



LINK

Oxford Diocesan Deaf Churches

Issue 40 – Christmas 2015

Christmas Letter

Dear Friends

The Oxford Colleges have lots of hidden treasures! I would like to draw your attention to one in Exeter College, the adoration of the Magi tapestry (shown on the cover of our Link magazine).

The Adoration of the Magi shows the three kings who were guided to the birthplace of Jesus by the star of Bethlehem. The tapestry was commissioned in 1886 by the Rector of Exeter College, for the Gothic revival chapel built for the college in 1850's by George Gilbert Scott. The Rector asked two former students, William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones to do the tapestry. Do go and see it when you have the opportunity!

There have been a number of versions of the tapestry since. I was particularly interested to see that the 2012 Australia \$1.60 Christmas stamp, depicted the tapestry. I think probably because there is a version of the tapestry at the Art gallery in South Australia.

Christians throughout history have used all sorts of material to show their faith, and tapestry is a popular way. Mary in the tapestry is amongst the flowers, and in particular is associated with the lily shown in the scene. We can see in this nineteenth century understanding of the three kings, Joseph gathering wood like a woodcutter. One of the Wise men dressed like a knight in armour, and Mary seated in the garden.

I like the colours in this tapestry, and the strong blue light. There is a stillness and beauty about this scene, as though the Wise men wandering in the woods have come across Mary amongst the flowers and stopped in silent reverence. This is well shown in the bowed head and look of the eyes of the first wise man.

Burne Jones' tapestry is not the nativity as we know it, but a nineteenth century view, done in faith and love. The important thing is that Jesus is at the centre of the tapestry, and it gives a clear message, that we come and worship our Lord Jesus bringing our gifts and in so doing discover more of his living presence in our lives.

In the Bible (Matthew Chapter 6:21) we read 'Where your treasure is there will your heart be also'. May our eyes be fixed on Jesus this Christmas, and may we like the kings offer our gifts.

Our Christmas service is also at Oxford this Christmas, on Dec13th at 3pm in the Church of the Holy Family, Blackbird Leys. I very much hope that we all will be able to come together to sign and sing our Christmas praises. Glory to God in the Highest and peace on earth.

May I wish you all a very Happy and Blessed Christmas!

Roger

Interview with Jennie Harvey

When I was born, my family (Mum, Dad and my Sister Christine) were living in West Ham, London. I was born in the West Ham Maternity Hospital.

We moved to Stratford a few months after I was born and lived in a small damp 1 bedroomed flat until I was 18months old when we were asked to leave there as the landlord had plans for the flat. Then my father found a bomb damaged house (2 bedrooms) in Chestnut Road Tottenham. The landlord said we could live there as a family until it was demolished but we would have to make it safe to live in. The rent was cheap so dad agreed. I remember my dad and Uncle John putting floorboards down in the bedrooms, making it sort of fit to live in and painting all the doors pretty colours. We begged for old paint so each of our doors were a different colour. I thought it was fantastic having a multi coloured house. It was very bright. The old tin bath was hung on the wall outside and, every time we emptied it we flooded next doors garden! My sister and I hated using the outside loo because of all the spiders. I went to the local school, Park lane Infant and Junior School with my sister and we attended Sunday school at the local church when we were old enough to be left there on our own. We lived in that house until I was 9 yrs old when the house was, finally, to be demolished.

After working hard and attending college to better himself and borrowing money from family and friends, my father scraped together enough money for a deposit to buy a house in Stanford Le Hope Essex. My sister and I attended the village school.

Dad, once again achieved another qualification and we all moved again to Bury St Edmunds where my sister and I attended a girls' school called Silver Jubilee School for Girls. It was there I joined the Cathedral Choir (the only one that accepted girls) and gained my red ribbon. It was there I decided to turn to Christ and asked if I could be confirmed. I had to be christened first so at the age of 11 I was christened and at age 12 I was confirmed.

As children we were taught to say our prayers every night with mum but I was the only member of my family that attended church. My father was not a believer but mum always said she believed in God.

