

The Parish Magazine

The Anglican Parish of Epping

Saint Alban the Martyr,
3 Pembroke Street, Epping

with

Saint Aidan of Lindisfarne,
32 Downing Street,
West Epping

The Feast of Saint
Alban the Martyr
(Albantide)

June/July 2015
Number 835

*In Covenant with the communities of
The Roman Catholic Parish of Epping and Carlingford,
The Uniting Church Parishes of Epping and West Epping, and
The Baptist Parishes of Carlingford and Epping*

From the Editor

The season of Easter has come and gone. Easter is my favourite season on the liturgical calendar. It offers my soul nourishment and hope. I get a similar feeling for my heart at each service of Holy Eucharist. Each Sunday we are extolled to lift up our hearts. At this stage of the service I imagine I have a blackened and withered heart in my hands in need of nourishment and hope. As I return to my pew after receiving the Body and Blood of Christ I feel my heart reinvigorating to be healthy and pink ready to keep me going through the daily worries and stress of everyday life. As a church community we are not immune to stress and worry... who will be our new Rector? how will the redevelopment of Epping effect us? Prayer and trust in the Lord is a sure answer to these worries. As a parish we are strong in both. We also ask all friends of Saint Alban's to pray for us at this time.

To contact us:

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Our clergy may be contacted at any time on 9876 3362

Saint Alban's Church is open daily for private meditation

Our parish library is open during office hours

Meeting rooms, various sized halls and other facilities are available

Please contact the parish office

Our Vision:

*To be
a
Worshipping,
Recognisably
Anglican,
Multi-racial,
All-age,
Gathered,
Christian
Community*

"a city on a hill"

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Thank you to the authors of the various articles in this magazine, contributors of photographs and our proof-readers. **The deadline for the next edition will be Friday 3 July, 2015** Contributions may be left at the parish office, or emailed directly to Stuart Armsworth at stundeb@bigpond.net.au.

The Parish of Epping is a parish in the Anglican Church of Australia. *The Parish Magazine* records recent events in the Parish, gives details of parish activities and publishes articles which set out opinions on a range of matters the subject of discussion within the Anglican Church community. It does not necessarily reflect the opinions of Clergy, Churchwardens or Parish Council. The editor accepts contributions for *The Parish Magazine* on the understanding that all contributors agree to the publication of their name as the author of their contribution.

Our Cover: The Bell Tower and Spire of Saint Alban's, Epping

Our Weekly Services

Weekdays at Saint Alban's

7.00am Holy Eucharist - Wednesday
10.30am Healing Eucharist Thursday
5.00pm Evening Prayer - Monday to Friday

Sunday at Saint Alban's

7.00am Said Holy Eucharist
8.00am Holy Eucharist with Hymns
10.00am Choral Eucharist - 1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays
Sung Eucharist - 2nd and 4th Sundays with Alban's
Angels
6.00pm Evening Service (Between June and September the Choral
Evensong is held on the 4th Sunday at 4.00pm)



Sunday at Saint Aidan's

8.30am Holy Eucharist with Hymns

Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals may be arranged with the Rector. Also available is the opportunity for special family services to coincide with re-unions, renewals or special anniversaries. These should be discussed with the Rector.

Important Dates for your Diary

21 June 2015: Saint Alban's Patronal Festival

9.30am Choral Festival Eucharist, Preacher: Bishop Peter Watson
XIIth Archbishop of Melbourne 2000-2005

28 June 2015: Choral Evensong 4.00pm

5 July 2015: Farewell Choral Eucharist for Father John 9.30am

This will be the only Service in the Parish on this day. The Parish Eucharist will be followed by a Parish Lunch in the Hall

19 July 2015: Confirmation

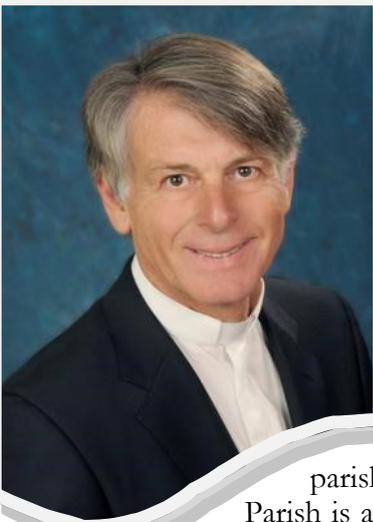
10.00am Preacher: The Right Reverend Christopher Edwards

26 July 2015: Choral Evensong 4.00pm

30 August 2015: Saint Aidan's Patronal Festival

8.30am Preacher: The Reverend John Sanderson, Senior Assistant Priest Christ Church Saint Laurence, Sydney

The Rector's Letter



This will be the last Rector's Letter that I will write. I will retire on 7 July 2015 and my final service will be on 5 July. Christine and I have purchased a home in Mountain Creek, between Mooloolaba and Buderim, Queensland. We look forward to the next part of our life journey in different circumstances.

It has been a joy for me to be the Rector of this wonderful parish for eighteen years. It is now time for the role of rector to be taken on by another priest to lead the Parish into its exciting and yet unknown future.

During my time as Rector there has been much change: change in the Parish, change in the Diocese, change in the Church in general and change in the ethnic makeup within our parish boundaries. Many parishioners have moved out of the Parish to live in other places. While the Parish is a gathered parish, many of us come from without the parish boundaries, the ethnic mix of the people who live in Epping has changed. The increasing number of Asian immigrants has changed the once primarily Anglo-Celtic makeup of the population of the area. These people will need to be ministered to in the name of Christ in the most culturally appropriate manner. In the Diocese there have been three Archbishops and that has given rise to a degree of disruption.

The Parish, on the next part of the journey to the completion of the Kingdom of God, will evolve into something that reflects the past traditions we all treasure, while acknowledging God's continuing revelation of his plan for it - the new creation. I hope that the Diocese will see the need to be more aware of the Anglican Church being a broad church, in keeping with the aims of the Elizabethan Settlement and acknowledge that ministry is a cooperative experience not a competition.

