

Anglican Chaplaincy of Bonn and Cologne

Newsletter

January 2016

Contents

2 **Editorial**

Letters

- 2 Pereira Children's Fund
3 Hi, and Thanks for All the Stamps!
5 The years with Patrick

Our locums – who are they?

- 6 John Newsome
6 Michael Bullock
7 Ian Eglin

Just a Thought

- 9 A passing thought
9 Concerts – looking ahead
9 Scientists say: Depressed? Go to church!
10 Thoughts on the Interregnum
10 The Muslim from Mehlem
11 Why Irish eyes are smiling
12 Deutsch nix verstehen? GA-English can help
12 Chaplaincy in the press
12 Spreading the News

Diary October to March

- 16 Advent wreath
16 How they brought the mince pies from Kent to Bonn
18 Nine Lessons and Carols at St. Boniface: The Choir's View
19 AGM

Upcoming events

- 20 WANTED: help with the concert team
20 Garden Party Bonn
20 Summer Fête Cologne
21 Dates for your diary

Editorial

Those of you who have seen the Editor walking around scratching himself in recent weeks may have wondered why he doesn't do more for personal hygiene, get a new shower or at least a packet of anti-flea powder. However, you are all barking up the wrong tree. Once this issue, the January issue (*sic*), has at last hit cyberspace, I will be able to discard the hair shirt I have been wearing these past months and rejoin the ranks of washed and flealess humanity. The fact was that I was not only very busy in the first three months, I also wanted to interview two people as part of the series planned for the Newsletter. This didn't work out, and eventually I decided to cut my losses and publish what I had. The interviews will now go in the April issue, which will, if we're very lucky, appear in April, and if not, in early May. I apologise for this lack of punctuality, but feel that it is better to be late than disappointing (as the bishop said to the actress). However, I will try in future to stick closer to the planned schedule of issues being published in January, April, July and October.

I wish to thank the contributors to this issue (and, in fact, the previous one). Their contributions reflect different attitudes and approaches, revealing the diversity (as a student once wrote: the *fructile* diversity) of our congregation. The first two letters remind us of how, in our own small ways, we can help other people even in times of financial difficulty. George's article on Patrick Curran, and the sketches of our recent and current locums, give a sense of the wide experience of our priests. Jenny and Barbara tell us how the church is presented in the media. Rainer lets us into some of the secrets of what it feels like to be in the choir during the Carol Service. So, as the 1950s TV series had it, 'keep them dogies rollin'...' The correct response to this, for those of you who are too young to remember this programme, is not 'Amen', but 'Rawhide!'

Geoff Sammon

Letters

Pereira Children's Fund

A letter from the Pereira Children's Education Fund

Dear Friends,

We would like to say a big Thank You not only to the church council, but also to individual members of the congregation for the generous donations given to our Verein, Pereira Children's Education Fund e. V.

It may interest you to know that many positive changes have taken place this year, one of which is that Tom Rensmann, Helen's son, has been elected as deputy Chairman of the Verein. Tom is very dedicated to social work. After doing his Abitur at the Aloisiuskolleg, Bonn, he spent five months doing social work at my school St. Paul's in Belgaum, India. Tom got so involved and enthusiastic about this work that he's been to India thrice since then, always working in a short stay at my school helping out wherever necessary

In the course of these visits to Belgaum Tom met Teacher Mariamma who has, on her own initiative, started a home for HIV positive children. Tom immediately identified this as the project he would like to support and suggested that our Verein should try to help. At a board meeting we decided to get involved and support his initiative.

The decision was made to take on 6 of these children into our Fund. As this new project deals with the education of these children it falls within the work our Verein is dedicated to. Having said this, Carol and I decided to use a part of the donation received from the Anglican Council to sponsor one child. Helen and her parents decided to get personally involved and support Tom's initiative thereby making this a Family Rensmann project within the Pereira Education Fund. It is truly a good cause as these children are orphans and have no other help whatsoever.

The Pereira Education Fund has further decided to take on 5 more girls at St. Joseph's High School, Belgaum and 5 more boys at St. Xavier's School, Khanapur, for a two year vocational training course beyond the Secondary School Certificate in the 11th and 12th standard.

This is a major step forward and has been made possible with the donations from the harvest festival and also donations from individual members of the Bonn congregation.

Your generosity is a big help towards assuring the continuity and sustainability of the work the Verein has undertaken.

You all have our sincere thanks

Carol Ann and José Pereira

Hi, and Thanks for All the Stamps!

