

in His healing **STEPS**



*He who was seated on the throne said,
"I am making everything new." Rev 21:5 NIV*

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Editorial



As it is very early January when I am beginning this editorial, I would like to wish everyone a Happy New Year! The weather today is very blustery and I am watching

people being buffeted by the strong winds as they walk by a very stormy sea!

The magazine will be distributed in early March, and although spring officially begins on March 20th this year, we will all be feeling (and hoping!) that we have turned the corner of an exceptionally cold winter. Of course there will still be the March winds and April showers to contend with and the old saying, 'Ne'er cast a clout till May is out' (in this case March or April!) is good advice if we find ourselves enjoying a warm spell during these months, which with our changeable and unpredictable weather patterns is always possible!

The staff of The Old Rectory spent New Year with those who came to the New Year Retreat. It sounds like it was a very joyful and reflective time; a good way to say goodbye to the old year and see in the new. Two of the guests have written in with their personal accounts of the Retreat.



The Crowhurst Christian Healing Centre is a place for people to come and receive Christ's healing; the peace and quiet of the Centre enables all who come to 'step aside;' to switch off just for a while from the hustle and bustle of the outside world and to focus on Christ alone. He knows what each person needs and rarely does a person leave untouched by God in some way.

During my first stay in 1996 I have always remembered Brian Coward's words on the morning of my departure, when he read from Philipians 1, vs. 6

'... being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.'

I had received much inner healing during that week and those words really spoke to me on that last morning. I have often thought of this scripture verse over the years and although life has been difficult at times, I can see when I look back that God did indeed begin a good work, His work, and I thank Him for bringing me to The Old Rectory, where I met with him in a new and real way.

In this issue

We have two encouraging stories of healing, along with several short extracts taken from the Feedback Forms and Testimonies Book. Work on the building continues and David reports on all that has taken place since the autumn. The new entrance and toilet for people with restricted mobility started in January and should be completed by the end of March, weather permitting.

We have an article from Kath, entitled 'Out and About,' in which she writes about Christ's healing ministry being made known to churches, locally and further afield.

The garden

The garden will be full of beautiful spring bulbs and flowers by the time you read this magazine. A gardener's work is never done and you can read Desmond's news on page 21.



I would like to express my thanks to Stephen, one of our pianists, who has supplied me with many photos for the magazine, some of which are included in this issue.

Thank you to all who have contributed to this issue. This is YOUR magazine and I welcome all contributions. My e mail address for those of you who would like to send articles to me directly is: survivor95@hotmail.com

It is still only January as I write this, Easter will have come and gone before the next magazine is due, so I would like to wish you all a Happy and Holy Easter.

Every blessing
Mary Slater

Our Senior Chaplain Writes...



Dear friends,

They say all good things come to an end, but is that true? God's love for us never comes to an end and surely that's an amazingly good thing?

The reason I write this way is to let you know, if you haven't heard already, that Kay and I will be leaving the Crowhurst Christian Healing Centre no later than Thanksgiving Day on July 18th this year. For both of us our time at the Centre has been a very 'good thing,' and The Old Rectory's life and work will not be coming to an end when we depart! In fact I fully expect to see it grow and develop in new ways not seen before.

Under God good things never come to an end.

Four years ago when Kay and I were invited to come here, it was clear that God had many changes in store for this place. My task, along with others, has been to see these changes come to pass and to help enable the Centre fulfil its calling as a place of Christ's healing, preaching and teaching in the 21st Century. It has been exciting seeing His renewal of accommodation, routines, practices, and ministry, brought about in ways we could never have imagined or at times even hoped for.

The Centre is spiritually, practically and physically ready for a new phase in its life.

What will that look like I wonder? It's not for us to know. What I do know is that it will require a new team leader to take it forward, something that can only happen when we have left. The Crowhurst Christian Healing Centre has reached a plateau after a four year climb. It is at a stage where it has regrouped, ready to climb higher to the very Glory of God under new vision and new leadership.

Of course there are many people and practices we will miss, yet we have a sense of peace that this is God's perfect timing for us and for the Centre. That is good too! We have learned a great deal about God during our time here. What a privilege it is that you're never too old to learn because He never stops seeking to reveal Himself to each one of us. We have also learned a great deal about the extent of human suffering and brokenness in ordinary lives and the depth of need there is for people to be set free from the things that rob them of His wholeness. The need for that is legion in our broken society. How The Old Rectory meets that need is the challenge for the new days ahead.

Without doubt this is a unique place, a safe place where people can come and find God in a healing and renewing way. Please pray for the new leadership to be provided and sustained. I believe it will be because under God, good things never come to an end.

Later there will be time to say more, but in the meantime thanks be to God for His ongoing love and provision.

