

InHouse

the Journal of the Lincoln Cathedral Community Association



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All are welcome

Muriel Robinson

**'Let us build a house where all are named,
their songs and visions heard
and loved and treasured, taught and
claimed
as words within the Word.
Built of tears and cries and laughter,
prayers of faith and songs of grace,
let this house proclaim from floor to rafter.
All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.'**

This hymn by Marty Haugen, which we sang at Dean Christine Wilson's installation on October 22nd, was not chosen lightly. Rather it, in particular the last verse, quoted above, is a fundamental expression of her view of ministry and of our cathedral's role in our city and county. When we met to allow me to prepare this article, Dean Christine talked of her hopes that we might be even more of a listening community and that the cathedral, to quote Bishop Stephen Platten, might be a 'flagship of the spirit' and a 'threshold of transformation'. But, as Dean Christine put it, we will need to ask ourselves how far we already are this and how we genuinely listen to the wider community and - almost more importantly - respond? How do we and could we lift up the voice of the voiceless?

Our new Dean, who describes herself as a missional Catholic, says we will hear in her sermons about building the Kingdom of God, about our need to walk the talk and live the message, being committed in every aspect of the Cathedral's life to the performance of the Gospel. And of course she acknowledges that



this is not new to us, citing how much she is valuing being part of a worshipping community, praying daily with colleagues and congregation, and reading scripture out loud, after the itinerant worship life of an Archdeacon. But her sense is that there is more to be done particularly around our engagement with Social Justice so that we can be sure that we do indeed

'build a house where prophets speak, and words are strong and true, where all God's children dare to seek to dream God's reign anew.'

We talked about leadership styles. She relishes the challenge and enjoys holding the creative space where imagination and vision can be explored together. Her own style is to inspire, to enthuse and to lead whilst also encour-

aging us all to exercise our own ministries- as she says, we are all in this together as followers of Jesus. Her arrival of course marks a new phase in the life of the cathedral and she looks forward to working with us as we ask how we see ourselves as one body, and how we can bring the many groups and sections of our cathedral community together to have a stronger common vision and purpose. She sees her role as leading in the collaborative work of setting a strategic vision, drawing us all around this to work to make that vision real. Her first challenge to me was to ask the LCCA to think about what might seem a small thing- the use of polystyrene cups for coffee after the 9.30 Eucharist, which are of course environmentally not great and which go straight to landfill. Could we come up with an alternative which was both sustainable and gave the best impression of welcome to all who join us in the Chapter House? I'm pleased to say that the committee is already working on this challenge, so watch out for changes! A small thing in one way, but such small things act as powerful statements to regulars and visitors alike about our view both of hospitality and of stewardship of the earth.

I came away from our time together invigorated and enthused. The years ahead may be challenging and uncomfortable at times, but I sense they will also be enriching and spiritually fulfilling. And I'm pretty sure they will not be dull!

International recognitions for the Cathedral Works Manager

Bob Harvey

Every activity has its Gold medals, its Honours List or its Oscars, but while judgement and evaluation can be reassuring, nothing is more encouraging than recognition by your peer-group.

This certainly shows in the smile of Carol Heidschuster, the Cathedral's Works Manager or, to use the more traditional title, Clerk of Works. In September, Carol flew to America to receive the 20th Annual Askins Award of the Preservation Trades Network, for her outstanding contribution to the Promotion, Training and Mentoring of Craft Skills.

Her position at Lincoln Cathedral is not a typical job for a woman, since it involves managing a host of skills that have, in the past, been almost exclusively male-dominated. But then "typical" is not a word one could ever use to describe Carol Heidschuster. Carol joined the Cathedral Works Department in 1988 and took on her present role in 2003. In essence, her function is the constant project-management of everything to do with the upkeep of one of Europe's finest medieval buildings, together with the maintenance of the surrounding properties in Minster Yard.

Lincoln is one of only a few Cathedrals in England to have its own workforce dedicated to the conservation of the building, covering five craft areas: Stonemasonry & Conservation, Glazing, Carpentry & Joinery, Leadwork and Domus (Engineering and Maintenance), in addition to a full Archive department. Carol sees her role in much broader terms than project management,

and is passionate about building and nurturing a community of workers who maintain and further the tradition of craft excellence. While students can achieve diploma status in their chosen craft at college, they also need hands-on experience. With the support of £750k from the Heritage Lottery Fund, Lincoln Cathedral has offered 18-month placements to 16 students between 2010 and 2015, enabling them to convert their diploma qualifications to full NVQ certification. The Cathedral will repeat this scheme again over the coming five years starting in 2018, in conjunction with the Heritage Skills Centre at Lincoln Castle, if a recent

one Cathedral workshop to another on placements in which they could broaden their experience. The apprentices go on to achieve a Foundation Degree at the University of Gloucester.

