



The flowers  
of the field...

# CHN NEWS

Newsletter of the  
Community of the Holy Name



Summer 2023

Welcome to our second magazine from Hessele.

As I write in mid June I am reminded that it is now 2 years since we set out in convoy to move here from Oakwood.

Here are a few highlights from the past year –

In August we had a lovely visit from Sister Patricia, one of our Zulu sisters who is very well-travelled. She had been invited to be a chaplain at the Lambeth Conference, and came to see us. She brought news from our Zulu sisters and from the Lambeth gathering.

While Patricia was here we hired a minibus and visited the seaside at Hornsea. It was a real treat, the walkers walked a bit and explored and paddled, while the rest of us sat and watched the world go by and gazed out to sea. Children and families were playing on the beach. Cups of tea and ice creams miraculously appeared. The weather was ideal – sunny with a light breeze – and we felt refreshed and very blessed.

At the beginning of September Sister Theresa Margaret celebrated her Diamond Jubilee and this was quickly followed by ‘The Visitation’ when we welcomed Bishop Humphrey and his team of Sister Jane, the leader of All Saints Sisters of the Poor, and the Ven. Caroline Baston who is a member of The Franciscan Third Order and is currently master of St Nicholas Hospital (almshouses) in Salisbury. We enjoyed having them with us and in due course we received a positive Visitation Report.



*(L-R) Sisters Monica, Patricia, Pippa and Catherine Paddling at Hornsea*

great uncertainty. It's important to have an ear to the ground, ( i.e. attentive prayer) trying to be alert to Gods way forward, wanting to affirm the positives. To do this at all is to fight the good fight with all ones might. We may not be able to discern HOW God is leading us forward, in world history or in the Anglican Church of our day, or in our challenges with climate and traffic...but if we are trying to attend to the Spirit, then we are more likely to be aligned with the resurrection life forever and always at work .The signs of the times can seem to be overwhelmingly negative, yet there are small positive shoots of hope and life . Mighty oaks from little acorns grow.

One aspect of contemporary society that can keep me sleepless in the small hours is the technological revolution . I no longer think this is just about my incompetence in this area but a much more general anxiety, especially amongst older people. I also think it to be an entirely proper matter for concern, a huge shift comparable to the industrial revolution, which is altering the way we live and relate to one another.

It can seem a strange, bleak time when old institutions , ways of being , and patterns of life are passing with little sense of what lies ahead. There can be fear and depression in this unknowing. We need to crest the wave of this... entrusting ( or abandoning ) ourselves to the Divine Providence, exercising faith ( a real work ) in the God who loves and saves the world -with the sign of the cross.

*Sister Carol CHN*

I am not sure what kind of mixed sign this is!

What we lack is any kind of racial mix , interfaith dynamic, ...or evident poverty. This is a middle class white village with historic roots . There was once a class distinction from one end of the village to the other. I live in the posh end, in the smallest but one of all the houses, with the lowest tax band and no parking. In the same' street ' one house was without inside water and loo until the 1980s. We still have no high speed broad band which stops at the main road.

In the middle -or to the side -of all this, I myself am an ambiguous and little understood sign, even to myself! I think of Thomas Merton's Conjectures of a guilty bystander.' I live my life with all its practical necessities of housework, cooking ,cleaning, trying to pay the bills etc.; I say my Daily Offices ( usually four of them ) and seek to pray . I try to find Eucharists, a midweekly one and two Sundays a month in the village - then to another church in the united benefice. Anglicanism with its unique blend of the catholic and the evangelical is threatened with extinction as the catholic end of the spectrum diminishes; as do religious orders. This is a real sorrow for those who value the Anglican expression of liturgy and practise....a sign of the times.

I contribute a little to the local church with the occasional preaching . I stand back from much else in the village but I do attend meetings for the re-opening of the White Hart pub, seeing this as a positive effort to re-animate community.

I feel, as do so many, the afflictions of our world as it has become, the appalling leadership in many of the nations. I witness with some anger the disarray of our own political parties and country. Climate change is difficult even to contemplate. Such tensions are unavoidably held in the stillness of the anchor hold as we live with

Sister Pauline Margaret and I went to Hull Minster for the Commissioning and Welcoming Service for Bishop Eleanor Sanderson as the new Bishop of Hull. It was a good mix of formal (declaration of assent, swearing of oaths etc) and informal with hearty singing and dancing from her New Zealand supporters. I think we are now official 'cat sitters' at Hull House.

