



JBMS NEWSLETTER

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NEWS UPDATE

For over twenty years JBMS has been in contact with many wonderful people who have known, come across John Bradburne, or have been touched by his life in some way. It is in a way like a meeting of minds, something is triggered when people come to know about Bradburne's life and from then on the 'relationship' with him begins to blossom.

For many people they say that they feel very close to John, who seems to help and comfort them which is very consoling. Many have picked up a booklet or a prayer

leaflet, or by word of mouth have been told about him, and that is the start of a new journey for them.

It is a privilege for us to come in to contact with people who are so inspired to want to help support the work of the charity, which raises funds for the continued work at Mutemwa Centre in Zimbabwe where John spent the last ten years of his life. Many have offered to help to spread the word by taking material to distribute in parishes or amongst friends, to help bring others to know about his life and



The summit of Chigona hill is a place of pilgrimage. The cross stands at a point overlooking Mutemwa. It bears John's name and the words on one side, 'Mudiwa Shamwari ye Mutemwa 1969-1979', and on the other, 'Servant of God 1921-1979'. In the background is Mutemwa hill, from which the Centre derives its name.

JBMS was founded in 1995 to support the Mutemwa Leprosy Settlement in Zimbabwe in the name of its late warden.



In this hut John Bradburne was abducted on the night of Sunday 2nd September 1979 never to return RIP.

work and poetry, and raise funds themselves. However, in this climate with so many charities doing the same thing, we have suffered from a certain amount of charity fatigue in trying to get new people involved.

As we approach the 40th year after John's 'martyrdom' on September 5th 1979 (in 2019) we want to continue to encourage anyone to help spread the word. There are plans next year at the University of Perugia, near Assisi, in Italy for an international John Bradburne Conference on March 30th 2017, to celebrate his poetry and life. We will update you of news later, but if you are interested to know more please do contact JBMS either by phone or email for details about this event.

In September this year we had a visit from Pauline Hutchings who has been involved with Mutemwa in the old days, and was a close friend of John's. We include a piece from Fr David Harold Barry about Tony, Pauline's late husband who recently passed on this year. He was active on the old Committee called the Friends of Mutemwa in the 80's and beyond.

Next year we hope to have Didier Rance's biography in print in English. It has kindly



Mutemwa Care Centre with huts which were built after John's death. The John Bradburne Memorial Society continues to fund its work.



John's huts stand just outside the entrance to Mutemwa Care Centre. From left to right they are: the guest hut, the sleeping hut, from which he was abducted, and the living hut. They are places of prayer.



"In this hut John Bradburne dwelt, prayed, sang and composed poem prayers to the Most High". (April 1973 - September 1979) Images include Our Lady and St Francis and a 'portrait' of Christ present in the consecrated host. The other walls of the hut are hung with autographs of John's poems and photographs of England.



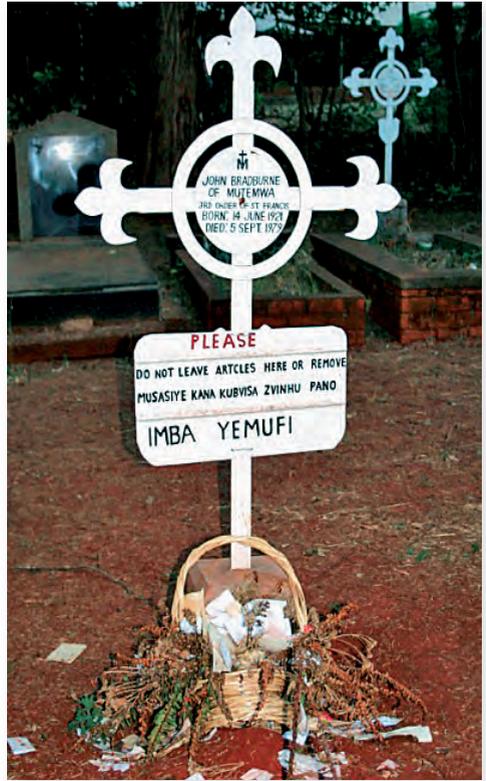
'John Bradburne of Mutemwa. 3rd Order of St Francis. Born 14th June 1921. Died 5th September 1979.' John is buried together with priests and other religious of the Jesuit mission at Chishawasha, just outside Harare. Tucked into the earth of his grave are intercessions written in African languages on pages torn from school exercise books.

been translated in to English by Mulachy O'Higgins, a great labour of life considering its length. It is a research of over four years and sheds light on so much of John's life that was unknown. The book in French won France's most prestigious prize for Catholic Literature in 2013, a choice of only one book each year for a special outstanding piece of writing.