A letter to Andrea Heinrichsohn

"Sehr geehrte Frau Heinrichsohn.

Sie haben uns eine Sendung mit Briefmarken zukommen lassen, die uns unversehrt erreicht hat. Für Ihre tatkräftige Unterstützung danke ich Ihnen sehr herzlich.

Jeden Tag freuen wir uns, dass etwa 120 kranke und behinderte Beschäftigte in der Betheler Briefmarkenaufbereitung einen beliebten Arbeitsplatz gefunden haben. Das ist nur möglich, weil hilfsbereite Menschen wie Sie uns gesammelte Marken zur Verfügung stellen.

Für Ihre Spende sage ich Ihnen ein Herzliches Dankeschön und grüsse Sie freundlich aus Bethel.

Ihr

Pastor Ulrich Pohl.“



Translation:

'Dear Mrs Heinrichsohn,

You have sent us a package with stamps, which arrived here safely. I would like to express my sincere gratitude for your energetic support.

Every day we are pleased to provide about 120 sick and disabled staff at the Bethel Stamp Facility with work which they enjoy. This is only possible because people like you assist us by sending in the stamps which you have collected.

I would like to thank you for your generous donation. Kind regards from Bethel.

Yours,

Pastor Ulrich Pohl'

The people from Cologne and Bonn didn't just give me a few stamps but I was so happy when I noticed the large envelopes full of stamps and a few had given me a plastic bag full of stamps! Thank you everyone!

For the new people in church, please don't throw the stamps away. It doesn't matter where they come from but just tear off the stamps leaving about 1 cm all around and from time to time give them to me. If you're normally in Bonn, give them to Geoff, who will pass them on to me.

With love,

Andrea"

The Years with Patrick

Patrick Curran, who last September stepped down as Archdeacon of the Eastern Archdeaconry, was Chaplain of St Boniface and All Saints from 1993 to 2000. He and I met at the British Embassy – at that time still in Bonn. As Chaplain to the Ambassador, Patrick was allotted office space and had the use of such facilities as the photocopy machine and the embassy post office. I worked in the press and information section. My room was not far from his, and I took to wandering over there. This led to occasional lunches together in the canteen, taking part in the midday Eucharist when it was held weekly in the embassy, and helping out with the chaplaincy newsletter – proof-reading and editing, folding and stapling.

This was also my road back to church. I started attending the services at St Boniface and going to Patrick's house group and to the occasional weekend retreats. Retreats led by Patrick included hikes in the Siebengebirge or the Bergisches Land, places where we could "get away from it all" without travelling too far. Sometimes we were lucky with the weather, sometimes not. The retreat that comes to mind was in the second category: hiking or rather slogging uphill and down, wet and sweaty, our spirits sagging. In the middle of this, perhaps we were taking a break, Patrick turned to us and said, "There's nowhere I'd rather be." Nowhere he'd rather be than with us, rain or shine, that was the message. Later I wrote in my diary: When Patrick is with you, he's really with you.

To appreciate this you didn't have to be an adult. In the worship services Patrick made space for the children to participate, and he didn't want young parents to feel guilty or uneasy. One Sunday he went into this in detail: "We welcome children in the service. We want to encourage their attendance. We ask that the parents of those children who do get restless feel comfortable enough to take their children out and bring them back again once they have settled down....A baby will always make noise....An adult does not need to overreact. Who can estimate how much damage has been done over the years by people giving young parents dirty looks?"

The dialogue with Patrick has gone on. To mark the fifteenth year of his ministry at Christ Church in Vienna, the plan is to put out another collection of his sermons for distribution to parishioners. (The first one we did when he left this chaplaincy.) An important part of editing is listening – not pouncing on the manuscript but letting it come to you. Recently I have listened to fresh expositions of Gospel passages; to Kyiv residents telling Patrick how the local street children look after one another; to a letter in the "Church Times" jointly written by a conservative evangelical and a liberal Roman Catholic priest who run churches in the same city and who have gradually learned to communicate with each other; to Patrick's observation that "faith will speak to faith"; to his account of a group pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and much more.

Faith will speak to faith. Patrick's faith, his buoyant spirit, his gift for being with people – these things made a difference. Old-timers here have not forgotten them or him.

