

Ploughshare October/November 1998

(Scanned version from the original)

From the Curate, Andy Broom

What's your earliest memory? Mine goes back to when I was 3 and I cut my head open and was rushed to casualty. I can't remember any pain, just the sense of panic and concern as we dashed to the hospital. In case I should ever forget - I still have the scar to remind me!

We all have memories. What varied and strange things they are. Many are unimportant and trivial, others are precious indeed; some evoke sadness, others a smile; some are beginning to fade, others are just like yesterday'.

Memories are an important part of the Christian Faith. The Bible recalls how God has been at work in this world in the past. It tells us how he was at work in the people of Israel. It re-calls Jesus' life, death and resurrection, and how his earliest followers developed into the Early Church. It reminds us that our faith is based on real events and real people.

But that's only half the story isn't it? Faith and knowledge of God is not only about looking back, . it's also about living now. The writer to the Hebrews reminds us that 'Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today and forever'. Jesus didn't just live 2000 years ago, . . . he's alive today!

So, as we look back over our memories, as we live out the present and plan for our futures, we can be confident that we are not alone. Jesus invites us to share all our experiences with him - the good ones and the not so good. He brought peace, hope and purpose to many lives 2000 years ago, and he wants to do the same for us today.

Andy Broom

Face to Face with Philip Herrick

Philip Herrick has been the organist at St Thomas for several years. He also plays the keyboard in the Sowers music group. A former banker, he was a member of the Parish staff between 1991 and 1995 as Co-ordinator. He is married to Karen, the leader of Sunday club, and they have three children.

Philip, when did you start your musical career?

I started learning the piano as soon as I could read, aged 6, and I've always enjoyed it. Actually I had one period of disliking practice intensely but it didn't last long. I started the violin when I was 9. I had wanted to play the French Horn but had problems with my teeth so I found I couldn't manage it. I began to learn the organ at 14. My teacher was in charge of music at my school, Gainsborough Grammar School and he was also organist at the parish church. He offered free organ lessons to anyone who joined the choir so that was how I changed from being a Methodist to being an Anglican! I was assistant organist there for 10 years until I was married at 26.

What doors have been opened for you by music?

I was in the county youth orchestra and that enabled me to see the world a bit. We went on tours to France and Germany. I learned so much from playing as one of 100 or so people. Taking part in testing works like Prokofiev's "Romeo and Juliet" suite, Holst's "Planet" suite and symphonies by Borodin and Dvorak gave us a wonderful sense of achievement. I began to realise, as I have in choirs, that people collectively can achieve far more than on their own.

Then it has meant meeting interesting and gifted people. Music even played a part in getting Karen and me together. I invited her to go with me to an organ recital in King's College, Cambridge and at the end to have tea in a very new establishment called "Pizza Hut"! She belonged to a Church youth group in Gainsborough and introduced me to a wider range of songs and choruses than I knew beforehand.

Has music played a part in developing your Christian faith?

Certainly. I have been fortunate to come from a very determined Christian family. My father is a Methodist local preacher and I have two uncles who are Methodist ministers. My brother Andrew is an Anglican clergyman, serving in Wales. Dad was happy for us to become Anglicans provided it wasn't just because we liked the music!

Actually it was music that got me involved in church and held on to me when I might have drifted away like many teenagers do. More than that, it was during a performance of Elgar's "Dream of Gerontius" in Lincoln Cathedral that it

dawned on me what Christianity was all about. It wasn't just a story. I saw real meaning in the suffering and cross of Christ. It was all about forgiveness. What I had learned in Sunday school and at home became living and new.

In recent years, we have been singing more informal, contemporary songs. What are your feelings about this?

I like music from all sorts of stables. Folk, classical, romantic, baroque, pop... I can't say I have a favourite piece of music or hymn or song. St. Paul writes about singing songs, hymns and spiritual songs and that surely means a variety. I think we need traditional hymns *and* contemporary songs - as long as they are done decently and in order. I have no regrets about broadening my repertoire, and the church's, and I see a firm future in singing both styles. We need plenty of tolerance though!

One dimension I have still to discover for myself is singing in the Spirit. I have witnessed this when the Holy Spirit seems to take control of a time of worship, and I had to take my hands off the keyboard. It was quite awesome, wonderful, but I know it wasn't for me to lead.

What are your memories of being a paid member of staff in the parish?

