

St Michael's Messenger ***Summer 2007***



Free

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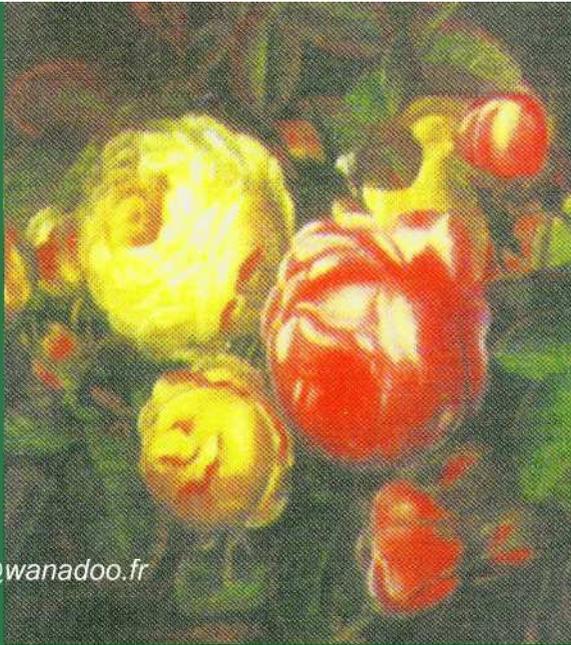
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A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Once more the time has come for another issue of *'The Messenger'*. A copy should appear once every four months and I have tried to keep to that schedule, but sometimes we may be a week or two out. That is the case this time; my apologies for that. Also I apologise if some of you had a copy of the last issue - Winter 2007 – that managed to have 3 paragraphs missing from Jean Coussmaker's article entitled 'A Remarkable Man'. I hope you all managed to either have a reprint of the article itself or a full version in another copy of the magazine.

My thanks, as always, to everyone who has contributed to *'The Messenger'* in any way: **Contributors, Advertisers and Office workers** alike. And, please, don't forget to visit our advertisers' shops and restaurants at the same time mentioning that you saw their advert in this magazine!

Please come if you can to **St Michael's**, on the **2nd June**, to a marvellous **concert** given by **'The Grove Singers'**, from England. They are giving their profits to St Michael's restoration fund, so the more people that attend the merrier! The music they will sing will be a mixture of sacred and secular music. It promises to be a great evening!

Please note that I welcome anyone who would like to contribute to *'The Messenger'* in any way. Please speak to me with your ideas after any of the 10.00 Sunday services, or email me at the address on the back of the magazine.

Thanks to all of you who came to the Pancake supper. I think that it was probably one of the most successful there has been. Thanks must go to Barry Coffey for his superb performance of Noel Coward songs on that evening.

I wish you all a great summer and look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at our church service each Sunday when you are in Beaulieu.

SB



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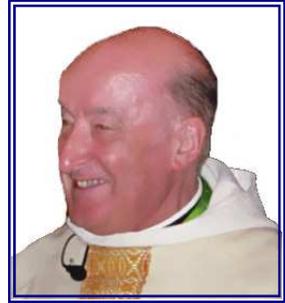
Hugh Mellor

Front cover: The Icon presented to St Michael's by Father Roger.

Photo by Hugh Mellor.

LETTER FROM THE CHAPLAIN

Some churches are having to manage decline and others growth. I think that in our case it is the latter, although the increase in the number of people who worship with us on big occasions like the Christmas carol service or Easter morning is not yet matched by a similar rate of growth on ordinary Sundays. We undoubtedly however are having to learn to manage change. A lot of stalwarts who kept St Michael's running when I first arrived at the end of 2000 have either died or moved away for good or spend much less time here. Fortunately there are new arrivals to take their place and it is right that their experience and freshness of vision should be enlisted.



At our Annual General Meeting we thanked Deanne Fox warmly for her time of service as Churchwarden; She remains as Treasurer and was re-elected to the Council. Twelve candidates stood for the nine places on the Church Council. This I think was a healthy sign, although, sadly, it meant that three people would be disappointed. I would like to pay tribute here to the three who were not re-elected and thank them for their devoted service on the Council; they must not think that they are in any sense being rejected, and we look forward to their continuing service to our community. They are Jonathan Clegg, Edgar Harborne and Anne-Colette Langelier. At the same time we welcome three new members, Josephine Attar (see her article later in this issue), Nicola Karlsen (see her article later in this issue) and Andrew Mercer (a former Churchwarden in Sussex), who have now joined the Council.

The drop in numbers of vocations to the priesthood over the previous decades, far less dramatic for us than for the Roman Catholic Church in France and in many other parts of the world, is another change that has to be 'managed'. It has however its positive aspects. The whole People of God and not just those ordained to the Sacred Ministry have a vocation to ministry and service. All of us are jointly responsible for the life and witness and activity of our Church, not just in areas traditionally left to the laity (finance, hospitality and flower arrangement, for example) but also in the celebration of our worship (I wish I could find more volunteers to lead the intercessions on Sunday) and in our mission to the English-speaking population of the area we serve, from Villefranche to Cap d'Ail. As for my particular job as your priest and pastor, I try always to remember the wise words of Cardinal Basil Hume: "The priest's task is to animate not to dominate".