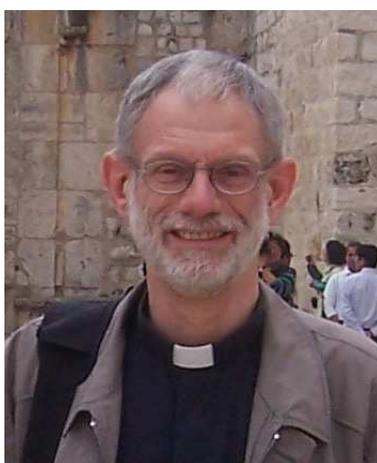
George Williams

Our locums – who are they?

It struck me that it might be interesting to find out more about our locums, as the time when they are staying with us is usually all too short. Here is an attempt to remedy that by giving you a thumbnail sketch of their lives. Obviously this sort of sketch only scratches the surface. It doesn't tell you much about people's lives, thoughts and experiences, but it does help to give you a bit of background.

We are very grateful to our locums for coming to the parish. We hope it was an enjoyable experience: we certainly benefit from seeing different people with different ideas and life experiences. Thank you to all of you. We hope to see you again in Bonn and Cologne soon.

John Newsome (locum: 7 to 28 February 2016)



John was born shortly after the war in Tynemouth, in the North-East of England. He went to school in Whitley Bay, Newcastle upon Tyne's seaside resort. After his A levels in 1969 he went to Merton College, Oxford, where he did a Master's in German, with French as subsidiary. From there he went to Ripon College, where he was awarded a Diploma in Theology from Oxford University.

He began his theological career as curate in the Newcastle diocese in 1976, moving to Berwick-upon-Tweed two years later. From 1982 to 1986 he served as visiting priest in a Protestant parish in Gelsenkirchen. He then spent seven years at St. Boniface and All Saints in Bonn/Cologne, leaving in 1993 to become priest at St. Thomas Becket in Hamburg. In 1998 he was appointed Canon of the Anglican diocese of Europe, located in the Pro-Cathedral of Holy Trinity in Brussels. From 2000 to 2014 he was the Anglican priest at St. Andrew's in Zurich, retiring in 2014. He now lives in Seligenstadt, Hesse, with honorary duties as Spirituality Advisor and representative of the 'Friends of the Holy Land'.

Michael Bullock (locum: 6 to 27 March 2016)

Michael was born just after the war in Shrewsbury. He studied Arabic at the University of Durham, graduating from Hatfield College in 1971. He completed his ordination training at the College of the Resurrection, Mirfield. He was ordained deacon in 1975 and priest the following year. After serving as a curate at Peterborough Parish Church 1975-1979, he went to Zambia, where he served as a



priest in the Copperbelt at Luanshya and Mufulira, and also at a rural mission station at Fiwila from 1979 to 1986. After a stint as vicar of St. Botolph's, Peterborough between 1986 and 1991, he worked at Christ Church, Naples from 1991 to 1999. While he was there he became a member of the Oratory of the Good Shepherd (from 1993) and was appointed Canon of Malta Cathedral in 1998, which he remained until 2012 (thereafter Emeritus). He was priest in charge of Liguria in Northern Italy from 1999 to 2000, then moving to Lisbon with Estoril, where he worked until his retirement as full-time priest in 2012. He has had permission to officiate as priest in Europe since 2012, and in Lincoln since 2013.

Ian Eglin (locum: 3 April to 8 May 2016)

My wife Caroline and I arrived in Bonn and Cologne on 31 March for me to be your Locum priest for six weeks. We live in a village called Yealmpton, near Plymouth in Devon, three miles from the south coast. We very much enjoy walking and I spend a lot of time gardening.



Ian tackling some recalcitrant zabaglione

I was ordained thirty seven years ago in Coventry Cathedral, and after four years as a Curate in Coventry, moved to be a parish priest in Northampton. I joined the Royal

Navy as a Chaplain in 1987 and served sixteen years both at sea and on land and saw a great deal of the world in that time. It was in the Royal Navy that I met my wife Caroline, who was also a chaplain. When I left the Navy, I went to serve four country parishes in Devon as their parish priest and retired from there in November 2012 after ten years. In retirement, I now have permission to officiate in the Diocese of Exeter and the Diocese of Europe.

I enjoy working on Locum duty for the Diocese and have recently been at St Michael's Church, Beaulieu sur mer and Holy Trinity Church, Nice with St Hugh's Church, Vence, France. I also did Locum duty at St George's Lisbon with St Paul , Estoril, All Saints, Puerto de la Cruz, Tenerife, and St Andrew's Zurich. For the last three years I have been Diocesan Chaplain to the Mothers' Union for Exeter Diocese.