We moved again a couple of years later to Brentwood Essex where my sister and I attended the local comprehensive.

After leaving school I went to college at Havering Tech to learn Science, wig making hairdressing and art. I then changed my job and became an auxiliary nurse in a home for people with mental health problems. I married and had 2 children.

I have a son, Simon, who gave me a lovely granddaughter named Chloe, and I have a daughter, Samantha, who has given me a lovely grandson named Dane. Dane is 19 and Chloe is 17 this year. I love them all dearly.

In my family my Aunt and her mother was hard of hearing. Neither used sign but my aunts mother used a lot of gesture. I had a friend who was deaf at primary school named Caroline who signed.

When I had my own children, and they started school, I worked in a school for children with severe physical and learning disabilities. We used a basic sign system called Makaton to aid communication with the pupils. There was a young boy who used a lot of gesture and noticed things the other children didn't seem to notice, e.g. the balloons on the ceiling would fascinate him as, in assembly we would have some candles burning and the heat from these would make the balloons move. He would watch them intently. This Child's behaviour was dreadful at times. The way he gestured reminded me of my aunt's mother and I wondered then if he was deaf.

I attended college to learn level one BSL on a Monday evening and on the Tuesday morning I would teach this young lad everything I had learned from my evening class. He learnt more and more signs every week and his language developed gradually. To cut a long story short, he was re-assessed and placed in the Special Needs Unit at Margate School for the Deaf. He did have physical disabilities but what was missed was the fact that he was profoundly deaf and his behaviour was due to frustration at not being understood. A few years later I heard he had been named head boy of the special needs unit. Thank you God!

After this I was seconded out to different schools to work with deaf children. I continued with my studies and worked in senior schools, colleges and Universities. I eventually qualified as a Sign Language Interpreter. It is a job I love and the people I work with are a blessing in my life.

I brought my children up as Christians and wrote out and pinned to their bedroom walls The Lord's Prayer. They both have a strong faith and are active Christians within their respective churches and communities. It is great having in-depth theological discussions and conversations with them both.

My hobbies are: Sociolinguistics, jigsaw puzzles (a great way for me to escape from troubles and stress), walking and social science.

My pet hate is computers but I expect that is because of my age. I wasn't brought up with technology which means there are huge gaps in my knowledge. This doesn't help when the computer goes wrong. I do a lot of praying at these times.

As for my belief in God, I know I can't do anything without him, that he is a loving God in whom I have faith and trust.

Tapestries and Processional Banner

Chapel of St John the Evangelist, Oxford Deaf and Hard of Hearing centre

The tapestries of the Last Supper, Praying Hands, Madonna and Child, and the Crown of Thorns are the skilled work of the late Mrs Eva Hayward who was a Deaf Church member for many years. Mr and Mrs Hayward were involved with the Deaf and Hard of Hearing club in Newbury for many years before moving to Witney. Do you have any memories of the Newbury club and the church meetings that you would like to share?

The processional banner with the eagle represented St John the Evangelist on a bright red background was made by Pat Russell of Abingdon and given in memory of Deaf People who had been members of the Deaf Church. The names inscribed on the banner pole are as follows:-