Every year the Cathedral welcomes three or four building-trades students for a month's work experience sponsored by the Prince's Foundation for the Building Community, and hosts exchange students from the American College of the Building Arts, and from Nidaros Cathedral in Trondheim, Norway. It's worth noting that stonemasons from the cathedrals of Trondheim and Lincoln have collaborated together on projects for not just decades, but over several centuries.

Carol Heidschuster is not simply the manager of a team of craft workers, and this is clear from the praise that is generously expressed in her nomination:

Although not a crafts person herself, she has created a structure that is supportive to the people that work alongside her. She allows young individuals to explore and grow within their craft and if they show true promise, to become a leader in their field. Her work in educating craftspeople is beyond doubt.

Carol heads up a community of shared expertise and constant skills development. This is what

the awards committee clearly saw in the way she works at the Cathedral. Perhaps greater reward than the Award itself is the satisfaction she clearly gets from seeing her passionate focus on encouraging and developing people being reflected in the enthusiasm and energy of the team she has gathered around her.



application to the Heritage Lottery Fund Skills for the Future scheme is successful.

In 2009 Lincoln Cathedral was one of the nine cathedrals that came together to establish the Cathedral Workshop Fellowship. This was set up in order to have a common programme of training for Apprentice Masons, with a system of being able to move Apprentices from

Farewell to stonemason Beatrice

Carol Heidschuster

Lincoln Cathedral Works Department has recently said farewell to stonemason Beatrice Searle.

Beatrice joined the Cathedral stonemasonry team in May 2014 on an 18 month traineeship through the Heritage Lottery Fund. She completed her NVQ qualifications through Moulton College and York College. In November 2015 she was appointed to the Cathedral staff on a 12 month contract, for the works on the North West Turret. She has left to deliver an exciting and unique art project, *For the Journey and Return*, which will take her from Orkney to Norway, and back again.

Beatrice is a talented artist with several exhibitions to her credit. Her new project is a true one-off experience. Here is an extract from her website, <http://beatricesearle.com/>

"St Mary's Church on South Ronaldsay houses a relic of Iron Age Orkney- a stone known locally as St Magnus' Boat. Into this piece of whinstone are carved two foot shaped hollows.

The widely accepted view is that St Magnus' Boat is a proclamation stone. The proclamation stones of St Magnus' time were connected with Iron Age Kingship; when subjects came to choose a new King they would stand in the stone to cast their votes before their peers, signifying by the steadfastness of the stone that the deed would be lasting. The chosen King also would stand in the stone in order to signify his connection with the land he ruled. These stones promoted democracy and harmony; stepping into the stone was a deliberate act, an unambiguous action that could not be misinterpreted.

Before a long journey was taken, the



traveller would place his feet in the footprints to mark the beginning and the end of the undertaking, in order to be in direct contact with the land he loved, the land that he was leaving or returning to.

'For The Journey and Return' is a project developed with the Orkney Islands Council. It will form part of a programme of cultural events that the Orkney Arts Council are holding in 2017, to mark 900 years since the death of St Magnus.

I will carve my own journey stone, in a geology particular to Orkney and, in June 2017, will make a round trip- by boat to Shetland, then on to Bergen, overland by train to Oslo and then walk the Gudbrandsalen Path, a distance of 643km, finishing in at Nidaros Cathedral in Trondheim.

I will carry the stone with me for the duration of the trip, setting it down occasionally in order to stand in it. The stone becomes an anchor to the land, a portable piece of Orkney, a way of being in contact with the islands wherever I go. Like Kings of old, something of the stone's strength and resistance can be harnessed by direct and sustained contact with it. Fellow travellers and members of the public are invited to walk with me and to stand in the stone. When my journey is complete I will return the stone home to Orkney."

Heritage open days

Ingrid Atkins

The Heritage Open Days Team extended an invitation to the Works Department to participate in this year's programme. After consulting with the Volunteers as to their availability it was agreed that the Works Department would take part on Saturday 10th September 2016 by opening the Workshops for the day.