Caroline and Katharina Meier-Cortés in an over the pizza moment

Caroline has been Baptist Minister for 30 years, and her ministry now is leading quiet days and retreats and offering spiritual direction. She is Chair of "Spiritual Companions Network for Devon" and has until recently been the Baptist Ecumenical Officer for Devon. She has ministered churches in Yeovil, Leicester, and Newton Abbot. She was the first female Chaplain in the Royal Navy and had a whole range of appointments including training establishments, service in the Adriatic, the Antarctic and the Gulf War 2003.

With our good wishes
Fr Ian and Caroline Eglin



The researchers found that while involvement in voluntary work, sport and political organisations seemed to have no effect on whether people were depressed, this was not the case with active membership of a church. One of the researchers, Dr Avendano, commented that it was unclear what the reason for this effect was: "The church appears to play a very important social role in keeping depression at bay and also as a coping mechanism during periods of illness later in life." He added, "It is not clear to us how much this is about religion per se, or whether it may be about the sense of belonging and not being socially isolated."

(source supplied by Helen)

Thoughts on the Interregnum

Currently we are in a period known as Interregnum or Vacancy. The first four Locum Priests have finished their time here (two others had to cancel their visit due to illness) and in between Richard stepped in to take services. This time of vacancy needs a prayerful approach, optimism and also some patience.

During an Interregnum the Churchwardens (Barbara, Markus, Geoff and Kathy/John) share an overall responsibility for the church and its activities and are working together with our Archdeacon, Colin, and Area Dean, Ken, also with Richard and the Church Council. In recent meetings the Church Council (with meetings now chaired by Barbara) has discussed arrangements for the Locum Priests but has also considered the website, finances and worship amongst other topics.

Since September there have not been any significant changes but there is still room to think about new ideas. If you have a good idea or a suggestion, please do not hesitate to speak to the Churchwardens or the Council members. We also need your feedback as it helps us with further planning.

Being in an Interregnum or not, it is essential that a strategic plan is followed and a plan for mission and ministry is developed and implemented. A lot of information on how to do this is included in a book called "How to do Mission Action Planning" by Mike Chew and Mark Ireland. This process takes time and needs consultation with the congregation and your participation. There are many dimensions of growth and it is not only about numbers attending worship. A greater knowledge of God, growth in fellowship and service to other people are essential too.

The Diocese in Europe's Synod also discussed a plan for the future called "Walking together in faith", which is described in the current edition of the "The European Anglican" (online on the Diocesan webpage). Please pray for the future of our Chaplaincy, those involved in leadership and all visiting clergy in the forthcoming months.

Barbara Merkes (Cologne Churchwarden)

The Muslim from Mehlem

I was the one of the last to leave church after a service when we were still in Mehlem. It was a cold Sunday in January, a bit too cold to snow, even. I drove off from the car

park outside *Haus Steinbach*, but noticed that there was something wrong with the car. Stopped a bit further along Rüdigerstraße. As suspected, a puncture. Didn't feel too worried. In my early days of motoring I'd even changed a wheel in a dark night on the side of the A1 with my arm in plaster. This time it was different. Where the hell was the spare wheel? Fingers numb with cold, I searched through the car handbook. Aha, slung under the boot. Got it out, found the jack. Tried to loosen the wheel before jacking it up. No way. Modern cars get their wheels tightened mechanically at the garage, which means they're very hard to loosen. From time to time people passed by, looked at my distress and passed on. I was just wondering whether to call the *gelbe Engel* of the ADAC when a slight man in his 60s, obviously foreign, who was passing by, stopped to ask if I needed help. Yes, I certainly did. Together we managed to put enough pressure on the crowbar to loosen the nuts holding the wheel, and it didn't take long before the new wheel was mounted. He then asked if I could take him to the mosque. I was glad to be able to repay his kindness, but within minutes a friend of his drove by and took him along. I presume he was either Turkish or Kurdish. The parallel to the Good Samaritan is so obvious to be almost corny, and the moral is clear to anyone who's heard a sermon based on the Bible story, but for me it had a big impact because I'd actually experienced it. Now, when I hear talk of Salafists and fanatical Muslims, I also remember 'my' Muslim from Mehlem.

Geoff Sammon

Why Irish eyes are smiling

While on vacation in Rome, I noticed a marble column in St. Peter's with a golden telephone on it. As a young priest passed by, I asked who the telephone was for. The priest told me it was a direct line to heaven, and if I'd like to call, it would be a thousand dollars. I was amazed, but declined the offer.