Roger Greenacre

FROM THE CHURCH REGISTERS

Service of Prayer & Dedication after Civil marriage:

Saturday 5th May Alan Carter & Wynn Harrison

Wedding:

Saturday 19th May Matthew Bannister & Katherine Hood



REST ETERNAL GRANT UNTO THEM, O LORD...

We offer our prayers – together with our sympathy to their families and friends – for the repose of the souls of the following, who have died since our last issue.

Félix Jullien was a Beaulieu resident, a loyal and devoted member of our French Catholic parish and its treasurer, who died suddenly in April. He was always friendly and helpful to us and gave us good advice on a number of occasions.

Margot Mayne was a friend and former parishioner of Fr Roger's at St George's, Paris, who was a regular visitor and generous patron of the Friends of St Michael's. She had an interesting and varied life in places as diverse as Cambridge and Oxford, Istanbul, Athens, Rome, Luxembourg, Brussels and, finally, Paris. She was very much involved in the early days of what is now the European Union; it was in 1961 that an article of hers in **The Economist** first used the term 'Eurocrats'. She was not only an author and journalist but also a passionate believer in Christian unity. She died peacefully in Paris on 3rd February in her 87th year and Fr Roger preached at her requiem in St George's Church.



IN BRIEF

Last year's record broken

Last year (in issue No 20) we recorded a congregation of 98 on Easter Day – “The highest figure for Easter Day recorded over the last 10 years” - and commented, “Let's make it at least 100 next year”. In fact we had 109 people in church on Easter morning this year, 20 of them children. Dare we formulate a wish for 2008?

Watch this space

The Danish Church on the Côte d'Azur will be celebrating its 30th birthday next year & a very interesting programme is being planned for this anniversary.

From Reverence to Veneration

Canon Kenneth Letts of Holy Trinity Nice, who had been Acting Archdeacon for a year, was installed as Archdeacon of France at the Archdeaconry Synod in Arras by Bishop David Hamid in February. We have assured him of our warmest congratulations, best wishes and prayers. Officially he is now the Venerable Kenneth Letts but he still prefers to be called Father Ken.



Congratulations

1) Père Louis Derausseau of the Catholic University of Lille, who was Roman Catholic Co-Chairman of French ARC (the Anglican-Roman Catholic Committee for France) for over 15 years, was presented with the Cross of St Augustine of Canterbury by Bishop David Hamid, acting on behalf of the Archbishop of Canterbury, during the Archdeaconry Synod in Arras. Father Roger was asked by Bishop David to make the introductory presentation.

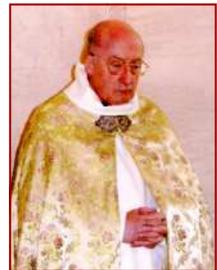
2) Professor Suzanne Martineau, whom many of us have met in Beaulieu, Chichester or Arras, who is the French Catholic expert on Anglicanism, author of *Les Anglicans* & honoured by Archbishop Runcie with the Cross of St Augustine has been named ***Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur*** for her ecumenical work.

The summer "locum"

Fr Ron Robinson of Portsmouth & his family had planned to do the August locum at St Michael's, but unfortunately Fr Ron's daughter Anna is unwell & so the family cannot leave England. We assure them of our prayers & good wishes, but are happy to announce that Canon David Skeoch is able to take over. He was until very recently Vicar of St Gabriel's, Pimlico, & has been a frequent visitor here. He will be locum tenens at St George's, Paris, in June.

Marking a Jubilee

Fr Roger was at the Abbey of Bec in Normandy for a weekend in March, lecturing on the Anglican-Roman Catholic Agreed Statement on Mary. As this year marks his 25th anniversary as an oblate (associate) of the abbey, he was invited to preach on St Joseph's Day (19th March) at the Mass and to preside in a cope from the Abbot's Chair at Solemn Vespers.



A sad farewell

Many of us will mourn the sudden and tragic death of our Editor's distinctive and instantly recognizable car, in which some of us have been privileged to travel. It died peacefully at the side of the autoroute, near Antibes, on 7th May at 18.40, having clocked up 270,000 kms, aged 10 years. Our condolences are with him as he has to dig deep and fork out on another motor!

What's Cooking?

Spicy Chicken Salad

This is the delicious recipe Mike Wain made for the Pancake Supper. So many people asked for his recipe that he has agreed to share it with us. It is a simple salad and makes a pleasant change from the normal cold chicken sandwiches; ideal for a summer garden party.

Ingredients

- 1 whole chicken. (I use *poulet fermier* which is a nice golden colour)
- 2 pots of natural ewe's yoghurt.
- 2 Granny Smith apples (or any two crispy red apples).
- 200g of mayonnaise (From 1 small pot).
- 3 teaspoons of curry powder.
- 2 cloves of garlic.
- A small amount of olive oil.



