



# JBMS NEWSLETTER

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## TRUSTEES VISIT TO ZIMBABWE - FEBRUARY 2007

We were very unsure what to expect as the BA flight from Heathrow began its descent into Harare. After all it was some 13 years since our last visit.

Fr David Harold-Barry SJ met us once we had cleared immigration and although the drive from the airport to the city is meant to be dangerous, we soon got to Silveira House where we spent some time with Fr David and Fr John Dove SJ who was in good spirits. We learnt much of the travails that face Zimbabweans on a daily basis with raging inflation. It was disconcerting that each day we were in the country prices fluctuated vastly, especially basic staple goods. Petrol although it is available is in short supply and one has to plan trips sparingly. What is clear is that despite everything, the basic infrastructure of the country was just about still in place.

At Silveira we visited the room where John Bradburne had lived with his bees, and we were very impressed with a whole set of newly built rondaval huts, designed as guest accommodation and for quiet contemplation for retreatants and those on courses. After a good night's rest Marge Chigwanda, the Chair of Zimbabwe Leprosy Association (ZLA) met us and took us to the Catholic Cathedral where we were to meet Fr Liam McCarthy OFM and others who would take us down to Mutemwa. Fr Liam duly arrived in a minibus and eventually, after a detour

around the suburbs of Harare, we made our way to Mutemwa. We had a very full complement of people representing ZLA, Friends of Mutemwa and JBMS (Zim), and members of a prayer group in Harare, many of whom had not met each other before and spent a most enjoyable two hour drive. It was lovely to meet Agnes Mapfumo (Aggie) again, she was one of John's great friends who came on the trip. Aggie looks younger each time we see her.

Mutoko the nearest town to Mutemwa has grown enormously in the past decade and we saw for the first time the effects of the Government's policy on pulling down the shanty towns in which so many were forced to live.

Once we got to Mutemwa we were welcomed in a traditional warm Shona welcome, complete with singing, ululating and dancing. This first day was spent in a round of meetings with ZLA, Friends of Mutemwa and JBMS (ZIM) who look after the spiritual side of the site where John's tin hut remains, and the thatched abduction hut beside it which has now



*John's tin hut next to the Abduction hut*

become a place for quiet prayer.



*Celia with Mai Sara and Coletta Mafuta, two of John's close friends*

Fr Liam showed us a new sculpture placed in there of a head and shoulders bust of John Bradburne. A red headband has been placed on his head (John's trademark). Also on this site an open air stand has been erected from which priests can celebrate Mass at the Anniversary of John's death on September 5th, at which many thousands gather.

It was clear that there is much enthusiasm but there was a real need to have an active full-time Administrator who can oversee Mutemwa and make sure that practical matters can be attended to. This has now been done. It is impossible for us to micromanage the settlement from 5000 miles away. It has been very heartening to see how warmly our ideas were taken up by the Committees and real efforts have been made to make Mutemwa self-sufficient in food. We are also fortunate that Fr Liam is spiritual advisor to both Committees - ZLA and JBMS (ZIM).



*Fr Liam with ZLA Committee*

After evening Mass with the patients we spent the evening at the nearby Mother of Peace (MOP) Aids Orphanage where there are now some 300 children, and were amazed at how much had been done and built thanks to big donors from the US and Austria in particular. The following day (Sunday) after Mass, it was the belated Christmas party for the patients and we had a good chance to walk round and have a good chat with everyone before we had a formal meeting with the Patients Committee. Coletta Mafuta who lived next door to John Bradburne's hut at Mutemwa acted as spokesperson for the group. They were very appreciative of the help and support and indeed it is clear that without our continuing support Mutemwa could not function. There is still much that needs to be done in terms of



*Patients gathered prior to meetings*

basic repairs and requirements which we want to address as soon as possible. But back to the party and a good time was had by all. Indeed Christine Pratt, one of our Trustees, who regularly visits Zimbabwe as she is also involved at MOP proved to be an ace dancer!