It is my hope that the Parish will always remain welcoming and inclusive. None of us has all the answers. God is greater than the sum of us all. The Parish should be aware of the need to foster the faith of young people. The future of the Parish has to involve young and old alike, and that means commitment by every member. Individuals cannot delegate personal responsibility for fostering the Body of Christ in this Parish. By our baptism we are all called to be God's ministers: to bring God's light into the world. There is no one else but you and I to spread the Gospel. Let your light shine. Let us not forget the words of Teresa of Avila. (1515–1582)

*“Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
Compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,
Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
Yours are the eyes, you are his body.
Christ has no body now but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
compassion on this world.
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.”*

My family and I have enjoyed a wonderful time here. We thank you for your love. All our grandchildren have been baptised here and my three children have been married here.

I conclude with the words of Saint Paul. (2 Corinthians 13:11-13)

“Finally, brothers and sisters farewell. Put things in order, listen to my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.”

John Cornish
Rector



The Rector, Churchwardens and Parish Council invite you to share with us our

**119th Festival of
Saint Alban the Martyr**

on

Sunday

21 June 2015

commencing at 9.30am

at the

Parish Church of
Saint Alban the Martyr
3 Pembroke Street, Epping

Preacher:

Bishop Peter Watson

At the conclusion of the Eucharist all are invited to the fellowship of morning tea in Saint Alban's Hall, prepared by the parish community.

This will be the principal parish service for this day.

There will be 7.00am Said Eucharist at Saint Alban's.

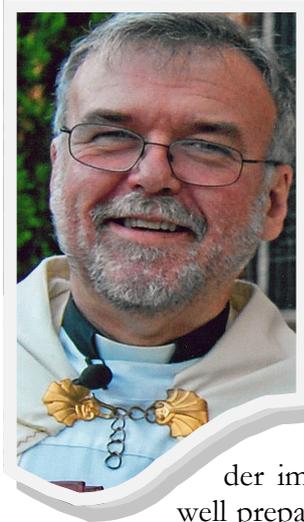
There will not be any service at Saint Aidan's.

There will not be an 8.00am or 6.00pm service at Saint Alban's.

“I am called Albanus by my parents and I worship and adore the true and living God who created all things.”

The artwork is an Impression of Alban and his attributed declaration of faith taken from David Nash Ford's *Early British Kingdoms*. www.earlybritishkingdoms.com/bios/alban. Sourced 13 May 2011 at 1330 hours.

ANZAC – Now and Then



Our celebration on 25 April each year is a special time in the life of Australia. This year in particular we commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Gallipoli landing. Historians have had a variety of views on why these events ever took place but over the last century the question of “why” has faded into the background as a more important question has dominated and that is the question of “what”. What did the Gallipoli campaign do to Australia? What impact did it have on such a young nation and what difference did it make to our thinking about ourselves.

We all know the dreadful truth of what war is. We see humanity in its worst light. We see the atrocities that always surface. We know the dreadful mistakes that can be made and Gallipoli had it all – a poorly devised strategy, a strategy poorly implemented, a campaign waged under impossible conditions, facing an overwhelming enemy, well supplied and well prepared to fight and die for their homeland. Count up the odds and Gallipoli comes out “impossible”.

Yet when war broke out Australia welcomed it with enthusiasm. This was a time of King and Empire. Many in Australia wanted it as an opportunity to demonstrate on the world stage what a robust nation had been formed just thirteen years earlier. When war broke out in 1914 the Epping community had only been settled for a little over 20 years. It was a small and close community. Everyone knew everybody else and the Hazelwood family were the glue that held it all together. Yet from the beginning of the war, many from this small community volunteered to travel half way around the world to fight for an Empire they believed in.

So we remember men like George White who enlisted as soon as he could. As a representative of Epping he was there on the beaches of Gallipoli on 25 April, 1915 and died on that day exactly one hundred years ago. In those early days of the battle it was complete chaos with no clear battleline anywhere. It was every man for himself. George managed to climb the ridges but it was there that he was wounded. He couldn't hold his position and so he attempted to turn back. However, George was never seen nor heard of again. His neighbour, Arnold Hazelwood was also at Gallipoli and when he heard that George was missing, he immediately began to search for him. Sadly, he was unsuccessful. George's family were so distressed by these circumstances that his brother, John, immediately enlisted. He too came to Gallipoli to search unsuccessfully for his brother. He died of his wounds in France.

The following year there was an inquiry into the Gallipoli action, but it revealed nothing concerning the fate of George. Even his rector of Saint Alban's at Epping, The Reverend Charles Thomas made inquiries, but again it revealed nothing. There was no grave, no lasting memorial to the bravery of George White, but we will remember him.

So too we remember the flamboyant, The Reverend Dr Everard Digges La Touch, whose name appears on our honour roll in Saint Alban's who had an even grander vision. He saw the theology coming out of Germany as a threat to worldwide Christendom. He saw this war as a holy war, as an opportunity not only to crush Germany but to wipe out the theologians that country had produced.

Everard was an Irish protestant with a Huguenot background who came to Sydney as a clergyman and lectured at Moore College, our Anglican Training College, leaving behind in Ireland his wife and children whom he never saw again. He quickly became a leader in the Diocese and a rallying point for evangelicalism. When the war broke Everard applied to the Diocese to go to war as a chaplain. This request was refused. He then attempted to join the army as a regular soldier. He failed the physical. He underwent an operation for his varicose veins. He saw his rapid healing as

a sign from God that he should go to war. He applied again to the army and was successful.

As a second Lieutenant Everard was always a charismatic leader with a profound influence over his men. He arrived at Gallipoli just in time for the battle of Lone Pine. Carrying only his cane and his revolver he strode into battle. Sadly, he only survived a few days at Gallipoli where he perished with a number of his men. Under his influence, his brother Averil followed him into the army joining the Royal Irish Rifles. Sadly, he died on 25 September, just six weeks after his brother.

We remember too, Leonard Hazelwood, the youngest of the Hazelwood brothers. He died at Poziers in 1916. He was blown up and buried by huge German artillery. An attempt was made to dig him out, to save his life. Unfortunately, all attempts were too late.

Or we could remember Johan Larson who was a neighbour of the Hazelwoods, or there was Stanley Pettett from Thornleigh, who was blond and handsome, but like George White, he was lost in battle and his body was never recovered.

