

# InHouse

the Journal of the Lincoln Cathedral Community Association



Lincoln Wassail  
Page 10



Tony Worth  
Page 7

## Christmas during Advent

Elaine Johnson

**The Latin word *adventus* means “coming” and in the four weeks of this season we celebrate the two-fold coming of Christ: the first as a human being, born in humility and simplicity of the Virgin in a stable in Bethlehem; the second still awaited, when he shall come in power and triumph to judge the world.**

For Precentor, Sal, this means balancing the liturgy of Advent with the many Carol Services which take place in the Cathedral during December.

For Sal, the key message is in Matthew’s Gospel, Chapter 25, vv. 35-40, which reminds us that we must be ready to welcome Christ into our lives at any time.

Advent is about being ready to welcome our Lord. People come to celebrate Christmas in the Cathedral throughout December and that means we have an opportunity to remind them what Christmas is all about and what we are preparing for.

Advent calendars and candles are practical ways of marking the Advent season and physical reminders of preparation for Christmas coming. At Christmas our God came to earth as a baby, born into poverty and danger. In coming to earth in Jesus, God has shown us the kind of God he is, which gives us cause for hope. Sal’s task is ensuring that the liturgy during the Cathedral services remains focussed on Advent and its preparation.

Sal has not counted the number of



Carol Services she will be involved with during December. She is taking them one at a time but acknowledges that there will be a lot of work as this year she will be ‘doing December’ for the first time.

Some external organisations prepare their own service, which Sal checks over, and all those groups come with a different focus and the liturgy of their Carol Service will emphasise that aspect of God. For example, the service for the NHS will have a sense of the healing power of God; the Co-op service will be more focussed on community, service to each other and sharing. It is important that the services speak directly to the people coming, and resonate with the

things which are relevant in their lives.

The reality of modern life in a Cathedral is that at this time of year there is a constant balancing act between Advent and Christmas. Sal feels that the Cathedral manages this very well, giving visitors a warm welcome which sets the context for the acts of worship which follow. While everything around us in December might be about Christmas, we can help ourselves in our personal preparation with signposts such as a calendar or candle.

During Advent in the Cathedral, attending some of the daily services of morning prayer, evensong and the eucharist is another way to keep us rooted in the liturgical season.

# Memories and Stones

Margaret Campion

**As one gets older there is more time to saunter slowly along life's path and whilst sauntering, to remember.**

Having remembered something one might ask the next relevant person they meet "Do you remember?...it was a long time ago but it was so interesting / colourful / fun" and suddenly you have lots of people with a collective memory of bits of whatever started off that particular train of memories.

At an *InHouse* meeting some time ago we were discussing a Christmas edition and I suddenly remembered an occasion when I was Schools Officer in the Cathedral and we had a whole lot of stones left from an earlier diocesan event, each commemorating a different parish, all of which had to be removed. It was late November, so the Christmas Market was not far off and at that time, in addition to the big Nativity scene at the West End, I used to put a smaller, more child-sized nativity in the East End under the Great Window. We had the bright idea of using these stones to make a 'rocky road to Bethlehem' and surround the figures with the stones, their parish names visible to the onlooker.

Does anyone remember that I wonder? I could not even remember the year except that it must have been before 2000 because that was when I retired! So I started asking; Verger Kate Wilson remembered the occasion – it was a diocesan event called "Vivat!" and it was in 1997. Every parish was asked to bring a stone or pebble painted with a scene of local interest and with the parish name clearly visible. Kate remembers that it was pouring with rain and that the orderly queue which should have waited outside the Cathedral came inside and snaked around the north and south aisles.

Bishop Bob Hardy was enthroned at the West End and the Chancellor Vernon White told me when I next saw him that his knees were killing him – which is not surprising when you remember that there are over 600 churches and probably almost as many stones, all of which were presented to the Bishop who handed them to the Chancellor who knelt down and placed them on either side of the throne – and then got up again and down again and up again...! Interestingly, in the Chapter letter of 23 November – 6th December 1997 Verger Kate was reported as reading the lesson – but she has absolutely no memory of doing so!

