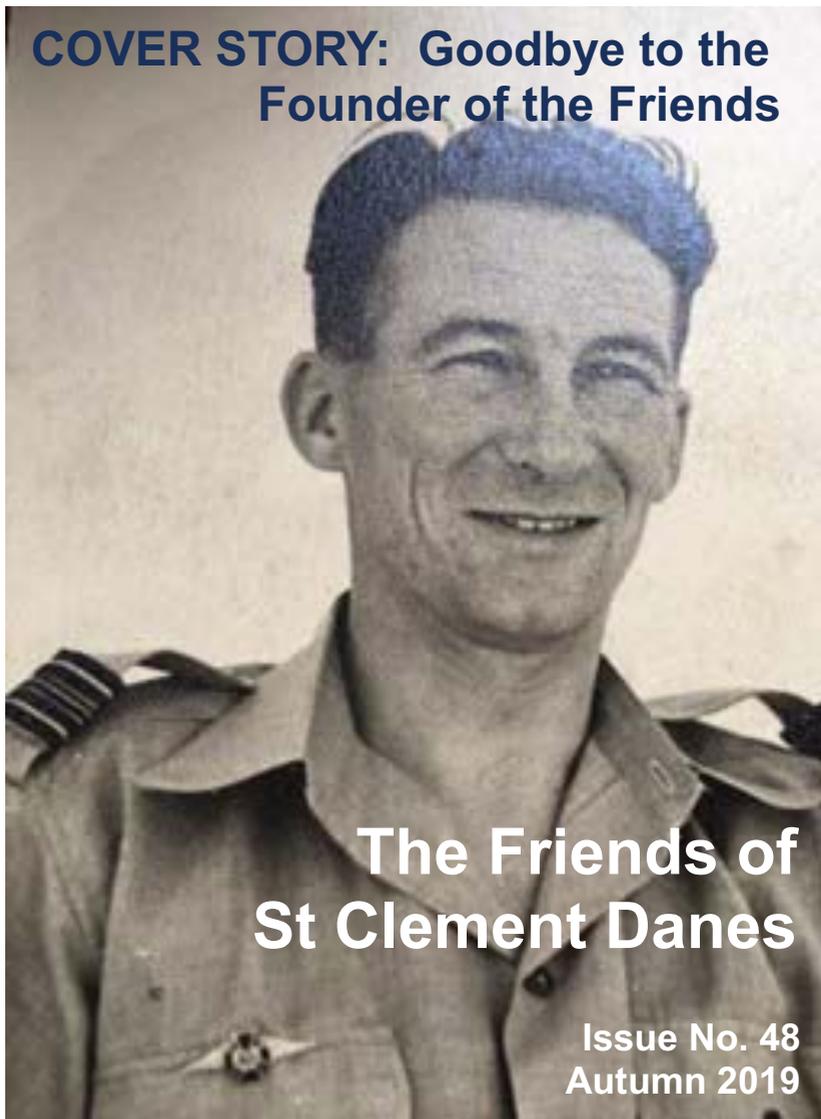


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towards the cost of this magazine

# Oranges & Lemons

**COVER STORY: Goodbye to the  
Founder of the Friends**



**The Friends of  
St Clement Danes**

**Issue No. 48  
Autumn 2019**

# The Friends of St Clement Danes

Registered Charity No. 1048757

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## **O&L Bulletin**

Daniel Kettle Esq (*Manager*)  
Iza Seabrook (*Editor*)

# The Friends of St Clement Danes

Bulletin  
No. 48  
Autumn 2019

 ROYAL  
AIR FORCE  
St Clement  
Danes Church



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***“Enabling the sacrifices of the past to support the challenges of the future”***

## Editorial Note

Iza Seabrook



It is my pleasure to edit the current issue of Oranges & Lemons. In an ever-changing world, we all need some peace and time to reflect, rest. Our church is a perfect place for both.

I hope you find time to visit us soon. Please do share this magazine with Friends and Family. If you have articles or pictures you wish to see published, please email me:  
[iza.seabrook@gmail.com](mailto:iza.seabrook@gmail.com)

## THINGS TO DO

- **Tell your friends and neighbours about us**
- **Visit us whenever you are in London**
- **Help out on one Sunday a year**
- **Become a guide to a group of visitors**

Please contact us: 020 7242 8282 or **[stclementdanes1@btconnect.com](mailto:stclementdanes1@btconnect.com)** or through the website if you can help out, especially on a Sunday; be a sidesman / woman, macebearer or read a lesson; we can support and encourage you in your new duties.

## Chairman's Letter

Group Captain Mark D Heffron MA FCIS CMgr FCMI RAF



It is with sad regret that we have to announce the passing of Reverend Thomas, a chaplain within the Royal Air Force who, whilst as the Padre here at St Clement Danes, was the driving force in establishing the Friends of St Clement Danes. He had the foresight to know that this body would be necessary, in the future, to support the work of the Central Church and the members of the RAF and their families. We are indebted to him and were

delighted that he was able to join us at our 100th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Royal Air Force on Easter Day 1 April 2018. You can read the details of his service career in an especially crafted piece in this edition of Oranges and Lemons, written by his son who will join us as a member in the very near future.

On the work of the Friends, you might think that this year would be quieter after the many events of last year surrounding the 100th Anniversary of the RAF. Well, that certainly doesn't appear to be the case and the Board are working as hard as ever on matters to support the church. We will give details of all we are currently undertaking at the AGM on Thursday 28 November 2019 at 4pm. Of course, after the AGM, we will host this year's Annual concert at which we are delighted to invite the Band of The Royal Air Force Regiment. Both Directors of music have devised a very varied programme with something for everyone. It promises to be a special evening yet again. We hope to see you there.