In Jesus' name,

Peter McIntosh

A NEW VENTURE

In March this year we will be running a five day retreat for people suffering from **ME/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome**. It will provide a creative opportunity to look at healing connected to their own healing journeys. Each morning there will be a themed talk covering issues such as encouraging a healing state and how the spiritual part of us supports our health. Folk will explore their energy, and getting the right balance in life for their own needs and purposes. There will also be time for creative work, prayer ministry, rest and refreshment. Each evening there will be a short time of worship, which will include relaxation and meditation.



This special retreat will be led by Helen Warwick, a former Occupational Therapist with training in Person-Centred Art Therapy, counselling and spiritual direction. She writes, "I am a Christian whom God has led on a

healing journey through chronic illness – ME/CFS! My passion is to help others with their journey through life, using a creative approach. I have written a book called Creating gardens in the desert, to help others in their suffering, based on tools I have found in my healing journey."

The retreat runs from Monday March 16th to Friday March 20th and is a new venture for the Centre. We would value your special prayers for this period as we anticipate it being fully booked. ME/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome is a well documented illness, with many sufferers, but Helen's healing story is such an encouragement to others and bears witness once again to what God in Jesus Christ can do.

Peter

Music Review

In my first issue, I mentioned that I would like to review music that has especially ministered to readers. I came across Libera some years ago and have just purchased their latest CD, Eternal. The songs are inspirational and reverential and I would highly recommend it. Ed



He who sings prays twice, so said St Augustine, and when you listen to the Heavenly voices of Libera, you can see what he meant!

Libera is a non profit making boys' singing group based in South London. The boys come from different backgrounds and cultures and are united in their love of singing. Songs of Praise recently devoted their whole programme to Libera and reported that there are approximately forty boys between the ages of seven and sixteen; this includes those who are being trained and not yet ready to perform publicly. As the boys get older and their voices change, many of them stay on and help mentor the younger ones.

Libera sing regularly in mens' and boys' choirs at parish choral services and their music frequently combines elements from Gregorian chant and classical, such as Debussy, Beethoven and Pachelbel.

Libera have performed all over the world and I was lucky enough to see them in concert in 2000 in St Peter's Church, in Bexhill. They were amazing and I became a fan there and then! They have many CD's available and I have just purchased their latest double CD set, Eternal, which has thirty two beautiful songs. I bought my CD for £10.99 from HMV in Oxford Street, but it can be ordered from WHSmith, and most music shops. If you have internet access you can order it from various websites. The Amazon website is currently offering it for £8.99 plus free delivery.

New Year Retreat December 30th

Christmas had not been exactly peaceful. A leaking water tank meant that on Christmas Day the gasman cameth! Coping with a lack of hot water, trying to keep up to date with my ministerial studies and preparing to lead an important service on January 4th left me feeling ready for a few days' peace and quiet!

We spent time on the Tuesday evening considering 'What is a retreat?' which left me feeling optimistic that I was going to have the time and space to reflect and listen to what God might want to say to me.

New Year's Eve dawned and our first act of worship included Communion. During this time we were reminded how God was there at the beginning (Genesis 1,) and, at the right time, became incarnate, 'And the word became flesh and lived among us.'

The second half of the morning was a chance to reflect. We were given time to look back on the year that was nearly over and to remember the times when God's light had been especially evident in our lives. Using Psalm 139 we were reminded that God knows each one of us, and there is nowhere we can be where God is not with us. We considered the presence and protection of God, protection not from the bumps and violence of the world, but protection and assurance that these won't have the last word.

Worship was woven into all we did. Our last action in 2008 and our first in 2009 was worship. The 'Watch Night' service was another opportunity to reflect on the ever-present light of God in our lives, giving thanks

for those people who had enabled that light to shine for us. There was something special about seeing in the New Year in God's presence through worship.

For me the most powerful act of worship was the service on Friday evening. We celebrated Communion and then had the opportunity to receive the laying on of hands and anointing. The calm and peace of God was very tangible. The fact that we were in a New Year (new because it is a gift from God, full of potential) and not simply in another year, was a reality.

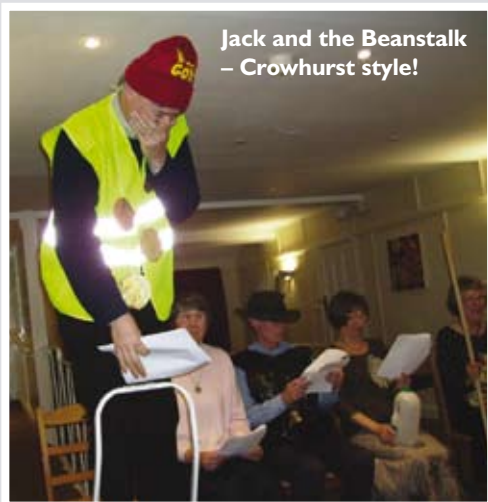
Having read this far you may be forgiven for thinking that the retreat was somewhat sombre, but that would not be a true reflection. During our spare time we had various word puzzles that challenged us – dingbats, word searches, crosswords, name that carol. We enjoyed a film and heard the Crowhurst story. Some enjoyed time in the Art Room, while others went for a walk.