Canon Mike Boughton remembers both the event and the stones from his parish at Bottesford but not the banner which his ex-churchwarden said he remembered! John Campbell may remember because when viewing the 'rocky road' during the Christmas market, someone tripped over and broke a bone and he decreed that we were probably breaching Health and Safety regulations and banned the stones the following year!

# A new verge



**During the recent Heritage Skills Festival, one of the woodturners was told that our vergers were now one verge (the short ceremonial staves carried by the vergers) short, following an increase in the number of vergers. He set to and made us one!**

The first photo shows the verge being made; the second shows it being presented to the Dean, the Very Revd Christine Wilson, and the Dean's Verger, John Campbell BEM. Next to it is the silver verge which was used to provide the design.

Christopher Laurence may remember the trouble we had in sorting out the stones afterwards and putting them into large plastic boxes, one for each Deanery, but none of us in the Cathedral could identify which parish belonged to which Deanery, so Christopher, who had been Archdeacon of Lincoln, was brought in to help, but he failed with some of the parishes so Archdeacon Hawes came and sorted the final ones for us! He then volunteered – or was persuaded – to store the boxes in his garage pending some decision about their final resting place.

And finally, an unnamed person reportedly said that after Archdeacon Hawes retired the stones were left in a forlorn heap in a corner of his garage! That I can't verify but I do wonder how many rockeries have painted stones amongst them and wonder if archaeologists in the future will have fun working out how they got to wherever they were found and what they might signify!



# Close properties 2: The new Song School

Margaret Campion and Elaine Johnson

**The new Song School is in the former Precentory which has had a complete refit and transformation paid for by an anonymous donation to the memory of the late Martin Pickering.**



It is now a beautiful, light and airy space which houses the offices of the Organist and Master of the Choristers, Aric Prentice, separate robing rooms for the boys and girls complete with lockers, toilets, washrooms and a Common Room for whiling away the odd half hour between practice and service. There is a nicely fitted kitchen with washing machine, dishwasher and refrigerator, and two small courtyards for summer days, both totally enclosed and private. There are also disabled access points and one unisex disabled toilet.

Probably the most important areas for



Aric, Jeffrey and the Assistant Organist, Hilary Punnett are the two newly fitted practice rooms. The boys are upstairs in a large light room with three large windows. The desks came across from the old school in the cathedral and are arranged in a square with the piano at one end. The girls have a room below, in what used to be the dining room and it is arranged exactly as the one above. Hilary has a smaller room upstairs which is used for the theory classes and she has designed an impressive array of teaching aids disguised as games for the probationers – learning must be fun under her guidance.

The really impressive room, and clearly the one Aric is most pleased with, is the Music Library. This is the first time for probably hundreds of years that the music is now all in one place. Formerly it was stored wherever there was a spare shelf in whatever vestry, room or stairway had space available.

It was a feat of memory to find any but the most often used scores. Now they are all together and one of the Lay Vicars is the designated Librarian and has catalogued and shelved hundreds of boxes of music. It is a lovely room too with one window overlooking Vicars Court and a smaller one in a deep recess in the ancient wall and with the original – or at

least, old – diamond paned glass.

The practical advantages of the new Song School are obvious – everything together under one roof, less time spent by Fiona, the Choir matron, escorting the children to the public toilets in the cathedral and a warm and comfortable space in which to practise and wait between services. It is also where, as they come out of school proper, they have a comfortable space in which to have tea before Evensong. At which point Aric mentioned that if anyone would like to help, home baked cakes and biscuits during term time would be very welcome! They always have a supply of fruit for the children and sandwiches from the Coffee Shop, but shop-bought cakes are not as good (or as popular) as the home baked variety!

