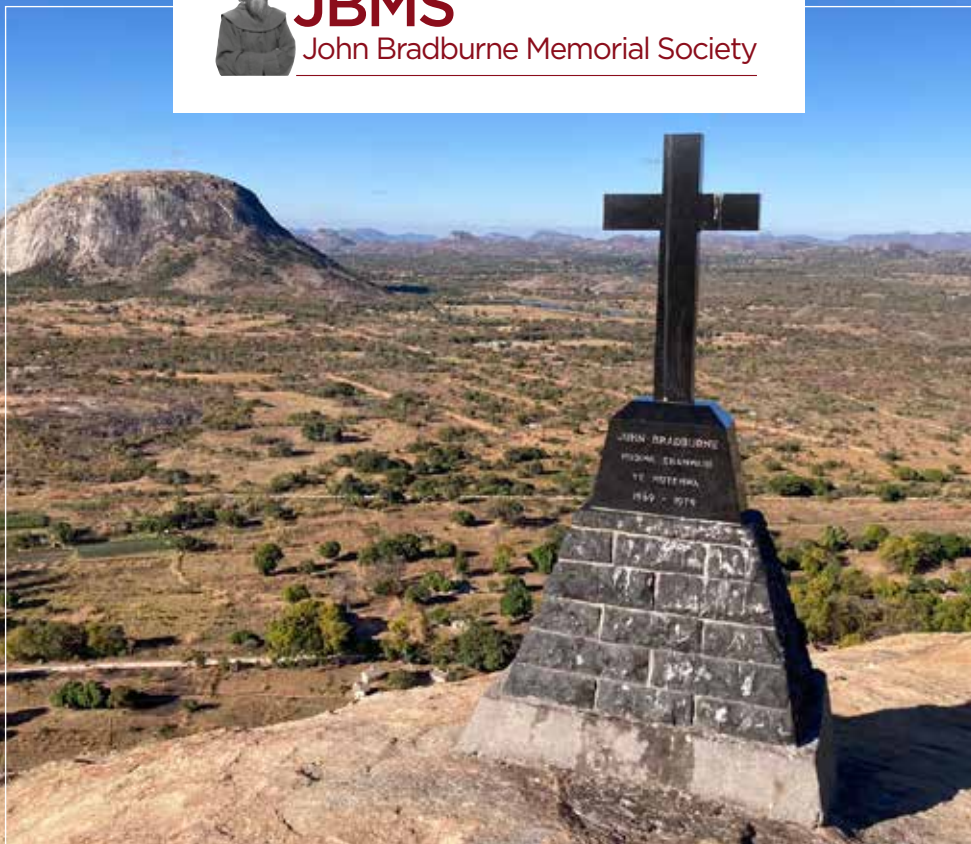




# JBMS

John Bradburne Memorial Society



# JBMS NEWSLETTER

## Summer 2025

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# WELCOME TO THE LATEST SUMMER EDITION FROM THE JOHN BRADBURNE MEMORIAL SOCIETY

We're delighted to share with you the latest news and updates from JBMS. In this edition, we bring you stories from Mutemwa, highlighting the incredible work being supported by JBMS. You'll also find thoughtful articles on the theme of Hope, reflections inspired by John's own poetic writings, and a look ahead to our upcoming events.

Thank you for your continued support in honouring the life and legacy of John Bradburne. His selfless service and deep faith continue to touch hearts around the world as we support his cause for beatification.

With deepest thanks and blessings,

JBMS



## A SAINT AMONG HEROES

John Bradburne has been posthumously declared a National Hero by the government of Zimbabwe. John is being recognised by the country as a figure of national importance for its people.

This recognition is deeply significant not only as an acknowledgment of his selfless service to the leprosy patients of Mutemwa and his unwavering commitment to the marginalised, but also as a powerful affirmation that may support his cause for beatification.

While national hero status is a civic honour, and beatification is a process within the Catholic Church, the two are not unrelated. The government's recognition can raise greater awareness of his life and virtues, potentially encouraging more testimonies of his holiness, miracles, and devotion to emerge.

In the journey toward beatification, such public affirmation by a nation adds moral weight and global visibility. It shows that his legacy transcends religious boundaries and speaks to universal values of compassion, sacrifice, and love.



# A HEARTFELT THANK YOU FOR HELPING BENSON WALK AGAIN!

We are overjoyed to share the wonderful news that Benson has now been fitted with his new prosthetic leg! Thanks to your generosity, he is already learning to walk and move with it, regaining the independence that so many of us take for granted.

