



Anglican Parish of  
Caversham Saint Peter,  
Dunedin, New Zealand

# THE ROCK

December 2013—Christmas



## The High Point of Creation

By  The Vicar

In the early days of the Church Christians tended to assume that the human story didn't have long to go, that history would soon draw to a close, with God drawing a triumphant line through the story so far. In this way of reckoning things the world had grown old, it was time for God's new age to begin, and the arrival of Jesus in our world was the signal that the change-over of the ages would happen soon.



2,000 years later Christians have had to work to a different time scale, and to revise their expectations—both of what the second coming of Jesus means, and of the significance of his first coming among us.

Karl Rahner was one of the twentieth century's greatest theologians, and he offered a bold proposal for a revised sense of Christian hope. For him the arrival of Jesus in our world in the cradle at Bethlehem was

*"...for we have seen His star in the East, and are come to worship Him."*

(Continued on page 2)

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## Thank you again

By The Editors

Last year at this time we offered our thanks to advertisers, contributors and readers for all their help and support in getting *The Rock* under new management under way.

This year, we can only say thank you again. Some of our contributors have been nice enough to thank us for our efforts, but really that is wrong way around for without them, where would we be.

In like wise, we are most grateful to our advertisers and hope they too have gained some benefit from our association. We cannot say too often, "please support them".

The next issue of *The Rock* will be in February 2014. Until then, Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all. And thank you all. 🙏

[www.stpeterscaversham.org.nz](http://www.stpeterscaversham.org.nz)

## The High Point of Creation


(Continued from page 1)

at the very centre of his theology. He believed that the coming of Christ came not at the late end of human history, but rather at the youthful beginnings of a long period of hope filled developments in human affairs. We could expect a long run to the history of the universe, and of the human story within it.

For him the Incarnation, the first coming of Jesus among us, has changed everything, and has a leavening effect on all reality, as it gradually works its way through the deep structures of the world. Through the operations of the Holy Spirit the continuing effects of the outworking of the Incarnation will spread God's influence throughout the world more and more.

The significance of Jesus' arrival in our world is that he is the highest development of human life. He sets the gold standard, the quality mark, of what it is to be a human being. He defines what it is to be a human being in the fullest sense of the definition, since he is the

high point of creation. He is different to us of course in some crucial respects. As one wise commentator put it, "he is what the rest of us are not," but also, "he is what the rest of us are, only more so."


For me Karl Rahner was a bit too hopeful and optimistic. He spoke for instance of the future interplanetary age we were on the brink of. That doesn't seem to have happened as the great powers have lost interest in manned space flight because of its prohibitive cost. And I also think that a sudden end to history because of a world catastrophe or the imminent second coming of Jesus cannot be ruled out. But I love the way he sees the cradle at Bethlehem as the still centre of the turning world, the most important thing that happened in the human story, with its powerful healing, inspiring, redeeming influence radiating out through all time and all ages and all places. This is what brings hope to us, and makes the cradle scene that will be set up in churches up and down the country more than just a heart warming reflection on the joys of childhood and family life. 

## Of Poems and Poets

The last in the 2013 series of The Caversham Lectures featured 2013 Burns

Fellow for Literature, the poet David Howard. He spoke on 26 November of life, poetry and everything.

Illustrating his points with samples of poetic work from the early Greeks to the present day—including, with commendable reticence, and only when pressed by the audience, one of his own pieces—Mr Howard presented a lecture which, although it touched at times upon matters spiritual, was another departure from the more traditionally theological subjects with which the series began.

Next year's series will include lectures by The Vicar on great Anglo-Catholics of the twentieth century including Dom Gregory Dix, the liturgist, Austin Farrer the theologian, and Michael Ramsey, Archbishop of Canterbury. 

### THE CAVERSHAM LECTURES 2013



David Howard presenting his lecture "In the still centre : Poetry as an act of compassion"

PHOTO.: INFORMATION SERVICES OTAGO LTD.

### THE CAVERSHAM LECTURES 2014

More online at [www.stpeterscaversham.org.nz](http://www.stpeterscaversham.org.nz)

Select The Caversham Lectures from the Theology menu for video and audio recordings of this and other lectures.