Finally, Aric put in a plea – Fiona really needs a sewing machine for the running repairs she has to make on the choir robes. If anyone has one that is surplus (no pun intended!) to requirements – please contact Aric!

It was a most interesting visit and wonderful to see how an ancient medieval building with a warren of small rooms has been transformed into a wonderfully light filled school for the modern generations of choristers.

# Flowers in Lincoln Cathedral pt 2

Michaela Philp

**In the flower team we have many calls on our time beyond our weekly work for the cathedral. Graduations, weddings and special occasions give us the opportunity to splash out on our stands and also these occasions bring in revenue.**

We charge for special flowers, only the market/wholesale price, and we also make modest charges for doing the arrangements. This means we can build our resources in all ways and have the privilege of doing wedding flowers and beautifying the place for students as they graduate. We hope we play our part in ensuring special occasions are just that.

By and large team members are free to follow their colour schemes and choice of flowers as they see fit. There are, however, times such as Whitsun, [flame colours] Christmas and Easter, Remembrance Tide, [scarlet poppies] Battle of Britain [red white and blue] when we need to use particular colour schemes. Brides also ask for their own choice of colour for their flowers. I am beginning to wonder what next year's centenary of the



course we are busy for Christmas. We are always looking just a little ahead, but that does not mean we are not able to *carpe diem*!! Regards to you all.

RAF will bring as requests. Watch out for April 1 2018!!

There are also sudden calls on our time. I remember some very moving times such as a funeral for a young soldier murdered by terrorists when we were asked at very short notice to prepare suitable flowers. When bishops and members of chapter are installed, or leave for that matter, we are on call. I remember when Bishop John left, I found most episcopal flowers, just the right colour for his robes. He toned in really well! I also remember preparing a small posy to go above Mike West's stall when he was installed as Chancellor, only to watch in horror as it gradually unpeeled itself during the service.

It is great to be able to add our arrangements to special times in the Cathedral calendar. We have recently planned for the Charter of the Forest dinner, then Remembrancetide and now of

## Stewarding 'The Snowman'

Elaine Johnson, in conversation with Dawn Flood

**How do you shepherd several hundred adults and children safely and efficiently in and out of five performances of 'The Snowman' in one day, including inviting the children to look at the instruments in the orchestra and chat to the musicians afterwards?**

The Cathedral stewards have got it down to a fine art with a one-way system where the audience come in at the north west door and go out of the south west door. Four stewards staff the doors for each performance and they

are supported by six events volunteers who show people to their seats. With so many children in the audience, the coming and going to the loo could be a challenge but this is managed with a Cathedral stamp on the hand, which the children love. Families also mean push-chairs, of which there were lots, but with seating in the centre Nave only, there was plenty of room to move. Although hard work for everybody involved in the day, the success of 'The Snowman' can be judged by the speed at which

the tickets sold out in just forty minutes back in August. The performance is just the right length for children and their faces are as magic as the story, although for one little boy, the highlight of his visit was having a go on the kettledrum afterwards! 'The Snowman' has become a Christmas tradition in just two years and the stewards were surprised how many adults came without children, particularly in the evening, but the lighting was so effective that, magically, it really was snowing.



# St Hugh's Shrine

Muriel Robinson

**We have been waiting impatiently in the InHouse editorial team to cover the arrival of the new furniture for St Hugh's Shrine, but I think most people would agree that the wait has been worthwhile.**

I was fortunate enough to attend the dedication service and to be able to listen beforehand to Nicholas Hobbs, the furniture maker, talking about the symbols and meanings he has woven into the designs. As the Sub-dean reminded us, the retrochoir is the climax of any pilgrimage to the Cathedral, with the reserved sacrament present, with St Hugh's shrine, and with the sculpture of Mary and the Gilbert pots on each side. This space is now rounded off by the new furniture, designed to inspire current and future pilgrims.