Method

1. Wash, and then brush the chicken with olive oil. Put some peeled cloves of garlic in and around the chicken. Cook the chicken in a pre-heated oven at 200°C in an oven proof dish covered with foil for 25 minutes a pound, plus 25 minutes. Allow the chicken to cool naturally; do not put it in the fridge to cool. When the chicken is cold you proceed to the next stage.
 2. Put the two pots of yoghurt and 200g of mayonnaise into a large bowl and mix well together.
 3. Add the curry powder.
 4. Take the skin and gristle off the chicken and throw away. Remove the roasted garlic to be used with another meal.
 5. Take the meat off the chicken and chop into small cubes. Add this to the curried yoghurt- mayonnaise mixture,
 6. Finally, core the apples, removing any pips, and chop them into small cubes. Add these to the mix and give it one final stir so that all the chicken and apple are covered by the sauce.
 7. Transfer the mixture into a serving bowl. Cover with Cling-Film and allow it to stand in the fridge for at least 2 hours.
 8. When you are ready to serve simply take out of the fridge, remove cling-film - et voila!
- This recipe will keep for up to two days in a refrigerator. Do not freeze it.

Mike Wain is looking for a job or part-time work.

Please contact him on 06 64 01 07 29

We are happy to give Mike this free advertisement in grateful recognition of his services to 'The Messenger'.

The Icon of the Virgin and Child

In the last issue (No 22) I wrote about the gift of an icon of the Virgin and Child that I was going to present to St Michael's and promised in the next issue to continue the story.

The municipality of Beaulieu organises a number of exhibitions by artists in the course of each year, held in the former Chapel of Sancta Maria de Olivio next to the Church of the Sacré-Coeur. In December 2005 I went to an exhibition of icons, the work of a group of local artists who, under the auspices of the Espace Culturel Fra Angelico in Monaco, have been pupils of the celebrated Greek Orthodox painter and restorer of icons Eva Vlavianos. The discipline involved is both spiritual and artistic and requires a long apprenticeship.



On that occasion I talked with a member of the group who lives in Beaulieu, Mme Chartreux, and I gradually became convinced that an icon, painted locally, and reflecting yet another spiritual tradition – that of the Orthodox Church – would be the ideal choice. When our architect was last here in the autumn of last year Mme Chartreux brought several icons up to the church for us to see; Donald and I agreed that the most suitable for our purpose was the icon of the Virgin and Child of Kykkos, based on an original venerated at the monastery of Kykkos in Cyprus (see Josephine Collins Attar's article on pages 10-12), painted or 'written' by Mme Elvire Mercatini of Menton.

The icon was duly purchased and the members of the icon painters' school brought it to St Michael's where it was brought up to the sanctuary in the course of our annual ecumenical service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

It was placed in its present position on a pillar in the nave in time for a special eucharist for the Feast of the Annunciation in March. I think it is generally agreed that it enhances the atmosphere of devotion and recollection in our church. It is not so much a decoration as an invitation to prayer and a pointer to the mystery of the Incarnation: "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us".

R.T.G.

PS We are grateful to M. Olivier-Henri Sambucchi, Archdeacon Kenneth Letts and Canon Jeremy Haselock, who advised us on the best location for the icon.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR WONDERFUL GIFT!

The officers and members of St Michael's Church Council, the Friends of St Michael's and all the members of the congregation would like to join together in saying a heartfelt thank you to Father Roger for his truly magnificent gift of the *icon of the Virgin and Child* that he has so lovingly given to St Michael's. A gift that will enhance, help and inspire worship in our beautiful church for all the years to come.

THANK YOU FR ROGER.

OFF ON THE ICON TRAIL!

By Josephine Collins Attar

I cons have always captured my eye and imagination. Long have I loved the beauty of these holy, golden works of art, always painted after periods of deep prayer and reflection. I have seen some ancient and wonderful icons in rare exhibitions in London and have a friend who prays and paints icons in her studio in Devon.

Here, on the Côte d'Azur, several groups of iconographers quietly continue in the tradition and there are schools for those who wish to learn the art. One of these, in Monaco, was where Elizabeth Nutter, friend and sometime worshipper at St. Michael's, painted a strikingly strong, red-gold icon of the Archangel Michael which she brought to my home for 24 hours some years ago and I thank her again for that!



So, when Father Roger first showed me the photographs of the beautiful icon which now hangs in our church, I was especially interested to learn more about it. The representation is of the Holy Virgin of Kykkos and the original icon was reputedly painted by Saint Luke who had seen the Blessed Mother herself! How thrilling this sounded and I wondered whether it could really be true!

Some time later I was tired and looking for a short break, which would not involve family duties! For some reason I thought of Cyprus. I had never been there but the idea of winter sunshine and Byzantine monasteries in snowy mountains was terribly appealing. I soon booked a flight and a monastery tour.

"I'm going to Cyprus next week", I told Father Roger.

"Cyprus! Then you must go to the Kykkos monastery in the Troodos Mountains. That's where the original icon is kept. Try and get a photograph."

I checked the tour brochure and, sure enough, there was a full day at the Kykkos monastery. I was off on the icon trail!

Cyprus is a small, rugged island, dotted with vineyards and olive groves. The coast, from what I saw of it during my brief stay, has been ruined with quite hideous, new buildings but the mountain villages with their cobbled streets and small, white houses are charming, timeless and spotlessly clean.

