something of an expert on English place names. And Ken seemed to know the New English Hymnal, when it appeared, so intimately that one would think he had edited it.

This familiarity with the Hymnal means that there will be a good reason for every hymn being selected on its day, thanks to Ken's formidable knowledge of both hymnbook and lectionary. The reason may be less obvious: perhaps that hymn was requested by one whose year's mind falls today. The more one observes the more one realises that we can see only a fraction of Ken's thinking, his attention to detail.

To remain with the more visible bits, a few highlights of Ken's era include:

- A public lecture, "Liturgical Music for the Parish" on the principles of writing music for the ASB;
- Two liturgical performances of the Fauré Requiem;
- The Victorian Week, and his lecture, with illustration from the choir, on Victorian Church music (1986)
- A liturgical performance of Haydn's Nelson Mass, in Cotham Parish Church (1987)
- The choir's visit to Peterborough Cathedral (1990) where it sang the services for the weekend, under Ken's direction;
- Providing the choir for the Glastonbury Pilgrimage (2001), so well received that Ken and the choir were asked to do it again.

But Ken's talents do not stop there. Who plays the Hokey Cokey that closes the MU Christmas party for the children, and 'Down at the old Bull and Bush' for the elderly? Who accompanies anything and everyone, from opera to jazz, at parish variety evenings? Who does a fair imitation of Fats Waller playing and singing 'My very God Friend the Milkman'? Who plays every Friday morning for Assembly at St John's Primary School? Be it Madrigals or Barbershop, Birdcombe Court or Worcester Terrace, the Director of Music knows no limits.

Ken is retiring as Director of Music, which means this is not the place to dwell on his other service to All Saints, as Parish Councillor, Committee Member, Churchwarden-Spouse, Magazine Editor and regular contributor, author of those ever-popular leaflets in the Atrium 'by a layman'. But as Director of Music his dedication has been astonishing, particularly when he had a young family, and particularly in the last 18 months since Richard Ashby left us.

In September 1988 we had a party to celebrate Ken's 60th birthday, and ten years in charge of music. In September 2006, as he retires, it's definitely time for another party.

Another layman Aug 2006

PARISH RETREAT 2018

As many of you now know Glastonbury Retreat House will close on 27 December 2017. This comes as a shock as it has been a Retreat House since 1931 and All Saints has been going there for many years. We have been very happy there.

Many years ago All Saints also went to Llangasty, near Brecon, for retreats and that is where we will be going in 2018.

- The dates are
Friday 2 February 4pm to 4pm on Sunday 4 February
 - Cost approximately £160 per person – the new tariff hasn't been confirmed yet.
- Conductor – Christine Dodd, who is a Roman Catholic and an experienced Retreat Conductor. She has lead retreats at Llangasty.

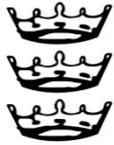
We have to pay for 16 places regardless of whether that many go, so the cost may be a little more. We will need to pay with one cheque when we arrive, so I will need your full payment by 21 January 2018 to confirm your place.

Llangasty is much smaller than Glastonbury and is rather remote, so for the few who like to indulge, retail therapy will not be an option! It is intimate but friendly and has two chapels and a library. The scenery around is magnificent and there are some good walking places. I would suggest looking it up on the internet:

www.llangasty.com/

There is a list to sign in the porch, please remember we are limited to 16 places. I will update in the magazine as necessary and I will also give details of directions and offer of lifts nearer the time.

Liz Badman



News from the Diocese of Bristol

Ven Christine Froude, Archdeacon of Malmesbury, on holding on to worries

A young woman confidently walked around the room while carrying in her raised hand, a glass of water.

She was leading a training day on wellbeing. She asked "How heavy is this glass of water?"

She smiled as answers ranged from 250 -500 grms. She took her time and then replied. "The weight of this glass of water doesn't matter, what matters is how long I hold it....."

"If I hold it for a minute it's not a problem..."