I was able to attend the conference for Leaders of Anglican religious communities at Wantage – sessions on Conflict Resolution – and Archives. As a result we had a visit from Dr Scholastica Jacob who is the archivist at St Anthony's Priory in Durham. She was impressed with our archives and gave us some advice about classification and storage. Plans are afoot to keep Religious Community archives at St Anthony's as communities downsize or die out. Scholastica reckons they are a treasure for the church!



***CHN sisters  
visiting the  
Carmelite sisters  
at Wood Hall  
Carmelite  
Monastery near  
Wetherby***

We were invited by Archbishop Stephen to visit him at Bishopthorpe Palace – so it was another minibus outing. Unfortunately we got rather lost in the environs of York and arrived late – a bit embarrassing but Stephen and his staff were all very welcoming. We had 'the tour' and a bit of a history lesson as we admired the portraits of former Archbishops of York.

Then we met in the chapel for the Eucharist followed by a sumptuous lunch and good conversation in the State Dining Room. We need to pay a return visit to explore the gardens - as we ran out of time.

In the autumn, Sister Verena decided the time had come for her to leave Aberdaron (her home since 1982) and her life as a solitary and she came to join us Quarry Bank in December. I think it was quite a culture shock for her but she has now settled back into community life.

We had a few difficult weeks in December and January – Sister Brenda became very unwell and moved to Emmanuel House, rather reluctantly, for respite care. She died there very peacefully on Christmas Day. Sister Jean Mary, who had become increasingly frail after a fall, was in hospital, before going into care at Bluebell House where she died a couple of days later.

In March we had a visit from Canon Norman Boakes. He is writing a thesis as part of a doctorate in Theology and Practice, looking at the current situation in religious communities and he interviewed a number of sisters.

Sister Flora Gardenia came out of hibernation to be part of the Hessle Scarecrow Festival – but sadly only a few people came to see her as the festival dates clashed with the coronation weekend.



*Sister Flora Gardenia enjoying tea  
in the Garden!*

We also took part in Hessle Open Gardens for the first time and had loads of visitors and good weather. Over £8,000 was raised for Dove House Hospice and other local charities.

If the valiant, voluntary yet professional efforts to rescue the listed building succeed, the hope is to include a small cafe/takeaway to tempt van drivers, as well as provide a meeting place and a shop for villagers. We can do it! It has been done by 130 other villages in the face of the disappearing pubs which can be a focus of community life. Another sign of the times!

The village hall is the one amenity that continued to function through the pandemic. The 700 year old Church closed with a dry rot problem exacerbated by lockdown. The small congregation raised an amazing £65,000 to remedy the problem and rescued the building for posterity. In the church porch is a very rare Palm Sunday gallery; inside an unusual stone pulpit on a side wall. There is also a bust of Sir Spenser Perceval, the only British Prime Minister to be assassinated. The tomb of his crusader ancestor is just outside of the church entrance. The building was well worth saving but can we rescue the worshipping community which dwindles and could disappear within the next five years, given the age range? One village church in the valley is already closed, another is on the way. Rural church is suffering. The UK was recently described as one of the least religious countries in the World. A sad sign of the times.

The gardening club flourishes, with volunteers tending the village green, the planters and the pub frontage. Before King Charles' Coronation pavements were weeded and cleaned up. All are conscious that the Gordano Valley is protected from further building as a site of special scientific interest, a wildlife habitat with its network of reens (small waterways) and its peat content rendering it unsuitable. Previous villagers paid for wildlife areas. A good sign of the times. Overhead the buzzards can be seen and heard. Peregrine falcons have a perch in the nearby stone quarry used by the constabulary for the South West as a shooting range.

wheelchair, was hanging on to another rope attached to the pony (film editing is a very skilled job!)

I would definitely say that animal therapy is a worthwhile activity – but it does take some organising!

*Sister Rosemary CHN*



## **ANCHORHOLD**

My 'anchor hold' is in a small village ( approx. 300 residents) bisected by an ever increasingly busy B-road. A mile across the lovely Gordano Valley is the M5, frequently blocked by traffic and the village road has become a rat run for escapees from the M5. The frequent 20 mph signs , the two 'pinch points ' and the 'planters' in the road have gone some way to slowing drivers down. Volunteers in green jackets wield hand held speed checkers, but a careless public still mostly exceeds the limits. There is no crossing and in places no pavements either. My tiny cottage is 50 yards back from the road so that I do not suffer the noise which afflicts those who are closer, nor the tremors as HGVs rumble through when the M5 is closed. We are a microcosm of the seemingly insoluble traffic problem of our times. Buses are infrequent, though a new system of calling for a small bus with a flexible time table and route has begun.