## Letters

The Rock welcomes letters to the Editor. Letters should be no more than 150 words in length and are subject to selection and, if selected, to editing for length and house style. Letters may be :

Posted to : The Editor of The Rock,  
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Emailed to:

[TheRockEditor@stpeterscaversham.org.nz](mailto:TheRockEditor@stpeterscaversham.org.nz)

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## KHCP Christmas

Rosemary Brown has received the Christmas newsletter from Kailakuri Health Care Project (KHCP) in Bangladesh.

KHCP is an organisation committed to health care for the poorest. It achieves this in three ways:

1. Making costs very low
2. Sharing costs with other health care organisations
3. Finding external funding.

Dr Edric Baker, leader of the KHCP, visited Saint Peter's in July 2012 and spoke to a group of people from Dunedin parishes. 

More online:

Read the KHCP Christmas newsletter at

[www.stpeterscaversham.org.nz/  
TheRocksupplements/1312/  
KHCP.pdf](http://www.stpeterscaversham.org.nz/TheRocksupplements/1312/KHCP.pdf)

# Water, water everywhere

By Ian Condie

**K**eeping watch on the bridge between midnight and four AM is usually boring and uneventful. The ship, other than the watch keepers, is asleep and there is really nothing to do but keep a lookout, check the steering and so on. The Second Mate, having a junior on watch under him can get on with chart correcting in the chartroom while junior carries out the routine.

Being a passenger ship, there was a Night-watchman. He was elderly, somewhat infirm and should probably have been retired but his duties were simple. He had a set patrol and had to clock in at specific points and raise the alarm if necessary. It had never been necessary for him to do so until one night he tottered on to the bridge and gasped, "Sir, there's flooding on the Prom. Deck."

The Second Mate was not sympathetic. If the sea was flooding the Prom. Deck it was too late to do anything but hope the boats could be lowered. He told Junior to go down and see what the old fool was talking about.

There was water running along the starboard alleyway in the passenger accommodation but its source was traced to the door of one of the public bathrooms. Cautiously Junior opened the door. To his relief there was nobody in

the bath but the taps were both turned full on so it was the work of a couple of seconds to turn them off then order the Night-watchman to get bucket and mop and clear up the flooding. He then grasped the chain that was attached to the plug and discovered to his surprise that the plug was lying on the side of the bath. What, then, was stopping the water escaping in the normal manner?




Junior removed his uniform jacket, rolled up his shirt sleeve and groped into the water. Sure enough some sort of cloth was stuffed into the outlet. It was easily removed and shaken out to find out what it was and, perhaps, discover a clue as to

why the bath had been left running unattended. The result was not reassuring. The young officer found himself holding up a set of gent's knee length drawers, a type of undergarment that had then been out of fashion for many years.

There was only one passenger who would wear such things and Junior felt a sinking feeling as he had a vision of a very elderly, rather infirm, gentleman having, perhaps, forgotten where the bathroom was, wandering round

the passenger decks stark naked and opening doors at random.

A quick check revealed that the gentleman's cabin was, in fact, opposite the bathroom. A light showed under the door as Junior knocked gently and opened it cautiously, to be enormously relieved to find the occupant in bed and sound asleep. 

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*"Buildings are only brick and mortar;  
it's our people who provide such quality  
service to families"*

Alan Gillion



The Rock's spies say the recent working bee to tidy the church grounds truly lived up to its name when a number of honey bees joined in—and stung some of our labouring parishioners. Ouch!

## Saint Peter's Fellowship

By Gwen Hudson

**I**n October a good number of our group was privileged to be given a presentation by Dr Alex Chisholm on her very interesting research work in the role nuts play in our diet. The depth and breadth of the research on behalf of our health was astounding and the findings to date illuminating and satisfying, especially to the women present who love nuts but are cautious of them because of weight gain fears. Scientific research shows that nuts do not cause weight gain but add many essentials to the body's health. Three hundred grams a day is okay.


In November a good number of our group assembled at The Home of St Barnabas for

our end of year lunch. Father Hugh conducted a service in the Chapel after which we assembled in the Blue Lounge for our Christmas Lunch. As usual the chef at St Barnabas fed us extremely well.

Raylene, who had organised the occasion, presented gifts to Gay who has worked so hard for many years and Gwen who has assisted. Joan was also given a sum of money to help with the Birthday Cards which we all receive with pleasure each year. It was agreed that the remainder of our funds would be given to Anglican Family Care. Thank you Raylene for the manner in which you managed the next step of our Fellowship's journey.