However, the highlight had to be the party on New Year's Day and after a fantastic buffet we got down to the 'serious' stuff.



– January 3rd

During 'Call My Bluff' the truthfulness and integrity of some of the clergy present, was called into serious doubt! This was followed by a quiz in which this particular participant displayed all kinds of useless knowledge about a whole host of different pantomimes. But the piece de resistance had to be the pantomime that the team leading the retreat put on. Never has Jack and the Beanstalk been performed in such a deadpan way to such gales of laughter!



Jack and the Beanstalk
– Crowhurst style!

The retreat was a time of great peace and quiet reflection with plenty of space to simply be with God. It was also a time of laughter, fellowship and fun. May 2009 indeed be God's New Year to all His people.

Darryl

What is love?

(From the grown-ups!)

In the last edition I printed some quotes from children reflecting their views on how they saw love. Here are some from the grown-ups! Acknowledgements to the authors are given where known.

"To love is to receive a glimpse of heaven." Karen Sunde

"Love is an act of endless forgiveness, a tender look which becomes a habit." Peter Ustinov

"Love is like a violin. The music may stop now and then, but the strings remain forever." Unknown

Love is never forgetting your God-given gift of true compassion for those who have and have not, and for those who are hurting.

Love is not about finding the perfect person; it's about seeing an imperfect person perfectly

And finally, God's word on the subject!

And now these three things remain; faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love. I Corinthians 13: vs 13 (NIV)

Once I was blind

Following major emergency surgery in December 1977, I noticed that my eyesight was deteriorating rapidly and by January 1978, I had lost the sight in both eyes. Doctors said that this was due to the trauma of the surgery and long-term diabetes (twenty-six years.) My own GP said that I would never work or drive again and must get used to it.

My husband and I had recently become foster parents and so this news was devastating. After many phone calls (we did not have a home telephone and mobile phones were unheard of) my husband arranged an appointment with a consultant at one of the London hospitals. We made the train journey full of hope and anticipation but after hours of tests I was told that they could not see into my eyes and I could not see out. Nothing could be done.

In March of that year a dear friend heard of my plight and offered to drive me to visit a lay preacher who was a firm believer in Christian healing. Through prayer I readily accepted. I was desperate and so I went to visit Rudi.

On entering Rudi's lounge, I was conscious of what I thought might be a picture on the wall. I was introduced to Rudi and we sat and shared our beliefs in the healing power of the risen Lord. Rudi placed his hands on my head and prayed a simple prayer. I felt wonderful warmth and a bright light shining on my closed eyes. When I eventually opened my eyes, I saw a picture above the fireplace; which had trees on it. Rudi told me that when I visited him again, I would be driving my car. Wow!

Each day after Rudi had prayed with me, my eyesight improved.

Sadly in 1978, my husband, who was a constant support through all the difficulties, died in tragic circumstances. I had to start work and drive again (there was no widows' pension for the under forties.)

After fifty-six years I would love to dispense with my daily insulin injections and blood tests, but God hasn't healed me of diabetes and I believe that my spiritual healing is more important. My sins are forgiven, Jesus is my Lord and Saviour and He gives me the strength to cope through the power of His Holy Spirit.

Take heart, Jesus still heals today.

Elizabeth Thompson

Crowhurst Christian Healing Centre

The name that through the years has been for those who stay;

The sign of life that through the tears brought healing day by day;

We thank you Lord for your healing love poured out with abundant grace;

Bringing your touch of wholeness in this most sacred place

Elizabeth Byford



Thanksgiving to God

Below is a selection of guests' comments and short testimonies, taken from the Thanksgiving Book and Feedback Forms.

I have thoroughly enjoyed the peace, tranquillity and the amazing, tangible presence of God in this place. The food is great and the staff are fantastically humble.

Being ministered to physically and spiritually. For the time apart from the rest of life and for the opportunity to discover the blockage between me and Jesus, our Lord.

I felt enveloped within God's love ever since I arrived; it felt like coming home.

Time to rest and pray in my lovely room; services and devotionals that spoke to my situation directly; personal prayer ministry.

Learning to relax; to be still with God; finding Jesus in my life. Thank you; a truly special place.

Found the peace I needed; I was able to relax and recover from the stress I have been under.

It has been such a safe, loving time here with so much space to receive from God; it feels life changing and releasing and I do thank God for it.

There is a real sense of the presence of God here and I realise that for my part, a greater dependence on Him is required of me.

A safe place where I am free to rest, think, feel and discover God.

I Want To Be There

I want to be there when God brings about the peace and harmony we are longing for.

I want to be there when God wipes away the tears from all our eyes and makes us happy.

I want to be there when God washes us in the river of life and makes us all clean.

I want to be there when God reveals His glory in the person of His son Jesus.

I want to be there when God brings in the fullness of His Kingdom.

I want to be there when God reveals the answers to all questions.

Will I see you there?

