

BROMLEY & SHEPPARD'S COLLEGES



Herald

October 2024



Welcome

Dear Collegians and Friends,



In this season of mellow fruitfulness, our cover picture is of Jill and George's Runner beans. We have now said goodbye and thank you to Angela King as our Acting Chaplain. Her last sermon is to be found in these pages. Michael Keen organised "Music and Silences for Joyce" to remember former Collegian, Joyce Ilson, who passed away this month.

We produced a new edition of the "Short Guide" to the Colleges ready for our Open Day as part of the London Open Houses Festival. So many people who came said, "I've been passing this place for years and never knew what it was...". Over £440 was raised for the Friends of the Colleges.

We celebrated Paul Jenkin's 80th birthday, Angela's farewell, as well as our regular events. Our Harvest Festival collected supplies for the Mottingham Food Bank. I get tired just thinking about all we do. Thank you to those who contribute to our common life!

The next Herald will be for November and the deadline is Saturday October 26th. Please send contributions to me, preferably by email to: therevvedbee@hotmail.co.uk. Thank you to Jo for printing and distributing them, to Rob for doing the housework so I can get on with this, and to all our contributors!

Brandy Pearson

Angela's Last Sermon at Bromley College

I'm not sure how familiar you are with computers but the Microsoft operating system seems quite often to be a law unto itself. As I opened a new document in Word at the start of writing this sermon there flashed up this message at the side of my screen -

Select Share to send this file to anyone you want who will work on it with you.

Rather alarmed at the thought of being invited to write a sort of group sermon on South American liberation theology lines I selected **not now** but then realised that I do of course need to share my thoughts, as always, with God, the creator of all, in the hopes that what I have to say will be in some way acceptable.

The truth is that this will be the last sermon I write for the time being because at the moment I just feel like having a break, partly because I have just entered my 80th year (though I know that makes me of no great age in this community!) but I have never fully retired and at the moment am finding it more and more difficult to formulate words that are theologically suitable or much use to anyone.

This is the Creation season, that season of mists and mellow fruitfulness, close bosomed friend of the maturing sun, as written by John Keats in his Ode to Autumn. He wrote it on September 19th 1820, and the weather then seems to have been more like the balmy weather we've had this week than the cold spell of a week or two ago. We are approaching the end of the year and also moving inexorably towards the end of our lives but let us not forget that the buds of resurrection

are already forming on the branches as the leaves begin to fall.

It must have been difficult for the disciples to strike the right balance in their developing relationship with Jesus. On the one hand they were being entrusted with secrets about his mission and destiny that were alarming and didn't fit with their expectations of what the Messiah would be like. That must have made them feel mystified but also rather special. But in addition to this Jesus kept emphasising the need to be more like servants than masters, like little children who were of even less account than the household servants. I expect we've all had an experience a bit like this, perhaps when we've got a new job or even a promotion. We feel pleased and proud that we've got this far but also anxious because we don't quite know what's expected of us. We've got new authority but not the power that we thought would be expected of us.

I have felt very privileged to be acting chaplain over the last 20 months at this time of change and evolution in the role of chaplain. I know that there are many things that I am not particularly good at, but I am very fond of you all and know that you work together for good. I have learnt a lot from you which has strengthened my faith. You have experienced conflicts and disputes and Covid over the last few years but all in all everyone I think is working together for the peace and thriving of the community. This is much less to do with me than to your own healing processes.

In today's 2nd reading James is saying that the conflicts and angry disputes that come so naturally to us need to be resisted. We can resist them by telling the devil to go

away 'get thee behind me Satan!' and by asking God, not to rain down fire and brimstone on those who have done us an injustice but instead asking God to fill us with love and true wisdom in place of anger.

So it seems that justice is not just to do with punishment. It is much broader than that. It involves an acceptance of the truth but it also involves a growth in understanding on both sides. Remember the Truth and Justice Commission in South Africa after the end of apartheid convened by Bishop Desmond Tutu? Rather a long time ago now. People got a chance to tell their memories of hurt and anger in a way that enabled their desire for revenge to fade away. Nowadays in this country there are also structured opportunities for victims to meet those who have committed crimes on them if it is felt that this will be helpful. A harvest of righteousness comes as a result of sowing the seeds of peace rather than crying out for revenge.