At the October meeting the group had discussed the future format of the group and

agreed the gatherings would become even more informal. It is hoped we will continue to meet—possibly in each other's homes if practicable or for the occasional luncheon gathering. Raylene has agreed to organise the first gathering of the new year and the following month will evolve from there.

At the end of the day, as most of us age, we can look back on a long period of doing, contributing to the needs of others and, of equal importance, sharing in a fellowship and friendship built up over many years. Now it is timely that the group, whose members share a similar philosophy on life and a common religion and who truly like each other, continues to meet and enjoy our shared history and where possible provide friendship and support to each other where needed. 

[www.stpeterscaversham.org.nz](http://www.stpeterscaversham.org.nz)

# Nutritious

By Alex Chisholm



dark

Over the past few years there has been a renewed appreciation of fresh, when possible home grown, but certainly locally grown food. "Fresh is best" has become a catch cry (not only of the Slow Food and similar movements), designed to increase appreciation of fresh food cooked "from scratch". This has been prompted partly by concern for the environment and the concept of food miles is one that is increasingly considered nowadays. In the past, before the availability of food from other parts of the world, allowing us for example to have tomatoes all year

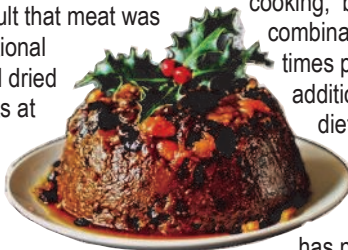
"...we need think only of the frankincense, and myrrh..."

round, people were reliant on food grown near where they lived. Seasonality meant that certain foods were associated with specific times of the year and menus were adapted to local conditions. Thus for instance the traditional Christmas fare still eaten in the Southern Hemisphere reflects the availability and suitability of foods for a Northern Hemisphere winter. When not all animals could be kept over winter there had to be a reduction in their numbers with the result that meat was available around Christmas. The traditional Christmas pudding made with suet and dried fruit also reflected the lack of fresh fruits at this time of year. Nuts of course are seasonal foods that were able to be stored over the winter months, thus supplying calories and essential nutrients during leaner times. Because of their availability they also belonged to the Christmas traditions. Sitting by candle light in the evening enjoying the "traditional" Advent foods of walnuts—cracked as required—and mandarin oranges, is a pleasant memory from my time in Germany. Mulled wine was another item often associated with the cold



winter evenings. In New Zealand, however, we have available a wonderful selection of fresh seasonal food as well as being able to enjoy whatever aspects of the traditional Christmas fare appeals to us or is part of our family tradition.

Spices are associated with many dishes and styles of cooking, but there are certain spices and combinations associated with Christmas. In times past these were rare and exotic additions to an often otherwise monotone diet, though not available to everyone and often the preserve of the wealthy. Nowadays we usually associate spices with food but this has not been their only role. In the Bible there are many references to spices, usually emphasising their precious and exotic nature and function in ritual. As part of the wonderful and familiar Christmas story we need think only of the frankincense, and myrrh offered by the Three Kings to the Christ Child and Mary His mother (ref. Matthew 2:11).



GRAPHIC: [HTTP://4.bp.blogspot.com/-TJ9v9J1\\_EDAU/TSLiCTDPHGII/AAAAAAAAAUM/K0FEMy4U2G/s1600/DSC\\_4057.JPG](http://4.bp.blogspot.com/-TJ9v9J1_EDAU/TSLiCTDPHGII/AAAAAAAAAUM/K0FEMy4U2G/s1600/DSC_4057.JPG)



The dedication and unveiling by Father Hugh of Father Geoff's headstone (pictured above) in the cemetery at St Barnabas', Warrington on 7 December, the first anniversary of the funeral, went very well. There were 26 people and 2 dogs (Deefa and Ike) present. We were lucky with the weather. There was thunder from the south during the service and from the north afterwards during fellowship on the lawn in front of the church but no actual rain until we were nearly back in Dunedin proper so everything could take place outside. Everyone felt we'd done Geoff proud and that he would've been very happy with it all.

REPROT: MICHAEL FORREST. PHOTO.: PAUL JEFFERY.