This was life in Epping one hundred years ago in 1915, when this community went to war. And while these men served overseas the women served at home. Some worked for the Red Cross, organising medical supplies while others joined the Comforts Funds producing warm clothing and socks to make life more bearable for the soldiers overseas. We should not underestimate the huge contribution these women made, as women all over Australia were galvanised into action most nights of the week doing all they could to support their men.

Many reasons might be found concerning why so many signed up to fight. We might find it hard to understand why so many stormed the army recruitment centres so that they could take part in the battle. How many young men put up their age so they could enlist? How many older men reduced their age so they could fight?

Yet no matter what their reason the Gallipoli shores soon taught them a new reality. A few days before the landing at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915, Byron Hobson, a 25-year-old stock clerk, serving with the 13th Battalion of the Australian Imperial Force (AIF), wrote these words in his diary,

*'We are all eager to get this first fight over.
Defeat never enters our heads for we understand
the Turks take no prisoners,
so that means to an Australian a fight to the finish.'*

Byron Hobson was not part of the covering force that landed at Anzac Cove at dawn on April 25th. The 13th Battalion was part of the 4th Brigade, a mixed Australian and New Zealand force, which landed late in the afternoon of the 25th. After the landing, the entries in Byron's diary significantly change in character and tone,

*'We have lost very heavily,
a chum of mine went under today ...
We are in the enemy's captured trenches
and have to keep very low
because it is almost certain death to show your head.
The noise is hell.'*

And a few days later he wrote,

*'Many sad sights are continually being witnessed ...
I don't want to lie and say I was brave -
when I first came under the enemy's fire.
I was absolutely scared to death.'*

So much had changed for this young man. He set off with optimism, bravery and high hopes. But,

Anzac continued

within a very short space of time, he had lost mates, been shocked and terrified, and forever been robbed of any notion of 'a romantic war'. He had faced, with many others, what no human should and his life changed forever. On the first day of the landing there were 2,000 casualties, and the medical response was a shambles.

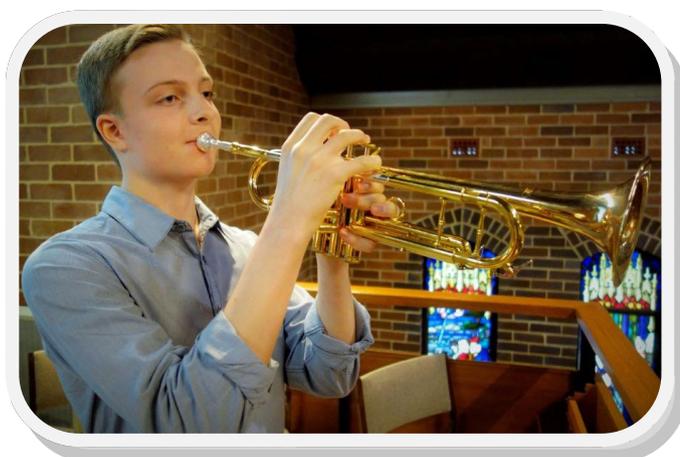
Out of this suffering and carnage, grew some remarkable stories and a sense that the Anzacs had proved themselves as men, as warriors, and that the whole nation of Australia was somehow drawn with them into a new and honourable national identity. These days you simply have to say the word '**Anzac**' and for many, a whole string of associations, both thoughts and feelings, come to mind, clustering around themes like sacrifice, mate-ship, endurance and larrikinism. These grand stories are compelling. They touch on and interpret the most profound questions and realities of human life, for example: What is a life worth? Who should we look to as models of heroism and courage? Are there greater, ennobling causes that justify the payment of such a terrible price? What past events and people must be remembered and commemorated in a nation's life? These profound questions constitute much of what religion and faith offer and call forth. In other words, Anzac touches deep down into the soul.

Yet the legend began so simply with individual men like Byron Hobson, each one playing their part in the larger story. But what was it that drove each man to behave as they did under these terrible conditions? In the end, it was not so much duty to the king or love of country. What began to dominate was duty to your mates, care for those other trench dwellers, those fellow sufferers. This was the real motivation of each man to find their courage, to muster their will, and perform their individual acts of heroism, and ultimately for so many, to die, to save the life of a friend.

They might have turned to barbarism, to become mere brutes seeking only their own survival. But instead, they reached back to another tradition, a way of living that had been drummed into them from an early age, a tradition that teaches that the good Shepherd lays down his life for his sheep, a tradition that teaches that even on the battlefield, amid all the horrors of war, a deep humanity, a deep wisdom, a deep love can be expressed in sacrifice. Not a sacrifice for glory, or wealth or some jingoistic ideal, but rather a sacrifice purely motivated by love for your fellow soldier, your brother, your comrade.

This is what the men and women of Australia discovered on the shores of Gallipoli one hundred years ago when they were tested in ways they had never anticipated. That somehow the only way to make sense of this terrible mess was to be found in the words and actions of Jesus, that our true humanity is found in that great love when we are prepared to lay down our life for a friend.

Ross Weaver



Edward Lawn plays The Last Post and Reveille at the Anzac Commemoration Service



On Sunday 26 April this year, our local Federal Member of Parliament, John Alexander joined us for our Anzac Commemoration Service at which we rededicated the memorial plaques which had been recently restored. The photos on this page are from that Service.



This edition of our Parish Magazine honours our Patron Saint, Alban.

The Alban Prayer

Almighty God, We thank you for this place built to your glory and in memory of Alban, our first martyr: Following his example in the fellowship of the saints, may we worship and adore the true and living God, and be faithful witnesses to the Christ, who is alive and reigns, now and forever.

Amen



(Artwork: Saint Alban Protomartyr of Britain sourced from www.occesussex.co.uk/Saints/St_Alban_comeandsee.jpg on 11 May 2012 at 1705 hours)



Photo: Display for Saint Alban's celebration of Harvest Festival. All food in the display is donated to Christian Community Aid, serving the local community. For more information visit www.ccas.org.au

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Rebecca Pincott

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Living in a World of Uncertainties



Having been a one-time editor of your Parish Magazine, I fully appreciated the dilemma Stuart Armsworth, your current editor found himself – I have been there. The cut-off date is arriving and I don't have enough words to fill the required 24 pages. I have also, thankfully, experienced what Stuart is about to experience. A deluge of articles, and now with too many, for the edition at hand. Such is the joy of receiving gifts from your parish.