With lots of vehicles passing through there are plans to capitalise on traffic flow in reopening the White Hart as a community hub. (*savethewhitehart.com*) This village gastro pub closed during the second lockdown.

Five of us visited Wood Hall Carmelite Monastery (near Wetherby) and caught up with Sisters Pam and Sue (who were both members of CHN a long time ago) and met the other sisters. They made us all very welcome and we really enjoyed the day.

We welcomed a group from the Mustard Seed Initiative ('Growing Disciples where life is tough') who were having an afternoon with Bishop Eleanor at Hullen House. They joined us for Vespers and were most appreciative – as were we that they came.

The Lodge is now being well used for retreats or just 'a place to be' – all are very welcome. Please come and see us when you can.

*Sister Diana CHN*



## **COMMUNITY INFORMATION**

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**Regd. Charity No. 250256**

## SISTER BRENDA CHN

**Born 3rd April 1934**

**Professed**

**2nd February 1958**

**Died**

**25th December 2022**



Sister Brenda was born in Birmingham on 3rd April 1934, the youngest of 6 children (3 girls and 3 boys). When she was still a baby the family moved to Anstey, a village in Leicestershire which is now regarded as the 'Gateway to Charnwood Forest.' it was there that Brenda's love of the countryside, its flora and fauna, and of gardening began. Brenda's mother died when she was only 10 - very distressing for her - and not long after that the family moved to Coventry.

In Coventry the family worshipped at St John's church and Brenda made some lifelong friends there . After leaving school, Brenda trained as a nursery nurse. she joined the Community of the Holy Name at Malvern in 1955 and was professed in 1958. In Malvern her early years were spent working in the kitchen or looking after the hens and she had time at our Retreat Houses in Chester and St Albans. in 1969 she went to South Africa and worked in a children's home in Johannesburg and then at the Convent in Leribe returning to the UK in 1973. The next 10 years saw her doing retreat house work again, including at the community's new venture in Cardiff. She helped look after our guest house in Malvern, was also a very good laundry sister and started to become a serious gardener. She had another short spell in Lesotho and Zululand finally returning to

Jean because of her dementia continued unknowingly to fulfil this part of our rule to the end of her life...but equally unknowingly all those who cared for her when they met her during her wanderings were carrying out 'the work of Christ's unfailing love'.

*Sister Monica Jane CHN*



## Furry Friends at Emmanuel House

When I was a little girl I read pony books avidly, and fantasised about showjumping like Pat Smythe, whom I had actually once seen in the flesh. My wish-list for Christmas always started with a pony - not that I expected to get one, but it was pleasant to dream.

Some weeks ago, the home where I live was visited by Furry Friends Animal Therapy, and last week our visitors returned together with a team from BBC Look North who filmed the encounter. One of the animals shown was a snake ('Fury?') which I was very glad not to meet; others were giant rabbits with beautiful velvety fur, just asking to be stroked, and many of the residents enjoyed cuddling them. But the stars of the show as far as I was concerned were 2 Shetland ponies.

I had always thought of Shetlands as small animals, but these, though short in stature, were very substantial in bulk. It struck me that riding one must feel like being carried on a mobile sofa. Sister Liliias and I were introduced to them individually (no showjumping, though) and I was filmed "leading" my pony round the corridor – actually its owner was leading it, and I, while being pushed in a

## Musings on the Bench

I'm sitting on our new wooden bench in the garden. It has been bought with donations made in memory of our sisters who have died since our arrival here in Hessle, most recently Sister Jean Mary.

Julie and I went to a garden centre some miles from Quarry Bank to purchase the bench. Behind us in the queue a lady was with her two friends: "Excuse me" she said "How is Sister Jean?" I had to explain that Jean had recently died. She seemed sad and said "We will miss her." I was curious as we had informed all Jean's family and friends of her death so I asked how she and her friends knew our sister.

"We live a short walk from where you live at Quarry Bank and we used to see Sister Jean walking past our house, sometimes looking a little lost so we invited her in for a cup of tea. She was such a delightful and interesting person. Her visits gave us great pleasure."

Jean had dementia and often went 'walkabout'. Sometimes she made her own way home but often made 'new friends' with local walkers, with the local police and with various car drivers who brought her back to us safe and sound.