Jenny Wakelin



Jenny took this photograph of the Berberis shrub, which is in front of the prayer room. She writes: "I find it particularly inspiring because it seems to me to be stretching up towards God and all He longs to give to us."

OUT AND ABOUT

'How can they hear if the message is not proclaimed? And how can the message be proclaimed if the messengers are not sent out?' So says Paul – and so say we, here at the Old Rectory.



Crowhurst Christian Healing Centre is one of the church's best kept secret - so we hear! Over the past year our advertising has increased greatly and we have launched a new, eye-catching web-site. These have borne fruit, as has the personal witness of many of the people who have met with our Healing Lord in this place. Personal witness is so effective and we are delighted and encouraged by the invitations that have been received for members of the Chaplaincy Team to get out and about to make the Healing Ministry of Jesus Christ known. Of course this also means the Centre is made more visible.

There have been invitations from churches in the area to preach on the healing ministry. One group of churches not only invited Peter to preach at their healing service but also invited our Ministry Team to minister as they didn't feel they had the resources for such ministry.

There is still so much ignorance, apprehension and misunderstanding when it comes to the ministry of healing and it is part of the Centre's role to allay such fears and concerns.

Over the past year Peter has had the opportunity to engage with ministers in the United Reformed Church as far afield as North Shields, Windermere and the West Midlands, as well as locally. Also locally, he has led an Away Day and a Teaching Day. In the Anglican Church he has led a Parish Weekend and a day on healing for the Diocese of Canterbury. At the same time I was in Southwark Cathedral leading a workshop on healing. This is so encouraging.

Ecumenically we were invited to run a six week course for members from the Methodist, Baptist, Anglican and Roman Catholic churches in Maidstone. A men's and a women's breakfast fellowship also provided the opportunity to share with different denominations.

Our horizons were extended when towards the end of 2008 Peter was invited to speak on a phone-in programme on Premier Christian Radio and more recently, he has made a pre-recorded interview about the Christ's Healing Ministry today.

We are encouraged to find that invitations are still coming in. By the grace of God, and under His guidance, the Chaplaincy Team will continue to go out and share the Good News of Christ's healing power at work today and make this haven of peace and healing known to more people.

Kath Batte
Deputy Senior Chaplain

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything,
by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present
your requests to God. [Philippians 4:6 \(NIV\)](#)

Prayer Requests for Spring 2009

Please pull out and keep for the coming months

Prayer Requests for Spring 2009

“Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give Him glory!” Revelation 19:6 & 7

Prayer and Thanksgiving:

“Be joyful always; pray continually: give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” 1 Thessalonians 5:16

Prayer

Please pray for the Trustees to have wisdom and discernment as they seek direction for the future.

- Give thanks and praise for the Lord’s continual blessing and provision for all our needs.
- Give thanks and praise that the new boilers have finally been installed.
- Give thanks that the construction of an improved entrance and the provision of toilet facilities for the disabled began on 12th January.
- Give thanks and praise that the rewiring and renewing of the ceiling in the large chapel can be completed at the same time.
- We give thanks and praise for the staff and guests who so graciously coped with all the disruptions to the normal routine.

“Praise the Lord, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise His Holy name.” Psalm 103:1

March Prayer Focus:

“I am the Lord, who heals you.” Exodus 15:26

March

- | | |
|---------|--------------------------------------|
| 4 | Clergy Retreat |
| 6 – 8 | Healing in the Psalms |
| 13 – 15 | Healing Retreat weekend |
| 25 | Guided Quiet Day
– Refiner’s Fire |
| 27 – 29 | Healing of the Memories |
| 31 | Trustees’ Meeting |

“The Lord is my strength and my song; He is my God, and I will praise him.” Exodus 15:2



April Prayer Focus:

“God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

Romans 5:8

April

- 9 – 12 Easter Retreat
- 14 – 19 Prayer and Painting week
- 22 Quiet Day – Rivers of Life
- 25 – 26 Training Day:
Healing Services

“He is not here: He has risen, just as He said.”

Matthew 28:6

May Prayer Focus:

“In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people.” **Acts 2:17**

May

- 1 – 3 Healing Retreat
- 8 – 10 Healing the Family Tree
- 13 Guided Quiet Day – Finding the Treasure of God
- 18 Trustees’ Meeting
- 22 – 24 Healing Retreat weekend
- 26 – 31 Prayer and Painting week

“For God is King of all the earth; sing to him a psalm of praise.” **Psalms 47:7**



Prayer for The Old Rectory

Prayer Focus:

"Since You are my rock and my fortress, for the sake of Your name lead and guide me."

Psalm 31:3

Prayer for the Trustees

Colin Crook (Chair), Jim Beveridge, Shirley Dawson, Ted Landon, John Lyttle, Jane Thomas and Mavis Williams

- Give thanks and praise for all the improvements to the house that have taken place during the past months.
- Give thanks for the legacies that were made available at just the right time so that work could begin on schedule.
- Give thanks and praise that although the house had to be closed for some of the time, the finances were covered by generous donations.
- Continue to pray for Charles Hooper and his wife, Prim. May the Lord bless them and surround them with His peace that passes all understanding.
- May we continue to seek the Lord's guidance and be obedient to His will for this place.