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# Glasgow—a Church, a House and a Garden

By Alex Chisholm

**A**fter Dubrovnik and Bristol, I was able to spend some time in my home town of Glasgow. It is always especially enjoyable to be able to visit family members, but I have also been fortunate to have various interesting experiences on my visits over the last few years. A first on this visit was, at last, being able to go to mass at St Bride's Episcopal Church—the Catholic parish in Glasgow. This is a very large building with the high altar against the East wall, and the tabernacle on the altar (pictured at top right). The main features of the liturgy (a notable difference was the Embolism in the Lord's Prayer) and service schedule would be familiar to Saint Peter's people, though there are several additional regular services.

Recitals and concerts are held at St Bride's. The organ (by Hill (1865), Mirrlees (1882), and MacKenzie (1972) - learn more at the web link below) is of historical significance, being the first organ to be lawfully installed and used during worship in a Scottish Presbyterian church, before eventually being moved to St



Bride's. There is a small but dedicated choir with a repertoire from Renaissance Masses and motets to more modern settings. St Bride's is situated in the Hyndland area in Glasgow's West End, fairly near the University of Glasgow.

However I was staying at my favourite B&B *The Glasgow Guest House* (top B&B in Glasgow on Trip Adviser) on the other side of town, in Dumbreck and just a 10 minute stroll from Charles Rennie Mackintosh's *House for an Art Lover* (pictured below) in Bellahouston Park. The park is a huge area with trees and open

green areas but adjacent to the *House for an Art Lover* itself is the most beautiful walled garden with carefully tended plants and lawns—but also areas for test plants. When I was there the weather was wonderfully warm—as I have often encountered in Glasgow—and sitting in the garden on one of the memorial benches



The East wall of St Bride's at conclusion of Mass.

PHOTO'S: ALEX CHISHOLM.



The Lady Chapel at St Bride's.

surrounded by the fragrance of the 'test' sweet peas was a delightful experience. The house itself is well worth a visit, specially for anyone fond of the work of Charles Rennie Mackintosh. 📷



House for an Art Lover.



Garden for a House for an Art Lover.



*More online':*

St Bride's website: <http://www.stbride.org.uk/>

The choir and organ at St Bride's [http://www.stbride.org.uk/organ\\_choir.htm](http://www.stbride.org.uk/organ_choir.htm)

See additional photo's of the house and garden at

[http://www.StPetersCaversham.org.nz/The\\_Rock\\_supplements/1312/Bellahouston.html](http://www.StPetersCaversham.org.nz/The_Rock_supplements/1312/Bellahouston.html)

# Saint Peter's People

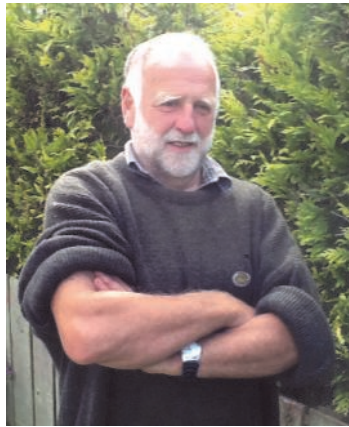
Ken Ferguson's story

As told to Michael Forrest

**K**en's father came from Lewis in the Outer Hebrides, the Western Isles of Scotland, where he followed the tradition for ordinary folk which was that the eldest son inherited the croft (farm), the daughters went into service (often on the mainland) and the other sons went to sea. Eventually he jumped ship in New Zealand in 1936. He continued his seafaring career here in coastal shipping then further abroad until his merchant ship, the *Awatea* (the pride of the Union Steamship Co. fleet), was sunk in the Mediterranean—miraculously without loss of life—during World War 2. He returned to New Zealand and married in 1945.

Like his twin sisters, Ken was born and grew up in Wellington, where there was a community of Lewis men, and attended Rongotai College. He left school in 1963 and being an artistic boy his first job was with James Smith's department store in their art studio. His first task was to help build floats for James Smith's Christmas parade. He then worked for a company specialising in displays and exhibitions. In 1970 he joined Television New Zealand as a scenic artist at their workshop in Tory Street, painting backdrops for various productions, moving with the workshop to the new Avalon facility in 1972.