Mr Hobbs started by reminding us that John Ruskin declared Lincoln Cathedral to be 'better than any we have' and then explained how the windows and the stonework, the liturgy and the people, the peace and space of the precincts and the soundscapes inside all influenced his designs. He sees the layout of the furniture as representing a sheepfold- not a wall or a barrier, but a sense of safety for the congregation. The curved rows of chairs act to guide visitors away if they are not participating and act as enclosing arms for worshippers.

The recurring themes he incorporated are time, risk, material, people and animals. The oak used is from two particular sites associated with St Hugh, one near Avalon and one from the Jura, home of the Chartreuse. The white maple symbolises St Hugh and his swan. The linen on the President's Chair reminds us of the Hanseatic League. The bronze represents antiquity. The tree selection was crucial- using the same tree for the top of the altar, the lectern, the credence table, the bookshelf pillar and parts of the President's Chair, gives a continuity of grain. The shape of the President's chair, echo-



ing the standing stones of ancient time, the lectern with its tree of life reflecting the middle times, and the altar representing daily life, blend past and present.

A reminder of St Hugh is present in the references to swans - look closely and you will see swans' feet in several pieces, and the altar is like a nest, emphasising accessibility and vulnerability. At every level it was clear to those of us there that this furniture is deeply linked to our cathedral, its history and current life, and our faith.

The final point was a demonstration for

us all of how we can make the shape of the altar with our hands – and thus take it away with us.

This was such a rich account of the making and design that I can only scratch the surface here. I am assured that a book is on the way! It should make for excellent reading. Meanwhile I hope that as you pass through the retrochoir or attend services there, you will have time to look-and touch, as the work is designed to be tactile!) - and see for yourself how well this furniture sits in its new home.



## A celebrated visitor

The Cathedral was recently delighted to receive a visit from a celebrated yellow-belly, Squadron Leader George Leonard ('Johnny') Johnson, MBE DFM, the last surviving member of the original members of 617 Squadron RAF and the Dambusters. He was in the Cathedral to receive an honorary doctorate from the University of Lincoln in their September ceremonies. Here he is seen with our Dean, the Very Revd Christine Wilson, and the Dean's Verger, John Campbell BEM.

# Stephen Langton's new head 2017

Paul Ellis, Stone Carver

**Sometime in 2015 Works manager Carol Heidschuster instructed me – Paul Ellis, Stone carver – to try and find somewhere inside the Cathedral for a carving to commemorate the 800th anniversary of the signing of Magna Carta.**

I thought a possible place could be a replacement for one of the many defaced label stops at ground level throughout the cathedral. These were unfortunately lost during the Civil War when parliamentary forces were using the Cathedral.

Various sites were considered, the chosen one being situated outside the Vergers' Vestry on the north wall of the North West transept.

It was decided the subject for the carving should be the head of the Archbishop at the time, Stephen Langton, a local Lincolnshire man from Langton by Wragby who quite possibly received some of his early education in the Cathedral.

The sentiment above the carving's head should be "The English Church Shall Be Free" which is the first line of the Magna Carta and which historians have attributed to Stephen Langton – a nice way to give title to the carving. This idea came from Carol Bennett, the then Education Officer at the Cathedral, whose help and historical knowledge played an important part in the project.

Drawings were made of the proposed



carving and submitted to Chapter and the necessary permissions sought for the replacement of the defaced medieval label stop at the chosen site and once all was in place I produced the carving which was fixed in the Cathedral on St. Patrick's Day, March 17th 2016.

Myself and Head Mason Paul Booth erected a scaffold tower and began to remove the defaced medieval stone; in doing so we became aware the stone above was only a couple of inches thick and appeared to be quite new!

As this stone needed to be temporarily

removed to allow our fixing process we thought this was quite a bonus! It was on its removal that we made the discovery. Situated behind the stone and wrapped in an old sandwich wrapper of greaseproof paper was a piece of cardboard upon which were the names and banker marks of the five men involved with the stone's insertion and the date. After recording all this for the cathedral archives, Paul and I dated and added our own names and marks to the reverse of the card and after sealing it in our modern version of greaseproof paper (a zip lock bag) along with our two £1 Coin donations, we returned and fixed the card into the wall and then reaffixed the stone along with the Stephen Langton carving.