In July, next year, a niece of John's, Teresa Yonge, will be undertaking a fundraising canoe journey on the River Thames from it's source at Cricklade to Teddington Tidal Lock, a distance of around 125 miles.



Re the Cause for John. We do not give up hope of finding a Postulator to promote John's Cause for Beatification, and continue to keep in touch with Rome for this to be achieved. It is a lengthy process, and we are advised to keep a constant drip feed of information in order to achieve a far greater following of people worldwide to



provide prayerful support including that of our Diocesan priests and Clergy in the UK. It is a continuous process.

John Bradburne can be found on Twitter @john_bradburne where each day you can find a line taken from the vast archive of poetry, selected by David Crystal to entice people to go and engage with the new enhanced poetry website www.johnbradburnepoems.com. (Go to www.twitter.com and type in @john_bradburne.com) There are some wonderful lines emerging from this source.

So please do keep in touch. Our deep appreciation for your support and kindness without which JBMS could not exist. We do know that this work is relevant for our times as John's life keeps us in the right perspective of what is truly important, to remain undiverted from all the distractions that can swamp us, to remain at peace with ourselves and with God, and to live good lives as best we can.

John Bradburne pray for us!

New book explaining John Bradburne's poetry due in 2017 by David Crystal

It was only a matter of time before books started to appear about John Bradburne. We have already seen Didier Rance's magisterial French biography, which we hope will be published in an English translation soon. And I am just reaching the end of a large book about his poetry, which will be out next year. I wrote it because I was fed up with people continually asking me a question. I would be chatting about him, and at some point would mention that he was the most prolific poet the English language has ever had. He wrote three times as much as Wordsworth, and twice as much as Shakespeare, I would say - as measured by the number of lines. After this news sinks in, I then get the question: "But is his poetry any good?"

It is as if people cannot believe that someone who wrote so much could produce work of quality. Would the same question be asked of the 500+ works of Mozart? Or the 700+ novels of Barbara Cartland?

There are two answers to the question. One is: Go read for yourself (or, in the case of Mozart, listen). And the other is to write a book illustrating and discussing the poems, in order to arrive at an evaluation.

That's what my book does. It will be called (I think) *A Life Made of Words: the Poetry of John Bradburne*. After reading it, I hope others will also be able to give a confident answer to the question.

Report from Fr Tigere, new Administrator at Mutemwa

I arrived at Mutemwa on the 16th September 2016 as the new Administrator. The place is so prayerful and people from all walks of life in Zimbabwe are visiting every weekend. Schools are also coming in large numbers as students are preparing for their examinations. The highest number at the moment is about 500 people who will come every weekend and this month of October 700 and above are visiting the place. They usually bring us sugar, rice, soap, clothes, but getting money is a real problem in Zimbabwe, but they are trying. Donations sometimes go up to \$80 dollars and if there are priests concelebrating we share that money for offertory for the upkeep of Mutemwa and its residents.

Projects are coming up well and at the moment, we are trying to establish our market, and I have been moving around Mutoko centre and visiting canteens and restaurants in order to supply them with pigs, eggs and off-layer hens locally. We have just fenced our projects area site with diamond mesh wire and our local workers helped us a lot.

Some of our lepers have been helping us with herding the cattle, and on Monday we received one calf and we are expecting more as well. At the site, we approached the council and they have shown us our boundaries, and we want to fence it as soon as possible in order to stop encroachment of any houses being built close by.