## From the Resident Chaplain

The Reverend David Osborn BD AKC PGCE RAF



I write this with the London summer in full swing, as people from all over the world visit this remarkable city, and of course, our wonderful church. We've reached that point in the year when you can't believe that the trees will lose their leaves, or that it can possibly be dark by four in the afternoon – yet I know that by the time you read this the nights will be drawing-in and Christmas won't be far behind.

The highlight of our autumn is the Friends' Concert which goes from

strength to strength – the quality of the music is first class combining, as it does, the skill and talent of the RAF musicians with the professionalism and great musicality of our choir. It's not too late to book your seats for this great event.

I realise that many of you can't get to London for an evening concert in November – but don't forget that our choir sing every Sunday at morning worship at 11am, so why not come along and join us?

In the meantime, thank you for all your good wishes and kind prayers and above all your support to the ministry of St Clement Danes Church, the Central Church of the Royal Air Force – it means a great deal to us all.

## Christmas Carols Invitation

You may know by now that the RAF Benevolent Fund has opted to change the format of its annual Christmas event – this year they are hosting a Christmas Concert at St Clement Danes on Thursday 5 December (please apply to the Benevolent Fund for tickets directly, thank you).

Therefore, we are holding a carol service at **11am on Sunday 15 December** which is open and free to everyone. It will be a mix of traditional readings and carols, along with choral music sung by our choir. Why not make a date in your diary? It's a great way to get into the Christmas spirit. Just turn up on the day.



### Trustees' Book

Located within the crypt at St Clement Danes is The Trustees' Book. The book contains the names of people who have died since leaving the Royal Air Force. Names can be included at the request of family members of the deceased, for which a fee of £40 is payable. To apply for an entry in The Trustees' Book please email: [st.clementasst@btconnect.com](mailto:st.clementasst@btconnect.com) and request an application form.

## **From the Archive**

The Rector writes in

The Anchor, St Clement Danes Parish Magazine, October 1929

### **The Harvest Festival**

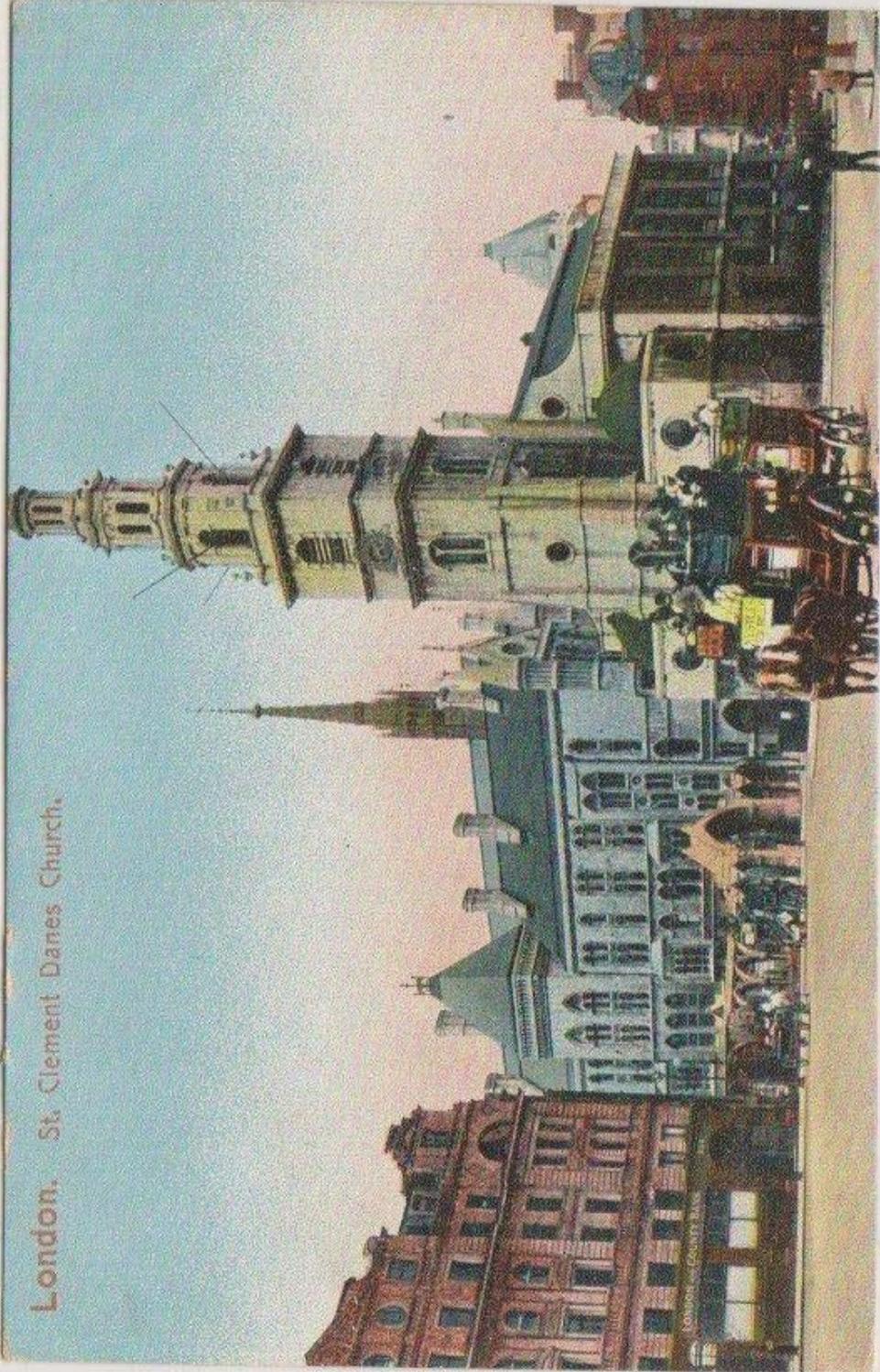
*We appeal to all our parishioners and friends for gifts for the decorations – pot plants, palms, ferns, flowers, corn, fruit, eggs, bread, vegetables, cigarettes etc, etc which will afterwards be given to the Hospitals and our own sick and aged people.*