It was great fun; there were great experiences but many frustrations too. The negative memories were discovering that many wanted to give up their roles, expecting a paid coordinator to take them over, and that it was hard work getting people to take on even straightforward, undemanding tasks. Just about the most exciting part was seeing many people come to faith and realising that there were many others who had played a key part in helping them.

I want to stress that I left because of the demands of having a child, Bethany, who was seriously ill. The hours caring for her and my family were just too long.

What are you doing now?

I'm General Manager of a ceramic decorating firm based in Matlock, responsible for administration, information technology, finance and anything else that crops up. In my week planner I always have "crisis" entered on Monday mornings - being prepared for the unexpected, someone handing in their notice, system failure or whatever!

What does it mean to be a Christian in the workplace?

It's difficult. I wrestle with it daily. I suppose honesty is the number one thing. I'm glad I took a stand from the word go with regard to some matters and I feel God has honoured this. I am learning to value people more for who they are not what they can do.

And finally, the family seem very much part of St Thomas'. Are they happy about this?

I think so. I remember a particular time when Emma (11) made a definite resolve to be a Christian. Jonathan (9) enjoys searching and asks lots of complicated questions. Bethany (4) is a very contented child. We have known all along, through all her operations and problems, God has had his hand on her. We've all found that "footsteps in the sand" has been true for us as a family. In the toughest times, we've certainly been carried.

James Sellee Returns to a Key Ministry in Ravaged Liberia

Our first Liberian Studylink Partner, **James Sellee**, returned home last September with a Masters Degree from **Oak Hill** College to a country recovering from the ravages of civil war. He managed to get a letter through to a family which provided kind hospitality through Studylink:

"I'm back home safely. Words cannot express how much I appreciate your love, warmth, friendship, prayers and care in every way. You were my pillar of strength and support for those two years of stay in the UK. Thank you for teaching me so much about practical Christian love and fellowship.

I'm priest-in-charge of one of our biggest city churches, St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in the capital city Monrovia. It is vibrant and has a membership of a little over a thousand. I enjoy maximum support and cooperation from the membership. The Bishop says my permanent assignment is to head the theological college of our Anglican university, which is closed at the moment due to the civil war. It is expected to reopen sometime in 1998.

Life is very hard. I survive on only one meal a day. It is taking a long time to recover from the civil war. Thank God for His sustaining grace, strength and providence. Nothing surpasses seeing and being privileged to share in the converting and transforming power of the gospel amid destitution and unspeakable suffering such as ours. Please pray for more so such grace and power in the midst of weakness and hopelessness."

St Thomas' Development

As this edition of Ploughshare goes to press, the new **Garden of Remembrance** is nearly complete. The men from Pople Landscapes have worked hard and approached a difficult task with great sensitivity.

Each morning, the Rector has held a short service on the site and several affected relatives have attended. It has been good to have many expressions of appreciation of what is being done.

Our prayer is that the Garden will provide many with the opportunity for treasuring memories and praying peacefully.

The Re-ordering of St Thomas' is now scheduled to take place in the Spring. The PCC are making final decisions about the seating, carpets and colour schemes. This follows work by the Development Committee and our architects, adapting the plans in the light of the Chancellor's Consistory Court decision that the Chancel must remain untouched.

Our prayer for the re-ordering is that it will encourage the renewal of St. Thomas' worship and provide many opportunities for varied activities right through the week.

Novi Most International

Update from the Director, Paul Brooks.

Just yesterday I returned to Britain from Camp Rio, the place where hundreds of young people from across Bosnia have been attending our 1998 summer camps. There is no doubting the fact that God has been using these camps to change the Bosnian church forever!

Before the camps it was estimated that there were around 550 known born-again Christians in the country. Well over 200 people, Muslims, Croats and Serbs, have received Christ at Camp Rio since the beginning of July - an increase of over thirty-five percent in the number of Bosnian believers in just eleven weeks!

A few days ago, Siad, a young Muslim boy who has been attending the Novi Most Sports Centre in Mostar for over a year asked Jesus for forgiveness and new life. His entire family were then converted following his lead!

The following day, tears of joy ran freely down my cheeks as I witnessed scores of young people publicly signifying their desire to follow Christ by signing their names across a painting of his outstretched hand. The included people from Tulza, Sarajevo, Bihac, Mostar and Jaice. Such a scene could hardly have been imagined a year or two ago.