We didn't know anything of her visits to her new friends on Station Road. We thank all the friends she made as she continued to live the bit in our Rule which states: "Mission may be expressed in many forms of outreach responding to the needs of the place in which we are set...wherever we are, whatever we do, the work of Christ's reconciling love is being carried out.....no one is too small or too weak to have her place in the work of reconciling love.... "

the UK in 1985.

In 1990 the Community moved to Derby and Brenda made plans for the new garden, having developed her horticulture skills over the years. She worked alongside a trained gardener and a volunteer. She attended Breadsall Church on Sundays, cycling there and making friends among the congregation. She looked after the sisters' graves in Breadsall Churchyard, joined the Gardening Club in the village and all her contributions were much appreciated.

Brenda loved animals, books, music and charity shops. She took over the care of several generations of convent cats and helped them live well and happily into old age. For several years she was the community librarian and took great delight purchasing new books (Although quite often she purchased books mainly to her tastes!) She had a care and concern for people who were marginalised and struggling with life.

Brenda had various health problems and surgeries over the years but was always quite philosophical about them. She began to be unwell in the summer of 2021 shortly after moving to Hessle and was in and out of hospital over the next 2 or 3 months. She still enjoyed wondering around the garden and giving advice on the purchase and positioning of plants, but was getting frailer and eating very little due to her illnesses. In June 2022 the GP set up end of life care but feisty Brenda defied the odds and recovered...she knew that her health problems were terminal and she really wanted to die at home. She was very appreciative of the care given by both staff and sisters. Unfortunately her care needs became more than could be managed at home safely so she moved into Emmanuel House just around the corner where she was for just 10 days, dying peacefully on Christmas morning.

Thanks be to God for her life and her many gifts.



Greenbelt. There is nowhere else like it. Even on the shuttle bus from the train station to the festival site you realise you are part of a huge family. On the bus there is a good natured scramble for seats and spaces for luggage, everyone helping each other, making space, shifting places and squeezing up to fit everyone on.

The camp village itself is huge and split into different areas. There are the campers in tents, the 'Glamper' section, the campervans/ caravans and on a level piece of ground nearest to the entrance to the main site, a disabled campsite. There is a 24 hour café, a parent and baby space, a shop called Milk and Honey selling those essentials you forgot to pack, the showers area and the Hub where general info can be found. This year there was also a new venue – the Village Hall where there were yoga classes, dance classes, sing-alongs, craft sessions and a folk music evening.

I camped with the Franciscans who come every year. They set up a chapel tent in the camping field where other Festival campers can join them at Morning and Evening Prayer and Compline. Every day except Sunday there is a Eucharist and there is always someone available for a chat.



*The Chapel Tent—Morning Prayer*

The main Festival site is reached down a walkway and is very large – you need a good pair of legs to walk around, though for those using mobility scooters and wheelchairs, there are flat walkways to all the venues around the site.

Sista was loved by all whom she mothered. Her influence on so many of us is indelible and undeniable. I am eternally grateful to her for teaching me confidence and helping me to find my strengths.

I fondly remember her joining in with us in games we used to play, very often with her being the victor in competitive games. This continued to be the case even 20 years after she had left St Catherine's, when I had organized a reunion with her and a group of her former students living in the UK when she was based at Lambeth.

She instilled in us a love for nature and would often emphasize that to love nature and all God's creatures was to love oneself.

All other sisters had names. She alone was Sista. We loved and appreciated her and felt safe and seen in her presence. She had not come to civilize but to educate and as a result was free, free to share of herself, and in turn open to our experiences and therefore built and enabled strong relationships. Many went on to form the bedrock of our country (Lesotho) and the values she shared form a golden thread that binds and builds. She lived a good life, embodied the words of the good and shared its values with all of us by teaching and example. Above all, she was fun. We are grateful and she will be sorely missed.

My fellow students have asked me to convey their condolences and to let you know they are all with you in prayer on this day and will continue to live by her example evermore.





## SISTER JEAN MARY CHN

*A Tribute given by one of the former students of St Catherine's High School in Maseru, Lesotho, who now lives in Leeds, on the occasion of Jean Mary's funeral.*

My name is Keke Mokete (née Lerotholi) and I am one of Sister Jean Mary's many children from St Catherine's High School in Maseru, Lesotho. I am here representing all those that were lucky enough to have been under her kind guidance and tutelage through the years. Today we are honouring, celebrating and remembering a phenomenal person with a heart big enough to offer individual attention to every child in the school – indeed she knew each and every one of us, as well as our parents, by name.