Fr Patience Tigere with Mutemwa Secretary and Nurse

Tony Hutchings RIP

by Fr David Harold Barry SJ

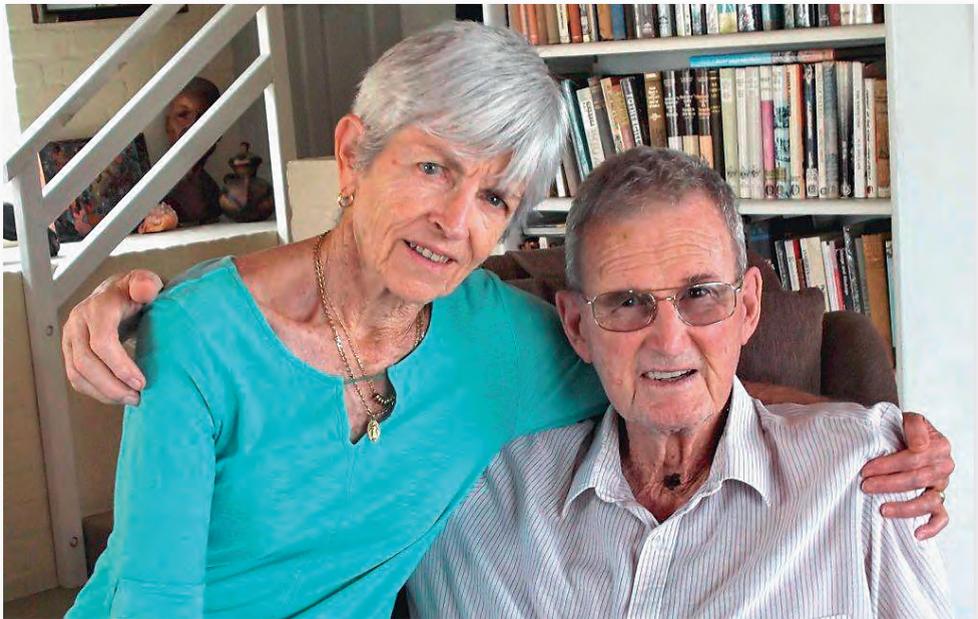
Tony Hutchings, a long-time supporter of Mutemwa, died in Cape Town after a long illness on 28 April 2016. Tony and his wife Pauline and their four children lived close to Mutemwa on a “commercial” farm half way between Murewa and Mutoko. A connection grew through Pauline hearing a radio broadcast about the Catholic faith by a Jesuit priest, Fr John Dove. Pauline felt drawn to explore more and ask Fr John who she could talk to. He told her he had a great friend at Mutemwa, John Bradburne, who was himself a convert, and he was just the man.

Thus began a long friendship with John Bradburne and with Mutemwa with constant visits there, and visits by John to their farm at Ngwarati. When a need developed for new people on the committee that ran Mutemwa, Pauline and Tony volunteered and Tony soon became the Chairperson, a position he held for over seven years. Tony brought to the work all the thoroughness and devotion he had developed in running a large farm over many years.

Tony and Pauline continued their support for Mutemwa right up to the time they were driven off their farm in the land seizures in the first years of the century. They settled first in Harare but then had to move out of the country to Cape Town. In his last years he gave a wonderful example of calm acceptance both of his losing his livelihood and his health. He never showed any bitterness or self-pity. He was a model of resignation – in the best sense – and of good humour, even though at times he was in great pain.

We do not know what makes a person who they are, but it would not seem a wild notion that his contact with people living with leprosy opened his eyes to understanding and compassion for those who suffer.

And perhaps this helped him to be patient and enduring when his time came. Pauline stood by him in all his ups and downs and our love and sympathy go to her as she mourns the death of the noble person who was her husband.