That evening we climbed Chigona Rock as dusk fell, and from the top there are spectacular tranquil and far reaching views spanning across the vast landscape, a scene from which John Bradburne gained his strength and peace

of mind from, and a place where he could pray in solitude.



*Patients and Committee Members gather outside the Clinic*

Throughout our time at Mutemwa we were looked after very well by Sister Priscilla Nare, the resident nurse there. It was lovely to hear how she came to work at Mutemwa and find her vocation in caring for the residents.



*The Staff at Mutemwa*

The following day we really had a chance to look at Mutemwa and examine what needs to be done. We have detailed our project Wish List in past newsletters and we looked very carefully, with Michael the caretaker/painter, at what had been done and what still needs attention.

What was clear in talking to Michael was that items such as



*Renovated and repainted house*

paint or cement which we in the West take for granted are extremely difficult to get hold of, and this is before inflation kicks in.

One of the most impressive things at MOP has been their farming activity which is now very productive with both dairy and goat production and irrigated vegetable crops. Much of the success is down to the Farm Manager, Koen Eidhof, and Mutemwa has recently taken on, on a voluntary basis, Lainah, his wife, who also has an agricultural farming background to help with the various projects at Mutemwa. This has already had a significant effect on the degree of productivity that the crops will yield. Hopefully it will also make the poultry enterprises more successful. The aim will be to turn the farming from a subsistence level to having surpluses to sell.

We left Mutemwa for the journey back to Harare very encouraged by what we had seen. There is clearly still much to be done but despite the real hardships in the country, the patients and staff are very resilient, positive and happy people, which bodes well for the future of the place.

Once we returned to Harare we had some detailed discussions with Julian Buss who has been masterminding a significant water project at MOP involving the erection of a large reservoir and pumping station and then a sprinkler system to water the crops. This is being linked up to Mutemwa just a couple of miles away, and will give the settlement much needed and consistent water supply both for personal use and for crop irrigation.

One of our key meetings in Harare was with the recently appointed Archbishop of Harare, Robert Ndlovu. We are very grateful to Bishop Patrick O'Donoghue, the Bishop of Lancaster, whose Diocese has Skirwith, the village where John Bradburne was born, who had encouraged the Archbishop to meet with us. He knew all about John and Mutemwa and indeed had discussed the possible progress of the Cause of John

at a recent Zimbabwe Bishops' Conference. They were all keen to see progress, so the Archbishop had asked Fr Liam McCarthy to prepare an initial dossier to be forwarded to Rome for initial evaluation. This is of course excellent news and we should all be very grateful for the courageous stance that the Catholic Church is taking in Zimbabwe.

To round off our trip, Margaret Chigwanda had organized a small farewell party for us and we had a wonderful evening with the various Committee members, but also Stella and Jean from MOP and others from Mutemwa to wish us Bon Voyage.

What we have agreed for the future, in order to keep the impetus going and to check on

progress, is that one of the JBMS Trustees will go out to Zimbabwe every 6 months. In these troubled times those working on the ground need all our support, both in kind and financial, and by our actual presence.

Celia and Tim Brigstocke

*In the months since our visit the situation in Zimbabwe has got considerably worse.*

## MY MEMORIES OF JOHN

by Pauline Hutchings

John Bradburne's life in a tin hut at Mutemwa leprosy settlement in north eastern Zimbabwe is a perennial source of fascination to countless people. And I, who knew him for the last six years of his time there, am often asked to write about what he meant to me. To date I have not been able to do so satisfactorily.

How does one stand far enough back to discern the ways in which one has been altered, refashioned almost, by one's contact with a person like John? Although he was murdered nearly thirty years ago during the bush war in Rhodesia, his thoughts and attitudes regarding fundamental aspects of life are ever at the core of my being. I believe I am only one of many people who fell deeply under his influence. My daughter, for instance, claims that John inspired her vocation to a Carmelite convent, and I know of at least one other vocation to a contemplative order, as well as a number of people indebted to John in their spirituality.