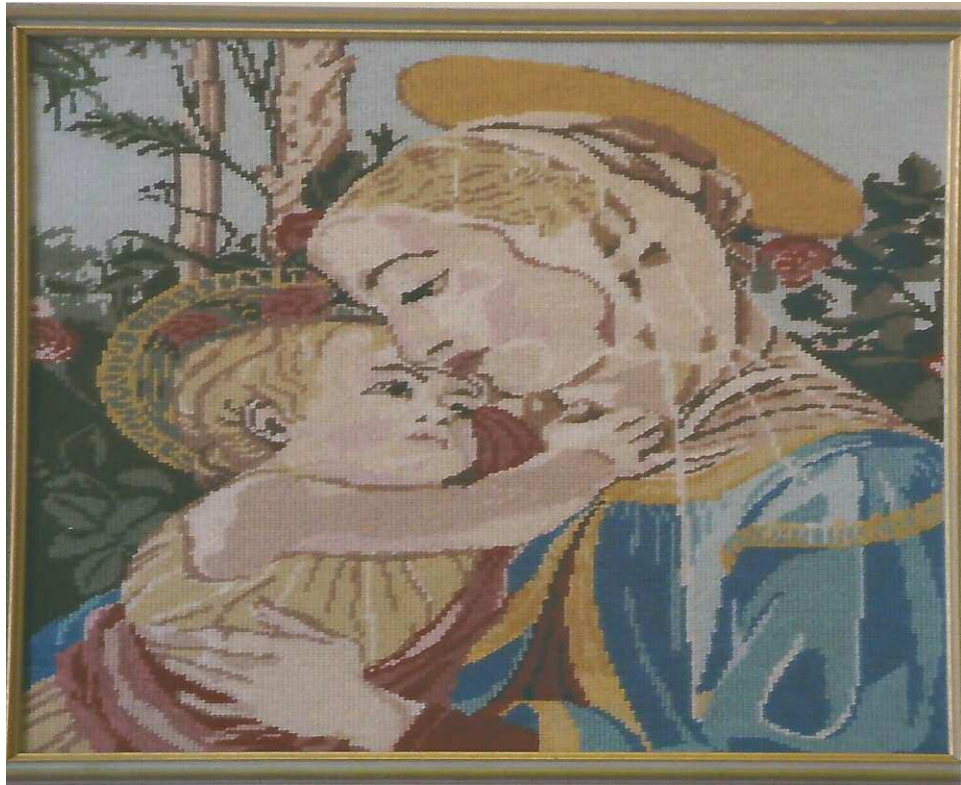
John Henry Hill	3.1.70 (1970)
Ernest Frank Victor Belcher	3.2.72
Alice Ruby Lawrence	16.4.72
George Mitchell	23.4.72
Robert Mills	28.8.74
Dorothy Colcutt	23.5.77 (Lady Worker)
Mary Jane Pill	19.7.79
Edith Gertrude Goff	19.8.80
Arthur Whitaker	18.4.81 (Church Warden)

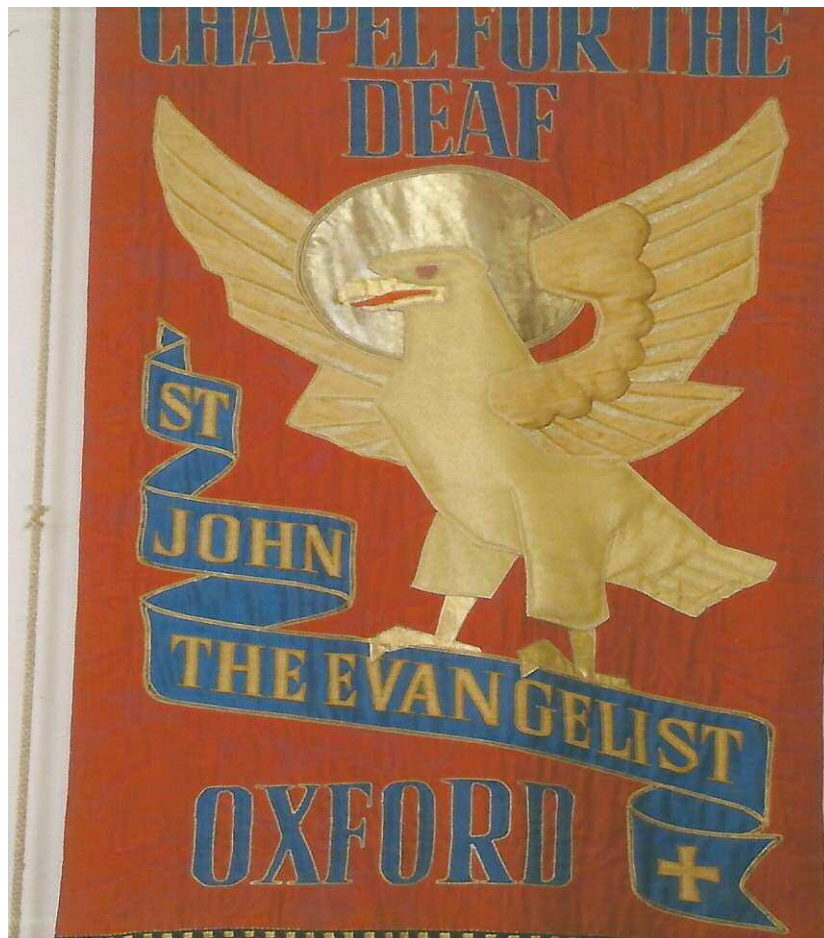
Miss Colcutt was a devoted Lady Worker, pastoral visitor, secretary involved with both the development of the original Oxford Deaf Centre in Banbury Road and the New Centre for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. She retired officially in 1961 but continued her involvement until her death in 1977.