"He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them His way." Psalm 25:9

Prayer focus for staff at The Old Rectory

"May the Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word."

2 Thessalonians 2:16

Senior Chaplain: Peter

Deputy Senior Chaplain: Kath

Chaplaincy Team: Colin/Kay/Margaret

Ministry Team: Andy/Carole/Dawn/Gwen/Hildegard/June/Kenneth/Maggie/Nigel/Penny, Pippa and Stephen

Finance Manager: Malcolm

House Manager: Heidi

House Team: Albert/Clare/Chrissy/Justine & Steve

Cooks: Diane and Fenella

Maintenance Manager: Geof

Gardener: Desmond

Office Manager: Jan

Office Team: Gillian/Juliette and Wendy

Pianists: Pippa and Stephen

Voluntary Helpers: Christine/Evelyn/Jenny & Shirley

Crowhurst Christian Healing Centre

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A story of healing



I came to the Crowhurst Christian Healing Centre after suffering fifteen months of ill health and was desperate for healing and a restoration of faith. After enjoying working for thirty-two

years in the criminal justice system, my last two years were particularly stressful. I became very anxious and depressed and was unable to cope with my work. My GP informed me that I was burnt-out and because my blood pressure was extremely high, I was at risk of a stroke and was warned not to return to work.

I was prescribed an increasing amount of medication as my GP sought to reduce my blood pressure and depression. Unfortunately, I suffered side effects and the depression deepened. This was not helped by having to undergo surgery on my knee (osteoarthritis) which left me needing a walking stick to get about. By this time my faith was at low ebb and relationships with my wife and family were tense due to my depression and my lack of hope and passion for life.

When things were particularly bleak I was encouraged to spend some time at The Old Rectory and so I booked in for four nights during November 2008, not knowing what to expect.

I came to the Centre downcast, feeling unwell and hobbling due to pain in my knee. However, after three days in the peaceful surroundings and after receiving prayer and ministry, I gradually became better and the

dark clouds of depression lifted. I decided to stay on for another four days as I knew being at The Old Rectory was doing me good.

On my ninth day I was led during the healing service to be anointed with oil and words of faith were spoken into my situation. I knew from that moment that I was free; a new joy welled up in my inner being and hope was restored. Clarity came to my mind, prayer became easier and reading the Bible and other books was now possible. By the time I left the Centre I was a new man. Gone was the spirit of heaviness and I was walking without the aid of a stick.

All I can say is "thanks be to God" for the excellent ministry at the Crowhurst Christian Healing Centre and the first class staff who act as channels of God's love and grace and are so willing to serve the needy in Jesus' name.

Mark Farthing

Did you know how good God is?

Did you know how good God is?
He blesses and guides,
He tests and provides;
He shields and He yields all our needs.

He will heal and teach, He will save and guide;
He will love and care, so you can abide.

Learn His word and you will live;
Love his people and He will forgive;
The good, the bad, the unpleasant

It may be a risk, BUT
Did you know how good God is?

Anisah Cooper

My New Year Retreat

at the Crowhurst Christian Healing Centre



I've been thinking that it's a good sign when you want to leave the Crowhurst Christian Healing Centre!

This may sound odd because before I visit I can't wait to get there. I think it's a testament to the special qualities of The Old Rectory.

Looking back, I can't believe so much was packed in, yet it was a very relaxed, reflective, restful and enjoyable time despite Anna twice beating me at Scrabble! We battled our wits with mini quizzes and there was a special edition of "Call my bluff" where we had to guess who on the Ministry Team was not telling the truth. Their own rendition of the panto "Jack and the Beanstalk" was hilarious and sadly to say not destined for the West End!

The highlight for me was actually New Year's Eve and the late evening service. During the day we reflected on what had happened to us personally in the past year. Like most people, I've had my 'ups and downs,' yet, when asked to write down when I felt God was near to me in actual moments, I had lots to remember.

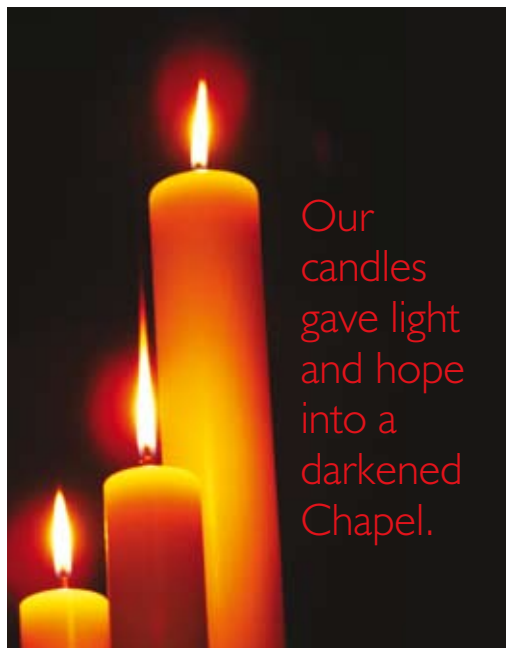
The New Year's Eve service was beautiful as our candles gave light and hope into a darkened Chapel. Each of us spoke of a person or organisation that had brought the word of God into our lives. As the world outside no doubt welcomed a New Year in with noisy abandon, we sat and drank in the peaceful atmosphere within the chapel.