John was a contemplative in the world. He was also such an eccentric that he was not able to fit neatly into any religious order. In fact from a worldly perspective his life could be described as an utter failure. Many people saw it as such, including the committee appointed to administrate the leper colony in those days. Along with the most profound spiritual enlightenment, John

unwittingly initiated me into the perplexing anomalies and contradictions inherent in 'do-gooder' personality clashes. I was much too slow to learn, and I regret not only the unhappiness caused to John during his last years, but also my part in hurting other people whose intentions were honourable, if misguided according to my own lights. We do-gooders can be such arrogant and prejudiced people!

John would have been the first to accept that his natural pride necessitated the social ostracism he embraced. He chose his poverty and lowly status as essential for his spiritual growth. People can hardly credit that he lived in a tin hut through Zimbabwe's suicide month, October, in low lying, tropical Mutoko. He planted the flame trees that now shade the hut, but they were mere saplings during his lifetime. In winter he shivered through the miserable nights, sleeping on a reed mat on the floor, wrapped in a thin blanket. There were no ablution facilities at all. It was important to John to identify with the people he had gone to care for. He even wished to contract leprosy himself so that he would be one of them. *Love is choice* he would say.

*Choice* includes the option to take the edge off one's spiritual appetite and longings by indulging in worldly satisfactions, innocuous as they may be; preoccupation with

material gain, good food or television, for instance. If you fill your life with sundry gratification - no matter what - you leave no space for things spiritual and you eventually blunt the urge. This precept was an important decider for my daughter who felt she could easily slide pleasurably through life and forget the spiritual yearning she sensed in John. It was important enough to her to forego that temptation.

His intense longing for union with God was what one experienced with John. I would arrive to visit him with a mind full of the events of my life, the wilting tobacco during a drought, mumps or chickenpox in one or more of my four children, cattle theft, the petty upsets of life in a small farming community, or a dramatic horror during the bush war, but before I had off-loaded half my burden on John, who was always sympathetic, I would get the feeling that my problems were circumscribed, that they dimmed in the light of a more immediate reality. John operated in a mainly spiritual dimension. He was most fulfilled when alone and at prayer or overtaken by the muse and literally bubbling with reams of prayerful verse and poetry.

This is not to imply in any way that John's life at Mutemwa was without discouragement. He faced a host of problems and anxieties in the Mutemwa of the

late nineteen seventies. The bush war had alienated many potential western donors in much the same way as at present, and the defence budget had depleted government welfare coffers. Conditions at Mutemwa were shocking, nutrition was poor, and health care basic. The lepers lived in squalid huts with badly fitting doors through which rats would enter at night to gnaw at nerve deadened limbs. But John's wholehearted gift of himself to serve his friends was idiosyncratic and incomprehensible to many people, including the committee in charge of the settlement. John was soon replaced by an orderly and banned from visiting his lepers. His reaction was to move just outside the bounds of the settlement and continue to care for his people at night. He would sit with the suffering and dying, reading to them from the Bible, talking to and praying with them, sharing their pain and keeping them company. Once the war reached crisis proportions, and committee members from Harare no longer visited Mutemwa, John was relatively free to venture back inside. Many of us feared for his life and we urged him to leave, but he had committed himself to those at Mutemwa and would not hear of moving to safety.

He was steeped in the English literary tradition and very well read, Shakespeare, Elizabethan poetry, the King James version of the Bible, Anglican hymns. He was able to quote any number of poets and screeds of biblical verse, but despite his natural love of classical literature and music, these enjoyments were not excluded from his overriding urge to pare down every aspect of his life to the metaphysical state in which he could hope to know God by 'unknowing'; in other words to enter a state of contemplation through overcoming the characteristic human dependency on the senses. *The most Godlike knowledge of God is that which is known by unknowing* said St Dionysius. And St Augustine: *The life of a good Christian consists of nothing else but holy desire.* To this end John read only a very

few books, books such as *The Cloud of Unknowing*, a spiritual treatise on the call to contemplation written by an English priest in the fourteenth century and *The Way Of The Pilgrim*, a little book on *The Jesus Prayer* written by a Russian monk. His Bible he read and meditated on every day, and the way in which he dramatised the well-known stories and events, turned them into virtual reality. Moses might have been encountering his burning bush right there on Chigona hill where, in his unique way, John instructed me in the Catholic faith. *Religion is caught - not taught* said John.