I was staying in a modern hotel in Limassol, not a pretty place but a good base for touring. The British influence was very evident, not the least sign of this being the numerous discotheques in the town. (No, I didn't!). The hotel was full of nut brown, long-stay couples of a certain age, from the shires of England. There were also a few weird misfits like myself who wore padded jackets for daily trips into the mountains. We sometimes joined in the stately, ballroom dancing in the evenings but were mostly too tired!! (I admit to a Zorba the Greek dance with an aged Cypriot ex-footballer!!).

The famous Kykkos monastery lies in the western part of the Troodos Mountains and is just 18 kilometres from the highest peak in Cyprus - Mount Olympus. It was built at an altitude of 1200 metres in an area of dense tree growth. The mountains were misty on the day we went to Kykkos and there was thick snow but the bus driver negotiated the hairpin bends with ease and I did not look down!

The bus finally parked in a small square just above the monastery and we walked a few metres through the snow to the tomb of Archbishop Makarios who, as you know, was the leading figure in the Cypriot struggle for liberation which led to the formation of the independent state in 1960. He was a monk of Kykkos and the Orthodox Church was one of the main financial supporters of the rebels as well as providing a hiding place for them.



The monastery buildings consist of many different architectural styles as they date from different periods. The church lies at the centre of the monastery and you reach it via a large flagstone-paved courtyard with a well. The cloisters and all the buildings are richly decorated with glorious mosaics which tell the story of how the holy icon came to Cyprus. These alone are worth a visit.

The church was especially built to house the icon and there are three aisles. The middle one is dedicated to the Holy Virgin, the right aisle to All Saints and the left aisle to the Archangels Michael and Gabriel. It is difficult to describe the interior as the eye is dazzled by all the gold!!

The golden walls are filled with icons which are centuries old and each one is outstanding in some way. The centre of attraction is, of course, the holy icon which has been passed on from generation to generation. It was painted on ceramic and is covered in a silver and gold plate except for the face which is covered with a red embroidered cloth. (The last cloth was made in 1795) The face is never revealed so as to inspire deeper reverence. The monks have uncovered the icon only in periods of great trouble when the icon was transported to a hill and the face uncovered so that she looked towards the sky without being gazed upon. The monks would sing petition prayers before bringing the holy icon back into the church.

The icon came to Cyprus in or around 1100 A.D and the story began with the visions of a saintly hermit, Isaiah, who was living in the forests there at that time. He asked a nobleman, who wanted to thank him for help, to bring him the icon of the Virgin, one of three creations by saint Luke, from Constantinople. After many difficulties the request became a reality and the icon came to Cyprus where it was received with great joy and prayer. A legend tells how the seashells came out of the sea and joined the procession up the mountains to the monastery. They say that the pine trees bowed down as the icon passed and even today there are 'bowed' trees and sea shells in the forests there! Nature's participation in the reception is beautifully illustrated in some of the frescoes on the monastery walls.

I also visited the monastery museum which is very impressive and contains numerous articles from the early Christian period as well as icons, church vestments and ancient documents. I returned to the dubious delights of downtown Limassol, my head filled with unforgettable images of Kykkos.



Another memorable trip was to Paphos where the ruins of a first century Christian basilica contain Saint Paul's Pillar. The remains of this marble column are allegedly where Saint Paul was scourged when he came to the island with Barnabas (later bishop of Cyprus) for trying to convert people to Christianity. Nearby are Christian catacombs and a strange tree, the Terebinth, centuries old where people seek a cure from illness by tying pieces of their clothing on to the gnarled branches. Today it is the tourists who rip up their handkerchiefs and leave their troubles in Paphos! In Paphos, above the ruins of the basilica, stands an old, stone, Greek Orthodox Church. It was abandoned for many years but is now a living church once more and is the church of Saint Kyriaki and Our Lady of the Little Golden City. However, the really lovely thing is that it is a Roman Catholic Church and an Anglican church! It is jointly run and financed by both denominations who also worship together at certain times. Now, there's an idea! I think that Paul and Barnabas would have approved!

So, I discovered the holy face of Cyprus and I will certainly return. When I look upon the icon in St. Michael's I see Kykkos again and think of the icon arriving there. I hope that my brief description will inspire some readers to go and see these wonders for themselves.

Josephine Collins Attar

BIBLE QUIZ

For all you animal lovers:

- 1) What creature was first to be let out of Noah's ark?
- 2) Which creature was sacrificed instead of Isaac?
- 3) Which creature provided Jesus with money to pay taxes?

For all you gardeners:

- 4) In the parable of the sower, why did the plants get scorched?
- 5) The Book of Proverbs tells us that he who tends a fig will..... what?
- 6) Who was the first man to have planted a vineyard?

And for all you sailors:

- 7) What material was used to waterproof the Ark?
- 8) How many people were In the Ark?
- 9) Who closed the door of the Ark?

And lastly:

- 10) Which is the shortest gospel?

How well did you do? Check your answers by looking on page 17

LIFE IN THE MUSLIM WORLD

'Observations & Recollections' by: Nicola Ann Karlsen.