At the end of the day when we were dismantling the scaffold and sweeping up the stone gullets from the removed stone I commented to Paul my surprise that previous masons from the '60s had not added any money to their contribution but just then Paul spotted something amongst the stone dust and gullets – an old halfpenny, so they had also added their 'mite'!

So, of all the label stops in the cathedral we chose the one with the card, so now five masons become seven plus £2 and one halfpenny! I wonder what Stephen Langton would make of bringing together masons decades apart within the cathedral?

## Editor and Editorial Policy

The current editor is Muriel Robinson, supported by Elaine Johnson and Margaret Campion and with photographs supplied by Jim Newton, the editorial team and authors or printed under a Creative Commons permission.

Decisions on content are made by the editors for each edition of InHouse. Submissions of short articles is welcomed though it may not always be possible to use all pieces as space is limited; articles are also commissioned to address identified issues. We reserve the right to edit submitted articles.

Copy for the next edition should be emailed to the Editors at [murielr@btopenworld.com](mailto:murielr@btopenworld.com) by **March 1st 2018** in Word format; accompanying photographs are also welcomed as JPEG files. Advice for contributors is available- please email for a copy. Regrettably it is not possible to accept hard copy as we do not have any secretarial resources.

If you do not currently receive InHouse by email and would like to do so, please email your address to us at [murielr@btopenworld.com](mailto:murielr@btopenworld.com). The electronic version has full colour photographs and is distributed ahead of the print version, so there are advantages!

# Another year, another beginning

Muriel Robinson, Editor

**Yet again as I write this we are on the brink of Advent and by the time you read it we will be in a new Church year.**

The darkness of winter is very evident this evening, with snow swirling intermittently and a very dark world outside my study window. But on Sunday the light of Advent will be lit and we will begin the journey to Christmas, when the light of the world came to us. On behalf of the editorial team, I wish all our readers a holy and happy Christmas and a good New Year.

Meanwhile, as we move through times and seasons, life goes on. The LCCA AGM in early November approved the revisions to the Constitution which will ease our electoral processes and clarify links with Chapter, not the most exciting thing to do on a November evening, but also had the pleasure of hearing from the Dean on her thoughts after a year with us and her hopes and plans for the future. Since then we have of course heard the outcomes of



the appointments to the posts of Chancellor and Chapter Clerk and can look forward to a full team in post very soon.

At the AGM we thanked the Dean and Sub-dean for all they have done to cover the times between Precentors and Chancellors and I am sure you will agree they have given a generous amount of time to keep things running well.

One part of the Cathedral structure which often passes rather unnoticed is the Cathedral Council, which includes in its membership two elected members of the community, currently myself and Lyndon Nicholas.

We have been ably led in the current Council by Tony Worth, the former Lord Lieutenant of Lincoln and former High Steward of the Cathedral, so we were all sorry to hear at October's meeting that Tony was ill and unable to attend. Sadly just a few short weeks later Tony died and he will be sadly missed by his many friends in the Cathedral community as well as by his family and many other friends across and beyond the county. There will be a memorial service in the Cathedral in January.

We've found a photo of Tony in happier times, lighting the Jubilee Beacon, and we will remember him with affection and gratitude for all he did for our community.

## Lincoln's three commons walk

John Harker

**About ten years ago, the City Council asked the Ramblers for initiatives to better utilise the Commons, and I devised a ten mile walk covering all three Commons.**

This shorter seven mile version – four miles in the morning then three miles in the afternoon – was tailored for Cathedral walkers. The morning walk started at South Common where archaeological highlights include:

- Remains of activity back to the Roman period (mid 1st to early 5th centuries) including the tombstone of Caius Valerius
- Part of the camber of the original Ermine Street
- The 12th Century Leper Hospital (the Malandry) across from the site of St Catherine's Priory (and Church).

