

Miss Tucker's News, 2010.

Greetings to you all near the beginning of 2011.

Most important, as ever, is the news of Mozambique. I realised that after 12 years it was time for me to hand over being the parish representative of the Angola, London, Mozambique Association to another member of the parish at our annual parish meeting at the end of March. Imagine my surprise when the phone rang on Holy Saturday, April 3rd, and it was Bishop Dinis who told me that on Good Friday Father Isaias, whose visit to us in Friern Barnet I reported to you last year, had been 'told', when he had finished reading the Gospel, 'Isaias, today you will be with me in Paradise.' 'Such a dedicated man,' said Bishop Dinis, 'God would not let him go in a less glorious way, in front of the congregation he loved so much.' Yes, he had collapsed with a fatal heart attack. Our Rector flew out on Easter Monday for an almost non-stop journey for the funeral. In August one of our parish flew out for the induction of the new priest, and brought back photos of Father Isaias' widow, Cremilda, and their children, Bernadette, 14, Junior, 11, and Armando, 8. He also brought a photo of Katia with whose family I stayed in '08, and her father, in her confirmation dress as Bishop Dinis had confirmed her at the induction service.

You will realise how I appreciated seeing the Tree of Life, inspired by Bishop Dinis' idea of handing in guns in exchange for tools given by Christian Aid, at the British Museum on Holy Saturday when I went up to give my talk on the Greeks. I am enjoying now starting a new kneeler for our church with a tapestry of this Tree of Life with the bird bringing food to its nestlings, a sign of new life, as the Bishop said to me when he put it on display in 2005. I remain one of Bishop Dinis' commissaries, and feel very closely involved in all that is going on in Mozambique and Angola.

You will remember I told you about the tapestry of the shell from Verulamium I was doing to commemorate the pilgrim scallop shell of St. James last year when we were handing over our parish church to the Greek Orthodox church. Our pilgrimage in 2010 was to Rome. Previously I had always concentrated on ancient things, so it was good this time to concentrate on seeing the Vatican Museum, the Sistine Chapel and St. Peter's, the only 'ancient' visit being to the catacomb of Priscilla, an exciting Christian place from pre-Constantine times. Previously I had found the Last Judgement in the Sistine Chapel threateningly dark. After the cleaning, it now has a beautiful blue sky, which has made it positive. In the ceiling the hand of God about to touch with the 'breath of life' the hand of Adam is glorious too. In St. Peter's I stood a long time in front of the Pieta where the left hand of the crucified Christ is resting limply on His thigh, like the hand of Adam, on the lap of His Mother, waiting for His death to be transformed into risen life.....So St. Peter's was special for me so soon after Father Isaias had, as Bishop Dinis says of his wife Berta, 'entered eternity.'

I continue to enjoy much music making. Our organist composes many works for us in the church choir to sing, and other highlights have been playing the 'cello in the Enfield Chamber orchestra and playing either 'cello or piano with a violinist friend.

I so enjoy reading news of you in the journals, and seeing many of you at CH meetings. This year I have also been pleased to hear from a large number of you in response to the letter sent out with a Hertford Christmas card about the Presentation Donation Governorship given by Hertford Old Girls.

It has been an immense pleasure for me to have seen Georgia Garrod through to her last year in the school. Georgia and her mother, Caron nee Haskell, came to Founder's Day Dinner with me this year in Horsham, with Georgia in her uniform with a splendid array of buttons on her sleeves in her role as Band Captain. Now to my astonishment I find I may, thanks to your generosity, 'present' another old girl's daughter and I am looking forward enormously to seeing another girl through the school.

What is unbelievable to me still is that there are now equal numbers of girls and boys in the school and what is crucial is that you all take on board how much Christ's Hospital relies on the support of its Old Blues to maintain its funds. Over the years some old girls have become Donation Governors and have played a great part in supporting the foundation. In addition this new Hertford Collective Donation Governorship is a wonderful way for you all to feel involved by giving towards new governorships, so I do urge you all to continue to be generous as others have been throughout Christ's Hospital's history.

Do you remember those special Leavers' services and the Charge? Over to you!

With loving greetings to you all, Elizabeth Tucker.