Camp Rio has been the biggest project we have taken on in our five year history. God blessed the ministry amazingly. Hundreds of volunteer workers from more than ten countries have helped to run the camps and every bill has been paid.

Fund-raising professionals will say that it is always disastrous to appeal for "general " funds, but that's exactly what I am doing. Would you please consider helping us by making a donation now? You can be assured that your gift will not disappear into a bottomless pit or be gobbled up in huge administration costs - those are kept to an absolute minimum. Your donation will be used to ensure the vital work of bringing Good News to Bosnia continues and that more lives are transformed by its power.

Bosnia is a changing place! The advances of the Kingdom of God in all parts of the community, and especially amongst the Muslims, has been incredible. Please ask the Lord if he wants you to make a further gift at this time to support the transformation taking place in the country.

Changing Bosnia FOR GOOD

Every day, right through the year, **NOVI MOST** International is engaged in vital ministry to enable young people in Bosnia who have been deeply affected by conflict to experience the love of Jesus.

Here are a few of our ongoing activities.

RELIEF - Trucks of aid leave our warehouse every few weeks with emergency aid. Assistance is given to enable refugees to return home. We provide funding for vital medical services.

YOUTH WORK -Our staff provide a full range of youth services in refugee centres such as Mostar's "Container Village" as well as engaging in sports development and arts ministry.

TRAUMA SUPPORT - Professional trauma counselling is provided as well as training for Christian nationals engaged in counselling.

CAMP MINISTRY - Camps benefit hundreds of Bosnian young people each summer but the planning preparation and follow-up continue throughout the year.

CHURCH PLANTING - NOVI MOST'S Bosnia Director, Nikola Skrinjaric, is Bosnia's leading pioneer and church planter. New initiatives are underway in more cities. He is 100% funded by NMI in Britain.

INTERCESSION - We publish and distribute the fortnightly Bosnia Prayer Briefing, organise special prayer initiatives and are developing the world's first permanent centre dedicated to prayer for revival in Bosnia.

HARVESTERS - The NMI team is the largest and fastest growing missionary force in recent Bosnian history.

Hope for Eastern Europe August 1998 Mission

Our journey this August proved to be very, successful. Dina met us at Bucharest airport. She is Pastor Dimitrio's youngest daughter from Basaraki Church in Constanta.. God has called her to be a missionary in India and plans had been made for her to travel back to England with us. A local pastor and his wife arrived shortly afterwards to transport us to the Emmanuel Mission, where we received a warm welcome. Les, Liz and Derek also had a very good journey with the lorry. The supplies for the Emmanuel Mission were unloaded the following day and many expressed their grateful thanks, especially for the gift for the family shelter home.

While in Bucharest we bought 150 bibles for the prison ministry at Tulcea and Constanta, plus a good number of children's books and evangelistic literature. We then moved on to Basarabi and received another warm welcome. Pastor Dimitrio and his wife arranged accommodation for us and supplies were unloaded. Here arrangements were made for people to call at the church to select shoes and have them properly fitted. Clothing was sorted to distribute to poor families. We shared our faith with some of these families, including gypsy children. We later prayed that the Lord would bless them, and many gave their lives to Jesus during an outreach led by Steve Miles and his team from London. I was very shocked to see the cramped conditions many were living in. The supplies were a tremendous blessing for many especially the shoes.

After a few days I went to stay with the Hangan family, including Tony, a doctor at Constanta General hospital. I went to visit paediatric and E. N.T. departments, which proved very interesting. I was thanked for the therapeutic teddies sent last Christmas, and was told of specific need for an automatic washing machine, children's pyjamas, disposable nappies and white sheets and pillow cases. There is a lot of very outdated equipment, and virtually everything is ready for renewal.

Les, Liz, Derek and myself next moved on to Tulcea. We attended a service in the village of Isacha, at a new church where Adrian preached on forgiveness and I was invited to talk about our work for Eastern Europe, including our visits to the leper community at Tichilesti. Some of our friends decided they would like to accompany us to Tichilesti to become more involved in praying for and supporting the community.

Our dear friends there are really special to us, and it is always a moving experience to share fellowship with them. There are now only 34 residents, because six have died since our last visit. We pray that all of them will experience God's love and saving grace.

The needs are many and the work is growing - without your help and support this work could not continue - thank you all in the wonderful name of Jesus. Our next mission is planned for October 9th to transport medical supplies for Dr. Nicolae's orthopaedic hospital and Constanta General hospital.