Nicola, who lived and worked as a teacher of English in the Middle East from 1985-2005, became Church Council Secretary of St George's, Baghdad and St Andrew's, Abu Dhabi. She is presently a council member of St Michael's and, with her family, a regular worshipper. Here she shares with us some of her memories of living in the Middle East:

Saudi Arabia

My first posting overseas, in 1985, was to Saudi Arabia. It was not the easiest of countries for a single female; indeed, if it were not for the growing demand from wealthy citizens for English speaking teachers, in their single sex schools, there would have been no visas granted at all for single, western women. Even Muslims would agree that Saudi is the hard man of the Islamic World. The ruling Wahibi tribes of Riyadh are particularly strict in their observance of Islam. The rest of the Muslim World inevitably expects Saudi to be the 'face of Islam', particularly in its role as the Guardian of the two Holy Shrines, Mecca and Medinah. Across the Gulf however, Iran watches



zealously that, and many say, disapproves of the lax ways of the Royal family. (The Eastern Province is more predominantly Shia and pro-Iranian and is seen as a threat to the current rulers.)

When I arrived in Riyadh, dressed head to foot in the regulation black abaya, I was surprised to find that behind high villa walls western pleasures and vices sometimes abounded; on flights to the West veils were abandoned and mini skirts donned. This situation gives Saudi a somewhat schizophrenic character to a foreigner.

On the streets, though, the Mutawwah held sway, supported by the rather Victorian sounding - **'The Committee for the Propagation of Virtue and Suppression of Vice'**. The expression of their duties included:

- Exhorting worshippers to go to the Mosque at prayer time.
- Beating ladies on the legs or arms if any flesh is exposed.
- Issuing sudden edicts (For example; banning women from entering video shops - as these may be places of assignation - or banning a particular brand of trainers - as the tread pattern on the sole was deemed to represent the Arabic characters for the name of Allah, and was thus an insult if walked upon.)

Males and females were separated completely in everyday life. This led to time consuming, and, as one Arab writer observed, economically draining use of resources as male members of the family ferry around non-driving female relatives, and institutions have to build and staff separate sections for ladies. This became very wearing as almost any car journey was technically illegal if not driven by a relative or employee.

Any outward sign of Christianity was not tolerated - even crosses were not allowed to be worn around the neck. In my time there, those Christians I knew who wished to worship met on western company compounds where meetings were held discreetly in individual homes by an ordained minister who was obviously designated, for visa purposes, as a company employee rather than a priest. (Such gatherings were illegal but there was an implicit understanding between the large oil companies and the Saudi authorities not to interfere in the daily life on those Western compounds.

Other 'illegal' activities were also tolerated, such as wearing western clothes, swimwear, mixing with members of the opposite sex and the manufacture of home-made alcohol. However, if a complaint was received by the authorities, they would take action! In one such case, a disgruntled Saudi, who was refused entry to a party at a compound, had the house raided by police and several westerners were arrested, including a female colleague of mine. She was released from jail by royal pardon on the occasion of 'Eid'.

Although Saudi Arabia falls into the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf, those members who attend Synod are never named in the proceedings and the group is referred to under a pseudonym. I never dared to have a conversation about this apparent contradiction with Quranic teaching about people of the Book, especially as single, female, western Christians were barely tolerated at all in this society. Even when swathed in a black abaya any social interaction in public was limited to money being waved from kerb-crawling cars to requests for "Johnny" (whisky), or incredulous children asking, "You eat pig?" Only occasionally, in the company of professional Saudi women, could some equal interaction occur.



One dear Saudi colleague once asked me, with tears in her eyes "Why does your father make you leave his home to work alone in a foreign land?" She pitied me. I pitied her. The gap in perception seemed such a huge one to breach and the retreat to a 'Western Only' compound or a 'Female Only' park became necessary to one's sanity. It was difficult to begin to explain a culture which also encompasses its own contradictions.

After one year I left and felt a sense of relief after such an intense and alien experience.

Iraq

In 1988 I was offered a posting at the British Council in Baghdad. In its present situation it does not seem the most attractive place in which to live and, one may think a particularly intolerant one at that. It was not always so. In the period from the formation of the country in 1920 until the rise of the Saddam regime in the 1970's Iraq was, in many ways, a beacon of sophistication and tolerance in the Middle East.

After the rise of the Baath party, and Saddam in particular, the regime became politically intolerant and many free thinking professionals left the country. The Iran Iraq war of 1980-88 was ruinous to the economy and the population.

My time in Baghdad, from 1988–1990 marked two years free from warfare and an atmosphere of hope in the population that things would now improve. The city still had remnants of its former civilised self: an educated population (one of my Iraqi literature students was working on a doctoral thesis on Gerard Manley Hopkins), renowned musicians and artists, open attitudes to gambling and alcohol (with wonderful breweries) and nightlife - which were particularly embraced by visiting Kuwaitis who had no such delights at home.

Above all, this ancient city had been, and still was, home to the three monotheistic religions in all their historic diversity. I never managed to count the actual number of religions and sects but the largest in number were the Sunni and Shia Muslims. Iraq, being home to the two holiest Shia shrines Kerbala and Najaf, is where all Shiite followers wish to be buried.