Yet compared to many of the wonderful current writers he has sourced I found myself feeling somewhat inferior. How could I compete with retired and not so retired priests, bishops, academics, historians and other worthy notables? So here goes.

How do we live in a world of uncertainty? When Barbara and I retired to Mudgee the uncertainty of our worship arose. What would the new churches, priests, parishioners be like? Would we fit in? That all worked reasonably well. Quite different to Saint Alban's Epping for me and pretty much on par with Saint Agatha's Pennant Hills at Saint Mary's for Barbara. Uncertainty here now gone – essentially.

A little further on at Saint John's the then Rector was called to become Dean of Bathurst. Now uncertainty re-arose. Who would be our new Parish Priest? Solved reasonably quickly with the arrival of a priest returning from Durham. Solution found and uncertainty disappeared. About three years later that priest is called to become Rector at Saint Luke's Mosman. They have gained a good priest. We are in uncertainty again. However, a recently retired priest from Denman in Newcastle Diocese moves to Mudgee. He is now our Transitional Priest and has been for just on 12 months – and a great priest he is too! Uncertainty now pushed to the back burner – for the moment at least because our much loved Transitional Priest indicated to our Lord Bishop that he was available for about 12 months only. Uncertainty is back on the agenda as our nominators endeavour to source a new Parish Priest for us.

In parallel with this over the road at Saint Mary of the Presentation Church, their parish priest, who is truly a local identity, gets transferred to Orange after 10 years here. This didn't just cause uncertainty as to who would replace him – it practically caused gnashing of teeth and ripping of hair. However, a new priest arrived, very much a different style. The spire still stands and the walls have not collapsed. Uncertainty has disappeared, in a style.

Now back to Saint John the Baptist Anglican Parish of Mudgee and indeed the Anglican Diocese of Bathurst. Our Transitional Priest and his two Honorary Associates are doing a fantastic job as they work with the concerns of the parish looking for a new Parish Priest. There is much concern within our parish of who will come – thankfully the parish is well able to fund the appointment – however there is a general feeling of whether or not anyone will want to come given the uncertainty that holds in the Diocese.

This then brings us to the great uncertainty. What of the diocese? There is plenty of uncertainty in this issue. Some priests that have been able to secure alternative callings to other dioceses have availed themselves of that option. I can understand that as they have young families and their career to consider. They do not want this uncertainty hanging over the future.

Certainly the uncertainty of how the current court case will end is nerve testing. Will the diocese be forced to sell up everything? Will this include churches, homes, vestments, chalices and the like? I don't know. And then the matter of the Endowment of the See needs to be worked through. As you know this is required, as an investment, to cover the costs of the Bishop and his office. For whatever the reason these funds are seriously depleted and cannot go on much past mid next year as I understand. What happens to the Bishop then? If he cannot be financially supported we cannot have him. No bishop means no diocese. No diocese means no Anglican church in about a third to a half of

New South Wales. I understand that other dioceses would be reticent to take parts of the Bathurst Diocese because in doing so they may then become liable for a proportionate part of the massive debt. Now there is uncertainty. To remove some of this uncertainty, by providence, the parish of Dubbo became available. Rather than seek a new Parish Priest, they called the Bishop to become their Parish Priest. This fixes two issues – they have a Parish Priest and our Bishop is secure in tenure. At least that is how I understand the position to be.

In our parish we are have special prayer services, three evenings a week, to seek God's directions as we move forward on this most complex and disturbing of issues. I don't know what the outcome will be. I suspect there will be no winners. Already I can see faults on both sides of the case.

Yet through all this, one thing stands out to my mind. God will prevail. He always does. We must place our trust with Him.

Saint Alban's with Saint Aidan's is going through a similar, though hopefully not as dramatic, period. The uncertainty of who will be called to be your new shepherd is a real challenge given your location in God's world. God knows exactly who He will call to be your next parish priest. And call him He will. What might appear uncertain for you is, in reality, as certain as day following night. It will happen, it might not happen this week or even this month, but it will happen.

So back to my original question. How do we live in a world of uncertainty? Simple. Trust God. Look for His direction and follow it with your heart and mind.

Rodney Hale
Previous editor of The Parish Magazine

The Parish Register

The Faithful Departed

William Howard HULL on 7 April 2015
Chris Michael TREVERS on 12 April 2015
Marie Yvonne DAVIS on 13 April 2015



“Go in Peace to Love and Serve The Lord”

How BCA Nomads respond to this challenge.

When I am rostered to say these words of dismissal at the end of the Eucharist at Saint Alban's, I always try to say them with enthusiasm. After all, they are the point of the whole service. We have together worshipped God in word and song, learned from the four Scripture readings and the sermon, been forgiven for our failings and drawn together to share the Eucharistic feast. The remaining task is to go out and live the life that He taught us to live – loving others by caring for them.

These words pressed on Jan and me as we prepared for our 14-month retirement trip in outback Australia in 1998/9. We love travelling, revel in camping in the remote parts of the country, and enjoy the company of likeminded travellers in the campsites. We could not ignore the words at the end of the Eucharist however. We tried in our daily lives to be of service to others, within the parish and in community organisations. Should we suspend all this for the duration?

The solution, we thought, might lie in The Bush Church Aid Society. Our ideas became plans as we talked with the BCA Regional Officer, The Reverend Greg Thompson, at the time a member of our parish. Our journey became an opportunity to serve BCA staff ministering in areas as far apart as Broken Hill and Broome.

The work was amazing. We helped with a kids club in Menindee, mended and cleaned windows, painted and repaired buildings, sorted out library books, helped with an Op Shop, did a lot of gardening, and were even able to conduct an Asset Audit for Anglicare in Darwin. Charities do not have staff to carry out the latter rather arcane task, but must be able to assure auditors and funding bodies that they are good stewards of their assets. It just happened that I had done asset audits for my employers over many years.