John was surprisingly rigid in his adherence to the teaching and rules of the Church, which he compared to a relentless steamroller. Brought up as a High Anglican, and frustrated by the ambiguity and contingency of church rules and protocol, he cherished the dogma and certainty asserted by Rome. He thrived, especially, on the doctrine of transubstantiation, the real presence of Jesus in the sacrament of Holy Communion. The King was truly in the tabernacle of the little round church at Mutemwa that was built by friends of his for him and his lepers, and in which he conducted daily Communion services. A priest would visit once a week to say Mass.

His legacy for me is vast, but this belief in and devotion to the Blessed Sacrament is perhaps the greatest of his influences. No matter that the language in a Catholic church be foreign and incomprehensible, the priest prolix or dull, the music or singing inferior, John's attention would be exclusively on the Presence of the tabernacle. He thought of Westminster cathedral in London as a train station where people would drop in at all hours to kneel silently for a few minutes in the presence of God as embodied in the Holy Sacrament, before resuming their way in the world.

In the tradition of *The Cloud of Unknowing* John advocated the use of short prayers said with passion. The *longing dart* aimed heavenwards, a single word or perhaps a mantra. He mentioned a few such as *EI*, a name for God, *OM*, part of a Buddhist mantra, the *Hail Mary's of The Rosary* and *The Jesus prayer*. It is not you praying, but the Spirit praying in you. Your words merely keep your mouth busy and your mind awake, while a mystical communication takes place. So much that is written or said about matters spiritual is cliché ridden and embarrassing, as though material concepts can be unproblematically used to describe uncreated concepts such as God. Those who are prepared to expound on these



John and Joshua

things don't *know*, say the Buddhists, and those who *know* don't say.

*Strange Vagabond'*, was a succinct epithet for John. In Christ-like fashion he found nowhere on earth to lay his head.<sup>2</sup> Whether because of his painful Second World War ordeals or whether as the result of his religious conversion, or more likely a combination of life experiences, John was continually aware of the ephemeral quality of physical life. He did not wish it otherwise. *Roll on the Kingdom* was a favourite saying of his, expressed with great optimism rather than in any defeatist sense. His unreserved

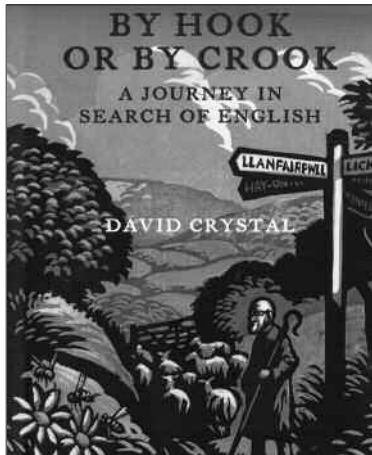
faith in a heavenly afterlife was more infectious than the leprosy that assailed his friends. He promised them eternal life to be lived in glorious bodies made whole as a result of the Resurrection<sup>3</sup> giving them hope of a better life to come.

John's eccentricity, his preference for the life of a solitary, and his disregard for social conventions were characteristics that disconcerted some people and led to misunderstandings and even, on occasion, animosity, yet the fruits of John's spirituality were clearly discernable. His rock solid faith in life's spiritual

dimension belied doubt and scepticism and rendered atheism absurd. His absolute commitment to the people of Mutemwa, eventually literally giving up his life to remain with them, speaks for itself. Whatever his perceived shortcomings, John was a unique friend of God who by his life-long example drew other people to God, and who in his death has given us a legacy of worship and prayer and service to the less fortunate of the earth.