There was still a small Jewish community and synagogue, much reduced after rich Jewish merchants left the country - the Saatchi brothers for example, who were Baghdad Jews. Christian denominations were varied and ancient, with some of the older Assyrian and Chaldean Churches still having their religious texts written in Aramaic. Other Christian groups included Greek Orthodox, Coptic, Roman Catholic and Armenian Orthodox, (The last of these were renowned for their haunting choral music.) In their churchyard is the tomb of Gertrude Bell, British Political Agent and founder of the Iraqi Museum.

Another little known group was the Sabians, who follow John the Baptist and wear a draped crucifix as their symbol. And there is the Yezidi, a bizarre sect from Mosul who recognise Adam but worship the 'Fallen Angel'.

The Anglican Church there was founded when British and Commonwealth troops helped to end Ottoman rule and Iraq was formed. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission maintains a calm and beautiful cemetery where rest troops from India, Australia and other allied countries who fell in that conflict. Many had died of cholera rather than in combat. It was to commemorate these troops that St George's Memorial Church was built in Baghdad in 1936 and a second church St Peter's in Basra. I remember one chair with the inscription: "In Memory of Sergeant Clarke, from his old nurse".

It was St. George's which I attended in 1988 with its small congregation of twenty to forty expatriates and which also hosted the Korean Christian community. There was no minister but in spite of the small congregation, the services were rich in spirit and community. We were even blessed with a cathedral organist! In place of a sermon a member of the congregation gave a reflection on the reading of the day.

After the Kuwait invasion most of the congregation had to leave the country and the church was ransacked. The church in Basra was being used as a weapons store. Today St George's has a large congregation (none of whom are Anglican) and has to meet in the 'Green Zone' for security purposes. Last year, all of its lay leadership were murdered.

Back in 1990, as far as I could tell, all religions were allowed to worship freely and were granted funds by the state to build and maintain places of worship. It was not unusual to find a mix of six or seven religions in one class of students and I did not see a glimmer of unease from any of them. This would have been unheard of in most Middle Eastern countries.

However, the shadow of fear which clouded every Iraqi life under Saddam overrode any religious antipathy which may have existed. Political terror kept order and people were united in their fear. In every class one student was an informer to the secret police and almost apologetically asked me their scripted questions, for example: "How you find the education of Iraqi people compared to other Arab countries?" Or they gave their excuses for missing class: "Please excuse me, I have to be at a demonstration outside your Embassy". Occasionally a student would disappear and no-one asked about their fate for fear of being implicated.

Even those closest to the power base lived in fear. One day a new female student arrived, elegant, but drawn, and dressed in black. I realized from the name, Ilham al Tikriti, that she was Saddam's sister in law. I expressed my condolences for her mourning. She told me it was for her brother - the Minister of Defence who had just mysteriously died in a helicopter crash. Her daughter was later given in an arranged marriage to Saddam's eldest son, Uday. Ilham died quite young, before the recent execution of her husband Barzan.

One always sensed an underlying violence in the society. We sometimes witnessed shootings in the street. A colleague and I were lucky to survive being kidnapped by two Iraqi soldiers. It was a random action and, by Iraqi standards, a very minor incident. We were released after being threatened and made to hand over all our money and cameras etc. It was around this time that the British journalist Barzoff was executed for alleged spying. The British Embassy was keen to play down our incident in the wake of the Barzoff execution and advised us not to report it. The Iraqi police, however, were extremely efficient in apprehending the two soldiers who were quickly captured and imprisoned.

We were called as witnesses. Throughout the process Iraqi police, officials and ordinary citizens apologized to us and stressed that this was not how Iraqis normally treated guests in their country. At the trial the judge was very insistent in asking us what time it was when our money was taken. We replied that it was about 9 pm. We soon realized the significance of the time factor when the judge then asked us if we wished him to apply the death penalty - which was the standard penalty for robbery in hours of darkness. We were horrified and said that we asked for nothing as penalty or compensation. The two soldiers nevertheless were given lengthy jail sentences.

At the British Council in 1990, several British teachers who were married to Iraqis were planning to leave, fearful for their children coming up to army draft age. A few months later, fortunately while I was on leave, Iraq invaded Kuwait and we were unable to return. Those who had remained in Iraq became 'guests', and coalition forces were preparing for war.

Nicola Ann Karlsen

In the next issue Nicola describes her time in the United Arab Emirates



This is a photo of St George's church, Baghdad taken in 2003, surrounded by fortifications. An interview with Canon Andrew White in 2006 describing the situation up to date can be found on:

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/week923/interview.html>

Well! What can you say?

Four ladies are having coffee together, discussing their children.

The first lady tells her friends,

"Well, my son is a priest. When he walks into a room everyone calls him - 'Father'."

The second lady chirps,

"Well, my son is an Archbishop. Whenever he walks into a room people say -'Your Grace'."

The third lady says smugly,

"Well, not to put you down, but my son is a Cardinal. Whenever he walks into a room people say -' Your Eminence!'"