Conversation was flowing well as the

route followed the River Witham passing some industrial heritage factories before emerging at the Brayford Pool, then along to the Grandstand. West Common has a long association with horseracing and recreation and historical points of interest included:

- The City racecourse moving to the Common in 1773 for almost two centuries until 1964,
- A 19th century smallpox hospital west of the Grandstand, and its conversion into an isolation hospital following the 1905 typhoid epidemic.
- West Common's level grassland being used for testing Sopwith Camel aircraft, assembled locally, during the first World War

After lunch in the Cloisters, the three mile afternoon walk started at the Arboretum designed in the 1870s by celebrated

Victorian, Edward Milner. It was renovated in 2002/3 at a cost of £3m. The lion statue and the Bandstand are the most popular of the five listed monuments there.

Next on the route was the 13th century Monks Abbey site and Monks Cell (probably part of St Mary Magdalene Benedictine Priory). Sadly the detailed information board had disappeared – hopefully for restoration.

The Cow Paddle Common is the smallest and least researched. However it has links to the prehistoric era 10,000 BC to 60 AD being the shortest crossing point / causeway on the River Witham until Roman times. A short walk through the underpass completed the route back to South Common.

The Cathedral congregation comprises many interesting individuals each with a lifetime of knowledge, interests and experiences. The Community Walks provide a wonderful opportunity to engage in lively conversation and listening to share these and exercise mind as well as body.



# The LCCA Harvest Supper

R A Chadderton

**I have just returned from an expedition down to the Nomad headquarters on Monks Road, where I delivered three huge bags of provisions.**

This vast assortment ranged from homemade jams to dishwasher tablets, tinned meatballs to tea towels to porridge oats. All the items, together with some cash contributions had been generously donated by the attendees at the LCCA harvest supper held in the Chapter House on Tuesday 17th October.

Our new Precentor, Sal, set the tone for the evening by singing the Selkirk Grace, and made a point of spending time on most tables, which she said has given her an opportunity to chat to members and to meet new people. It was a thoroughly entertaining evening with a very lively Ceilidh band, who kept us all tapping our toes and at one point even



had us doing a Scottish country dance or two round the central column. For the relatively modest charge of £8 we were treated to cottage pie with vegetables, followed by fruit crumble and custard. I understand that ticket sales amounted to nearly £500 so may I, on behalf of the

committee and the Nomad Trust, say thank you to those people who supported this successful event. I always think good food, good company and good entertainment is a great combination. Perhaps you might like to think about joining us next year.

## A walk around very local churches

Margaret Campion

**In medieval times it was estimated that there were at least 46 churches in the city which was, of course, much smaller and more compact than it is today.**

Many have disappeared, at least five within the last fifty years, and one very close to the Cathedral, St. Michael on the Mount, within the last 10 years although this one has now been incorporated into the Diocesan Offices.

Last year on a lovely sunny day Bishop Christopher guided a group of friends from the Lincolnshire Churches Trust round six different churches which now support or have in the past supported the Ministry of the Cathedral. Of these, four were active churches and two were sites of previous parish churches

We started at the Chapel of Edward King House which was originally part of the Buttery and kitchens of the medieval Bishop's Palace but later, in the time of Bishop Edward King, was developed into the impressive Chapel it now is. We

then visited the site of St. Paul in the Bail – where a lively group of Morris Dancers was busy entertaining the public – and where the Bishop explained that this was originally a Saxon church and predated the Cathedral. Then we went on through Newport Arch to look at the graveyard of the old St. Nicholas parish church and then walked to the relatively modern St. Nicholas Church in Newport. Here we were able to look at the modern extension which supports the community work of the parish and we all agreed that the addition was a most sympathetic addition with the use of local stone and materials.