It started out a little damp but did not discourage us or the general public, who flocked in to see behind the scenes. Everyone was upbeat and looking forward to a full and exciting day of inquisitive people. Volunteers were strategically positioned in order to keep people flowing, so that they got to see all departments without causing a traffic jam. We as volunteers and the Works staff were not disappointed; everyone was so interested and asked lots of questions. Children were not left out - they were encouraged to chip away to see what they could produce in the Mason's shop.

A great day was enjoyed by all. One visitor commented, "We always wanted to know what was behind these gates and doors." Peter Hellen was told by a visitor how amazed he was at the knowledge and experience of the craftsmen.

A word from the editor

Muriel Robinson

This edition of InHouse has so much in it that this editorial will be brief, to keep space for the many more interesting features and accompanying photos we have for you.

Many thanks to all those who help with InHouse in so many ways, and to the editorial committee in particular. Thanks also to the members and committee of LCCA, including our new committee members- in the next edition we will do an update with a photo to remind you who is on the committee. I hope we will see many of you at the next LCCA social on Shrove Tuesday- which in 2017 is on February 28th.

I hope we will get this edition out before Christmas, but it will certainly get to you during Christmastide (which as we all know goes on till Candlemas on Feb 2nd!) so I shall take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy Christmas and a really good New Year.

Where's that tennis ball?

The prize offered for the location of the tennis ball mentioned in the last edition remains unclaimed but we have decided to put you out of your suspense and reveal the answer.

The ball is on the south side of the cathedral, in the first recess immediately past the Galilee entrance as you go east. There are three arches in the stonework at window height and the ball is lodged on the right side of the left arch.

Sad news

Just as we were going to press we learned of the deaths of two members of our community who've made a notable contribution over the years.

The first was Maureen Bowden. Maureen and her husband, Trevor have been servers at the Cathedral for some considerable time. Maureen had only been ill for about three weeks and had spent

the last two in Johnson Ward where she died from cardiac arrest on December 7th. The second was Alan Campion who died on December 8th after several months of illness. Alan did so much for our community it's hard to know where to start, but in particular the 9.30 community has reason to be grateful for years of reliable coffee provision.

We will say more in our next edition but could not let this one go to press without sending our love and prayers to Trevor Bowden and to Margaret Campion, and to their wider families.

May Maureen and Alan rest in peace and rise in glory.

Forthcoming events 2017

Messy Cathedral

Saturday 7 January 2017

10am – 1.30pm

Messy Cathedral is back for Epiphany 2017. Join us for lots of crafts and fun.

Henry V

Monday 13 & Tuesday 14 February 2017
7.30pm

Marking the ongoing centenary of the First World War, award-winning theatre company Antic Disposition present their critically acclaimed adaptation of Shakespeare's Henry V. Tickets from £25 www.anticdisposition.co.uk or 0333 666 3366.

Lincoln YMCA Sleep Easy

Friday 3 March 2017, 7pm – 7am

Participants will sleep rough in cardboard boxes for one night to raise money for the homeless in Lincoln on the East Green of Lincoln Cathedral.

Lincoln Cathedral Consort 'Come and Sing'

Saturday 18 March 2017 10am

Lincoln Cathedral Consort invite you to come and sing with them. This event will be led by Director of Music Aric Prentice. There will be registration and workshops ending with a public performance at 3.15pm. To find out more or to book your space please contact Hilary on 01522 512682 or assistantorganist@lincolncathedral.com

Discover Greater Lincolnshire Weekend

Saturday 18 March 9am – 4pm

Free entry to the Cathedral with charges for upper level tours.

Choral Society perform Haydn's Creation

Saturday 25 March 2017 7.30pm

Performed with the Lincolnshire Chamber orchestra. This work - a favourite with choirs everywhere - is a vocal challenge both in staying power and nimble vocalisation.

Passiontide Concert

Saturday 1 April 2017 7pm

Join the Lincoln Cathedral Choir as they perform St. John Passion by Johann Sebastian Bach in the Nave. This masterpiece is the older of two surviving Passions by Bach. Compared with the St. Matthew Passion, the St. John Passion has been described as more extravagant, with an expressive immediacy, at times raw and unbridled. Tickets from £8 on sale now www.LincolnCathedral.com

Food and fellowship at Harvest

Elaine Johnson

At the end of October approximately eighty people enjoyed a convivial harvest supper in the Chapter House.