It was satisfying to use our skills in so many ways, but even more so to have time to become members of the congregation as we stayed for a few weeks in these remote areas. We attended worship, led it in one place, attended Bible Studies and church dinners. One of the great gifts was that we were also a listening ear for the BCA clergy. Far from support and unable to talk over day-to-day problems with anyone in a small town, we found ourselves welcomed as sympathetic Christians.

The BCA Nomads

On our return, we approached BCA, offering to coordinate other travellers who might wish to love and serve the Lord in this way. Within weeks, a Code of Conduct and necessary legalities were organised, and The BCA Nomads launched. In August 2000, BCA Nomads No 1, a couple from South Australia, set out on a long trip. They are still members, and many others have served for years too.

We coordinated the group until two or three years ago, when we handed over to another couple, who have enthusiastically extended its reach. One of their initiatives was a very successful meeting at the caravan park in Nundle in early 2015. For the first time, we met people who we had advised and helped on their journeys. We had talked by phone and exchanged emails, but it was great to meet up and spend time face to face. Most active Nomads living in NSW and Queensland attended; about 30 couples.

We had a chance to explore the town, and chat with fellow BCA Nomads. We all met daily to praise our Saviour in song; get to know each other in small group bible studies and share our experiences. People talked of major building work in Winton, at Nungalinga College and sharing in the life of communities. One couple was planning to start a Christ for Campers ministry at Lightning Ridge this year, and another heading to Paraburdoo in the Pilbara to “church sit” while the Minister and his wife were in Sydney for medical care.

We all shared the same sense of joy at being able to use our travels as an opportunity to serve our Lord by serving His people.

Saint Alban's and Saint Aidan's Supporting BCA

Our parish has always strongly supported BCA. It is a Mission of the Month every year. The twice yearly emptying of BCA Boxes is a practical way to help.

We are grateful to Father John and our fellow parishioners for your interest and support of our work with BCA Nomads, following an article we wrote for the Parish Magazine fifteen years ago. We enjoyed the invitation to share our experiences and our plans in place of a sermon for the Sunday services as the Nomads work began.

If you would like to receive BCA's magazine *"The Real Australian"* or its prayer notes, or become a BCA box holder, please ask in the office or contact Glyn Evans who coordinates the Mission of the Month.

Max Boyley



Above: The small church at Nundle was packed by its normal congregation, 60 odd BCA Nomads and a Scottish Clan attending its annual "Kirking of the Tartan". The morning tea they provided was a gourmet lunch.



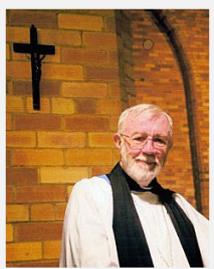
Left: Daily singing of favourite hymns and songs was a highlight of the BCA Nomads gathering.

Right: Most participants shared their experiences as BCA Nomads at regular sessions.



Lift High The Cross.

Australian links to a great hymn

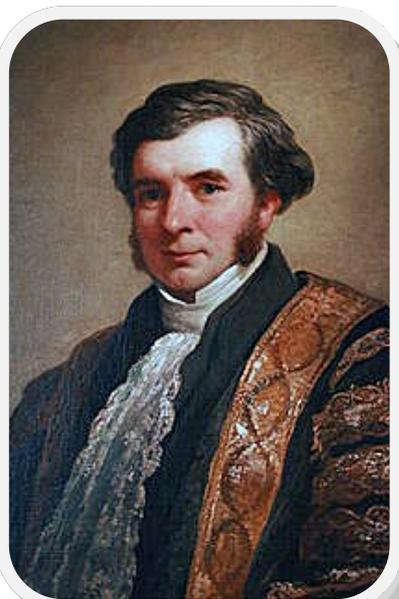


Years ago I was present at an Ordination Service in Saint Saviour's Cathedral in Goulburn. The Processional hymn at the beginning of the service was "*Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim*". It is number 271 in the *Australian Hymn Book*. It is a magnificent call to evangelism for all Christians. I am quite sure that members of the Saint Alban's congregation have sung it many times. It is always sung to the tune *Crucifer* which seems to be inseparably associated with this great hymn.

I have always been fascinated by the stories behind the hymns we sing and sometimes introduce a hymn in worship by telling a story about it. There are several Companions to the Hymnbook, compiled by the late Professor Wesley Milgate who was my English teacher at Sydney University sixty years ago.

There is a fascinating Australian link to the tune *Crucifer*. The words of the hymn were written by the Dean of Winchester, George Kitchin, in 1887 and revised by Canon Newbolt at the beginning of the twentieth century. Soon the hymn became very popular as a processional hymn and this owes much to the tune. To tell that story we meet two Nicholsons, Sir Charles Nicholson and his son, Sir Sydney Nicholson.

The story goes back to the year 1834 when a young doctor named Charles Nicholson arrived in Sydney. He had graduated from Edinburgh University but for many years his early life was shrouded in mystery. We now know that he was the illegitimate son of a woman named Barbara Ascough but the identity of his father has never been discovered. He changed his name when young. A recent article in the Sydney University Museums news, entitled "Mystery on the Yorkshire Moors: the humble origins of a great man" tells the full story. Sir Charles must have been haunted by the fear that his origins might be discovered in an age when illegitimacy carried a terrible stigma. However he carried the secret to the grave and only now has research uncovered it.



EXPLORER: Nicholson had an uncle named William Ascough who had made a fortune shipping convicts to the Colony. On 11 June 1836 this man was drowned at Broken Bay near Sydney and young Nicholson inherited his estate and it made him very wealthy. His medical work in Sydney prospered. He also explored parts of the Colony and opened a route from Braidwood to the coast. He acquired land and went into politics, being speaker of the first Legislative Council.

Nicholson's particular passion was to found a University in Sydney, following the traditions of Oxford and Cambridge. For many years he was Chancellor of the great University that stands on the hill beside Parramatta Road, the oldest university in Australia. Back in England he secured a Royal Charter for it, making the degrees conferred there of equal standing with Oxford and Cambridge. I remember standing in awe before the portrait of him in the Great Hall. Nicholson toured the Mediterranean and collected Egyptian, Greek and Roman antiquities which now form the "Nicholson Museum", the richest collection of antiquities in Australia. I remember with pleasure the hours I spent studying the coins and statues and relics there.