There is a newspaper cutting entitled 'Pat's stitch in time spans the years' from the Oxford Mail in April 1981 which describes some of the other work that Pat Russell, a professional embroiderer, had undertaken.

The album of photographs by Michael Perfitt given by him to the archives show David Knowland carrying the Banner, in procession at church services. Please look at the banner and the tapestries when you next come to the Oxford Deaf and Hard of Hearing centre – they are beautiful works of art and commemorate the lives of Deaf People who were members of the Deaf Church congregation.

The photographs follow.





Reading Deaf Club over 50's harvest

Our Lay Minister Anna Knaggs is always keen to welcome the Reading over 50's to the upstairs chapel for the Deaf.

On September 15th, we invited the over 50's to a harvest service. Almost everyone came to the short half hour service.

Anna opened with a welcome, then Vera Hunt signed, 'Think of a world without any flowers'. Anna lead the Confession and Absolution and Sue signed the Gospel, followed by a talk by Ken.

After prayers and personal prayer with lighting a small candle, we signed The Lord's Prayer, then a hymn created by Sue years ago, called, 'The Four Seasons'. This was signed by four people, each of us signing one word of each line, then all four signing the last, 'Thank you, thank you', line

The Four Seasons

Spring, summer, autumn, winter
Refreshing rain, brilliant sunshine,
Beautiful colours,
Exhilarating snow,
Thank you, thank you.

Easter, Pentecost,

Harvest, Christmas,
Risen Lord, Living Water,
Fruit of the Spirit, Christ is born.
Celebrate, celebrate.

Eternal life,
Holy Spirit here,
Heavenly home, gift of love,
Praise, praise, praise, praise,
Alle Alleluia.

Love, joy, hope, peace,
Celebrate, celebrate,
Celebrate, celebrate.
Spring, summer, autumn, winter,
Come on and celebrate
Say thank you Lord
Sing alleluia.

It is a joyful hymn and many people said how much they enjoyed it.
We finished with the blessing by Anna then we all went downstairs for our packed lunches.

It was wonderful to involve the over 50's in our worship again. We also have a short Christmas service for them, with a drama, and they are always popular.

It would be good if the other Deaf churches try to arrange similar short services for the people who attend coffee mornings or other regular gatherings.

Ken Dyson

Now 2 short poems sent in by Vera

The Gate of the Year

I said to the man who stood at the Gate of the Year“

Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown.”

And he replied,

“Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way.”

Minnie Louise Haskins 1875-1957

Word

Before the world began,
One Word was there;
Grounded in God he was,
Rooted in care;
By him all things were made,
In him was love displayed,
Through him God spoke, and said,
'I AM FOR YOU'.

Life found in him its source,
Death found its end;
Light found in him its course,
Darkness its friend.
For neither death or doubt
Nor darkness can put out
The glow of God, the shout,
'I AM FOR YOU'.

The Word was in the world
Which from him came;
Unrecognized he was,
Unknown by name.
One with all humankind,
With the unloved aligned,
Convincing sight and mind,
'I AM FOR YOU'.