The savoury cottage pie and accompanying vegetables had been prepared by Susan and her team in the cloister refectory, with a delicious dessert to follow. And, as ever, a vegetarian option had been thoughtfully provided.

Entertainment was provided by the Lincoln County Hospital band who played a selection of light music. There was also fun entertainment on each table in the shape of a 'harvest quiz' with seasonal questions and a picture quiz of cereal logos.

Thanks must go to the Community committee for organising this enjoyable event and special thanks to Susan and the refectory team for the catering and Alison Eagleton for devising the quiz.



County Harvest

Muriel Robinson



As usual, the Cathedral and the farming community of the county marked the harvest with the County Harvest Festival, and St Hugh's Choir was filled to capacity as we ploughed the fields and scattered. The usual amazing display of produce greeted those entering St Hugh's Choir from the nave and the breadth of crops presented during the service was fascinating, including not just the arable and vegetable crops we might all think about but the sea harvest and even wine! The Dean, fresh from her installation the day before, preached to us and reminded us in the midst of this plenty to think both about food waste and what can be done to reduce it and about the need to be vigilant to be sure those working on the land are not caught up in modern slavery. I'm sure I am not alone in taking these important messages away and reflecting on them.

The Nomad Trust

Muriel Robinson



This year the Community Association invited people to make donations instead of bringing raffle prizes to the Harvest Supper or buying raffle tickets.

The list we got from Nomad reflected actual need, so rather than tins of food or vegetable marrows we brought black bin bags, socks and long life milk.

The resulting collection was impressive and filled the boot of my quite capacious car when we took all this to Nomad, who were most grateful both for the actual goods collected and for the cash donation which accompanied these.

Many thanks to all those in the community who contributed so generously.

Dead wood in the Cathedral

Margaret Campion

I mean, of course 'dead wood' in its literal sense - the wooden timbers from the roof which are replaced over time by new seasoned oak beams - it is these that go on to become something new.

Today this old oak is sometimes sold through the cathedral shop but in the '80s and '90s it was often given to local craftsmen who made wooden artefacts such as lamps, candles and small bowls which together were marketed under the name of 'Cathedral Treen'. These were very popular at the time; they fitted well into that era of the Good Life, stripped pine, Laura Ashley prints and dried flowers, but no longer quite fit the 21st century minimalist styles.

Some parishes commissioned larger pieces of this cathedral oak to make various church fittings such as floor standing candlesticks and the wall cupboards known as aumbries and in this way a small part of the ancient mother cathedral is to be found in the daughter churches. During our long church visiting project my husband and I visited every church in the diocese (although we were not able to gain entry to all of them). We found several of these pieces of Cathedral



Treen and think there may be more which we did not notice because, of course, we were not specially looking for them.

We found a floor candle at Owmbry by Spital, aumbries at Nettleham, Spalding and St. Peter at Gowts here in Lincoln, and there is an important piece in the chapel of Trinity House in Retford, not part of the diocese, of course, but a foundation associated with the cathedral and of which the Sub Dean is ex officio the Master. This aumbry and also the aumbry at Peter at Gowts were designed by Caroline Littler, who also made the copper fittings and decorations, but the wood was fashioned by David Crawford Thomson who also made all the Cathedral Treen pieces sold at craft markets all over the country. These pieces are all numbered and marked 'Cathedral Treen' and state that the wood came from Lincoln Cathedral. You may wish to know that 25% of the sale price came back to the cathedral.

Have a look in your cupboards- you may find a lamp lurking there which you had forgotten about! They were often given as farewell gifts to long serving volunteer workers of the Cathedral.

Long standing readers of InHouse will remember our former contributor, Reg, who has sadly now passed on to the great cat basket in the sky. His former secretary has penned a verse requiem beautiful enough to harden the prose-biassed hearts of the editorial team.

Requiem for Reg

Flecked, flitting between bronze and gold
Where softly fallen leaves lie,
Drifted and drifting,
A silken shadow
Sets a weave of footprints, that plait, cross and recross.
Dusted gold, sheen-of-copper tesserae
Heaped in hordes, Hoards
Plucked from tree-tops, flicked from bough-tips
Sidle, swing, breeze-borne down
Onto pathways lit with gilded leaf
Aglow.
These tawny trophies pay homage to
A soft-as-night striped shape
A blur, who traces paths and ways.
Secret routes among gardens
Along walled lanes and through all his old haunts.
May his shadow slip still among
His wayfaring trees.