The fourth lady sips her coffee in silence. The first three ladies give her a subtle -"Well....?"

She replies: *"Well, my son is gorgeous! He is 6'4", tanned and works out in the gym every day, so he has a well toned body. He works as a 'Tarzan-Kiss-a-gram'. Whenever he walks into a room people say - 'My God!'"*

We received this in a letter from our good friends Nick and Stephanie who asked if we could publish it. We do with the greatest of pleasure.

Leukaemia Research

On Easter Monday we held a party in aid of Leukaemia research which raised € 28500. A number of St Michael's parishioners were involved in helping with this very successful fund raising effort.

During the evening, guests were entertained by our marvellous M.C. Stuart Barham who directed and accompanied on the piano memories of Noel Coward performed by Barry Coffey, an exquisite operatic duet by Marjon Lambrijks from the Vienna Opera house and Prof. Nadir Saoudi - Monaco's top heart surgeon! Marjon also sang a solo aria by Puccini. Last, but far from least, Justin Hayward brought the house down with his signature "Nights in White Satin" - a song he wrote when aged 19.

Many exciting prizes were eagerly bid for at auction: one brave soul paying over €2000 for the dubious pleasure of bobsledding headfirst down the Cresta Run. There were tickets for Wimbledon (donated by Susan & Ceri James). For the less sporty, tickets for the Opera at the Villa Rothschild donated by Mark & Sarah Holford. And for the even less sporty, fine cases of Burgundy, along with many other items, all generously donated for this cause.

Over the past 20 years the survival rate for children with Leukaemia has dramatically improved mainly as a result of the dedicated research carried out by the institute. A big thank you to all who helped make the evening a success.

Nick & Stephanie Harley

BIBLE QUIZ ANSWERS:

1) Raven. 2) Ram. 3) Fish. 4) Shallow roots. 5) Eat its fruit. 6) Noah. 7) Pitch. 8) Eight. 9) The Lord. 10) Mark

Report by the Church Fabric Committee to the AGM - April 2007

Past Year

The repair to the guttering that was put in hand following the storm damage in August 2005 was completed at a cost of just under 15,000 euros. This was not only very necessary work but also a requirement set down by our insurers as a condition of continuing to insure the building against flood and storm damage. The cost of this work was met from a combination of the Fabric Trust Fund and funds donated for restoration work. Subsequently the insurers paid for all the repairs to the damaged interior decoration. All of this highlighted the importance of keeping the guttering clear and well maintained. A regular twice-yearly programme for this has now been established.

Major Project

The other major development in the year was preparation, and costing, of a programme of work to restore the outside of the church. This is a major project that requires stripping most or all of the rendering, replacing further parts of the guttering, making good other parts of the exterior then re-rendering and painting the whole. The estimated cost is some 180,000 euros (say £120,000) including VAT.

Clearly this is beyond the immediate resources of the Chaplaincy and so the proposal of the Fabric Committee is to consider this in three phases. Phase One would be to restore the tower and the front of the church. At the same time, a door would be created to make easier access from the tower onto the roof for future maintenance. The cost of Phase One will be approximately 55,000 Euros.

During this phase it is intended that a permanent access platform would be built inside the roof void and netting would be installed to block access by pigeons.

Funding

In the past 16 months or so we have received donations towards restoration of over 18,000 euros of which, after the guttering repairs, about 10,800 remains. Discussions are in progress for donations of a further 12,500 euros. In addition there is £8.500 (say 12,000 euros) in the Fabric Trust Fund. We are also hopeful that the Département des Alpes-Maritimes will favour us with a grant to cover part of the cost of this work and an application is being prepared.

Recommendation

The Church Fabric Committee firmly believes that a plan is needed to restore thoroughly the exterior of the building, even if that may take some time to complete. The plaster and water-proofing is in a deplorable state having been patched up over the years and in many places is now hollow, allowing rainwater to access the fabric of the building. It has now been agreed by the CCC to adopt the three-phase plan as described above; to raise funds for that purpose and to go ahead with the work as soon as we are confident that the money is available to complete Phase One.

Nick Harley, Justin Hayward, Hugh Mellor

Churchwardens' Report 2006-2007 - as reported at the AGM

Since the last AGM our presence as a congregation in the community of Beaulieu-sur-Mer and district has remained strong, confirming the ties St Michael's has with the local Catholic and Danish parishes through our various ecumenical activities, which included an Anglo-Scandinavian service and our ever popular Christmas Carol Service.

Our weekly attendance has remained constant at around 36/37 on average, and income from the plate over 2006 came to €11,809, including the occasional midweek service, which averages out to €231.50 per week. A sum of €3,424 has been given from this to other charities, based both in the UK and in France.

We also had a very good 2006 Easter service at which €955 was collected for Fr. Roger.

Weddings at St Michael's have been fewer in the last year numbering only 7, including both Danish and Swedish (2005 was a record year!), but marriage blessings are becoming more popular and we continue to enjoy the occasional baptism.

A new agreement is being drawn up concerning the use of the church for concerts organised by the town, and an issue regarding damage during one of them last year has been satisfactorily resolved.