A SON NAMED SYDNEY: In 1862 Nicholson returned to Britain but continued to take a warm interest in Australia. He got married in England and the couple had a distinguished family. His youngest son Sir Sydney Nicholson was born in 1875 and named after the city where his father had

lived and worked for so many years.

Sydney Nicholson was educated at Rugby, New College, Oxford, and the Royal College of Music. He had a brilliant career as an organist at Eton College and various Cathedrals and finally at Westminster Abbey. He edited *Hymns Ancient and Modern* but his greatest claim to fame is that he founded the Royal School of Church Music. He was also a composer of sacred music. When we sing the hymn "Lift high the Cross" to his tune *Crucifer* we are remembering Sydney Nicholson.

AN EMOTIONAL RETURN: In 1934 Sir Sydney Nicholson came to Australia. In the city whose name he bore he was welcomed to the University of which his father had been a founder. It must have been an emotional moment for him. In the Great Hall he received an honorary degree and addressed the Senate and teaching staff. Sydney Nicholson recalled that it was exactly one hundred years since his father had arrived by sailing ship in 1834.



He spoke of his father's life-long enthusiasm for Australia and the University and his wide cultural interests. He knew an immense amount about medical matters, literature, antiquities, classical languages, Egyptology, coins, books, manuscripts, art and poetry. The speaker then commented that the one thing his father did not know the remotest thing about was music. He concluded: "I know very little about anything else but music."

He gave an address on church music and said that architecture has been described as frozen music. He said "I would like to describe church music as architecture come to life." (*Sydney Morning Herald* 21 September, 1934)

So that hymn tune *Crucifer* links us to two great men, one the founder of the University of Sydney and his son, founder of the Royal School of Church Music. We owe much to both of them. Next time Saint Alban's resounds to that great hymn we should give thanks for both father and son.

Robert Willson

Father Robert Willson was for seventeen years Chaplain of the Canberra Girls Grammar School. He acknowledges that the late Bishop Neville Chynoweth, a musical scholar, first roused his interest in the Nicholson story.



The Rector has recently introduced Community Hymn Singing on occasional Sunday afternoons at 4.00pm, featuring the favourite hymns of parishioners. More details will be available in the Parish Bulletin, speak to the Rector if you want to know more information or to suggest your favourite hymn for inclusion.

Photos for this article sourced from en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Nicholson and www.songsandhymns.org/people/detail/sydney_nicholson @ 1500hours on 15 May 2015

From Saint Alban's to the World: One Parishioner's



Father John has been asking me for some time (years) to write an article for the Parish Magazine. I'm a person who needs a deadline, so perhaps Father John's retirement is all a ploy to get my thoughts to print. Or perhaps not. Either way, it worked.

My brief was wide: write "something" about my life. A dangerous proposition to a person with a lot to say. But what follows is, essentially, a story. It's a story about people. Primarily, it's a story about people far less fortunate than those reading this article – people living some 16,000km North West of our City on a Hill. But, before we can get there, we need to start a little closer to home: we need to start with one of what I consider to be the real stories of Saint Alban's.

These are the stories of the people of Saint Alban's and the relationships between them.

Without these relationships, I guess, I may never have come to be (having been born to parents who met as teachers of the populous 1970s Saint Alban's Sunday School).

Beyond the chance of my birth, however, my life has been significantly shaped by the relationships I formed as a child within the grounds of Saint Alban's. It's a fact little known to most parishioners that, within the confines of the Saint Alban's Junior Choir (circa 1990s), an unbreakable bond formed between five little girls lost in a sea of oversized blue and white robes. Kate Murray, Jess Burrows, Sarah Gough, Katherine Randall, and I all attended different schools and universities, but for years our paths crossed twice a week for games of Bull Rush and Hangman, for Chris Wagstaff jokes, and, of course, for music. The friendships that grew supported us all through the challenges of adolescence – through victimisation by school bullies, through challenges in home lives, and through the death of my father. I am blessed now to have the most adorable little Goddaughter, Claire Alice Edwards (Kate's daughter – this is what happens when one of your number hooks up with the Church organist...who goes on to become The Reverend Ben Edwards).



Saint Alban's Junior Choir in approximately 1984

But years before I had a Goddaughter, I had a dilemma. It was 2007 and my dilemma was, in a nut shell, this: *I have a law degree. Now what?*



Jessica Burrows, Jennifer Croker, Sarah Gough, Katherine Randall, Kate Murray and Chris Wagstaff at Kate's 21st

'What', as it turned out, was a trip to Tanzania with Sarah and Jess, where we undertook a volunteer placement for a month, went on safari through the Serengeti, and climbed the tallest free-standing mountain in the world. It was an amazing adventure, and one that was somewhat life defining for me. It was in Tanzania, whilst talking to a social worker named Grace and clutching a small, parentless and malaria-stricken child named Fasar, that I decided to practice Family Law. Grace's first husband had vanished one day without warning, and she had never seen or heard from him again. The family unit, as I saw it, was a universal institution, and one that was fundamental to society. A family, whatever form it may take –

perhaps five little girls in oversized blue and white robes – is a basic human need. I thought that I could learn how to be a Family Lawyer and, once I got good at it, maybe I could return to a developing country and put my skills to use.

Fast forward six years and that's exactly what I did.

Journey (or Legally Blonde 3: African Adventure)

It was 2013, and I faced another dilemma. I had been practising law in the Eastern Suburbs of Sydney for over five years, working for an Accredited Family Law Specialist who will always be my mentor and my friend. I was happy in my job and strongly supported by my colleagues in the region. But something about my life wasn't quite enough.