Pauline and Tony Hutchings at home in Capetown

Fr. Liam McCarthy OFM returns to Mutemwa

It was a kind of coming home for me – to return and visit Mutemwa. I had spent thirteen years as missionary in Zimbabwe. During that time I frequently went to Mutemwa to visit the residents and staff of the Leprosy Centre. I became very aware of the enormous contribution on a regular basis of the funding being sent out by the JBMS. Without this funding – coming from the many kind benefactors to JBMS – the work at the Leprosy Centre could not continue. The Centre today has forty one residents. They are cared for daily by a devoted staff and helpers. There is a qualified nurse taking care of the sick. On my visit I celebrated Mass in Shona – I hadn't forgotten it over the three years I've been away! The residents and staff gathered in the little chapel so dear to John Bradburne. To celebrate Mass with these poor and sick people is an experience I will always treasure. One felt so close to the early days of the Church – the disciples of Jesus who gathered at the Mount of Beatitudes.

After Mass the people gathered under the blue jacaranda trees and I was introduced to the patients and staff by Fr Patience Tigere, the Administrator. Among those whom I met were three survivors who had known Baba John – the three had lovely memories of the love and care shown to them by John Bradburne.

The present Administrator is Fr Patience Tigere, – a Franciscan friar. Fr Patience was Ordained

in 2014. He is also a member of the Council of the friars here in Zimbabwe. He is so devoted to his ministry here. Only a few days beforehand I had travelled with him to many pharmacies in Harare as he tried to buy the medicine and drugs needed by the patients. This was not easy.

Let me tell you something of the situation here. Some say it has gone from bad to worse. You cannot get more than a few dollars in cash from the Banks. The Banks have run out of cash as people have drawn out their hard earned cash lest their money be turned into Bank Bond Notes. Clients moreover will not put cash into the Banks. Many transactions are now done by swipe cards – no cash, just bank to bank transfers. If you need cash you queue at the Bank and get a minimal number of notes. People are desperate.

Back to Mutemwa – on behalf of the poor sick people there – and the homeless – I express deep gratitude to the kind benefactors of JBMS. Without your continued support the patients would not receive the food, the shelter, the medicine and the care that they need and deserve. I can assure you that you are remembered in the thoughts and prayers of the residents and staff. By your generosity you are continuing the love and goodness of John Bradburne who in his time gave everything for the sake of the poor lepers. Thank you.



A group after Mass celebrated by Fr Liam and Fr Patience



Fr Patience Tigere OFM with three residents who were with John Bradburne

YOUR LETTERS



Cecilia at her confirmation (on right) with her sponsor

When the life of our eldest granddaughter Cecilia, autistic with additional problems became so dreadfully unhappy and stressful for herself and her parents, I gave her to John Bradburne to look after her. She was about eight years old, and from then on it became clear that every year came with required new help and support, one to one specialised swimming lessons at the sports centre opposite the house, a drama group for the disabled, a speech therapy group.

At 11 she transferred to a splendid school with twenty hours of support a week. From then on her progress was remarkable; a special prize as a pupil who had made unique progress, singing lessons for a true sweet voice, useful in choirs and plays, passing vocal and clarinet music exams. For ten years she has been in twice yearly holiday club performances of abbreviated Shakespeare plays. In this year's celebration she was notable as Cordelia and Juliet.

Meanwhile, most important to her was that she made friends, including a faithful loving best friend. The boys stopped making fun of her and she developed a real kindly charm of manner. She is an ever loyal support for her aspergers younger sister, and for her youngest sibling always the useful big sister.

Teachers were glad to be an accompaniment for her when she went abroad with school choir exchanges. She had two sessions work experience at a charity shop, and learnt to travel alone on buses. She writes us twenty or more page letters every holiday with detailed accounts and illustrations of her lessons, projects and school events. She was confirmed and is now a regular reader at Mass.

To crown it all, she has a good set of nine GCSE passes, beyond any expectation, with two A stars, one C and the rest A's and B's. She has joined the school sixth form College and we wait and see!

Paula Parkyn, Devon

Due to John Bradburne's intercession on behalf of my daughter Elizabeth, a cancer sufferer. I am certain that my prayers were answered by him. Elizabeth had organised three cancer awareness teaparties, the last on 10th September in their little garden. On the 9th her garden was infested with bees to the extent of having to cancel, but as it was on our own 61st wedding anniversary, I told her to hold on.