We then retraced our footsteps to St. Mary Magdalene in the Bail where the Bishop was joined by the Churchwarden and together they gave us a great deal of information in the way this church interacts with both the community and the cathedral. During the tourist season this little church will welcome around 100 visitors an hour which is pretty impressive

and requires quite a lot of volunteer help to welcome and oversee so many people in a small place. Because the Cathedral is not a Parish Church, all weddings in the Cathedral which take place to the west of the Angel Choir have to be registered in a Parish Church – which is of course, St. Mary Magdalene. Until quite recently all baptisms and funerals were also recorded in their registers but these are now kept separately by the Cathedral.

Next stop was at the St. Anne's Bede Houses where the Warden gave us a lively talk about their founder, William Waldo Sibthorp, and showed us round the lovely chapel. We were invited by one of the residents to look inside his house and then given tea and biscuits in the Community Room. The gardens of the Bede Houses are utterly delightful, a tranquil retreat in the heart of the city and many of us were enquiring about the possibility of retiring there but alas, there is a waiting list and vacancies do not occur very often in such delightful surroundings!



# Love your neighbour - a step too far?

Christopher Laurence, summarising a longer piece by Martin Ott

**Dr Martin Ott brings back a salutary message from his visits to Iraq, setting up the German Peace Service.**

The aim is to resolve conflicts peacefully and prevent potential conflicts from escalating into violence. "Christians", he writes "are considered to be one of the oldest continuous Christian communities in the world...a fractious community divided by doctrinal differences that exist even to this day...The vast majority are indigenous Eastern Aramaic-speaking ethnic Assyrians." In 2003, Christians numbered about 1,500,000 in Iraq, representing just over 7% of the population of 22 million. Today, after the ISIS occupation nobody knows



an exact number but it could be as low as 450,000 and the fear is it might be the end of a substantial and visible presence of Christians in Iraq.

"I visited the city of Qaraqosh, formerly a flourishing city of 50,000 in Iraq's breadbasket... when ISIS entered the town only 100 or so people remained, mostly those too poor, old or ill to travel.... ISIS offered them their favourite choice: Christians who wanted to remain in the "caliphate" must agree to abide by the terms of a "dhimma" contract, under which non-Muslims are protected in return for a special levy known as "jizya". "We offer them three choices: Islam (conversion); the dhimma contract; if they refuse this they will have nothing but the sword".

("However" Martin writes, " we should remember that Muslims, mostly Sunni

Muslims, have been the main victims at the hands of ISIS." Other groups include the Yazidis, of whom 6,000 women were kidnapped, 300,000 forced to leave their homes, where 45 mass graves have been found. "The cruelty of ISIS is beyond our comprehension").

"After ISIS was defeated and the first residents came back to Qaraqosh in October 2016 they found more than 2000 houses destroyed, all the churches desecrated, shops and businesses smashed, parts of the town still mined. Now (September 2017), every day 30 families return, 1,500 families are already back, the first schools are open, life and business returns..... "But the security situation is very fragile. How do they deal and come to terms with the Muslim communities who joined in the looting after ISIS took control? I asked the Christian priests,

who are organising the reconstruction of their city, whether they feel a need for building bridges between Christians and other ethnic groups. "Not really" was the answer, here nobody trusts anybody anymore".

"We don't have time for solutions" says the Revd Emanuel Youkhama, head of the Christian Aid organisation CAP-NI. "Iraq is a forced marriage between Sunni, Shia, Kurds and Christians, and it failed. Even I, as a priest, favour divorce."

Martin concludes: "I returned from Iraq with the strong conviction that security and protection are the first needs of peacebuilding for the victims of ISIS here. There is no appetite for "Love thy neighbour." Sometimes the ideals of Jesus and Paul are beyond what can be expected of communities that have been ripped apart."