Next Sunday we will be celebrating harvest and perhaps we can prepare for that by looking back over our lives and gathering up all those fragments that make up our own harvest of righteousness. Harvest yields were generally surprisingly small in New Testament times so a yield of as little as 30% was by comparison large.

Richard Handforth, I know, our oldest resident has been looking back over his life recently. This was triggered by his receiving a massively heavy school brochure from the school in Hong Kong where he was head teacher between 1965 and 1973. It was not easy to build up the reputation of St Stephen's College, built on the site of a penal colony but he played his part and now the school is known as the 'Eton of the East'!

The fruits of our harvest are all mixed up of course with the tares and weeds of our sinfulness. But we do not need to compete with each other as to who is the greatest and whose yield is the largest. We just need to welcome the poor and needy and by doing so we welcome Jesus who makes up all that we lack in righteousness.

Jesus said, 'Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all.' Then he took a little child and put it among them; and taking it in his arms, he said to them, Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me.'

Angela King



Presentation to Angela at her last coffee morning.

A New Deal for the Churchill Theatre

Following many months of uncertainty, Bromley Council has just agreed to accept an offer from a developer for the leasehold of the Churchill Theatre site.

The developer's proposals include a commitment to work with Trafalgar Group to ensure the theatre remains in the current building - something Bromley Liberal Democrats have campaigned for since plans to sell the site were first revealed in November 2022.

Signatories of our petition will recall the Conservative-run Council's rationale for selling the site, which had fallen into disrepair on their watch and was supposedly "nearing the end of its design life", with the cost of necessary repairs spiralling out of control.

In response, 5,585 local residents signed our petition and made their voices heard, helping to secure this outcome. Under the agreement the building will be refurbished and made structurally sound, giving Trafalgar the assurances they need to keep the theatre in its present home.

There are details about the deal that we can't share with you yet, and there will be concerns about whether the Council have secured best value for this site, whether there are sufficient guarantees to ensure the theatre's future, and whether it really was necessary to spend £15m to move the library now that it seems that the building wasn't actually "end of life".

But initial signs are that this is a positive outcome that couldn't have been achieved without the support our

campaign received. Thank you to everyone who helped our campaign.

Graeme Casey, Julie Ireland and Sam Webber

Liberal Democrat Councillors for Bromley Town

Paulos' 80th Birthday Breakfast

On Monday September 9th, not only did Paul Jenkins celebrate the Birthday of the Blessed Virgin Mary (transferred from Sunday) but we all helped him celebrate his 80th birthday at a Champagne breakfast in the Common Room.





Thank you to Paulos for a special event, including a very moving speech. It was definitely the fanciest breakfast I've had in a long time!



The Birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary
by Giotto, in the Scrovegni Chapel
Padua, Italy (c. 1305)

In memory of Ruth Allton



A generous anonymous donation in memory of Ruth Allton has provided the Colleges with a seat made from re-cycled plastic bottles which is near the Slip Gate and three parasols for use with our green tables.



Paul Allton

Sing from your seats

....This was the enticing heading of an email from the Royal Albert Hall to all those who had purchased tickets for the Promenade Concert on 7th September, when Handel's *Messiah* was to be performed. We were invited to join the chorus on the night in singing the Hallelujah Chorus and the final page of the Amen Chorus. Those interested were asked to be in their seats three quarters of an hour beforehand for a short rehearsal.



This was too good an opportunity to miss, so there we were in our seats in good time, armed with the music which Dorothy had downloaded beforehand. The conductor and one of the chorus-masters (there were six choirs taking part!) duly appeared on the then empty stage, but with the organist at the ready. They started with a playful banter between themselves and with the audience, obviously aiming to make us feel at ease. It

had the desired effect – in fact it felt rather like a Morecombe and Wise turn. They then took us through our paces, and the rehearsal went surprisingly well. Having conducted eight ‘Come and Sing’ *Messiahs* over the years, it was fun to be on the receiving end, at the same time hoping that my ageing voice wouldn’t do too much harm.

