

BROMLEY & SHEPPARD'S COLLEGES



Herald

November 2025



Welcome

Dear Collegians and Friends,

The golden autumn leaves I can see beyond the cedar trees from my bedroom window, are disappearing daily in the seasonal winds. The clocks have gone back, though my body clock does not yet agree!

We have what I hope will be the first of a regular contribution from Nick, our new chaplain. We have memories of Coventry Cathedral, and more about Derry, by Michael Hewitt.

The picture on the front is from our Harvest Festival, to remind us all of the harvest of the sea, thanks to Paul Jenkins.

The next Herald will be for December and the deadline is Saturday November 29th. What would you like in our edition for Christmas and New Year? 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 his support, and to all our contributors!

Brandy Pearson



From the Chaplain's window.

I have made a start!

I have made a start about 5 weeks after I started. I have started sitting at the window on the ground floor of The Chaplains House – and have made a start.

I have started recognising threads – seeing how a change can point out learned behaviour, unnecessary anxieties now slipping into the past tense. The threads may just be gossamer thin but perhaps they will be robust enough soon to handle more fondly.

One of my favourite writers is Ronald Blythe (pictured here in his study in 1983) – perhaps he is also well known by you.

Ronald Blythe wrote a regular piece in The Church Times - in the 80's and 90's – and seemed effortlessly able to



pull threads – most of which were the sign of an active and fecund imagination. Threads of historical narrative – stories – reinterpretation of known (or half remembered) theological ideas. The threads which he drew out were also joined by threads of his own skilful links of ideas & culture - always with an eye to the human connections with either the idea itself – or how it may seem to others.

I read recently a biography about Ronald – know as Ronnie to his friends - and it is a wonderful portrait of a writer who immersed himself in place. The place – particularly garden - he immersed himself in was once the home of the Nash's – Artists and friends of Ronnie.

So why am I banging on about him? Because I have made a beginning – I have made a start in looking and thinking and reflecting, and pondering, and tugging at threads – in this place.

Here then I will look out at the changing landscape of this particular corner of the Colleges and see it change, and appreciate the view – and be open to all of which it may speak about our lives as neighbours in this historic place.

I see the tree -gorgeous on this beautiful autumnal day – the dappled light – it's changing foliage – the colours!

I wonder – who first sat at this window, centuries ago and perhaps spoke kindly words or listened to stories of distress, or assured a person of the deep love God had for them. Human dignity, human need, human longing – I sense this work has been done in this house. I sense

that this continues amongst us, and the mystery which we share, and speak about and fumble and tumble about trying to embody. When we stop and stare we can glimpse a sense of the divine life which we share, and inhabit.

So I have made a start. I have found a spot. I am looking, I am listening and I am grateful.

I am grateful for the warm welcome I have received, for the opportunity this ministry will offer me personally, and for the shared space that Mark and I will inhabit.

It has been good to make visits to your homes, to see the differences in the flats, to understand how the sun comes this way – or that. To see how important this place is to you as a place of security, and calm. To allow love of neighbour to be re-interpreted for you in your space, and to allow the beauty that surrounds us in our little oasis to speak of God, and continuity, of hope in a rapidly changing world – or at least to give us the inkling that we might be able to start articulating this.

I am very glad to be with you. I have made a start. In the pages of Herald we might explore some of the emerging themes further, and as we look and listen, hope and dream, pray and work, it will be all through and by, the glory of God.

With warm wishes and prayers,

Nick

Our Harvest Festival



With Paulos reminding us of the harvest of the seas, pictured in more detail on the front cover, our Harvest Festival encouraged us to contribute tins and packets for the Mottingham Food Bank.

May we continue to remember and prayer for those who work there, and those who need all the food provided. Let us hope for a society where Food Banks are no longer necessary.

Wrap Up London

Mottingham Food bank are now asking for any winter coats in good condition that are no longer needed, as part of the Wrap Up London Appeal.

Please let Christine Latham have them if you have any.

Coventry Cathedral



On the night of 14th November 1940 a raid was launched against Coventry. The main targets were the factories but many homes, two hospitals and the cathedral were also destroyed. Famously the Provost Richard Howard next morning wrote the words, 'Father forgive' on the wall behind the sanctuary. These words were later carved into the wall. It was decided to leave the ruined cathedral as a memorial and reminder of the destruction of war, while plans were made to build a new cathedral next to the ruin. A cross was fashioned out of 3 medieval nails found in the ruins and became the symbol of the cathedral's ministry of reconciliation. On the altar in the ruined cathedral there is also a cross formed from 2 charred beams. Sister Mary Lawrence of the Society of the Precious Blood grew up in Coventry and remembers as a child putting some of her pocket

money into the box outside the ruin which was collecting money for a new cathedral. The new building which was designed by Basil Spence and contains a massive tapestry of Christ by Graham Sutherland was consecrated in 1962.

I visited the cathedral with a South African friend, who incidentally is a clergy widow, and we were shown round by Canon Nitano Muller who comes from the same area in the Cape where my friend lives. He is wearing a replica of the Cross of Nails. I particularly like the Gethsemane chapel and the statue entitled 'Reconciliation'.



Clare Preston

Student Days in Coventry

Rob and I both went to college in Coventry in the early 1970s. The main college building is next door to Coventry Cathedral. Neither of us were Christians at the time, but visited the Cathedral many times.

Rob still remembers a wonderful performance of Bach's Mass in B Minor there, and I still remember a really moving Christmas Carol Service.

The graveyard of the Cathedral is immediately in front of the Student Union building, and we both recall a fantastic event called Winter Rising - Death playing chess on one of the tomb as if from an Ingmar Bergman movie, and people dancing around a giant bonfire!