Throughout Italy, I kept seeing the same golden telephone on a marble column. At each, I asked about it and the answer was always the same: It was a direct line to heaven and I could call for a thousand dollars.

Then I went to Ireland.

When I finished my tour in Ireland. I decided to attend Mass at a local village church. When I walked in the door I noticed the golden telephone. Underneath it there was a sign stating: "DIRECT LINE TO HEAVEN: 25 cents."

"Father," I said, "I have been all over Italy and in all the cathedrals I visited, I've seen telephones exactly like this one. But the price was always a thousand dollars. Why is it that this one is only 25 cents?"

The priest smiled and said, "Darlin', you're in Ireland now. It's a local call."

(supplied by Walt)

Deutsch nix verstehen? GA-English can help

If you're new to Bonn, can't speak German but would like to know what's going on in Bonn, you can now google *GA-English*, the online news service in English provided by Bonn's *General-Anzeiger*. It's run by Carol Kloeppe, a US citizen who has been living in Germany since 1992 and in Bonn since 2001. The website's aim is also to help people new to the city with everyday problems, e.g. how does the public transport system work, which hospitals offer emergency services, what public holidays are there, and gives information on possible excursions round and about Bonn.

(source supplied by Helen)

Chaplaincy in the press

There were plenty of occasions last year when the local media, English-speaking institutions and our ecumenical partners were informed about what is going on at St. Boniface or All Saints and is well worth a visit. In total seven articles were printed, one in the "Kölnische Rundschau", three in the "Kölner Stadtanzeiger" and three in Bonn's *General-Anzeiger*.

Barbara Merkes

Spreading the News

It's Sunday morning. When you arrive at church, you're given a copy of the weekly sheet as usual. You pay close attention to the readings and the notices... but what are those three funny symbols on the bottom right-hand corner of the front page? They look like this:



Here's a quick guide to what they mean.

Facebook

The 'f' symbol stands for Facebook. The chaplaincy's Facebook page is: www.facebook.com/AnglicanBonnCologne. It's public, which means you don't need to be a Facebook user to access it. This is where:

- We share chaplaincy events, photos, and the latest news from around the Diocese in Europe and the wider Anglican Communion.
- People can comment on our posts, send us messages, and share links.
- You'll usually find three to five updates a week.

As of early January 2016, our Facebook page has 247 'likes'. That means 247 people keep up to date with the chaplaincy on Facebook – mainly from Germany, but also from as far away as Malaysia, the Philippines, South Africa and Brazil. We've even had people joining our congregations after making initial contact with us through our Facebook page. And when we posted a special prayer (via the Church of

England website) after the terrorist attacks in Paris last November, that post reached 5,320 people worldwide and was shared 48 times. That's quite a reach.



Twitter

The bird symbol is the Twitter logo. Of all the social media channels, the chaplaincy is most active on Twitter. If you have a Twitter account, you'll find us at [@Anglican_Bn_Cgn](https://twitter.com/Anglican_Bn_Cgn). But even if you don't, you can see what we're up to at any time at: https://twitter.com/Anglican_Bn_Cgn. This is where:

- We have over 130 followers from all over the world.
- We follow over 140 Twitter pages, including our own Diocese in Europe, churches all over Europe and beyond, Christian news sites, prayer resources, live broadcasts of church services and more.
- We retweet the daily diocesan cycle of prayer.
- We share chaplaincy news, service times, photos, and details of special events.
- You'll find updates every day. One of the special things about Twitter is that each update ('tweet') can have a maximum of 140 characters, so we have to keep it brief.

If you'd like to dive a little further into Twitter, here are some other accounts I can highly recommend: [@OurCofE](https://twitter.com/OurCofE), [@DioceseinEurope](https://twitter.com/DioceseinEurope), [@eurobishop](https://twitter.com/eurobishop), [@AnglicanDK](https://twitter.com/AnglicanDK), [@anglicanfinland](https://twitter.com/anglicanfinland), [@JustinWelby](https://twitter.com/JustinWelby) and [@kircheimweb](https://twitter.com/kircheimweb).