### **The Children's Home**

*A short time ago a lady, well-known in society, motored past the Home, remarking to a friend of ours who was with her; 'The gate should be shut, it is not safe for the Children'. She was quite undeniably right. The friend didn't know then that the reason why the gate was open was because it was so dilapidated it couldn't be closed: a new one was urgently needed. I only wish that it had been me in the motor as I could have told this lady, who is very, very rich, there and then and asked her for a replacement. The cost of an iron gate, wholesale is £25 – an oak one, also wholesale, £23. Now will any lover of little children give this? It is not something new and unneeded, but is absolutely essential to the well-being of the little ones. Won't you help me, please, to get it for them?*

**Ps. Please note, no gate is currently needed.**

London. St. Clement Danes Church.



# COVER STORY: Goodbye to the Founder of the Friends

Michael Thomas (son)



The Reverend John Thomas, who has died aged 97, had a long and distinguished career in the Chaplains' Branch of the Royal Air Force, culminating as the Assistant Chaplain-in-Chief of the Royal Air Force at St Clement Danes and the Air Ministry, with the rank of Group Captain.

Thomas had periods acting as Assistant Chaplain-in-Chief of the Far East Air Force in the 1960s whilst at RAF Seletar in Singapore and during the early 1970s in the Near East Air Force Headquarters in Cyprus; it was during this tour that Thomas was to return prematurely from RAF Episkopi, Cyprus in 1971 to take up the prestigious role as Resident Chaplain of St Clement Danes, London, the Central Church of the Royal Air Force.

Thomas John Samuel Thomas was born on 17 December 1921 in Cwmgors, a small mining village in Glamorgan, South Wales, where his father, David, had returned to from the Royal Navy after the First World War, having taken part in the Battle of Jutland whilst serving on the Dreadnought Battleship, HMS Tiger. Thomas was educated at Pontardawe Grammar School where his games skills quickly came to the fore, being selected for a Wales Schoolboy rugby trial. Sadly, whilst his half-back partner went on to represent Wales, Thomas broke his leg in training and never realised his dream. Already weakened following a road traffic accident at the tender age

of three, Thomas' legs were to lead to a premature end of a promising rugby career at the age of eighteen.

Thomas attended Swansea University to read History before deciding to break his student years in 1941 to enlist during the Second World War. Joining the Royal Air Force as an electrical engineer, part of his training was at RAF Credenhill, Hereford, before being put on a troop ship in Liverpool to serve overseas – destination unknown. The days on board were occupied with drills, church parades and lectures. Interestingly, he met a civilian Anglican Missionary on his way to a mission post in West Africa. That, of course, gave him an inkling of where he might end up. Thomas was, initially, a Flight Engineer on Sunderlands at RAF Jui, Sierra Leone, a place he was to call 'hell-on-earth' in his memoirs. After that it was off to RAF Accra, on the Gold Coast, as an electronics training instructor.

After being de-mobbed in 1946, Thomas returned to university, this time to St David's College Lampeter, to read Theology and History. The germ of an idea to serve in God's ministry was already growing. Thomas received his tennis colours and was ordained as a deacon in 1949 at St David's Cathedral in West Wales. Then a few years serving as a curate and then priest in Dafen with Llwynhendy near Llanelli, where he watched the Scarlets with the faithful rugby supporters from his flock. He never let on that he was an avid supporter of the All Whites, the main rugby team from Swansea! 'If they had known', he said, 'I would have been disowned!'

In 1951 Thomas re-joined the Royal Air Force, completing his Officer Cadet Training Course at RAF Spittlegate, Grantham. Thomas' first posting was to RAF Yatesbury, a radio technical school, before moving to RAF Cardington, the principal reception centre for new recruits into the RAF. In 1954 Thomas served overseas, firstly at RAF El Adem, before moving in 1955 to RAF

Idris, Tripoli in Libya; it was from here that Thomas organised the safe repatriation of service families during the 1956 Suez Crisis. After a tour at the apprentices' training centre at RAF Halton, Thomas became the Colony Chaplain at RAF Steamer Point in Aden. Two years at RAF Bassingbourn, a Canberra flying station, were followed by an interesting appointment at RAF North Luffenham.



(Pictured left: Thomas in North Africa. His popularity with all ranks was shown by his ready acceptance in squadron crew rooms as well as on the hangar floor.)