And when it came to it, the performance went remarkably well.

The whole evening was a moving experience for me on different levels. Seeing everyone standing in the packed arena brought back memories of being there myself frequently from the age of twelve onwards. Then years later introducing Dorothy to the Proms and enjoying it all through her eyes and ears. And later still, remembering with affection my days singing with the BBC Symphony Chorus.

But above all, it was lovely just to sit back and take in this lovely work, admiring the way Handel set such wonderful music to the at times mind-blowing texts from both the Old and New Testaments.

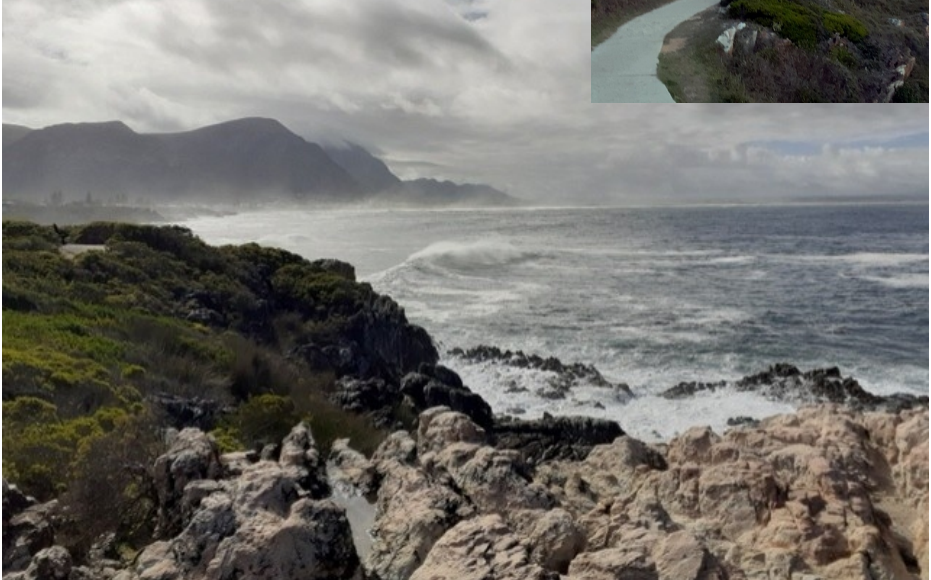
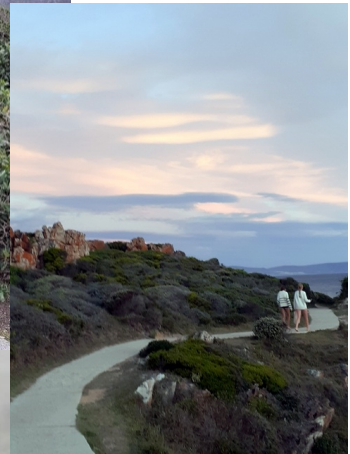
But trust our daughter to lower the tone. When we sent her a photo of the auditorium just before the concert, Karen texted back: ‘When does the karaoke start, Dad?!’

Dorothy and Roy Nicholson

Clare's brother Alan's Bench

My brother Alan died at the Cape in October 2020 and due to Covid I was not able to attend his funeral. So on my visit to Hermanus in South Africa, at Easter this year I was glad I could sit on the bench that has his name, high up along the cliff path and look out over the bay.

Clare Preston



Milk bottles to Sunflowers

At the beginning of spring, I spied, from our first floor flat, Peter Morris planting plastic milk bottles in the beds on the south side of Bromley College. What would they grow into? I am no great gardener, but I could not guess.

In fact, they seemed to grow into sunflowers and dahlias, which have been flowering for months, and are still surviving heavy rain and winds.



OK, I do realise that they did not actually grow from the milk bottles, which were to keep the flower

seeds safe from cold and squirrels. Also, Peter told me they were not all milk bottles. Some were water bottles and some were something else!

Brandy Pearson





Getting ready for Harvest Festival
Photo by Paul Allton

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