All who received the Word
By God were blessed;
Sisters and brothers they
Of earth's fond guest.
So did the Word of Grace
Proclaim in time and space
And with a human face,
'I AM FOR YOU'

***John Bell and Graham Maule
from Wild Goose Songs.***

Christmas likes and dislikes

We cannot be sure that Christmas will be a time of peace and goodwill.

Some years ago there was a Mori poll which showed that in this country there were more than three million rows at Christmas, four million people snoozing in front of the television at twelve o'clock midnight on New Years Eve, and five and a half million people with bad headaches the following morning. Perhaps it is just as well that Christmas comes only once a year!

There are, I suppose, a few things about Christmas that can make people irritated. I do not like the way the decorations are put up in our towns and cities earlier and earlier in the year. I am not keen on the advertisements constantly reminding me that Christmas is on its way and putting me under pressure to buy more and more. Then there are the presents. As a boy I was once given a piece of 'keep fit' equipment called a chest expander which I used quite often, but as all who have seen me can witness, this equipment has not worked! I had to put in a lot of effort to compose a suitably positive 'thank you' letter!

And yet it is easy to be grumpy. We live in a grumpy society and it is easy to complain and to point out what is wrong. There is much that I enjoy about Christmas and most of these are childish. I like Christmas trees, Christmas lights, crackers. I like turkey and the films on T.V. I like the laughter, familiar family jokes, friendly banter which occurs at relaxed Christmas meals. I like the way people say and sign 'Happy Christmas' to strangers. I like the way Christmas happens every year, they link with each other over the years, a mysterious special day. I like the story of the Nativity with its simplicity and sense of hope.

I hope you experience more likes than dislikes this Christmas, and that the story of the Nativity will once again fill you with hope for another year.

Ben Whitaker

Christmas Jokes to share with family and friends

What do you get if you cross an "apple" with a "Christmas tree"? - *A pineapple*

Who is never hungry at Christmas? - *The turkey because he is always stuffed*

What do you get when you cross a "snowman" with a "vampire"? - *Frostbite*

Where do snowmen go to dance? - *A snowball*

What happened to the man who shoplifted a calendar at Christmas? - *He got 12 months*

What did the big candle say to the little candle? - *I'm going out tonight*

The Faithful Departed

We remember before God the Souls of the faithful departed, an we pray especially for the souls of :-

David Knaggs	Reading
Clive Hunt	Maidenhead
Ron Burke	Newbury
Mary Lovegrove	Milton Keynes
John Herring	Aylesbury
Sister Mary Clare	Birmingham
Alice Bennett	Wokingham

Dear God, in love and thanksgiving we place our loved ones in your care and pray that they may be transformed into your likeness, and rest in your eternal peace through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Thank you to everyone who gave so generously at our Harvest. We raised £170 at our auction to support the work of Zane, who help the people of Zimbabwe. Tom Benyon gave us an inspiring talk, and if you would like to find out more about the work of Zane, do look at their website: www.zane.uk.com

WEB Site

ODCD has a new website. www.odcd.org.uk

Do have a look, and keep up to date with what is going on.

Would be helpful, if we could send you the link magazine by email. If you would like to receive it by email, please let us know

**Also, if there is anyone who would like to join our mailing list,
please let us know.**

Editor**Mrs Susan Costar**

57b Seacourt Road

Botley

Oxford

OX2 9LN

Tel: 01865 722612

e-mail: susancostar@btinternet.com**Part-time Chaplains****Rev Roger Williams**

Denchworth House

Denchworth

Wantage

OX12 0DX

Tel and Minicom: 01235 868442

Fax: 01235 867402

e-mail: roger@rwilliams24.freemove.co.uk**Rev Ben Whitaker**

87 Bagley Wood Road

Kennington

OX1 5LY

Tel and Fax: 01865 736100

e-mail: ben@benwhitaker.co.uk**Honorary Chaplain****Rev Vera Hunt**

54 Highway Avenue

Maidenhead

Berks

SL6 5AQ

Fax and Minicom: 01628 623909

e-mail: vera.hunt6@gmail.com