It was North Luffenham where he was the first Priest-in-Charge of the Rutland village of Edith Weston to combine his duties with those as station chaplain. He struck up a lifelong friendship with a village resident, Colonel Stayner, who had been the senior British Officer at Colditz, the notorious Nazi prisoner of war camp for officers (allegedly escape-proof). Little did the Nazis realise the ingenuity of the inmates, another of whom – the war time ace Douglas Bader was to become a good friend. Such was the skill with which he undertook his responsibilities at Edith Weston (named so after the wife of Edward the Confessor), that when Thomas was posted to Singapore in 1965 the villagers petitioned the Royal Air Force to cancel his posting so that he could continue as their priest. Such a request made it doubly sure that Thomas would leave promptly for the Far East!

Thomas served as the senior chaplain at RAF Seletar in Singapore, combining his chaplaincy duties with those as President of the station rugby club! A qualified rugby referee, Thomas never forgot his primary pastoral role, as well as preaching at the Anglican

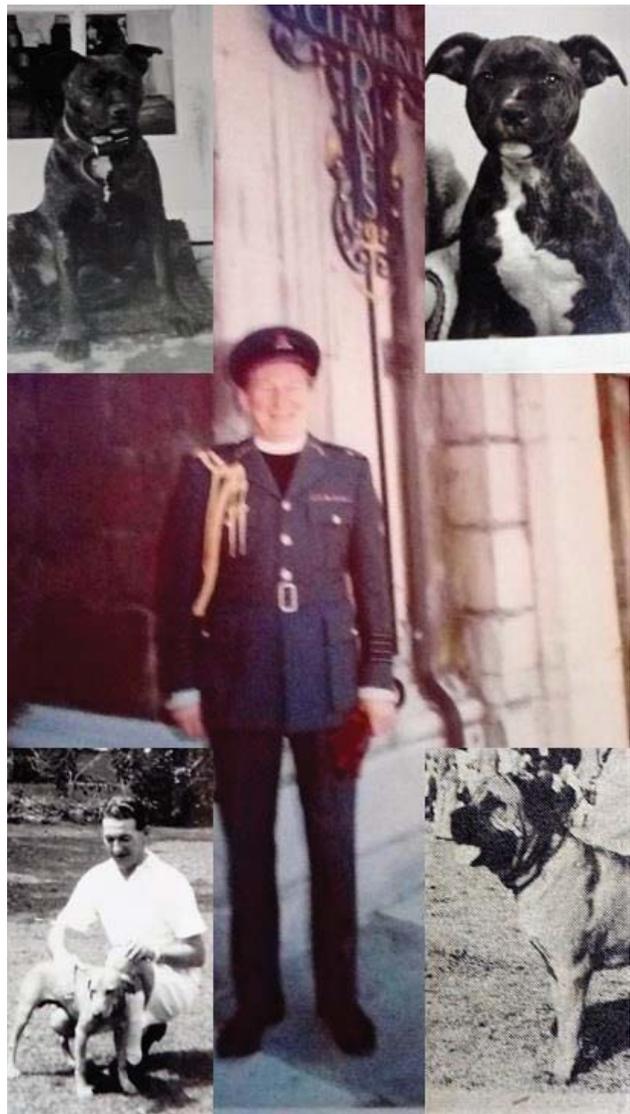
Cathedral in Singapore and being flown to preach at special services at RAF Kai Tak in Hong Kong and in the conflict zone of Brunei. Returning to the UK in 1967 Thomas was the senior chaplain at the RAF's main transport station at the time, RAF Lyneham. It was here that his friend and station commander, the international rugby referee, 'Larry' Lamb, described Thomas as 'a muscular Christian and a keen sportsman'! This was reinforced when Lyneham, with Thomas at the helm as Director of Rugby, won the RAF Station Rugby Cup in 1969.

A curtailed posting in Cyprus saw Thomas being appointed as Resident Chaplain at St Clement Danes in December 1971. Destroyed by enemy bombs in 1941 St Clement Danes was rededicated as the Central Church of the Royal Air Force in 1958. Thomas was very proud of his links and time at this famous 'oranges and lemons' Wren church, not least because of another sporting link. William Webb Ellis who, in 1823, 'with a fine disregard for the rules of football as played at that time, first took up the ball in his arms and ran, thus originating the distinctive feature of the rugby game', was rector of the church in 1843 for 12 years.

During his five years as Resident Chaplain Thomas was a frequent visitor to Old Deer Park in Richmond to watch London Welsh RFC trounce many a side! In August 1973 Thomas was made an Honorary Chaplain to the Queen; as one senior RAF air ranking officer said at the time, 'Richly deserving for the wonderful contribution made throughout his years in the RAF in general and the Chaplains' branch in particular'. Thomas preached at Westminster Abbey and Canterbury Cathedral and in 1972 Thomas organised the memorial service for HRH Prince William of Gloucester, who'd been killed in an air crash.

In 1976 Thomas founded the Friends of St Clement Danes, visiting Kensington Palace to support HRH Princess Alice of Gloucester

becoming the Founding Patron. A senior church representative paid tribute to Thomas on his passing, by saying, 'Without his contribution to the organisation of the Friends, we would not be able to support the Central Church of The Royal Air Force as we do. He will live on through our work'. As one former Chaplain-in-Chief



commented, 'Thomas will be remembered for his youthful enthusiasm during his RAF years, while at all times displaying a maturity and expertise in a compassionate manner, a rare combination.'

Following retirement from the RAF in 1976 after a combined 31 years of his two stints, Thomas was offered a number of attractive appointments. He finally accepted an invitation from the Archbishop of Canterbury to become Vicar of Horsham, West Sussex in 1977. This was a large 'living' of five daughter churches in the team

with six clergy to assist the Vicar. In 1981 Thomas organised the

celebrations for the 750th anniversary of the first recorded Vicar of Horsham. The church featured in Songs of Praise during his tenure and in 1983 he entertained HRH Princess Alice of Gloucester at the Vicarage, as well as returning to St Clement Danes to officiate in the memorial service for Sir Douglas Bader. Thomas retired to his native Wales in 1984.