Website

The third symbol is that square that looks a bit like a bar code. It's a QR ('quick response') code. If you have a smartphone with a QR scanning app, you can scan the code, which automatically opens the chaplaincy website at www.anglicanbonncologne.de. Our website is where:

- You'll find background info on our two congregations: who we are, where to find us, and when we worship.
- We publish the chaplaincy calendar of services, concerts and other events.
- You can read past issues of our newsletters and weekly sheets.
- We list links to other churches/worship resources/local English-speaking organisations.
- You can read our blog, browse the photo gallery and find out ways of getting involved in chaplaincy life.
- You'll find updates whenever necessary.

Chaplaincy Calendar	
Saturday, 2 January	
Sunday, 3 January	
9:30am	Eucharist in Bonn
9:30am	Children's Ministry Bonn
11:45am	Eucharist in Cologne
11:45am	Children's Ministry Cologne

Offline and online

Of course there are still other, offline, ways to keep up with what's going on at St. Boniface and All Saints. This newsletter is one, and the printed weekly sheet is another. The European Anglican, printed four times a year, features news from all over the Diocese in Europe; you'll find copies at the back of church. But these days it's impossible to imagine chaplaincy life without the internet. When you see a new face at church on a Sunday, it's almost certainly someone who's looked us up on the internet first. And thanks to social media, it has become much easier to connect with other Christians across Europe and beyond.

To sum up, here's a quick social media quiz for you (answers below).

1. You want to watch the Archbishop of Canterbury's New Year message online.

Where can you find the link?

- a) www.facebook.com/AnglicanBonnCologne
- b) @Anglican_Bn_Cgn on Twitter
- c) www.ArchbishopOfCanterburysNewYearMessage.com

2. You can't find your copy of the Diocese Prayer Diary. How can you find out what and who we're praying for today?

- a) @Anglican_Bn_Cgn on Twitter
- b) www.anglicanbonncologne.de
- c) I pick some random names until I've found my diary again

3. You're planning a tour of Europe and would like to attend English-language services in Helsinki, Minorca, Copenhagen, Andorra, Brussels, Bordeaux, Florence, Prague and St. Petersburg. Where can you find the service times?

- a) I turn up on a Sunday morning and hope for the best
- b) I check each church's website individually
- c) Via @Anglican_Bn_Cgn on Twitter

4. You want to show your friends some photos of recent chaplaincy events. Where can you look?

- a) @Anglican_Bn_Cgn on Twitter
- b) www.anglicanbonncologne.de
- c) www.facebook.com/AnglicanBonnCologne

5. You're ill and can't come to church. Where can you find live broadcasts of church services you can take part in at home?

- a) www.AChurchNearYou.com
- b) @ChurchLive on Twitter
- c) www.anglicanbonncologne.de

Here are the answers to the quiz. How did you do?

- 1. a)
- 2. a)
- 3. a), b) and c) – but c) is the quickest and safest option
- 4. a), b) and c)
- 5. b)

Contacts

If you'd like to find out more or get involved in the chaplaincy's social media activities, just get in touch:

- Facebook, Twitter and weekly sheet: email Jenny Knudsen at notices@anglicanbonncologne.de or tel. 0228 94693999
- Website: email Christoph Heinrich at web@anglicanbonncologne.de

Jenny Knudsen

Diary October-March

Advent wreath

We would like to express our sincere thanks to Herr Behne of St. Josef for giving us this beautiful Advent wreath in the run-up to Christmas.



How they brought the mince pies from Kent to Bonn

NB: Most of the facts in this text are true. Only the names have been changed to protect the guilty.

A week before last year's Bazaar on 5 December, it was realised that there were NOT ENOUGH MINCE PIES FOR THE BAZAAR. Panic! Revolutions have started for less. Wasn't it Marie-Antoinette who said, unfeelingly, 'Qu'ils mangent de la brioche!' ('Let them eat sausage rolls'), thus sparking off the French Revolution?

Aware of the heavy historical burden on their shoulders, on a Saturday G, R and C therefore decided to set off via Aix and Charleroi, stopping only to sample the delights of a Scottish-Belgian motorway chip deli specialising in deep-fried Belgian chocolates, and head for Dover, the nearest source of mince pies. This was shortly after the Paris attacks, and we were expecting a de-Schengenised Europe – the sort of Europe which Marie Le Pen and Nigel Farage would love to have – where we would have to queue up at each border. At Aachen this was an unfounded fear,

because true to its role as capital of Charlemagne's empire, before there was either a Germany, or a France, and certainly not a Belgium, border controls were still non-existent – no frontiers, please, we're Franks.