Sista, as she was affectionately known by all, had a love and kindness that was infused in everything she did. Although Sista had a no nonsense demeanour about her, which believe me, could be quite intimidating, especially if you knew you had done something you shouldn't have, she had a magical way of bringing joy every time she walked into a room...no one who met her could forget her impish smile. The guidance and advice she gave each one of us was invaluable. Her desire to see each student work to their potential was very apparent.

Sista was full of wisdom and was the epitome of hard work and dedication, something she strived to instil in all of us. She always put others first and taught us the importance of being charitable to the less fortunate and to be grateful for what we have at all times. My school days are filled with happy memories, in great part due to how she ran the school.

It takes around 15 to 20 minutes walking from where we were camped to the Playhouse at the far end of the site.

The Playhouse really is that – a theatre in a tent with a variety of performances throughout the day. Here I saw three very different performances; an acrobatic comedy group, a play about social media and an Indian dance performance.

In the Treehouse and the Pagoda there were discussions and talks from various speakers, including poetry readings from Rowan Williams and a talk about how we can use the past to inform the future given by Baroness Lola Young. The Hot House, a small, intimate venue held discussions, performances and poetry readings. Most of the venues provide some seating but seasoned Greenbelters bring their own chair, especially for the popular sessions!

The Jesus Arms and the Blue Nun were there to quench thirsts and this year there was a new bar, the Hope and Anchor, a 'dry' bar managed by the Methodist Church.

There were plenty of places to eat and drink on site (although most were rather expensive). The United Reformed Church had the best and cheapest place for a cuppa in their lovely café/venue; only £1 for a big mug of Yorkshire tea. And there is always the Tiny Tea Tent, a converted caravan with a large canopy, lots of comfy old sofas and tables and a huge selection of different hot drinks, served in proper ceramic mugs. A perfect place for a chat and catch up with old friends you meet at random!



Greenbelt is very family friendly with lots for the children to do. There are creative venues where you can learn a variety of different crafts, there are singalongs, music, dance, prayer spaces, you name it, it's probably available. There is plenty of emotional and spiritual support available too as some of the subjects discussed can be very challenging for some.

The Glade is the main stage; here music groups and choirs performed, and interviews were held. This is where the Sunday Eucharist Service is held and this year it was all about climate change and very thought provoking it was too.



Crowds arriving for Sunday Worship

The Canopy is a performance venue for music and entertainment and here one of the great traditions of Greenbelt was held – Beer and Hymns. Crowds of people arrived on Monday at Noon to sing their hearts out with a drink in their hand (alcohol is not obligatory, any drink will do). Apparently this year the volume of the singing reached 110 decibels!

Greenbelt strives to be ultra green; single use plastics are banned and everyone is encouraged to use refillable water bottles (there are plenty of places to fill your bottle around the site) and hot drink mugs. In the bars, for £2 deposit a refillable glass can be had and at the end of the festival you can either return it and be refunded your deposit or take your glass away to bring next year! Festival goers are encouraged to use public transport whenever possible to offset their carbon footprint—over a third did last year.

It's a wonderful place to go – a friendly, hospitable, very open place where everyone – believers of every faith or none, sceptics and advocates, young and old mingle and join together to discuss, debate and chat about life, the universe and everything.

It's a very positive wonderful, place where it is possible to believe those six impossible things before breakfast!

Please visit [www.greenbelt.org.uk](http://www.greenbelt.org.uk) for more information.

*Sister Catherine CHN*



## End Times

I had rung the bell  
and was about to step off the  
bus.

The driver, when I said, 'thank  
you',  
Responded with a question:

'Do you think we are in the 'end  
times'?'

I had a few seconds to respond;  
(He had his passengers and a  
timetable)

'I think,' I said slowly,  
'I think we are always in the  
end times.  
Certainly we must live as if  
that's true.'

'I do' he said,  
And waved me off.

I walked on home, subdued,  
solemn  
and yet hopeful and heartened.

Climate change is rearing crucially,  
There are more than rumours  
of wars,

The daily news often sounds very  
like  
The Book of Revelation.

How do we live?  
How do we pray?

I ask myself this question day by  
day.

All I can do is get on with it.  
Like the bus driver –  
ease off the brakes and  
drive on....

*Sister Pauline Margaret CHN*