Thomas continued his preaching engagements far and wide, preaching as Guest of Honour at the RAF Cranwell Officer Graduation and enjoying being honorary chaplain to many military and civilian organisations, including the Pathfinders Association, the Royal Air Force Association, Bomber Command Association and The Polish Aircrew Association. He served as President of his local RAFA Branch, Probus, Tenovus and was Chairman of Governors of the local school for twenty-five years. Thomas was well known for his wisdom and remarkable memory. As one local said, 'He was widely respected for his friendship, good humour, loyalty and wise council, a never-failing asset'. During 2008 and 2009 he wrote his memoirs for his family, with additions in 2011 and 2015. In 2018 he returned to the place that was special to him, St Clement Danes, for the Royal Air Force Centenary Service. As one current very senior RAF officer said at his death, 'He was a dear friend and a devoted priest'.

Thomas enjoyed travelling, reading, owning dogs and was a Championship Level Judge; he maintained his great love for Wales and Welsh rugby in particular.

In 1951 he married Enid Daniels, who died in 2006. Thomas John Samuel Thomas died on 14 July 2019. He is survived by his son.



*You are cordially invited to*  
**The Friends of St Clement Danes**

# **ANNUAL CONCERT**

*The Band of the RAF Regiment  
conducted by Flight Lieutenant Thomas Rodda  
and the Choir of St Clement Danes.*

*Thursday 28th November 2019 at 7pm*

*Donations: £18 per person for pre-ordered tickets  
and £20 per person at the door.*

*Cheques are payable to 'RAFCTE'*

*Tickets are available by telephone: 01285 713456*

*Or email: [enquiries@rafcte.com](mailto:enquiries@rafcte.com)*

*Or post to: Friends of St Clement Danes Concert*

*Douglas Bader House Horcott Hill*

*Fairford Gloucestershire GL7 4RB*

*The programme will be varied including:*

*I Colori della Gioia (Jan Van der Roost) Band + Soprano Solo*

*Send in the Clowns (Sondheim arr. Parsons) SAC Read*

*Hark the Herald Angels Sing (Choir and Audience)*

*Let the Seraphim – Let Their Celestial Concerts All Unite (Handel)*

*Brass + Choir*

*A Christmas Overture (Nigel Hess)*

*Registered Charity No.1048757*



**Annual General Meeting of The Friends of SCD  
Thursday 28 November 2019 at 4pm  
The Crypt Chapel, SCD, Strand**

All members of the Friends are entitled to attend and vote. It is hoped that as many as possible will be able to attend.  
Notice issued by Chris Priebe, Secretary.

**Agenda**

1. Opening Prayer
2. Apologies for Absence
3. Chairman's Opening Remarks
4. Election of Council Officers and Members
5. Minutes of 2018 AGM
6. Treasurer's Report
7. Membership Secretary's Report
8. Any Other Business
9. Date of next AGM

As in previous years, audited accounts will be available at the meeting and will be published with the minutes in the next Oranges & Lemons.

A copy of the Friends of St Clement Danes Constitution will also be available.

## **From the Registers**

We are delighted to have shared in families' excitement when they come to St Clement Danes for a Baptism or Wedding.

### **Baptisms**

Astrid Emi Lindsay-Gleadhill (20 January)  
Harry David Roden (31 March)  
Conor Martin Frazer (2 June)  
Wilbur James Woodruff Kelly (7 July)  
Harriet Virginia Todd (7 July)  
Olivia Rose Hughes Gilbert (21 July)  
Ophelia Beatrix Barda Catling (21 July)  
Florence Willow Turner (18 August)

### **Thanksgiving for the Gift of a Child**

Jacob James Lord (28 April)

### **Weddings**

Martin Aaron Wild & Claire Margaux Thompson (12 April)  
Richard John Wash & Ria Claire Doolan (26 April)  
Jack Christopher Stubbs & Emily Samantha Mary Travis (10 May)  
Vickram B Michandani & Augusta O Carlisle Aiken (24 May)  
Jason Ronald Clarke & Katie Alane Edwards (29 June)  
Samuel James Harry Todd & Victoria Claire Wilson (13 July)  
Christopher Don Jason Taylor & Victoria Jane Dunlop (9 August)

### **Marriage Blessings**

Lee and Claire Stanton (27 July)

**Requests for Baptisms and Weddings should be made  
to the Resident Chaplain**

# Church Diary

All services start at 11am unless stated otherwise

06 Oct	Choral Eucharist and Baptism
13 Oct	WAAF / WRAF /RAF (W) Service
20 Oct	Choral Eucharist
27 Oct	Choral Matins
03 Nov	Choral Eucharist and Baptism
10 Nov	Remembrance Sunday Service <b>at 10.50am</b>
17 Nov	Choral Eucharist
24 Nov	Choral Eucharist: St Clement
01 Dec	Advent Carol Service
08 Dec	Choral Eucharist and Baptism (tbc)
15 Dec	Christmas Carol Service
22 Dec	Choral Matins
<b>24 Dec</b>	<b>Midnight Mass at 11pm</b>
<b>25 Dec</b>	<b>Choral Eucharist for Christmas Day</b>

The church is closed to the public from lunchtime on Christmas Day until 9am on 2 January 2020. There is no Sunday service on 29 December 2019.