The Franco-Belgian border was a different matter. Just before the border a long line of vehicles had built up – enough to gladden the heart of any true queue-loving Brit, but we had gone native after the many years in Germany and preferred to avoid the queue, so we left the motorway to try our luck on local roads. There was one road block in a nearby town, but they waved us through when they saw we were Anglicans (you wish). At the approaches to the ferry terminal we could see the effects of the refugee crisis, because now a high metal fence separated the tent city housing hundreds of refugees, with a policeman standing guard every 50 metres. A sobering reminder of reality.

After checking in at our Dover b&b we set out to complete our mission, but struck a blank at Asda's, which did not seem to have any. Next stop Morrison's. Here we found a cornucopia of pre-Xmas fare. There was a dazzling array of mince pies, all with confusing names. I've personally never understood what people see in shop-made mince pies. They're dry, they're sweet and they don't have any mince in them, so what's the point? After taking advice as to which type of pie tasted best, G made an executive decision to take 600 of these. They had to be brought from the storeroom, but that was OK. The snag was that they would only keep for 10 days, after which, presumably, they would either explode, turn back into pumpkins, or become handsome princes (or frogs) if you kissed them. Dismayed at the possibility of a Germany plagued by hundreds of princes (or frogs) and by an epidemic of kissing, at R's prompting we had a quick rethink, and decided to go for the less epicurean option, which could be kept for a couple of months. So the 600 mince pies were carted back to the supermarket store room and replaced by the type with more preservatives. The shop assistant was very patient.

After this, all was plain sailing. We needed Xmas crackers, Christmas puddings and other festive paraphernalia, but Dover's various supermarkets were able to provide them, and by 7 p.m. we were able to trudge wearily home by car, tired but happy. So we treated ourselves to a good curry in a local restaurant. Next day we had the fry-up which this b&b does so well, and prepared for the rigours of the border crossings to come. Hm, that's what you thought. No checks between France and Belgium – apparently the Belgians weren't fussed about terrorists coming from France, and there were no checks on the Belgian-German border again. So Schengen rules, still.

It was a bit crazy to make a special trip over to Dover just to get things for the Bazaar and the carol services, but it was fun. A bit like doing things for the church in general, in fact: not always very sensible, and often time-consuming, but fun. And that's what it's partly about, isn't it?

Geoff

Nine Lessons and Carols at St. Boniface: The Choir's View

As the clock moves towards 7.30pm, the people in the church settle down, full of expectations for the coming 90 minutes. Around 25 members of the Bonn English Singers are getting ready in the vestry. Some of us drink a final sherry, which helps to clear the throat and clean the voice. Some people go through their music one last time to make sure all their pages are in the right order.

Just before we leave the vestry, we line up in the right order. A lot of "ssssshhh" can be heard as we calm down. Our conductor, Fraser Gartshore, has given us exact instructions of when to open the door and go into the church. When we hear the organ playing the first notes of the prelude, that is our signal. A soprano opens the door and we all follow her in. The pews in the church are completely full. Conversations stop, the organ plays softly, and we take our positions in front of the altar. We are about to start another emotional carol service.

The Nine Lessons and Carols are the choir's highlight each year. We usually pick the carols we would like to sing at some point in September or early October. The programme has to be agreed with the chaplaincy, which is usually a very easy process. So it is early autumn when we start singing Christmas music. That gives us around 12 rehearsals to get every single carol right. Some of them are really hard work. There are always some that we love and others that aren't so popular. However, that doesn't keep us from trying to polish them to perfection. Although not of all of us are churchgoers, Christmas and the Nine Lessons and Carols are still something special for the entire choir.



After the prelude, Fraser plays the first three or four notes of *Once in Royal David's City* for the soprano soloist who will start the service with the first verse. The carols we sing with the congregation are easier for us because it is

harder for people to hear if someone makes a mistake. That changes, of course, when the choir sings alone. Quiet carols with close harmonies, such as John Tavener's *The Lamb*, are especially challenging and quite hard work for everybody. Watching the conductor, listening to everyone around you, finding your note, singing the correct words and breathing at the right time – it all has to fall into place at once.

During the readings there is no opportunity to sit and relax. As much as we like to sing in front of people so they can see us, there is also a downside to it. It is lovely, though, to see people's faces during the readings or as we sing and to read their emotions from their eyes and their smiles. It makes us feel part of the congregation preparing for Christmas rather than a choir singing for an anonymous audience.