1. Fr John Dove SJ *Strange Vagabond of God* 1997
2. Luke 9:58
3. Philippians 3:21

## DAVID CRYSTAL WRITES ABOUT HIS NEW BOOK



My new book, *By Hook or By Crook* is subtitled *A Journey in Search of English*. It is a sort of linguistic travelogue - the story of a journey around England and Wales looking for interesting things to do with language. And at one point, on my way from Hay to Stratford, I pass through Risbury - which of course is where the John Bradburne Memorial Society is based.

This was too good a chance to miss. I took the opportunity to talk about John's poetry and about his life, gave a few examples, and made the point that here we have someone who is certainly the most prolific poet the English language has ever seen.

The book came out at the beginning of May, and has now been reviewed several times in the press and on the radio. Because it's a very discursive, rambling kind of book, and

because reviews tend to be quite short, it always interests me to see which particular points reviewers home in on. And I was delighted to find that the section on John's poetry was attracting interest. Indeed, the very first radio interview picked it out. Ian McMillan was fascinated by him, and as a result John Bradburne became part of the Radio 3 literary discussion programme. 'The Verb'. He - John, that is - would have been tickled pink.

You might expect *The Tablet* to single him out, as indeed it did. Dot Wordsworth chose John as one of her three illustrations of what the book contains. This is what she said: 'The digressive approach allows the author to introduce the story of John Bradburne, the eccentric Englishman who lived among lepers at Mutemwa in what is now Zimbabwe. Since his murder in 1979 the cause of his canonisation has been pressing ahead. Crystal admires Bradburne's poetry and is the editor of the John Bradburne website which records 4,288 of his poems.' (That figure is out-of-date now: it grows every day!)

Then, the big surprise: John attracted the attention of the reviewer in *The Independent on Sunday*. This is what Murrugh O'Brien had to say: 'Those who love wordplay will be grateful to the author for introducing them to the obscure 20th century poet John Bradburne, who, with 170,000 lines of verse, stands as

the English language's most prolific poet; he celebrated his leprosy patients in loving acrostics.' That last bit is nicely put.

The blogs are beginning to notice him too. Blogs are internet diaries, which talk about anything and everything. And in one, called 'Scattered Leaves', the writer reads *By Hook or By Crook* and makes a discovery: 'One of the things David Crystal wrote about was the poet John Bradburne, who I'd never heard of (largely because he's virtually unpublished). After becoming a Catholic in the late sixties, he went off to Africa to live in a cave, tend lepers ... and to write highly accomplished, rather old fashioned poetry, about ... well, apparently about the first thing that popped into his head (he even wrote his letters in couplets). Actually, the poet he reminds me of most is Byron, with perhaps a dash of Wordsworth and a little Chesterbelloc.'

Slowly, steadily, the news is reaching a broader public. You can see it on the poetry website ([www.johnbradburnepoems.com](http://www.johnbradburnepoems.com)) In the past month of June, 74 people have visited the site, mainly from the UK, but also from Ireland, Norway, the USA, Canada, Barbados, Mexico, Australia, and Zimbabwe. In January it was 54 - a significant increase. In all, 631 people have visited since the site went live on 24 August last year. It's a splendid start.

## FUNDRAISING AT JBMS – ONLINE AND OTHER by John Reid

The John Bradburne Memorial Society started life early in 1995 thanks largely to a visit Charles Moore, the then editor of the Sunday Telegraph, made to the leprosy settlement at Mutemwa. A subsequent vivid article in that paper captured widespread interest and sympathy in John and Mutemwa, resulting in over £20,000 in donations. JB's companion, Father John Dove, who ultimately received the funds, passed them on to a small group including JB's niece, Celia Brigstocke, to set up the JBMS charity to care for and support Mutemwa.