Ken left television for a while and relocated to Nelson, working as a promotions/display manager in an old-fashioned department store called Trathen's. But he was "head-hunted" back to television and sent to Dunedin in 1975 as a set-designer, rising to the position of Design Services Manager and being responsible for the visual content of all productions. By 1990 TVNZ had become just a broadcaster of programmes made by independent production-houses, so the



Dunedin studio was closed and Ken became redundant. Then he ran a freelance workshop which designed and built the sets for all television productions in Dunedin, such as *Me and You* for Rex Simpson's KidsTV—filmed in Green Island—and Taylormade Productions, plus promotional or educational programmes on corporate themes.

Religion has played a large part in Ken's life. His father was raised in the Free Church of Scotland, a very Calvinistic Reformed Church which was totally Bible-based. For example no hymns were sung (as these are of merely human origin and therefore unreliable and subject to fashion), only Psalms, and Sunday was strictly observed as the Sabbath, so special that doing anything was forbidden (although his father used to take the family on a picnic each Sunday afternoon to help pass the day). However, he married a Roman Catholic, a good Christian woman who took advantage of her husband's absences at sea to have her three children baptised at St Catherine's Catholic church in Kilbirnie (Wellington). But they were all raised as Presbyterian, attending St Giles' in Kilbirnie when their father was ashore. Their mother used to go to the early Mass at St Catherine's instead. Ken believes that

growing up in a real "orange and green" situation, which still exists and is taken to puerile extremes in Lewis, as he saw on a recent visit there, has made him more accepting and tolerant. He commented that he felt his father lived in self-imposed exile in New Zealand, knowing that some in Lewis would consider him beyond the pale for having crossed the Protestant/Catholic divide.

Ken says, "In my teens St Giles', Bible class played a big part in my life. The Easter Presbyterian Bible class camp was held for the males at Reikorangi near Waikanae from [Maundy] Thursday evening until Easter Monday afternoon. There were probably up to 200 attending and we loved it. We slept in old army Bell tents on straw and it really was quite rustic. My bags were usually packed and ready not long after Christmas. At the age of approximately eighteen I knew that I could no longer ignore Christ's call and since then through 'thick and thin' I have never regretted my decision to walk the Christian path".

Ken has lived in Andersons Bay since 1981 with his second wife, Joan, also a Roman Catholic. They have two daughters who both live in Western Australia—Sarah is a geologist and Mairi a geotechnical engineer—but no grandchildren. Ken does have two grandchildren, from his first marriage in 1969 which gave him a daughter, Kathryn, and a son, Donald. Today Ken's interests include the Highland bagpipes (he has played in a pipe band), gardening, art (he paints) and fishing. As well as attending Saint Peter's, he worships fortnightly with his wife at St Brigid's Catholic or goes to the Musselburgh Baptist church, but is pleased to be called a Saint Peter's person, and is a very interesting and talented one at that. 🇳🇿



Christian World Service's Christmas Appeal and appeal for the victims of the Philippines typhoon are still open for your donations.



A Unicef appeal for the Philippines is also open. Dennis McKinlay, Executive Director of Unicef New Zealand says donations to this appeal will be matched dollar-for-dollar by the New Zealand Government.



More online at

<http://www.cws.org.nz/>

<http://christmasappeal.org.nz/>

<http://cws.org.nz/what-can-i-do/emergencies/philippines-typhoon-appeal>

[https://www.unicef.org.nz/philippines?campaignid=362&referrid=2&qclid=CMjY8Mqln7sCFU0ypAod\\_DoAcQ](https://www.unicef.org.nz/philippines?campaignid=362&referrid=2&qclid=CMjY8Mqln7sCFU0ypAod_DoAcQ)

## Regular Services

*please consult The Pebble or our website for variations*

*All services are held at Saint Peter's unless noted otherwise*

SUNDAY:	8am	Holy Communion according to the Book of Common Prayer
	10.30am	Solemn Sung Eucharist
TUESDAY:	11am	Eucharist in the Chapel of St Barnabas' Home, Ings Avenue
THURSDAY:	10am	Eucharist
FIRST THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH:	11am	Eucharist in the lounge of Frances Hodgkins Retirement Village, Fenton Crescent