Michaela Philp

Cathedral music

Michaela Philp

The sharp-eyed among you may have noticed, on the tables outside the choir, leaflets advertising an outfit called Friends of Cathedral Music.

Since our Organist Laureate and Director of Music asked me to be the Diocesan Rep, I think it is about time I gave the community a few more important details about FCM so that one or two of you may perhaps become members.

Sixty years ago Rev Ronald Sibthorpe noted in the national press the problems facing those who organised and provided cathedral music and called a meeting in St Bride's Church, London; so began the work of FCM. This year, sixty years on, the organisation is strong and offers wonderful support to cathedrals and parish churches for their music. Did you know they recently gave Lincoln Cathedral choir £30,000? The other Sunday, I went to Boston Stump to be present when our treasurer, Tim Rogerson, presented Aly Buxton with a cheque for £25,000 to assist their music team.

FCM does not sit on its funds, it gives them out. Last year some £300,000 was distributed and, to celebrate the 60th year of operations, FCM hopes to build a 'Diamond Fund' of some seven figures so that no chorister is denied a place in a choir because of lack of money. All of you who enjoy our music must applaud this aim.

If you join, and the annual sub is not enormous, you will receive a bi-annual publication full of information about cathedral music, musicians, their work, CDs, essays on present and past musicians, and much insight into this world that perhaps we, some of us, may take a little for granted. FCM now has some 4,000 members, but is always seeking more, for obvious reasons. Its governing body is made up of expert volunteers and, I think I am right in saying, all work pro bono, and that does not mean the pop-star. There are various events around the country to which members may go. When I went to Westminster

Cathedral for the Diamond Anniversary weekend and to show the flag for Lincoln, I listened to a matchless Vespers, but also to a most amusing talk by Martin Baker.

I very much hope to be in a position to put a 'Gathering' together here next year. This will give an opportunity to hear choir rehearsal and find out more about the Father Willis and to meet like-minded folk. I also send out a bi-annual letter to my group in Lincolnshire, giving information about our music. If you remember Tony Harvey, he was very much a moving spirit behind all this sort of event. The AGM at Southwell last year was amusing and informative. Of how many AGMs can that be said?

So, pick up a leaflet, ask me if you wish about FCM, and seriously consider offering your support to keep music alive and flourishing in our country. On a recent trip across Spain to Santiago, I saw many fabulous organs, and did not hear a single one speak. Do we want that for GB?

Our very own Superstars

Lindsey Sutton

This summer the Cathedral played host for the second year running to the amazing theatrical production, "Jesus Christ Superstar".

InHouse carried an article about the production in the Autumn issue, but did you realise how many members of our community were involved directly? No less than 11, including present and past members of the Choir, as well as a future chorister, our musical director and three members of the Congregation.

Mark Wilde from our Choir was the show's Musical Director and Choir Members, Alex Warcaba-Wood, Frances Hurt, Heather Wilde, and Leo Krasinski Walker were joined by Katie Care and newcomer this term, Theo Hayes. Alex accompanied us at several rehearsals as did Aric Prentice, who also played one of the keyboards during the performances. Alex, as Caiaphas

the High Priest, was splendidly arrogant and chillingly threatening. Katy was among the apostles and dancers who were soloists. Frances, Heather, Leo and Theo were part of the roaming bands of children, playing, dancing, darting and

thieving through the crowds in Jerusalem. Congregation members Patricia Allison, Josie Morton and Lindsey Sutton were part of the Ensemble, the "Chorus" of the production.

Every person who took part in "Jesus Christ, Superstar" in the Cathedral was granted the opportunity to be part of an experience beyond anything ever felt

before. The three hours of performance each night wrapped each character in the story so thoroughly that one emerged a different person afterwards. We may have left "Superstar" behind but we take forward a family of new friends, numbers of new skills and a host of remarkable memories.



2,000 mince pies for Christmas

Elaine Johnson

The Cathedral Cloister Refectory has been open for over thirty five years, although initially only in the summer months, and Susan Scatliffe has been the refectory manager for about twenty three of them. Before then, she worked in the cathedral shop in Exchequergate and when that closed she applied for her present, full time post in order to continue working within the cathedral.