Prayers were offered to John (a great friend to bees) to help. Amazingly on the 10th she called me on the phone and said 'Mother have you been praying for me, I can't believe it, there is not a single bee in the garden, they simply left overnight!

We had a wonderful family gathering at 2-6pm with all our family attending.

Thanks be to God.

Patsy Collinson, East Sussex

I am writing to thank JBMS for the work they are doing to help raise funds for Mutemwa Community in Zimbabwe. I recently attended the anniversary of John's death this year at Mutemwa which was deeply moving. I witnessed how so many people bore witness to John Bradburne's intercession in their lives, and how many young people are drawn back to their faith through the Sacraments and through inner reflection. It made me feel very happy to be part of such a celebration. John's life and work he gave to the community show how his goodness and love transformed the lives of the people there both spiritually and physically. Many believe John will be made a saint one day which will benefit so many people around the world. His simplicity of living with the poor giving himself completely to their service is a role model for us to follow in a world which has been overtaken by technology and distraction, which John himself rejected. For him the main thing was to be as close to God as possible through practically helping his fellow man, and through quiet conversation and meditation of His word in the Gospel and in quiet reflection which gave him such inner strength to cope with the demands of those around him.

Sally Mbugu, Zimbabwe

Letter from John Bradburne's mother Erica, to Pauline Hutchings dated September 28th 1979 in response to a letter of condolence to her after John was killed

Dear Pauline,

I feel I must address you thus knowing so much about you from Audrey (daughter) who in her letter of Sept 12th quoted two from you and including your kind message to me. So as I have your address I want to tell you how very much I appreciated this and your account of my beloved John's tragic end- the beginning for him- and I try not to grieve now but rejoice for him.

We now pray for him and believe that he does for us, but I shall sadly miss his regular cheery and humorous letters (often in verse), of which I have kept so many. Together with countless poems, and I hope some of the latter may be published some day.

Forgive this childish script but with an arthritic hand it is very difficult to write in my ordinary one, so I hope you can decipher.

Audrey very sweetly sent me the photo you sent her of John with your two sons and daughter and a friend at an after Mass breakfast at Easter. It is exceptionally good of John and I have it out in my bedroom. I often look at it and feel and know he is near. Thurston (Fr Dove) came down from London on the 18th after his return from Ireland (where he's been overwhelmed with sadness at the ghastly news). and spent four hours with Mary my daughter and me and never stopped talking of John

except when obliged to put some food in his mouth of which he hardly seemed aware! John in his last letter said of Thurston 'He has already become a saint in my opinion'. Two days ago Thurston sent me numerous prayers, the whole order of the Requiem Mass for John and the wonderful homily given at it by Fr David Harold-Barry. If I can get a photocopy of this I will send you one. I sent Audrey a splendid article in the Tablet by Lady Judith Listowel who knew John and also Philip my eldest son in London. I have had well over 40 letters as well as cards and phone calls and have found it a bit hard to keep pace with this stupid hand, but am so grateful to all these kind people and especially for their prayers, which I know have helped me enormously.

It must be very difficult for you and your husband to carry on as things are in your so troubled country. May God preserve and keep you safe. John had a premonition and wrote not long ago to Philip, 'If I should meet a violent end, light a candle for me and pray that I may meet it with calmness and courage'. He did, and I am proud to be the mother of that rare being, a Christian martyr.

My love, and God be with and bless you and yours,

Very sincerely

Erica M Bradburne

Your Continuing Help

Please do continue to keep in touch with JBMS.

It is important that those who have personal memories about John Bradburne to write these down and send to us as a record which can be safely kept in the archive.

For those who hear about John's remarkable life, and for those who receive help from him, we would be delighted to receive your messages and responses to enable us to support his Cause and spread the word further.

We are most grateful to our friends over the years who have remained in contact, and who help to keep the work going to support Mutemwa Care Centre, where John dedicated the final years of his life.

We especially pray that John Bradburne's life will be honoured and spread by the Church in order to inspire others who, similar to John, sought to find their vocation by God's good grace.

If your parish is interested in receiving our free booklets please let us know and we can send these to you. Email: info@johnbradburne.com.