05 Jan	Choral Eucharist
12 Jan	Choral Matins
19 Jan	Choral Eucharist with Baptism (tbc)
26 Jan	Choral Matins and Berlin Airlift Association Standard Lay-up
02 Feb	LASER ATC Service
09 Feb	Choral Matins
16 Feb	Choral Eucharist
23 Feb	Choral Matins
<b>26 Feb</b>	<b>Ash Wednesday Service at 12.30pm</b>
01 Mar	Choral Eucharist with Baptism (tbc)

## **Battle of Britain Bunker: New Exhibition and Visitor Centre unveiled**



A brand new Battle of Britain Exhibition and Visitor Centre, at Uxbridge, was unveiled at a civic ceremony by Hillingdon Council last year.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Ray Puddifoot MBE, officially unveiled the state-of-the-art visitor centre in the presence of Boris Johnson, MP for Uxbridge & South Ruislip, Cllr Carol Melvin, Mayor of Hillingdon and distinguished guests, including Second World War veterans.

The building is visually stunning, and its design embraces the central themes of flight and planes, with a shell-like form and twisted geometry.

Hillingdon Council acquired the Bunker and its auxiliary buildings from the Ministry of Defence in 2016. Construction of the centre began in summer 2016 and was handed over to Hillingdon Council from the contractor in November 2017.

The Battle of Britain Bunker Exhibition and Visitor Centre is a former underground operations room used by No 11 Group Fighter Command during the Second World War. Fighter aircraft operations were controlled from the bunker throughout the war, but most notably during the Battle of Britain.



Those who staffed it played a crucial role in the air defence of the United Kingdom throughout the Second World War and the new visitor centre tells the story for the first time through an interactive exhibition. The new displays include full size replica aircraft, original artefacts, wartime footage and oral histories. For those who cannot take the tour down into the original bunker, the visitor centre also has a full size replica of the original plotting table map as part of a

360 degree touch screen experience.

Hillingdon Council became custodians of the Battle of Britain Bunker in 2016, taking over responsibility from the Ministry of Defence. The council secured £1 million in government funding to carry out essential repairs to the bunker.

Cllr Ray Puddifoot said: "Hillingdon Council is proud of the borough's RAF heritage and we regard it as both an honour and a privilege to now be custodians of the Battle of Britain Bunker. To ensure that the bunker could be kept open and its historic significance remembered, understood and enjoyed for generations to come, we provided £6 million funding to build this state-of-the art Exhibition and Visitors' Centre.

"We should never forget that our brave British pilots fought alongside those from other nations - notably Poland, New Zealand, Canada and Czechoslovakia - and that their success, and indeed their lives, were often in the hands of the ground staff underground in the No. 11 Fighter Group Operations Room here on this site in Uxbridge – 85 percent of whom were women."

One of those women, Helen Mills, a 93-year-old bunker veteran, attending the ceremony said: "This is a tremendous exhibition and it brings it all back. The war was not going well at the time when I left school, so I joined up. I had the necessary qualities of being quick-witted and having good diction. We had to learn on the job. Heaven help you if you missed a plot when they came in thick and fast!"

Daniel Stirland, Senior Curator, said: "The bunker played a crucial role in the air defence of the United Kingdom throughout the Second World War. It was so important, both King George VI and Winston Churchill visited in 1940 during the Battle of Britain and were amazed by what they saw. Our new museum finally acknowledges the top secret work carried out at Uxbridge by the Royal Air Force."



Boris Johnson, MP for Uxbridge and South Ruislip said: "This is an absolute triumph for Hillingdon Council. I am just bowled over by the beautiful job they have done and it far exceeds my expectations. It's a new facility for the borough and a great new visitor destination for London."

For more information on the Battle of Britain Bunker Exhibition and Visitor Centre: [www.hillingdon.gov.uk/bunker](http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/bunker)

# Tribute to Peter Long

Iza Seabrook

Peter was the Director of Music and Organist at St Clement Danes from 1992 to 2015, and member of the Choir from the mid-70s. Peter was only the second Music Director of St Clement Danes, following in the footsteps of Martindale Sidwell. He was also instrumental in creating the recordings for the 'I lift up mine eyes' CD.

I had the pleasure to hear his work on a regular basis and I fondly remember his excellent organ playing at my own Marriage Blessing at the church.

We wish to pass on our deepest sympathies to his family and friends. Peter is pictured below (right) at the 2009 Friends' Concert with the former Friends' Chairman AC Paul Hughesdon and WO Richard Skelton ARCM.





# The Early Days of the Parish

Chris Hill

Whilst the history of our Church is quite well documented, and having written about how the St Clement Danes Lodge came out of the Church, I thought it might be interesting to see how the Parish operated in relation to our Church.

Poor relief in St Clement Danes parish relied heavily on charity in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It lay somewhat outside the remit of the vestry, although overlapping interests and large sums of money involved meant that charitable donations easily got entangled in 'vestry' politics. The Holborn Estate Charity came into existence on 28 February 1552 when the overseers of the poor decided to buy the Holborn estate from William Breton for £160. The estate consisted of 12 small cottages, a tenement called the Slaughter House and grazing land situated in High Holborn in the parish of St Andrew's Holborn which had formerly been part of the Charterhouse Carthusian Priory's estate.