For the first five years donations built up steadily - apart from a spectacular year, 97/98, with two individual donations totalling £15,000 alone. Over the same period Mutemwa needs were minimal, averaging just £2,000 per year. This was fortuitous, helping build a capital reserve to generate income and provide security for leaner times. The next three years, 2000-2003, saw funding demands starting to grow, averaging £6,000 per year. The last four years, 2003-2007, has seen almost a fourfold jump in funding demands, the result of much harder times in Zimbabwe and a dearth of other funding sources for Mutemwa. At the same time, over the last few years, JBMS donations have plateaued. Our challenge is to improve our fundraising to match the increased needs of our cause and recipients.

The majority of our funding support comes from our newsletter membership which is growing slowly towards the 3k mark. Our regular covenanters represent a core of about five percent of this group. On these we depend

heavily and are greatly indebted. Publicity, occasional advertising, meetings and word of mouth help to build our membership, currently spanning four continents, and contribute to our major complementary aim of spreading knowledge of John and his beatification Cause. Additional funding sources include: gift aid, sale of goods – books, videos, etc. and our website. It is this last area of online fundraising which clearly has great potential and warrants attention and development for two different groups of people: Donors and Fundraisers. Let us consider each in turn.

For prospective **Donors**, getting to our website is surprisingly easy. Just type in: [www.johnbradburne.com](http://www.johnbradburne.com) - and you are there. Upper/lower case makes no difference. Across the top of the home page you will see the various areas you can then investigate from 'Introduction' to 'Guestbook'. The one related to fundraising is: 'Donations and Covenant form'. The first enables you to donate by setting up a Standing Order at your bank. Print and fill out the form and send it to the JBMS secretary and the task is done. The second, a Gift Aid form, filled out similarly, allows us to reclaim income tax you may have paid on your donation – at the standard tax rate this can increase the size of your donation by 28%, a valuable supplement often overlooked. In the future we may add the Charities Aid Foundation's e fundraising services. This allows donors to give via credit and/or debit cards and in foreign currencies - \$ and Euros. It should also provide JBMS some promotional benefits, and later extend to handling direct debits.

A more radical and exciting form of online fundraising is offered by the website [Justgiving.com](http://Justgiving.com). This is primarily aimed at **Fundraisers**, committed charity supporters who invite friends, colleagues and relatives to support their cause. The website is most commonly used by event participants – from trekkers to marathon runners – but an increasing number of people are now raising funds in different, less athletic, ways – from head-shaves to sponsored silences, anniversaries, and in memoriam collections.

The Justgiving website helps you create an online fundraising page with title, message and photo, where friends can donate from anywhere in the world and leave a message of encouragement. You register for an account, email the address of your page to all your contacts and deliver on any commitments made to your donors. Funds, including any Gift Aid and net of a small transaction fee, are transferred automatically to your chosen charity's bank account – JBMS we hope in this instance! JBMS in turn have to register with Justgiving and pay a fee of about £211 per year – a worthwhile investment given that a typical fundraising page raises £450, while many bring in well over £1,000. JBMS also get a page connected to their website, which can accept credit/debit card donations, as well as being used for fundraising. We recommend you check out [www.justgiving.com](http://www.justgiving.com) for advice, examples, training and tips on fundraising. It can be a real challenge and a lot of fun, not to mention good for health and humour.

*John Reid is the Treasurer of JBMS.*

### TESTIMONIES

I wanted to share my testimony for John Bradburne's intercession for me when, unusually, I was feeling a deep depression which just came over me one morning. I immediately asked John Bradburne to help me out of it, and as I prayed to him and looked at the picture of him smiling on the leaflet, I could

feel this lifting instantly. I knew he was with me and the burden I had experienced as completely taken away, and I felt consoled by him.

I pray regularly asking John's help in many ways and I have never been left unaided. I would like to encourage others to do the same. John is a very powerful saint in heaven, and I for one, am

confident of his support to me and others through prayer.