Peter and Kay keeping score for Call my Bluff!

The retreat gave me space and time to reflect and be with God; time to rest, time for good food and company and of course, time for fun.

Rachel Gallehawk



Our candles gave light and hope into a darkened Chapel.

KEEPING THE OLD RECTORY UP TO SCRATCH!

The Old Rectory is a bit like the Forth Bridge - there's always painting or refurbishment work to be done and in the last few months there seems to have been more than usual! Back in the autumn of 2008 we took advantage of a lull in our programme to redecorate and re-carpet the Dining Room; it now looks very smart. Then, just before Christmas, we closed the Centre for a few days so that we could replace our old boilers. The benefit was immediate; all through the sharp cold snap in January we were wrapped in comfortable warmth.

Towards the end of January we started our long-awaited work on the new entrance and toilet for people with restricted mobility. This work should be completed by the end of March, weather permitting! During February we expect to renew the lighting and electrical wiring in the Main Chapel. As I write this, we are finalising the details of the work programme and sorting out how we will arrange the Healing Services while the Chapel is unavailable. We will probably hold them in the Dining Room or the Lounge; an interesting change of atmosphere, but one which I'm sure will not hinder the work of the Holy Spirit.

Even when all these projects have been completed, there will still be more to do. We hope to replace the old gutters and window frames in the Accommodation Wing so it is all up to the standard of our new entrance. We also want to improve the insulation of the buildings and cut down on our heating bills.

All of these activities require the time and effort of our staff to make sure everything is done properly. They also make a significant



impact on our financial resources. Over the years we have been greatly blessed by those who support us through regular and one-off donations, and also by remembering us in their wills. From time to time we have also been very grateful when people have given money for particular projects, like the provision of en-suite rooms and, more recently, the new entrance and toilet for people with disabilities. This particular project is costing around £20,000 more than we expected, so we are still praying and trusting that more donations will be forthcoming.

It is certainly a challenge keeping the buildings and their surroundings in the wonderful condition they deserve to be. Many things have changed in the eighty years since Reverend Howard Cobb first established the Centre, but the ethos of the place remains the same and the Christian Healing Ministry continues to flourish here.

Long may it continue!

David

Edwin Howard Cobb



Howard was born in Stroud, Kent in 1878, the fifth son of Charles and Sarah Cobb. His childhood was like many other Victorian schoolboys; he was a practical lad and on leaving The King's School, Rochester he

became articled to a firm of optical and nautical instrument makers in Fenchurch Street, London. His mother died when he was a young man and after this he began to consider ordination. His father supported him and Howard went to Lincoln College, Oxford. He graduated in 1903 and was ordained at Southwark Cathedral in that year. He began his curacy at St. Barnabas, Dulwich Village in South East London.

In this parish he met and later married May Moore. They eventually had three sons and a daughter, but sadly the little girl died in infancy. He moved to Mill Hill in 1920 and whilst in this parish he first met James Moore Hickson, a well known layman who had dedicated his life to the renewal of the ministry of Divine Healing.


James Moore Hickson visited the parish and helped Howard to start an intercessory prayer group to pray for the sick in the parish. They began to hold healing services in the parish as well. One day Howard visited a patient in

hospital who was suffering from sleeping sickness. He caught the infection and became dangerously ill. His wife sent for James Moore Hickson, who laid hands on him, while the people of the parish also prayed.

Howard went into a nursing home and over the space of six weeks gradually recovered. James Moore Hickson visited him a number of times over this period and as he regained his strength he became increasingly convinced that God wanted him to devote more time to the healing ministry, so he looked around for a country parish with a large rectory.

He found The Old Rectory, which in common with many rectories at that time, had oil lamps, well water pumped from the garden and many other old fashioned characteristics. This is where his early training in optical and nautical instruments came in useful. He had always been a practical man, good with his hands and able to use what we term DIY skills. His son Michael remembers how even the children were considered and he made them a wonderful train set.

For two years he continued as rector, caring for people in the house, but eventually realized he needed to give up parish work and devote more time to founding a home of healing.



The fact that the rectory was a mile from the church probably helped the church to agree to sell him the house and this enabled the family to find a property near the church.