The aim of the Charity's founders was to provide alms and accommodation for the poor people of the parish of St Clement Danes. The initial £160 came from the parish rates. The cottages were let, with the rents distributed among the poor of the parish, and others allowed use of the land for feeding and grazing their cattle, as well as the Slaughter House, free of charge. The Charity was able to enlarge its sphere of activity, as more properties were built on the land it owned increasing its revenue, and as land values in Holborn appreciated. However, the Charity Commissioners deemed the latter use of funds improper and, after a court case, a trust deed of 1647 required that alms houses were built on the current site of the Royal Courts of Justice, within a few yards of the east end of St Clement Danes church.

Pictured is a map of the Parish circa 1700.



A Map of the Parishes  
of ST. CLEMENT'S and  
of ST. MARY'S SAVOY,  
with the Rolls Library  
from the left by the  
Circulation and Admissions

- A Table of References to this Map.**
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The trust deed also ensured that the rents and profits from 1647 to 1679 were appropriated to the benefit of the poor of the parish at large. A law suit was brought in 1701 because past collectors for the poor still owed sums on their accounts and money had also been spent on eating and drinking, beadles' salaries, payments to the vestry clerk and other general expenses of the parish. In response, a decree of the Commissioners of Charitable Uses dated 7 February 1701 increased the number of the poor who benefited from 12 to as many who had lived in the parish for more than 12 years, limited only by the profitability of the Charity.

The lower churchyard almshouse contained five rooms, with the women receiving 2s 6d per week. It remained in use until around 1798 when they were pulled down as part of the widening of the Strand and replacements were built at the back of Clement's Inn Hall. Some houses and ground in Eagle Street were purchased in 1772. A new conveyance to the trustees of the Holborn Estate Charity in 1773 directed that the income was, firstly, to be distributed in alms to support 12 poor widows in the parish almshouses and the remainder for any public use and benefit of the parish, which the vestry decided to use for repairing the church.

Accumulations of income invested in stock amounted to £8,647 in 1814, when part was again used to repair the parish church. Another law suit was instituted through the Attorney General to force the vestry to use the money for the poor and the Master of the Rolls decreed in 1816 that the whole income should be used to benefit the poor. The trust of 1773, being contrary to the 1701 decree, was declared void. The Charity Commission in 1819 were very doubtful about the justification of using the income to offset the poor rate under the decree of 1816, particularly considering the limitations imposed by the decree, and they submitted the matter to the Attorney General.

During the 19th century, the scope of the charity widened to include the development of local charity schools and was further extended, under the 1844 scheme that followed the long running court case of



*Attorney General v Bovill and others*, to both the provision of accommodation for the maintenance of poor people of the parish and education within the parish. By 1844 the boundaries of the Holborn estate ran from 77 to 110 High Holborn on the south side, with the northern boundary being an irregular line along the back of houses in Eagle Street. The 1844

scheme also allowed for 40 new almshouses to be built within six miles of the parish, where male inhabitants had to be over 60 years old and, if married, their wife had to be at least 50.

Spinsters and widows had to be over 50 years old. They all had to be residents of The Parish who had been assessed to pay rates for the poor of St Clement Danes for at least five years, or were the widow or daughter of somebody who qualified. Once the new almshouses were built, the previous almshouses were to be sold

and the proceeds used in the construction and fitting-up of the new almshouses. It appears that the old site was subject to something of a legal tussle between the charity and the parish, possibly regarding the freehold, which resulted in the charity surrendering their interest in the almshouses to the parish.

The site was then apparently placed in the hands of the Church Wardens as a charitable trust. After failed attempts by the Holborn Estate trustees and the Parish to come to an agreement to construct an infant school on the site, the Parish decided to operate the building as an asylum for destitute housekeepers with the first group of six elderly women inducted in October 1850.



# Arnhem

Alex McCallum, Scottish Saltire Branch, ACA

No 298 Squadron was re-formed on 4 November 1943 at RAF Tarrant Rushton, England with the Handley Page Halifax. It trained to air-tow the big General Aircraft Hamilcar glider but began operations in February 1944 dropping SOE agents.

During the Normandy landing the squadron air-towed both the Airspeed Horsa and Hamilcar to landing-zones around the beachhead; an unusual operation involving parachuting jeeps which had been carried underneath the Halifax. The squadron then returned to SOE duties.



Once home to 3,000 people, Tarrant Rushton Airfield in Dorset played a vital role during the Second World War. Development of the airfield on a plateau to the east of the River Tarrant started in

May 1942. Tarrant Rushton had a somewhat chequered career but undoubtedly its greatest moment came when the serried ranks of Halifax tugs and Hamilcar gliders started to move off down the runway carrying elements of the 6th Airborne Division to Normandy.

Home to the Royal Air Force and the Glider Pilot Regiment – with its massive Hamilcar and Horsa gliders – Tarrant Rushton landed the first troops in Normandy on D-Day, and played an important part in the Arnhem and Rhine Crossing operations.

Market Garden was one of the boldest plans of World War Two. Thirty thousand British and American airborne troops were to be flown behind enemy lines to capture the eight bridges that spanned the network of canals and rivers on the Dutch/German border; but let's hand over to someone who was there: Alex McCallum, a Flight Engineer with No 298 Halifax Squadron, describes the scene in the section below:

'Dorset had a covering of snow at Tarrant Rushton Airfield as aircrews, Glider pilot Regiment and Paratroops of the 1st Airborne waited to take part in Operation Market Garden. The invasion, on 17 September 1944, of the Netherlands was intended to shorten the Second World War by six months.