Another friend of mine who is on medication, on doctor's orders, has said that when he is feeling unwell he only has to look at the picture on the coloured leaflet and he feels much better. He too believes strongly in John's help for him whenever he needs it.

**Miss Joan Wallace,  
Bury St Edmonds**

I watched the life of John Bradburne and was truly inspired by his life and courage even to the very end. I have sought John's intercession many times, and it has never been known to fail. I would like to return the favour by promoting his cause here in the Philipinnes and make him known to help foster his cause for beatification and canonization. I am part of a diocesan group that promotes the virtues of the men and women of God and I find John Bradburne someone to emulate and to get inspiration from.

**Michael Mordeno,  
Philipinnes**

I would like to thank John Bradburne for his intercession. Recently my son was hospitalized with a severe infection I believe his prayers not only obtained my son's recovery, but it also opened doors for the funds for his expensive medicines that I could not afford. His favour with the Lord is great.

**Bonne McNally,  
USA**

I have been deeply moved by John's story. I visited the website after seeing a notice in Catholic Life Magazine. I am awestruck by his courage and faith. I cannot tell you how inspirational it has been for me to read about this great man.

**Steven Hughes,  
UK**

I don't know if the following would count as a testimony to John's answer of prayer, but from my point of view it is. It has been a dreadful year for the family. Awful illness, loss of employment and two deaths in one week. One was totally unexpected. However, there was one event due which I told John I was leaving entirely to him, namely the Baptism of our new granddaughter.

There were many obstacles connected with this. I asked John to pray for safe travel for so many; good weather and most important an understanding priest and parents. Last Sunday that is exactly what his prayers produced.

The funeral took place on Friday but nevertheless the Christening went ahead on Sunday. The sun shone and miraculously the difficult priest 'changed' into the kindest, most understanding person, and so a lovely Baptism took place.

I thanked John for bringing them together in the first place and though neither my daughter nor her husband practise the faith, we all received a baptismal blessing.

**Anonymous**

I came across the little booklet with card inside while praying in Westminster Cathedral last November. John is surely a Godsend and a great example to follow. I am 62 and expect to be ordained as a Deacon. I am asking his help for this to happen. The road is not an easy one.

**John Rees**

John Bradburne was and still is an inspiration. I am a Zimbabwean, and every year as a church we used to pilgrim to Mutemwa Leprosy Centre and see the hearts he touched there. One thing that amazed me was the cross on the mountain that seemingly rotates and shines occasionally even though it is fixed to the mountain ... miracle! I thank the Lord for blessing Zimbabwe with such an angel!

**Nyaradzai Mutiwayo  
UK**

John Bradburne has been part of my prayer life since last year when I 'met' him. He is a holy example to all of us, and an inspiration to all Secular Franciscans.

**Marsha Gustafson,  
USA**

My first encounter with John Bradburne was when I picked up a brochure and prayer leaflet about him at the Carmelite Aylesford Priory, in Kent. I immediately wanted to know more about this extraordinary man, and read more on the website. Just as immediately I wanted to distribute leaflets and brochures about him in the

Roman Catholic churches I attend.

My encounter with John Bradburne coincided with my need to make an important decision.

Although a member of the Legion of Mary, I had long wanted to join the Third Carmelite Order, due to my special love for their saints and writings. Doubts and hesitations were tearing me apart. Now, having been struck by the fact that John Bradburne completely submitted himself to the Holy Spirit in making choices, so I began to pray for John's help and guidance: should I or shouldn't I join the Order?

My regular church is The English Martyrs in Strood, Kent. Having obtained the parish priest's permission to distribute brochures and prayer leaflets about John Bradburne, the very first morning, which was the seventh of eighth day of his novena, an extraordinary event occurred. Present at that day's Mass was someone I had never seen at English Martyr's before in all the time I had been attending that church (this covers a period of three years), but whom I had once met at Aylesford Priory. He was prominently wearing his Third Order scapula. We chatted for a while, but it was not until I watched him leave that I realised that this unexpected meeting was not a coincidence. That morning I had come to church to distribute information about John Bradburne towards the end of a period of persistent prayer during which I called for his help, some sign, and the sign had come in the person of a member of the Third Carmelite Order.