Howard's practical skills came to the fore again as he set about adapting the property for its new purpose. The field behind the house was turned into a large kitchen garden; the conservatory became a quiet room for reading and writing and a small chapel was built. The home of healing was born, the first of its kind, and it soon became known throughout the Church of England. Howard Cobb was referred to affectionately as Father Cobb and his blue cassocked figure was a familiar sight in the chapel, where he seemed to bring a peace and serenity to troubled visitors.

Howard wrote six books and sent out a quarterly prayer letter to the friends of Crowhurst. We still have much of his work in the archives and the many truths he wrote about are still valid for us today. In one letter he wrote about delayed healing and reminded his readers that when the Israelites in the wilderness were bitten by snakes they were healed when they gazed on the bronze serpent on a pole. However those who were so concerned by their injuries concentrated on them and were filled with fear. They neglected to look at the pole and failed to receive the healing that was there for them; if only

they could have accepted it. The same truths hold good today, he writes; as long as we keep our thoughts on our injuries, we are holding on to them.

When we look upon the cross we see the fact on which to base our belief. We contemplate that the Holy Spirit is able to make the truth sink below the level of conscious mind and work to heal our soul and body, making them holy to the Lord. Howard finishes the article by saying: 'Remember we are not waiting for Christ to do something for us – He is waiting for us to accept the blessing He is holding out to us.'

Howard Cobb died peacefully in 1950; he is buried in the graveyard of St. George's Church, Crowhurst. Mrs Cobb died in 1956 and is also buried there.

Barbara Kingston

Our thanks go to Barbara for this enlightening and interesting article on Howard Cobb.

Easter Reflections on a Beech Hedge

I was looking back through some of the past magazines and came across this article in the Spring 1998 edition, written by Brian, one of our former chaplains. It is just as relevant today as it was then and I hope Brian won't mind me reprinting it! Ed

Out of my office window I can see the low beech hedge bordering the field. When autumn arrived the leaves gradually turned brown but did not fall. This is what makes the beech so attractive because the bushes always appear to be in leaf, and we don't have weeks with bare branches. When the low-angled winter sun shone upon them, the leaves appeared bronze, but still they clung on, even when buffeted by some very high winds at Christmas time and in the storms of early January.

What is it that eventually causes beech leaves to fall, long after they appear to be dead, and when they have withstood the onslaught of high winds for so long?

All is revealed in the spring, for then new life causes green leaf buds to break through and push away the old, dead leaves. The branches can then appear a bit bare as the new leaves are very small and have not yet grown to cover the gaps in the hedge. But this is only for a short time because the sap is rising fast and the new leaves grow quickly – and what a beautifully rich green they are!

Engaged as we are in the healing ministry of the Church, my thoughts turned to the healing available from our Lord Jesus. He once cursed a fig tree that was all leaf and no fruit, and

there may be times in our lives when this is true of us. We can give the appearance of fruitful lives, for example by going regularly to church, joining in all the activities of a busy church life, working conscientiously at our jobs, maintaining family life etc. But if all this activity is sustained by our own, human effort, while inwardly there is a spiritual void, with little or no personal relationship with Jesus, then our lives will be rather like the fig tree outside Jerusalem that so disappointed Jesus on his way into the city.

Such human 'foliage' is sadly vulnerable to the high winds of misfortune, trauma and disappointment and, unlike the beech leaves, will blow away in a spiritual storm. However, if we are willing to admit our need of the Lord, turn to Him to fill that void within, and submit to His sovereignty over our lives, we will find that the foliage of our best purely human efforts will – like the beech leaves – begin to turn brown as He breathes upon it all, and lose its superficial glory.

"Take up your cross and follow me," said Jesus, challenging us to go to Calvary in Him, letting go of our old self, 'dying' to self. The paradox of this apparent 'death' experience is that His new life will begin to push away the old leaves that we have been so proud of, just as the Father's new life brought Jesus out of the tomb on Easter Day. The leaves of our lives may have been spiritually dead for a long time but not been blown away, and now the new life of the Resurrection of Jesus, after our 'death' of self, is given full sway to produce new, glossy, green leaves in us. Even more importantly, when we continue to live this newly created

Garden news

relationship with Him, His Holy Spirit will produce the fruit in our lives that not only provides real satisfaction in our hearts, but attracts others to Him.

I hope that some challenge and encouragement rising from these thoughts may come to you when you next see a beech hedge!

Brian Coward

Former Chaplain to the Crowhurst Christian Healing Centre



Many plants become dormant over winter but Desmond has hard at work. From pruning trees, tidying up the bramble near to the railway line, planting spring bulbs and renovating some of the garden furniture, he has been very busy.

Desmond has now transplanted the Hebe shrubs in readiness for the work on the wing. He took this seemingly difficult job in his stride and both shrubs are thriving in their new location. Although frost has affected their greenness, he is hopeful that both shrubs will fully recover and provide their beautiful summer colour once more.