"If I hold it for an hour, I'll have an ache in my right arm..."

"If I hold it for a day, someone will need to call an ambulance!"

"The longer I hold it, the heavier it becomes."

She went on to say: "That is the way it is with worry! If we carry our burdens all the time, sooner or later, as the burden becomes increasingly heavy, we won't be able to carry on..."

"As with the glass of water, so it is with the worry in our lives, sooner or later we have to lay it down, or we will be overcome by it."

We worry too. About the current political upheaval, not only in our own country but in places as diverse as North Korea, Afghanistan and even the USA.

We worry about the enormous population movements as many in the Middle East flee from war and persecution.

We worry about the disregard for international law and order as innocent people are mowed down in Las Vegas, Barcelona, Nice, London and other cities across our world.

Perhaps though your worries aren't "out there." Perhaps your worries are inside you:

- Secret concerns about your health,

- Private worries about your marriage,
- Hidden fears for your children and grandchildren,
- Concealed anxieties about the direction your life is taking.

Today, and every day, we all have a choice before us. We can carry that glass of water, that worry, until we are overcome by it. Or we can lay it down and choose to believe God's promise.

"For surely I know the plans I have for you, plans for your welfare not for harm, to give you a future with hope."

The source of our worry may still be there, but offering each day to God in prayer reassures our souls that God is with us and will never forsake us.

Whatever you may be worrying about today, May the peace of God that passes all understanding, be yours.

Read Archdeacon Christine's full article at www.bristol.anglican.org

Avonside Mission Area churches sign covenant

Members of churches in the Avonside Mission Area have gathered to celebrate the signing of their covenant.

Rt Revd Dr Lee Rayfield, Bishop of Swindon and Acting Diocesan Bishop, spoke at the special service, which saw more than 100 people from across five churches gather at St Mary's Stoke Bishop to commit to the vision.

The Avonside Mission Area is a network of five local Anglican Churches serving the North West of Bristol.

Bishop Lee told them that, collectively, they could make a big difference to their communities. He said: "You're doing this because there's something very special that God does when He brings people together.

"We have a wonderful opportunity in this; in making ourselves accountable to one another to show what can happen when we work together."

A Mission Area brings together parishes committed to developing a coordinated approach to mission across a wider geographical area; to focus, share and multiply mission resources and practice; and to provide a context in which new leaders and ministers can explore vocation and develop in a mission focused setting.

*Read the Avonside Mission Statement at
www.bristol.anglican.org/documents/avonside-mission-area-covenant/*

Upcoming Events and Training

Visible Discipleship: A Discussion Panel

Wednesday 8 November at 7pm: Christ Church Clifton, Bristol

How do we understand the relationship between social action and evangelism? An evening of discussion and conversation exploring the relationship between social action and gospel evangelism.

Christians in Science - Professor Sir Colin Humphreys

Friday 17 November at 7.30pm: Christ Church Clifton, Bristol

Professor Sir Colin Humphreys will be speaking on Science and the Historicity of the Bible.

Godly Play Taster Day

Saturday 25 November at 9.30am: Tyndale Baptist Church, Bristol

An introduction to using Godly Play in your church as a way of creating sacred space and building a community.

Details of all events and training can be found at www.bristol.anglican.org

*Read all the latest news from the Diocese of Bristol at our website
(www.bristol.anglican.org) or follow us on Facebook
(www.facebook.com/Diocese.of.Bristol) or Twitter (@diobrizzle).*

We love sharing stories about what our churches are doing. Tell us your story by getting in touch with our Communications Officer, Ben, at ben.evans@bristoldiocese.org.

Julian Trust Night Shelter

Blanket Request

Winter is approaching rapidly and cold nights for the homeless.

Blankets and duvets are needed in the night shelter and to offer too often to guests who are unable to stay for the night as we only have 18 beds.

Please either leave them in the flower room or if you are unable to bring them to Church please ring me and I will collect.

Many thanks in anticipation.

Vera Sanders

Tel 01275 814002