So, Our Lady of Mount Carmel had led me to John Bradburne, and John Bradburne has, in turn, led me back to Her. I began my apprenticeship period with the Third Carmelite Order in February this year (2007) and I am now fervently praying for John's beatification and canonization.

**Milenia West**

## **JOHN BRADBURNE DAY**

**A John Bradburne Day will be held at Ladywell Shrine, Fernyhalgh, near Preston on Saturday, September 1st. Commencing with Mass at 12 p.m. followed by a talk about the his life and exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.**

**Enquiries: Fr Tom Hoole Tel: 01772 700181**

**A Charity Concert, held at the Ucheldre centre in Holyhead on 17th November, raised £1,400 to support Mutemwa, Zimbabwe. Casey Jones and friends were joined by several musicians from across Anglesey for the concert.**

Casey Jones a friend of John Bradburne who organized the evening gave an introduction which was followed by Professor David Crystal who gave a background to Mutemwa and John Bradburne with a six minute slide presentation, to give a background to the audience of John's life and work. A good variety of entertainment was performed thanks to Richard Synnot and Terry Riley, brother and sister duo John and Millie Walmsley and many others. Kenyan hits from the 60's, African slave songs, a Puccini aria, Irish reels were then followed by Welsh hymns and fold songs, blues and hymns from Amazing Grace to the Old Rugged Cross with reggae and rock 'n roll on a variety of instruments, whistle, guitar, piano, panpipes and whale bones! John would have loved the eclectic mix!!

David read the poem 'Josephite' from the book Songs of the Vagabond, edited by him and his wife Hilary. He spoke at length on his poetry and where he stands with his prodigious output alongside Shakespeare/Wordsworth and the like. Throughout the evening between acts were classic stories of John's eagles, bees etc. How the lepers were taught plainsong and Gregorian chants, his musings and travels. David finally spoke about the possibility of John becoming Zimbabwe's first saint, and the website on offer to those present who wished to pursue John's life further. The point was made that should John's Cause progress, so too will his poetry reach a wider audience, and that would surely sustain Mutemwa.

The turnout was tremendous with a full house and everyone went home uplifted.

*Many thanks to Casey Jones, David and Hilary Crystal and all the performers who made this event such a happy and enjoyable one and raised such a wonderful donation to contribute to the continuing running of Mutemwa.*

## **THANKS TO JBMS SUPPORTERS**

*JBMS are very grateful to all those of our friends, new and established members of the Society, who continue to offer their constant support to the charity. It is especially appreciated in this time of deepening crisis in Zimbabwe, that we can keep support going strong, with special gratitude to our loyal covenanters. Also as an apostolate for John Bradburne, we are keen to disseminate information about his life and work wherever possible. It is due to many of you who have helped with this that John's life is becoming better known and respected world wide and in this way we can continue to grow our membership for the benefit of Mutemwa.*

## **JOHN BRADBURNE AT DOVEGATE PRISON A Saint in Waiting**

Prior to the morning devoted to John Bradburne, a number of the churchgoing population were given a copy of a booklet about John Bradburne to read before we met to talk about John's life and work. In addition the inmates were asked to prepare questions which could be swapped around during the group discussions.

The morning began with the celebration of Mass. The Mass intention was for the life of John and his family. After Mass we had a short break for coffee, tea and biscuits. Approximately 30 inmates attended so it was very full and they were split into five groups of six people. The questions varied from his army life, his search for what God was asking of him and what was the work and vocation he eventually gave his life for. One of the inmates who was musical was very interested on this aspect of John. The group session lasted for about 45 minutes with lots of discussion taking place. We finally closed the morning with prayer and song.

In the subsequent weeks many inmates said how much they had enjoyed the morning.

Rev Tony. RC Chaplain at HMP Dovegate