Susan says that the refectory service is very much about the whole team and they all work extremely hard. Deputy manager Angie has worked there nearly thirty years and most of the eight part-time staff have also been there a long time. Several volunteers also work in the refectory throughout the year and are much valued members of the team.

Apart from the Christmas period, the refectory is open every day: 10.00am-4.30pm, Monday to Saturday and 12 noon-4.00pm on a Sunday. They serve light meals such as sandwiches and jacket potatoes and always a main meal of the day, for example, cottage pie and vegetables or lasagne. The home-made soup is always popular, as are the Christmas baps of turkey, stuffing, cranberry and pig in a blanket. Susan and the team start serving those just before the Christmas Market and continue through December.

Susan says that the atmosphere at Christmas Market time is 'crackers', although for four days it is good fun. She and her staff will be there from 7.00am, preparing the food and serving it well into the evening. They open at 10.00am and will stay open until 7.30 or 8.00pm. Apart from the preparation required, they also arrive so early in order to get a parking space! Mulled wine and mince pies are served in the Chapter House during the Market and that is staffed by much appreciated volunteers.

Once the market is over Susan and her team can enjoy the run up to Christmas in the Cathedral. They need so many



mince pies for the many different events taking place that they couldn't possibly make them all and order them in from Curtis', a popular choice. Susan reckons they probably need about 2000 altogether, including some gluten free. The last Cathedral shop preview evening took 250 alone. As well as the Christmas mince pies, a range of gluten-free cakes is available throughout the year and the soup is also gluten-free. Susan and the team try to accommodate all dietary needs and much of the food is also dairy-free.

The refectory caters for many other Chapter House events, such as the Community Association harvest supper, canapés for the Halle and Messiah, St Hugh's Day and so on.

The length of time that most of the staff have been there shows how much they are part of the Cathedral and how much they feel they belong. Susan reports to Jackie, the Chapter Clerk, who is very supportive of the refectory, as are the Dean and Chapter.

The refectory is a very warm and welcoming building. Many customers are regulars and the staff are always pleased to see them and have a chat. Susan emphasised that the refectory is about

the whole team and everyone deserves credit for its service. From many people's experience, it clearly deserves its five-star rating, not only for its environmental food hygiene, but also for its comfortable, friendly atmosphere and its hard-working and helpful staff.

Russell Pond, LIB. BA, MA.

No, it's not an obituary, it's an acclamation.

It's a long time since Russell retired as Chapter Clerk and entered into an extraordinarily energetic life in various fields of public service.

At home he used his first degree to write a book for magistrates and then launched himself into a completely different sphere of academic studies.

First came a BA in the Humanities, and now, aged 81, he has achieved an MA in Philosophy with the Open University. Congratulations!

Christopher Laurence

Five weeks in Rome:

Part 2 - the kindness of strangers

Muriel Robinson

One of the most remarkable things about our stay in Rome as Richard recuperated from his surgery was the kindness we encountered.

This of course included the kindness of so many friends and relatives around the world, including from the Cathedral community, but in particular what struck me was the kindness of strangers.

As pilgrims we had stayed in the Domus Internationalis Paulus VI, and the staff there could not have been kinder, instantly assuring me that I could stay on and finding rooms for the different friends who came to support me. The Director, a wonderfully unassuming Roman Catholic Monsignor, who would wander in to supper in shirt sleeves and braces, took me under his wing, and once we discovered a mutual ability to speak French he would ask me regularly how things were. He also arranged

a remarkably generous daily rate including lunch and dinner when we wanted (both of which came with wine). The reception staff were wonderful and one, Sabina, even came with us to the hospital on the first morning to help translate.

Support also came from the amazing Anglican Centre, which is effectively the C of E's embassy to the Holy See. A young Italian who works there, Luca, has excellent English following a gap year working in pubs in Dublin. He came to the hospital and had to translate for me as the doctors explained just how seri-

ous the situation was at the beginning and that really the chances of Richard coming through that first operation were slender- not an easy thing for a sensitive young man in his 20s to have to take on. Archbishop David Moxon, the Ambassador, made me welcome and helped by ringing the British Embassy

in the Piazza Navona and started just about every day with coffee there during the cheap time before midday. The waiters got to know us and they too kept an eye on us, asking after Richard and enjoying hearing of progress. Visits to the hospital were made so much easier by the support of the other families – and

later the other patients- who used their often impressive English to help with translations and who showed real care and concern for me as well as each other. This was despite the fact that in many cases I was getting much more encouraging news than them, as Richard made such rapid progress whilst for some of their relatives the outlook was very bleak. . Even the woman running a souvenir shop where I went to buy towels for Richard (not provided by the hospital!), and who stitched his name on to the set I bought, reduced the price when



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she heard why I needed them, and sent him a kiss!