# The story of two wassail bowls

Gordon Jackson

*'With our wassailing bowl we'll drink to thee!'*

**The Lincoln Wassail started life in the chapel of Bishop Grosseteste College in 1975.**

It was initially the means of sharing some of the most beautiful -and largely unknown - Christmas carols and the tradition that gave them rise. To furnish the Wassail better, Paul Smith was asked to produce a suitable bowl, and thus we have the honey-glazed vessel dated 1977 which has been used for every one of our Wassails down to the present.

It has been the channel of over forty gallons of elderberry wine, the Ellen sack made from wild fruit by our wine master Helen Jackson.

After we moved to the Ringers' Chapel in 1979, the tradition lost its processional character and became more of a musical liturgy, assisted by the altar and the stone vault. Ed Korylyk joined us and brought his folk group and school choir along, and with his biting guitar we had an hour of concentrated joy. That was a result not of the wine, though that did add a little, but of the gladness in the songs, and in singing, and the sound off the stone, and the pleasure in one another's faces, and within it all what the songs were about, God choosing his lowly mother and squalid stable to come to earth in, the miracle of the Incarnation. Our Collect sums it up:

Dear Lord and Saviour,  
Jesus Christ, we rejoice  
and give thanks that you  
came down from heaven  
to redeem us and our  
earth, to be our healing,

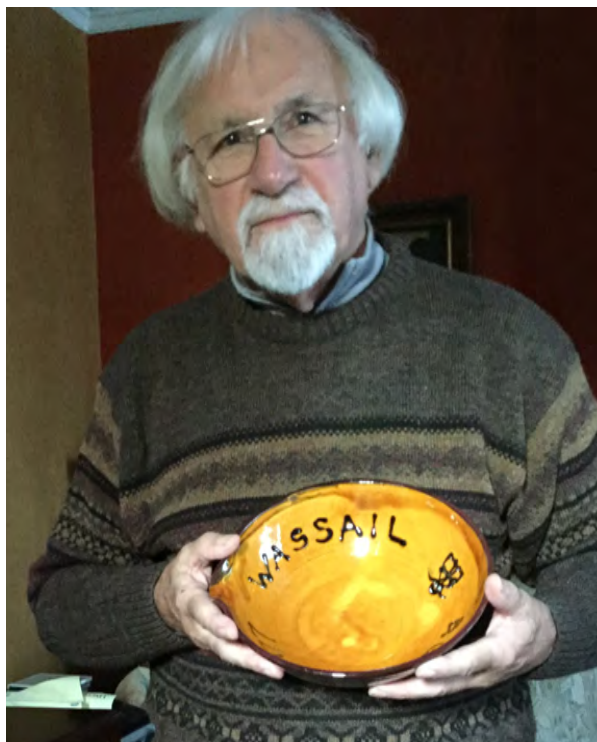
our health, and our hope  
of salvation. We give  
thanks that you have given  
us your Wassail, which  
we celebrate in this wine  
and these songs of gladness.  
Wassail (to altar),  
Wassail (to company).

Then we sing an hour's worth  
of Christmas carols, in four  
or more languages and always  
end with figgy pudding.

Our gathering was never advertised, but folk brought along friends, and tourists from all over the world. But when numbers got to over seventy we had to move from what felt like our home to the higher solemnity of the Chapter House where kings held their parliaments. It felt strange at first, but our numbers still increased and even stretched to 150 or so.

Then we had the great loss of our truly loved Ed Korylyk, and to signal his continuing presence with us, and also to cope with the added numbers, we commissioned a second wassail bowl by the potter Jim Newbould (who makes medieval vessels for museums) and that has been circulating since 2014.

Our wassail has now established itself, and will continue with its annual modifications as long as folk want it to. I would like to say 'as long as berries grow on elder trees' but that would be stretching things. It is, however, spawning other offspring in other parts. This year's wassail, traditionally on the last Saturday before Christmas Eve, will be on the 23rd at 11am. Come to sing and to be merry.



Bowl made by Paul Smith 1977



Bowl made by Jim Newbould