Our busy gardener has planted wallflowers in tubs outside the front door, and in the mangers he has put winter pansies, *Tete-a-Tete* daffodils, and a *Skimmia* for the centrepiece.

Tulips and daffodils have been planted in various places so The Old Rectory grounds should be ablaze with spring colour by the time this magazine is published!

Desmond's plans for the summer include a new venture of hanging planting bags on the white pillars on the front of the house, in which he hopes to put *Busy Lizzies* and other suitable bedding plants.

So while the plants in the grounds may have gone into hibernation, Desmond has been hard at work and we look forward to seeing all the colours that will result from the fruits of his labours.



Book Review

The Shack by William P Young
Hodder ISBN 9780340979495 2007: Price £7.99

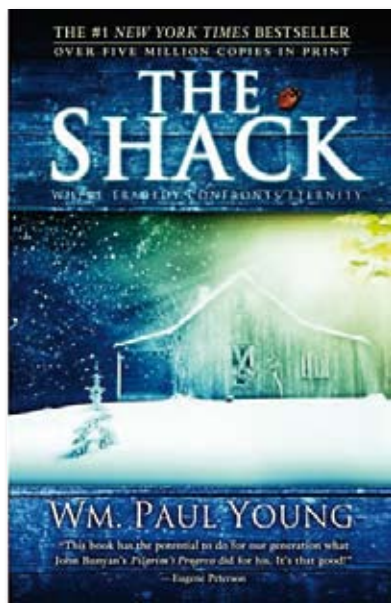
This fiction best seller is worthy of our time and attention. Mackenzie Allen Philips – or Mack as he was known – grew up in a strictly religious household under the control of his church elder father. His father was a closet drinker who severely beat and abused his son when drunk. Aged 13, Mack spoke to another church elder about his father's behaviour, who then reported it back. After a brutal beating Mack put rat poison in his father's drink and ran away from home.

Having made his way in the world Mack married Nan, a nurse, and raised a family. One weekend Mack took his three youngest children on a camping holiday. At the camp his son Josh got into difficulties whilst canoeing. Mack rushed into the water to rescue Josh and got him back to shore. When all was thought to be under control it was found that his six year old daughter, Missy, was missing from the campsite. She had been abducted, ill treated and murdered. The family was devastated.

Four years later in the midst of his 'Great Sadness' Mack finds a suspicious letter in his

mail box, apparently from God. In this letter he is invited back to the shack where the murder took place. Curious, he drives to the shack on a winter's afternoon and walks into his darkest nightmare. What happened that weekend changed his life forever. Mack met with the living God in a most unexpected way.

Mack, and the reader, have to confront the subject of evil, suffering, forgiveness and redemption. The book deals with the age old question of where is God amidst great suffering. You may find the answers both astounding and transforming. To give any more away would spoil the book for you.



There were many times as I read the book that I had to stop and remind myself it was a work of fiction. The theology and the narrative are skillfully interwoven, and the whole is very readable as a story in its own right. It is a story that at times will fill you with joy, and at other times you will need the tissues close at hand. It is a good read.

Colin Crook

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March

4 March

Clergy Retreat

6 - 8 March

Healing in the Psalms

13 - 15 March

Healing Retreat weekend

25 March

Guided Quiet Day

27 - 29 March

Healing of the memories

31 March

Trustees' Meeting

April

9 - 12 April

Easter Retreat

14 - 19 April

Prayer & Painting Week

22 April

Guided Quiet Day

25 - 26 April

Training Day:

Healing Services

May

1 - 3 May

Healing Retreat

8 - 10 May

Healing the Family Tree

13 May

Guided Quiet Day

18 May

Trustees' Meeting

22 - 24 May

Healing Retreat weekend

26 - 31 May

Prayer & Painting Week



For further information and bookings:
Telephone 01424 830033

Web Site www.crowhursthealing.org.uk

**Many people are finding us on the web.
If you have access please give us your
comments, in particular any items you
would like to see included.**

Noticeboard

Easter Retreat 9th-12th April

An opportunity to come and experience Easter in the quiet and peaceful surroundings of The Old Rectory. There will be prayerful reflection, guided meditation and inspirational worship, from the Last Supper through to Christ's glorious Resurrection.



Prayer & Painting week 14th-19th April



These weeks are very popular, as the following comment shows:

The painting and prayer week was a great blessing; I'm very grateful for Maggie's encouragement and praise the Lord for her. A huge thanks to all the team and staff for the wonderfully inspiring services every day; the beautiful music; for our excellent care, delicious meals and all the fun and laughter. I love all the prayer here and agree that surely this is a 'thin place.'

Guided Quiet Days – An opportunity to

take time out from our busy lives and spend a day in the presence of the Lord.

Future guided quiet days are:

Wednesday 25th March

Refiner's Fire – Gretel Wakeham

Wednesday 22nd April

The unexamined life – Mike Playdon

Wednesday 13th May

Finding the Treasure of God –

Isobel Rathbone



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For a brochure, programme or further
information please contact the Secretary

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