My dad's final words to his confused fifteen year old daughter as she leant across his hospital bed for an embrace were, "*Always do your best*". As an adult, I have wondered just how much time he spent contemplating what his final piece of guidance to me would be, as I am at a loss to think of more apt advice. Of another, we can ask no more than their best, and of ourselves, in my view, we can ask no less. Surely the world would be a better place if everyone strove to be the best person they could be; if all parents strove to be the best parents they could; and if to every job was applied all the skills and effort available. Surely too, we must be happy with ourselves if we give everything we do all that we have; if we leave nothing on the field, as they say. What I find most remarkable, though, is that those words of advice are fitting for a child, as I then was, but they are also profound enough for me to carry them through the rest of my life.

In 2013, I questioned whether I was really doing my best. My dad was always my biggest fan – in his eyes, I could do anything – so I questioned whether what I was offering to the world was really the most I could offer. Plus, the end of my 20s was fast approaching. (For those not aware, the 'Pre-30 Freak-Out' is the new 'Mid-Life Crisis'. And mine was bigger than most.)

So it was that I turned 29, finished up the following day at the job I loved, and, a week thereafter, boarded a plane to the West African nation of Ghana, without any former members of the Saint Alban's Junior Choir by my side.

I was ill-prepared for my new residence. My departure from home had been a rushed decision, flanked by precious little research. And Ghana was not what I expected it to be. It was dirty. It was hot. It was humid. Make that, obscenely hot and humid. It was crowded, polluted, and Twi-speaking. It was far less developed than I had anticipated. It was mosquitoes. It was a passive-aggressive 'host Mum', infrequent electricity, and cold water, bucket & pail bathing. I saw nothing of beauty in the country. I was miserable.

The capital of Ghana, Accra, was where I was based. Accra is a busy and crowded city, dominated by cars and petty traders who roam the streets peddling everything from phone credit to corn on the cob to exercise equipment. It is a dirty city. Sealed roads and walkways are a rarity. Rubbish litters the ground everywhere, as do stray animals and people in varying states of undress. Semi-open sewers line every road, which are used as toilets. The air is polluted and the traffic chaotic. Gardens are generally hidden behind concrete walls topped with barbed wire, and there is very little green to be seen.



What is most remarkable about the city, however, is the contrast between the rich few and the poor majority, and the proximity of the two. Lavish gated communities stand between dirt roads and shanty makeshift structures.

I had volunteered through an organisation called Projects Abroad, in a professional placement, and I began working at Legal Aid. If I had to sum up The Legal Aid Scheme of Ghana in one

(hyphenated) word, that word, without a doubt, would be “under-resourced”. The scheme has only a handful of lawyers to serve a population of 24million people, most of whom are eligible for Legal Aid. Three of those lawyers were working in the Accra office. And then there was me. Me, sitting in a crowded, dirty, and undersupplied room, or sometimes on wooden benches outside, meeting with clients, listening to their stories (I generally got the ones who spoke English and, if none, I recruited a translator), drafting documents for them, giving advice, and then sending them on their way. Ghanaians are famous for saying in a thousand words what they could say in five. I used to play a game with myself – testing for just how many minutes I could mentally check-out of the conversation without losing the thread of what I was being told. It was many.

In Australia, the practice of law has adapted over the past few decades to cater to an increasingly sophisticated and educated clientele. The clients of Legal Aid Ghana are not sophisticated or educated and their problems are reflective of this. Most women who saw me were victims of physical and/or sexual violence and the most frustrating part for me was that they didn’t realise it. One woman, Eunice, detailed to me the intricacies of the 30 minute long beating she experienced at the hands of her husband.

Many of my clients believed in black magic and would spend hours telling me about the curses that had been placed upon them. One woman explained that her mother-in-law had made her barren by giving her a sewing machine for the purpose of “sewing her womb”. The mother-in-law had told her that by repairing the machine and sewing with it, she would prepare her womb for children; but infertility and gynaecological problems had ensued, leading to the natural conclusion that the sewing machine had, instead, been a curse, for which, of course, medical attention was not the solution.

The clients I attended were dirty, they smelt, and they were poor. They breast fed infant children whilst giving me instructions. But they were grateful – so very grateful – for my help. One client offered to come back and bring me a fish – all she could offer. A co-worker, the son of a high court judge, leaned towards me and said, “*You wouldn’t want to eat her fish*”. Poor as the clients of Legal Aid were, I was to learn that they were better placed than many Ghanaians, as evidenced by the fact that they had heard about, and found their way to, Legal Aid, and actually realised that they may have some kind of a problem and that there was a legal system that may be able to help them.

Not like the people of Old Fadama (more commonly known – to Ghanaians - as Sodom and Gomorrah), who I was soon invited to visit.



Old Fadama is located a short distance from the heart of Accra, and is the largest slum in Ghana. Situated on a mere four acres of land on the banks of the Korle lagoon, Old Fadama is home to in excess of 80,000 people. Not just any old slum, it is also one of the largest e-waste dumping grounds in the world (translation: westerners dump broken electronic goods there on mass as a cheaper method of disposal than complying with their own government’s disposal regulations). Viewed by many Ghanaians as the home of moral

degradation and crime, its inhabitants are characterised as illegitimate citizens, to be avoided, ignored, and, where possible, removed.

The community was established in 1989 (just before I joined the junior choir), when people began setting up shanty structures on the land after becoming displaced as a result of tribal fighting in the north of Ghana. Over time, as the girls and I attended our weekly choir practices, almost oblivious to lives less fortunate than our own, the resident population of Old Fadama grew, with people from all over Ghana migrating to the capital in search of work, but unable to afford accommodation in any other part of Accra.

Today, Old Fadama is home to sixteen different tribal groups and has been called a *national disaster* by Amnesty International. The landscape of the slum is littered with rubbish. The banks of the lagoon are piled high with electronic waste. The air is thick and filled with smoke generated by the burning of plastics (pictured right). It has a chemically, rubbish-fuelled, odour and it makes outsiders feel sick. The ground is the colour of melted down lead. The whole area is a shambles. Old Fadama is a maze of shanty structures, seemingly thrown together with whatever materials were on hand and chaotically arranged with narrow pathways between them. Navigating the maze is a balancing act, and requires one to step around and over cast iron pots on coals, small children amusing themselves in the dirt, and puddles of stagnant, rubbish filled, silver water. There is no sewerage, little electricity, no medical facilities, and very limited access to education.