When it comes to the final two carols, *Hark! The Herald-Angels Sing* and *O Come All Ye Faithful*, we've made it to the home stretch. Not only have we successfully delivered the difficult bits before; now it is time for some properly loud singing. It is just us and the congregation celebrating the coming of the Redeemer. When the sopranos climb up to reach their high notes in their descants, it sounds like angels singing. Almost everybody is smiling – in the congregation and in the choir. Now we know that all the hard work since autumn has paid off.

And then it's Christmas, more or less. We have some mulled wine and mince pies, receive a lot of cheerful comments about the singing and feel warmly welcomed and appreciated. We'll take that feeling with us through Christmas and the coming year until it is time to open the carol books again next autumn.

Reiner Knudsen

Annual General Meeting

The AGM took place this year on 10 April, following a Eucharist held at All Saints. It was attended by Archdeacon Colin Williams, and followed by a pot luck meal. As part of the AGM elections were held for the positions of churchwarden and representatives of the PCC. The following people were elected:

Church wardens:

John Hebel, Geoff Sammon (Bonn)
Barbara Merkes, Markus Müller (Cologne)

There was a special word of thanks to Kathy Caldwell for her work as church warden in Bonn and as Chaplaincy secretary. Kathy and her family are moving back to the UK this summer.

PCC:

Kai Nürnberger, Carol Pereira, Helen Rensmann, Jill Wolff (Bonn)
Lizette Dennis, Hilary Griffiths, Ingrid Hempeler, Ranti Hendricks (Cologne)

Upcoming Events

WANTED: help with the concert team

There will be four concerts at All Saints during the course of the year. It is our custom to provide refreshments for the musicians and our audience during the interval.

Due to work commitments and absences we need more helpers for these evenings. Concerts normally start at 7.30 pm (some of them on weekdays), although one concert is planned at the earlier time of 5 pm on a Sunday.

If you could help with setting up (tables for refreshments and chairs in case of an orchestra) before the concert, greeting people and handing out programmes, serving refreshments during the interval and tidying away afterwards I would be pleased to hear from you. Perhaps you are new to our church, would like to get more involved and get to know people better?

Your efforts will be rewarded with an excellent concert and good fun.

Please get in touch with Barbara Merkes, the concert coordinator

(concerts@anglicanbonncologne.de).

Garden Party Bonn

The Garden Party this year is being held on Saturday, 4 June. We hope to get a piper to come along and maybe include some more music, but there will also be the usual attractions:

- café with cakes and savouries
- barbecue
- food from India, Africa, Jamaica
- British produce and home-made food
- craft stall
- books
- Nearly New
- Tombola

If you have any good ideas for new stalls, just let us know.

We need contributions for most of these stalls. Items for **Books**, **Nearly New** and **Tombola** can be brought to church and put in the store room.

If you are **going to the UK by car** and can bring over **British produce**, could you please contact Geoff Sammon at geoff.sammon@gmx.de or on 02255-225250.

Summer Fête Cologne

Cologne's Summer Fête is being held on 27 August to catch the last warmth of summer before autumn arrives. More details in later Newsletters, but please sort out items which can be sold there, and tell the organisers if you can bring back British produce from the UK.

Dates for your diary

24 April: Songs of Praise at All Saints, 6 p.m. Come along and sing your favourite hymns.

8 May (Muttertag): Last Sunday with Ian Eglin

15 May (Whit Sunday/Pentecost): William Mounsey's first Sunday as Locum

4 June: Garden Party, Bonn, behind St. Paulus, 12.00 to 4 p.m.

9 June: Concert with Leeds College of Music Camerata (Orchestra), 7.30 p.m., All Saints

19 June: Confirmation at All Saints with Bishop David, 10 a.m.

26 June: Last Sunday with William Mounsey

10 July: First Sunday with John Lindsay

14 July: Concert with King's School, Gloucester (with Choir and Swing Band), 7.30 p.m., All Saints

24 July: Last Sunday with John Lindsay

7 August: First Sunday with David Houghton

27 August: Summer Fete, All Saints, 12.00 to 4 p.m.

28 August: Last Sunday with David Houghton

16 October: Concert with Lingfield Notre Dame (Senior) School, Lingfield, Surrey (with Choir and Jazz Band), **5 p.m. (note: earlier time than usual)**, All Saints

19 November: Bazaar, Bonn, Pfarrheim St. Josef, 12.00 to 4 p.m.

18 December: Carol Service, All Saints, Cologne 6 p.m.

19 December: Carol Service, St. Paulus, Bonn-Beuel, 7.30 p.m.