'There had been closure of the Airfield before it was opened again, outgoing mail was censored. The NAAFI canteen supplied us as we waited, not the usual mugs of tea – but with rum. We could feel the heat rising from it. As I recall, it was a Sunday morning, many congregations had left their churches to witness the largest armada of aircraft on its way.

'The Dutch Resistance had warned us that there were enemy panzers around. A light aircraft failed to find them, but the operation proceeded nevertheless.

'Our first flight there towing a Horsa glider was uneventful; but our next flight the following day was a bit different. A piece of shrapnel

at my feet reminded me how near it was to accompany the smell of explosive.

‘Our large Halifax was capable of carrying a seven-ton Tetrach tank. Equipment however would be something to consider in backing up our infantry, for the British lines were to supply the armour on one heavily defended road.

‘On the first day 40 aircraft and gliders were airborne in 23 minutes 10 seconds. On the second day 31 aircraft and gliders were airborne in 19 minutes 15 seconds, and on the third day 21 aircraft in 11 minutes. On our second flight towing a Hamilcar glider, this demanded a close watch on our fuel. We had been given emergency landing availability elsewhere if there was a danger, but we managed to land back at our base.

‘During this flight a shell had exploded beneath the armour-plated seat at the Navigator’s position. If the hole had been any larger he would have lost the use of his parachute. As it turned out, his wounds were superficial but still needed attention in the rest bay. In trying to assist I ripped off his trousers at the seams to apply bandages much to his annoyance at the thought of having to buy new trousers.

‘Just as well I knew our Navigator Mac (McLaren); he had left school in 1936 to become a peacetime Navigator. He had ditched in the sea, was picked up as a shipwrecked mariner, crashed a Wellington through a hangar, and was now with our crew at Arnhem.

‘Our fuel supply was getting short as we arrived at base. I advised our Pilot to land without the usual circuit beforehand – it seemed that had been his intention and we landed safely; apparently not before time, as our outer starboard engine cut out at the end of the runway.

‘That was our 23rd operation out of 27 and we were also heavily engaged in supplying the French Resistance and others throughout Occupied Europe. This fact must have caught the attention of Hitler,

for he authorised us to be executed if captured, regardless of wearing a British uniform. In addition to Arnhem, I suppose we were a slight source of annoyance to Hitler. While waiting to tow the first glider to Pegasus Bridge we had dropped secret agents into Europe from the French Alps to Norway; dropped supplies and arms to the



Resistance Workers and dropped in the SAS complete with jeeps.

‘However, I knew where to draw the line. Immediately after I completed my ops tour I became engaged to Cynthia – I was afraid of US troops who were looking for British wives to take back to the States.

‘Having completed 18 months and 27 operational flights, I was temporarily grounded and missed the Rhine crossing ‘Varsity,’ but I was still present when the crews returned from this mission. Some spoke of icing problems, but the death toll was tremendous. Those on parachutes were already dead on landing.

‘On 24 March 1945 the squadrons were fully occupied in 38 Group delivering airborne troops to the far bank of the Rhine. It is of particular note that 60 RAF pilots were lost flying gliders in this action, because of the shortage of glider pilots after Arnhem. It was then that I reflected on what had gone before.

‘38 Wing had been established on 15 January 1942 under Group Captain Sir Nigel Norman. The Wing’s Order of Battle consisted of 296 and 297 Squadrons. Tragically, the Commander (later Air Commodore) Sir Nigel Norman did not survive the war, and was killed on 19 May 1943. During 1943 changes were made in all aircraft types and bases. From March to August, No 295 Squadron flew transits of Halifax – Horsa combinations from Portreath to North Africa (Operation ‘Beggar’). Subsequently, 296 and 297 Squadrons flew Albemarles and Halifax aircraft in Operation ‘Husky’ (Invasion of Sicily). Later, 295 and 297 towed further gliders to North Africa during the period August to November 1943 for Operation ‘Elaborate.’

‘On completing my operational tour, I was posted as an Instructor to crews training in Essex. I was glad that a certain flight to Rockall was scrubbed. I recalled that one crew on squadron training ditched there when headwinds caused them to come down in the sea. The flight engineer was a competent swimmer, but it was he who drowned. By New Year 1946, virtually all the squadrons in the Group moved to Upavon.’



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If St Clement Danes is as important to you as the thousands of people it remembers within its walls, we would ask you to consider leaving a gift in your Will for the future preservation and maintenance of this beautiful sanctuary.

For more information please email: [st.clementasst@btconnect.com](mailto:st.clementasst@btconnect.com)

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Please complete and return to: The Friends of St Clement Danes,  
Strand, London WC2R 1DH

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**Normal Membership** by Direct Debit

**Corporate Rates** please contact the Membership Secretary at the church.

**Serving RAF Personnel** please contact your Station Representative

*Membership renewals are made from 1 July each year. Part-year subscriptions may be made initially to cover an intermediate period.*

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- I enclose a completed **Gift Aid Declaration** (turn page)

Name and Surname:

RAF Rank (if applicable):

Address:

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Signature:

Date:

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Date:



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	_____

4. Bank/Building Society account number

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5. Reference Number  
(Hon Treasurer to complete)

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6. Instruction to your Bank or Building Society  
Please pay The Friends of St Clement Danes direct debits from the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with The Friends of St Clement Danes and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

2. Name(s) of Account Holder(s)

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3. Branch Sort Code  
(from the top righthand corner of your cheque)

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Signature(s)

Date

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_____

Banks and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit instructions for some type of account.



Our mission is to encourage growth in the membership of the Friends of St Clement Danes through promotion of what St Clement Danes provides spiritually, socially and culturally.

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