I am advised that more than 65% of the residents have received no formal education, surviving on less than \$2 per day. Men and children spend their days wading through the trash in search of scraps and copper to sell. They dismantle the electronic goods with their bare hands and burn the plastics, emitting toxins into the air, land, and water within which the residents live and their children play. Women work as Human Load Carriers, known as “Kayayie”(pictured left).

I remember my first visit to Old Fadama vividly. The sensation of not knowing whether to vomit or cry is not one encountered frequently or one easy to forget. On that day I witnessed a living example of the resilience of

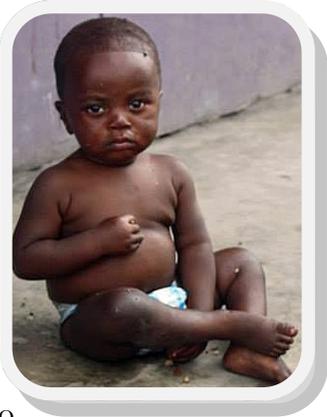
humanity – proof of just how much human beings can withstand. What strikes me as I recall the experience is just the lack of reason in the whole thing. Within the one world, by the chance of my birth, I was, as a child, clothed in blue and white robes, while children in Old Fadama have no clothes at all. I was born to a father with whom I sang duets, yet so many children in Old Fadama are born to fathers who won't even pay for their food. I was born to a mother who knitted pink clothes for me while awaiting my birth – the birth of a girl who would later stand in a slum explaining the concept of foetal alcohol syndrome to a heavily intoxicated woman in



her third trimester. And I was spoilt enough to run from the doctor trying to give me pre-kindergarten vaccinations, yet to the children of Old Fadama, medical treatment is an inaccessible luxury, not even available to a child experiencing a seizure in a puddle of silver water, as I was to witness.

But to such a lack of reason there will never be an answer. Unless the answer is the lack of reason itself. The lack of reason that drove me to dedicate the months that followed – often working late into the night – to meeting the people of Old Fadama, to educating them, to offering them legal assistance and, ultimately, to the establishment of a legal centre within the community; a legal centre that aims to improve the lives of the residents of one of the largest e-waste dumping grounds in the world by promoting equality - equality of human beings; equality before the law; and equality of access to information.

The residents of Old Fadama live in an environment that is crowded, dirty, unsanitary, and unsupported. There is a prevalence of domestic violence and rape (of adults and of children). Child maintenance and child custody issues are rife, with children not receiving the support they need to grow, develop, and be educated. Rental disputes are a daily occurrence, with most residents uncertain that their possessions will remain when they return to the room they share with a host of other people, and unsure of whether they will be able to sleep in the one spot from one day to the next. Violence is a commonly employed mechanism for the resolution of disputes.



There are two major deficiencies in Old Fadama that cause and amplify so many of these problems: a lack of knowledge in the community of legal and human rights; and a lack of access to remedies for legal problems and human rights abuses. These deficiencies result in a situation in which acceptable behaviour is determined by strength and power; and in which there is a gap between the people of Old Fadama and the services to which they are entitled.



The centre I established is now known as Fadama Legal Assistance Program. It was built and equipped using funds donated by the Eastern Suburbs Law Society of NSW and my amazing friends. I trained people to work in the centre and created informational manuals, procedures, and precedents, and created contacts for the centre within the Ghanaian legal system. The aim of the centre is to create a link between the residents of

Old Fadama and the wider community by promoting the rule of law; by disseminating information about legal entitlements and human rights; and by providing the people of Old Fadama with access to remedies for legal problems and human rights abuses.

Today, Old Fadama holds a piece of my heart. I continue to do what I can to manage Fadama Legal Assistance Program from Australia. I returned to Ghana in March this year to overhaul procedures, and was reminded, whilst giving a talk on domestic violence, rape, and child maintenance, to Muslim women in the slum, of why I am dedicated to the project. This year I finalised a partnership with Rotary and established a non-government organisation called ‘Support for Legal Services & Education in Slums’, so that support may be provided to other slums as well, if and when I am able to expand the organisation.

So was the little girl dressed in oversized blue and white robes always destined to end up in a slum in West Africa? That, I cannot say. What I do know is that she holds dear the words of Max Ehrmann oft quoted by our retiring rector:

And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should.

I carried with me the words of the poem to which these lines belong when I packed up my life in 2013 and moved to Ghana. There, I befriended a Muslim girl about my age from California. Whilst sitting with her in the back of a taxi on the way back to Accra after spending a weekend in Togo (a neighbouring French-speaking country), I mentioned the words quoted above. In response, she pulled from her bag a printed version of the entire poem.

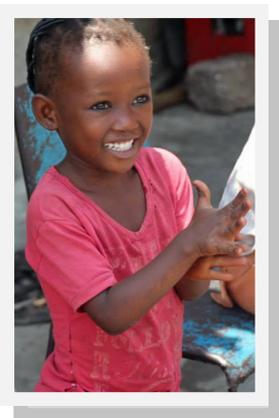
In an age when the world seems to be divided down Muslim/Christian lines, the fact that two girls from opposite sides of the imaginary fence would end up in a West African nation with the same words etched into their hearts is emblematic of the sameness in all of us, whether we're born into blue and white robes or into no clothes at all.

Though miserable when I first arrived in Ghana, through perseverance – perseverance made possible by the strength my support network gives me, so much of which originates from our City on a Hill – and through finding a sense of purpose, I came to see the beauty in the country; the beauty in humanity. For, as Ehrmann's words go on to state:

With all its sham, drudgery, and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world.

And, despite the atrocities I have witnessed; the images of a suffering humanity that are burnt to my mind, if I were to believe in nothing else, I would still believe in that.

Jennifer Croker



Above: Jennifer speaking with women about issues of domestic violence and rape in 2015



Left: Jennifer with Mary and her children - after fleeing a violent 9 year relationship. Mary had her children taken away from her by their father, who beat her anytime she attempted to see them. I met Mary 6 months later and, after making an application to the court (a shack down a dirt road), arranged for the children to be returned to her. This was their first weekend of being re-united.

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