There is no doubt we were very glad to get onto the air ambulance and head back to Lincoln, but I am able to look back on this time in Rome with good memories alongside the great anxiety and pressure. I will never forget the kindness shown but I also developed a real affection for this amazing city. As soon as we feel up to it, we hope to return so that Richard can also enjoy it and so he can meet those who supported me through such a difficult time.

What are the Gospels?

John Davies

‘WHAT ARE THE GOSPELS?’ A Lecture given by the Revd. Canon Professor Richard A. BurrIDGE, Dean of King’s College London, to Lincoln Theological Society on 17th October, 2016.

Professor BurrIDGE began by summarising some nineteenth- and early twentieth-century answers to his question, particularly those of Karl Ludwig Schmidt and Rudolph Bultmann, who concluded that the gospels are unique in form and are not in any sense biographies but in the main collections of sayings and brief narrative elements. This led to a fragmenting approach which failed to consider a gospel as a complete whole. BurrIDGE, by contrast, came to believe that ‘the gospels are a form of Graeco-Roman biography.’ (This is actually a quotation from Professor BurrIDGE’s book, *What Are the Gospels?* 2nd edition, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2004, p.258, but it neatly encapsulates his thesis.)

Thus, when BurrIDGE began his work, the common-sense view of the gospels as life-stories was far from obvious to experts and seemed to have been discredited. For him perhaps the key word was ‘Graeco-Roman’. Modern readers expect modern biographies to be verbally and factually exact and accurate. Often the subject is still alive and likely to object to what s/he considers inaccurate or misleading. In all ancient ‘lives’, vitae or bioi,

the protagonist has died, even if, uniquely, he has risen from the dead. Readers today sometimes do not bear in mind that even modern biographies are interpretations, and expect a kind of documentary rectitude. In ancient biographies, BurrIDGE told us, characters say the sort of thing they would have said, and there is comparatively little interest in psychological motivation. What ancient biographers, including the four evangelists, found important was the public life – the words and actions of the protagonist – not what they had for tea or who their childhood friends were. (I sometimes think that modern biographers may be more influenced by novels than they realise.) One further important difference between the gospels and modern biography is that the ancient writings were read aloud. They were heard, not perused silently.

The four gospels, BurrIDGE told us, give four portraits of Jesus. They are about Him, not about early church beliefs or communities. BurrIDGE made use of the traditional emblems from Ezekiel and Revelation – human face (Matthew), lion (Mark), ox (Luke) and eagle (John), but applied these, not to the authors but to Jesus Himself. Mark’s Jesus is swift and disconcerting, a lion. Matthew’s suggests the royal humanity of the Jewish Messiah. Luke’s ox bears the burdens of others and cares for the powerless, the vulnerable

and the outsider. John’s Jesus is the eagle, swooping and soaring between the Father and the world He came to save. Yet clearly these are four books about the same man. Each can be read separately or compared with the others.

Professor BurrIDGE was lively, lucid and well organised. He is a genial and highly professional lecturer, using hand-outs and PowerPoint, including photographs, diagrams and computer-generated statistical evidence. He is a classicist as well as a biblical scholar and has a strong sense of genre informed by recent literary theory. He has moved the idea of gospel-as-biography from the margins to the centre of New Testament criticism and study.

His lecture was in part the biography of his research. Like an ancient biography it centred on his public life, his academic journey, as messenger of the news that each gospel is the story, the picture, of Jesus the Son of God and Saviour of humankind, and that these portraits are to be trusted. One of his images showed Professor BurrIDGE receiving the Ratzinger Prize from Pope Francis, the first non-Catholic to do so.

Perhaps we needed to see this in order to register BurrIDGE’s achievement. He has shown us that the gospels are trustworthy in their own terms and that, in revealing Christ’s life, they can profoundly affect our own.

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