We have not visited Coventry since leaving college, but have enduring memories of the beautiful stained glass in the baptistry and the angels engraved on the glass looking out at the remains of the old cathedral.

Brandy and Rob Pearson

Music for an Autumn Afternoon

We were treated to a concert featuring harp, flute, voice organ and recorder on Saturday October 4th, in the chapel, with a varied programme for everyone.

Here is a photo of some of the musicians who took part. There

was a retiring collection in aid of Jessie's Fund, which supports children who are seriously ill or with complex



medical conditions to communicate through music and to the work of the Friends of Bromley and Sheppard's Colleges.

We enjoyed tea and tasty refreshments afterwards in the Common Room.

Photo by Paul Allton

Derry/Londonderry Connections

I felt very honoured when Cecil invited me to accompany him to his beloved Derry. For two of the four full days there, I did my own thing, whilst Siobhan, Cecil's sister-in-law, drove him to see old friends and relatives. I was able to wander around, not so aimlessly, visiting many museums and ancient and fairly modern monuments, including the Peace Museum, Guildhall, Peace Bridge and the Bloody Sunday Memorial on the Bogside.

I walked round the mile long City Wall. I stood on the spot where Cecil's house once stood, and its back garden backing on to the walls with its tunnel leading into the Cathedral (now blocked) and once used as an air raid shelter. After attending Cathedral Mattins, lead by the



Dean, we visited the Apprentice Boys Headquarters and Museum, where Cecil's father had been a leading light and had been a drummer in the colourful parades. The last full day we attended Mattins in St Augustine's Church (known as the Wee Church on the Wall) the site of St Columba's Abbey, where he left for Iona. It was larger than I expected, with the Heatley Family Memorial window, with its striking ribbon of orange glass. Cecil preached and we sat in the Heatley family pew.

Afterwards, we crossed the border into County Donegal and, after a hotel lunch (Siobhan's grandson is getting married there on New Year's Eve) drove to Buncrana, seeing the house where Cecil holidayed with his granny, and where he learned to swim off the beautiful sandy beach and seascape of the Donegal Hills. It was rather squally weather, but one doesn't go to Ireland for the sun!

On the way to the airport, we stopped by Cecil's school where, in the impressive archive rooms, a few old boys, now retired, showed Cecil photos and documents.

I felt steeped in the history of Derry as seen through the prism of Cecil's life and his deep association and love for the city and its people. Derry had become a fond place in my memory too,

Michael Hewitt

“Welcome to Church”

from St Saviour’s Priory in Haggerston E8:

One of our generous benefactors sent us a cheque with a covering note written on an old postcard of a stained-glass window from a church he once worked in many years ago.

The benefactor added a P.S. that made us all laugh... the Church Wardens didn’t want a signpost to the church “in case the wrong people came”!!



Illustration by Ann Huston SSM
from “The Orient 2025” with thanks

Peregrination

First steps
faltering but upright
full of hope for the
future
haloed child

pilgrim
through wild wood
paths and
world wide web
towards maturity



'I am the true and living Way'
who guides our steps
not just for the sake of safety
but to help us grow in love
along the way.

Last steps
faltering
knees bent
full of stubborn

determination but weaker
as time goes on
stumbling

towards the end of life
as we have known it.

Deo gratias
Angela King

Andrew's Ancestry

Much to my surprise my sister Liz has discovered that a distant relative of mine lived in Bromley College. Thanks to research by Liz , Kathleen Craig and Janet Woodger we have found that Clara Louise Burnside came to live at no. 40 Bromley College with her daughter Clara Law Burnside in 1904. She stayed until 1922 by which time her daughter had died.

Clara Louise was the niece of my Great Uncle John Grant. She was his wife's brother's daughter. Clara Law Burnside ,(nee) Law, married the Revd. Henderson Burnside .He was a Missionary in China then in Japan. He died in 1903 as Vicar of St. Saviours Forest Gate in East London.

Andrew Grant

We had a whale of a time.....



Bromley 3 Faiths Group has wrestled, like other inter-faith fora, with the local dynamics of the conflict in Gaza. Our early autumn schedule was put on hold while the steering group teased out how to hold Christian, Jew and

Muslim together while geopolitics drew such aggressive lines between them.

It was a relief and delight therefore to meet together in person at Bromley Reform Synagogue on 16 October. Some 40 people gathered, including 4 from the College. Our theme was the prophet Jonah, revered in all 3 faiths. We were told that the whole book is read in synagogues each Yom Kippur, regarded as a parable to teach repentance. Muslims take the Qu'ranic story of Yunus literally, with the difference that it teaches he went to Nineveh twice, rejected the first time but persuaded by God to try again – a lesson of determination in the face of setbacks. For Christians the exposition highlighted God as powerful, faithful, saving and forgiving.

After generous and delicious refreshments provided by our hosts we then divided into groups of 6 or so, comprising members of each of the faiths, to explore our own understandings of Jonah. These conversations buzzed vibrantly till we were called to order after an hour.

There was time to hear of an initiative by the Steering Group to collect money to send to the DEC appeal for food and medicine for Palestinians in Gaza, of the next meeting (on zoom on December 4th), of the annual invitation weekend 14-16 November and, for those who wished, a short tour of the synagogue.

If you would be interested in finding out more of this crucial friendship and dialogue across what many tell us are unbridgeable chasms, please visit the Bromley 3FG website Bromley 3 Faiths Group, or speak to Clare, Richard, Neil or Valerie.

Richard Martin



Photo by Clare Preston

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