There is a much greater awareness now than at any other time remembered by the present Churchwardens, of the fabric of the church and our duty to preserve and improve it. The repairs following the damage caused by the storm in the summer of 2005 are well in hand, and a rudimentary inspection of the condition of the roof is reassuring, as well as giving food for thought about future projects. We owe a great debt of thanks to Nick Harley for all his commitment and leadership in this area.

Our attention now is turned to the renovation of the exterior of the Church, and we are guided in this by a costing plan, from Nick and Hugh Mellor as well as proposing a way forward (see their report opposite).

In September we were proud to welcome, as part of their visit to Beaulieu, Their Royal Highnesses the Prince Edward, Earl of Wessex, and the Countess of Wessex for the inauguration of the Place Duc de Connaught, which brought with it the renovation by the Mairie of the area in front of the Church, including two beautiful period lamp posts. The last year has also seen the long awaited removal of the obsolete overhead power lines from the northwest corner of the Church.

The highlight of our year at St Michael's was the confirmation last August by Bishop David Hamid of Debra and Felicity Garvey, Ripley and Colombe Harrington, Jack Moore and Mike Wain. It was an inspirational occasion that brought home the true meaning of our faith, as well as filling St Michael's with love, and strengthening our resolution and purpose.

We consider ourselves very fortunate to have the participation of so many of the congregation in the life of our church, and so we would like to thank: Stuart Barham for his joyous organ playing and editorship of the superb St Michael's Messenger, our verger Ian Corrie for the safe keeping and care of this beautiful building, and our servers Jonny Clegg, Colombe and Ripley.

Continued on page 20

Churchwardens Report (Continued)

We thank Linda Johnson and Vance Johnson for their invaluable work and exceptional dedication, Hugh Mellor for his professional guidance in our affairs, our secretary Tom Downes, as well as Rex Thorne, Joop Monnet van der Ploeg, Anne-Colette Langelier, Mike Wain, Micky Van Vekelenburg, Jack and Roberta Moore, Heidi Van Arsdell, Michelle Clegg, Helen Downes, Paul and Judith Couch, Ursula Schulz, Marie Hayward, the members of the Chaplaincy Church Council, and all those who have given flowers, provided hospitality, and read the lessons and psalms. Most of all we join with everyone at our church in expressing our grateful and heartfelt thanks to Fr Philip Robinson.

Lastly, we are extremely pleased that Fr Roger has assured us he will be with us for another year at least.

Justin Hayward and Deanne Fox (Churchwardens 2006 – 2007)

DO YOU REALLY MEAN THAT?

Notices that bring a smile to the face!

- * *On a bathroom wall:*
'Toilet out of order. Please use floor below!'
- * *In a laundrette:*
'Automatic washing machines. Please remove all your clothes when the light goes out!'
- * *In a London department store:*
'Bargain basement upstairs'.
- * *In an office:*
'After the tea break staff should empty the teapot and stand up-sidedown on the draining board.'
- * *In a health food shop window:*
'Closed - due to illness.'
- * *On a leaflet handed out in the street:*
'If you cannot read, this leaflet will tell you how to get lessons!'
- * *On a repair shop door:*
We can repair anything! (Please knock hard on the door – the bell doesn't work.)
- * *In a safari park:*
'Elephants please - Stay in your car.'
- * *Outside a second hand shop:*
'We exchange anything – bicycles, washing machines, etc. Why not bring your wife along and get a wonderful bargain?'
- * *On a farmers field gate:*
'The farmer allows walkers to cross the field for free, but the bull charges!'

(What chance do foreigners have to understand English, eh!)

MINDBOGLER

Using only one word, and correct grammar, complete the following sentence as accurately as you can:

'The number of occurrences of the number one in this sentence is

A drink to the person with the first correct answer (which will be revealed in the next issue of "The Messenger")

The answer to last issue's Mindboggler:

The correct punctuation on the notice by the lake to allow swimming should be:



L I M E R I C K C O M P E T I T I O N

Thank you to the many people who, from near and far, sent in limericks. Father Roger now gives his judgment.

There were some interesting and witty contributions (particularly from Jack Moore) but I have finally to name as winner **Christopher Monckton**, who sometimes plays the organ for us. He wrote 4 limericks using the different ways Beaulieu tends to be pronounced; the best one – in my opinion – is based on the way Beaulieu in Hampshire (England) is pronounced – ‘Bewly’

**There was a young person of Beaulieu
Whose child got all pukey and meaulieu.
When out in a boat,
Said the child, and I quote,
“The sea is too wuff and unweulieu”.**

R.T.G.

FROM THE CHAPLAIN'S COMMONPLACE BOOK

“The Gospel was not good advice but good news.”

W.R.Inge, Dean of St Paul's (died in 1954)

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The contribution of each and every one is gratefully acknowledged

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Fiona Brannon, Ceri and Susan James, Vance and Linda Johnson, Edgar and Joan Harborne, Justin and Marie Hayward, John and Leonora Kerry Keane, Hugh and Anne Mellor, Jack and Roberta Moore, Jeremy and Susan Nordberg, William Prather, Rex and Sophie Thorne.

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