## The Rock

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## Exploring Roots

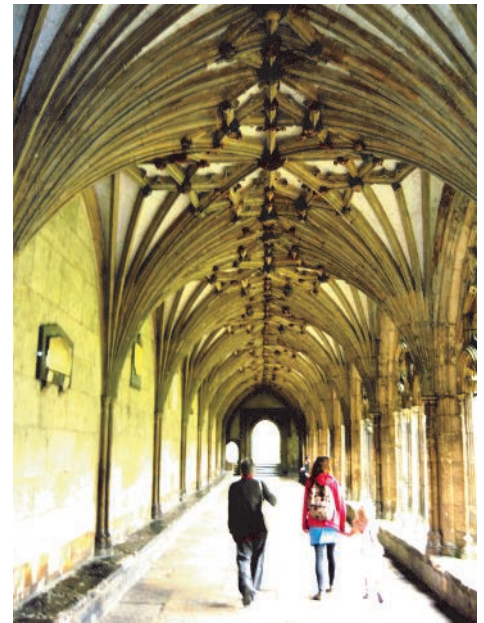
*(Continued from page 8)*

Boadicea (or Boudica), of the Iceni, laid waste many a Roman encampment and many a Roman soldier. The details were gruesome. I began to find the silly looks on the faces of the giraffes rather comforting. Then I found something of greater and more lasting comfort. Very high up above the roof of Colchester town hall was a large and elegant statue of St Helena, the mother of the Emperor Constantine and at one time the most important woman in the world. It was under her son, in the early fourth century, that the Roman Empire became Christian. Helena herself visited the Holy Land and is credited with having found the True Cross. It is believed that she was born in Colchester, the daughter of a local British chieftain (a spot in Turkey also claims this honour but with no greater likelihood).

We had explored Canterbury Cathedral, early in our stay, with a very small Batman and an even smaller fairy, with pink wings and pink-framed spectacles (I am now a 'Great Aunt', you understand, so family visiting is happening in reverse). After a while Batman (who just happens to be a girl) voiced disquiet, 'I thought this place was all about Jesus', she said. The fairy also looked puzzled. In the crowds of tourists, the magnificent masonry, they did not find what they had expected.

I myself had had an uneasy moment when we visited the chapel where Archbishop Thomas à Becket had been murdered at the behest of Henry II in 1170. There, oblivious to the astonishment of others, sat a young clergyman with long legs and a smart black suit and dog-collar, texting on his mobile. It did not seem right.

Fortunately, when Batman's puzzlement was voiced, we were in the crypt and just next to the cathedral treasury so we went in there to find a very moving silver crucifix, sacred pictures and other treasures that were quite clearly 'all about Jesus'. The fairy engaged in serious contemplation of a set of Stations of the Cross, which was in the bottom of a glass case at just the right height. I found something unexpected in a corner and this was the pastoral staff made for Henry Lascelles Jenner, when he was chosen to become the first Bishop of Dunedin in 1868 (he was a canon of Canterbury and a very fine musician). The staff, of course, was never used, for Jenner came out to Dunedin only to be rejected by the nascent diocese. That discovery caused me a pang but it reminded me that human imperfection and the pain it causes are part of the Christian experience. We can't stay on the smooth and delightful pathways of pilgrimage for ever, much though we would like to do so but have to return, refreshed by our experience, to the stonier roads of the everyday. I was nevertheless very grateful to discover, as we left the cathedral by the cloisters, that the long-legged, texting clergyman had redeemed himself by moving out there. 📱



Exploring a cathedral

PHOTO.: SUPPLIED.



## Special Services

Contact The Vicar to arrange baptisms, weddings, house blessings, burials, confessions and other special services.

## For your diary

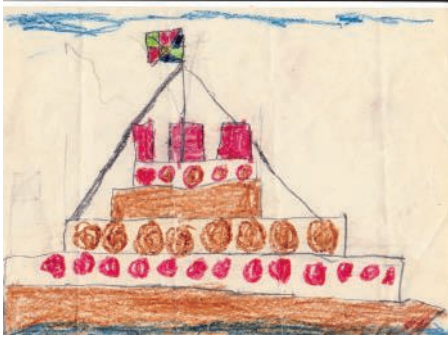
- Sunday, 22 December :** 7pm Nine Lessons and Carols Service.
- Christmas Eve:** 11pm Midnight Mass of the Nativity.
- Christmas Day:** 8am Holy Communion.  
10.30am Sung Eucharist with Carols.
- Tuesday, 31 December:** 10pm New Year's Eve Watchnight Service.
- Sunday, 19 January 2014:** Hospital Chapel assistance (bed moving).

# Exploring Roots

By Pamela Welch

The Revd Dr Pamela Welch, a Saint Peter's parishioner and Deacon of the Church, starts a holiday and finds herself on a pilgrimage of sorts.

Every few years I make a trip back to England to see people to whom I belong. I have been doing this since I was three., when I travelled with my parents and my brother on a Union-Castle liner from Cape Town to Southampton. I remember the ribbons which



A Union-Castle liner by the author When she was Very Young

were thrown from ship to shore just before vessels left in those days and the fun and games of the voyage, many of which were utterly baffling to me. Neptune arrived at the 'Crossing of the Line' (the Equator) and shaved young men's faces and threw them in the swimming pool (goodness knows why).

In those days we went to see my Father's family: his brother and his wife and our cousins and 'The Great Aunts' (a group which included an uncle) who lived in Hampshire, deep in the New Forest. These days I still see family (my brother's chiefly) but also visit friends made during many years of living in England and, particularly when



" Robert, Duke of Normandy, a wicked son of William the Conqueror..."

PHOTO.: SUPPLIED

Neil can come with me, we visit as many other Zimbabwean exiles as we can fit in.

This year, when we set out for a longer-than usual visit (10 weeks) my mind was full of the people we were going to see. England itself

and all it had to offer were secondary to my preoccupation with people, though I hoped we might fit in a visit to a stately home or two. What I did not expect was to find myself all unbeknownst on a pilgrimage, but that is what happened. Everywhere we went, we were drawn into the Christian history and present of the land.

We began in Maidstone, visiting Zimbabwean friends there as I have done since 1976. For the first time, exploring the town, we found the late-medieval Archbishop's Palace (now the town registry) on the river, where he of Canterbury used to stay when touring his diocese. The next Sunday we worshipped in a church which was part of the original palace complex and had stood there since 1398. On another day, we waited for a bus by a town church, St Faith's, where our friend is churchwarden and read that, in that very churchyard, Parliamentarians had received the submission of the local Royalists in the Civil War of the mid-seventeenth century.

Then we went north, to Northumberland. At a new museum, Vindolanda, by the Roman wall of the Emperor Hadrian, we found a tiny artefact used in the Christian worship of the fourth century. At Hexham on the Sunday, we worshipped in an abbey which was founded by St Wilfrid in 674 and I thought of the visit we had made in the previous week to Canterbury, where St Augustine had first set foot in 597. We also went to a wonderful concert in Northumberland, in a church with a notice by the door which said, 'Christian worship has been offered on this site for over 1000 years'.

At Gloucester, we wandered around and worshipped in the glorious cathedral there (with the help of the massed choirs of the cathedrals of Gloucester, Hereford and Worcester, for we found ourselves there for the Three Choirs Festival). The monument which entranced me most was that of

Robert, Duke of Normandy, a wicked son of William the Conqueror, who came to a sticky end for his wickedness but was nevertheless buried in the cathedral (in 1134). On the other side of the choir was the monument of

a wickedly murdered king, Edward II (1284-1327): he was much mourned by the people and his shrine became a place of pilgrimage for many medieval years.

We ended our tour in a village in East Anglia, north of Colchester. I knew a very special Anglican layman, Ronald Blythe, lived in the area. He has written a delicately phrased, poetical, very civilized and deeply spiritual meditation in the Church Times each week for many years. We found his church (eventually) and heard him preach, most memorably, on John Bunyan. He shook our hands and later, outside the church, signed a



St Helena atop Colchester town hall

PHOTO.: WWW.GAZETTE-NEWS.CO.UK

copy of his latest book for us. We learned from another that he is now 90 and I was all the more grateful we had scoured the countryside to find him and sit at his feet.

I did not expect to be moved by anything in Colchester itself. The old town (it was the original Roman settlement in Britain) is overlaid by a modern chaos of cars, badly-designed roads, shops and brightly coloured giraffes—advertisements for the local zoo. However, the wall of the Roman town was still there and impressive. Even more impressive, if somewhat chilling, was the realization that it was in this very vicinity in the years 60/61 AD that the warrior queen

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