Over the coming weeks, Benson will have two more appointments with his doctor to ensure the prosthetic is working well for him. After that, he will be free to move with confidence once again. This life-changing gift would not have been possible without your support, and we cannot thank you enough for making such a profound difference in his life.

From all of us at JBMS, and from Benson himself—thank you!



## AND STILL THEY COME – 1 BY DAVID CRYSTAL



It never ceases to amaze me how often someone produces yet another piece of the jigsaw of John Bradburne's life and poetry. At the end of 2024, the Prior of Parkminster, the Carthusian monastery in West Sussex, sent us 13 letters and a postcard found in its archives. They were written by John between 1950 and 1953 to Dom Andrew Gray, whom he had met during his stay there in 1950, and whose friendship and influence he greatly valued. 'Deo Gratias for the day I met you', he writes in one of them.

None of these letters were known to us. There's no poetry in them, but they provide invaluable insights into a period when there is hardly any surviving material in John's own hand. The sequence can now be read in the online poetry database: [www.johnbradburnepoems.com](http://www.johnbradburnepoems.com). Type 'Father Andrew' into the search box and you'll find them.

The letters show a man searching for his vocation. The first is in October 1950 when he is en route to

Israel via Italy. 'About my vocation and Israel I feel ever more confident, though still very much in the dark as to how.' A couple of weeks later, in Israel, he writes: 'The Lord made nothing clear to me at the time except the great grace of trusting in Him.'

Where he ends up is the result of a misunderstanding. 'On being put down, somewhere in Jerusalem, I enquired where was Mount Zion, because I wanted to hear Compline at the Benedictines. The woman I asked misunderstood my question and directed me to the House of Our Lady of Sion (founded by Ratisbonne, a convert Jew, for the conversion of Israel.) This was providential, because they were very kind and gave me bed and food. Then they agreed to put me up while I decided what to do.'

He finds that the Superior thinks 'I may well have a vocation to be a priest in this order. I said first that though I knew I had a vocation for the Jews, I did not think I had the vocation to be a priest. But the whole thing seems to be meant - I arrived here by what seemed a mistake!' He's accepted as a postulant and plans to begin his novitiate in September. He describes his company: 'There are seven of us here: 3 Hebrews, 3 French and an English vagabond buffoon'. He writes: 'I am very happy; please pray that I may lose myself in the

love of God - the best way to be an apostle'. In a postcard he comments: 'Please pray much for me, dear Father, for I'm weaker than water'.

He begins studying as a Novice, but it doesn't work out. In December he writes: 'Last Sunday, after a year of doubts and a month or so floundering in Minor Logic I made the decision once and for all that I had not a vocation to the Priesthood. So, I told Fr. Superior ... He was in complete agreement with me that I had neither the make-up nor the aptitudes for Priesthood'. And the following year he leaves Louvain, travels around Europe, and in September ends up as a sacristan in a church near Naples. In March 1953, in the last letter to Father Andrew, he writes: 'with copious greetings from a vagabond who's settled at last'.

During all this time, he was writing poetry. In January 1951: 'I had a mild attack of rhyming recently, but now I am quite well again!' And in March 1953 he sends a 'book of nursery rhymes' to Father Andrew, and two others to John Dove and his godfather - 'quite different each book'. Unfortunately, none of these have been found. He adds: 'In the little Epilogue I have said to you how nice it would be for Miriam's Church here if my writings raised some cash, in or out of my lifetime'. JBMS has seen to that.

## AND STILL THEY COME - 2

A new year, January 2025 - and a new poem discovered. Dr Wayne Perry was a friend of John in the 1970s, when he spent a year as a junior doctor at the hospital in Harare. He sent us the collection of poems and letters from John after he returned to England. Wayne had already provided photocopies of the letters, but these were the originals, and in the collection was one not seen before - a joyously playful piece called 'Woman, Song and Wine: a play on the Word's Mother'. It's in the poetry database now. Wayne has published a reminiscence about John in JBMS Newsletter Summer 2015 p. 7, which can be found on our website: [www.johnbradburne.com](http://www.johnbradburne.com)





# EMPOWERING FUTURES: THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING MUTEMWA FAMILIES

Thank you for your continued support of JBMS in uplifting the families of Mutemwa. Your generosity in covering children's school fees not only provides them with the gift of education but also eases the financial burden on their families. Your kindness is making a real difference, empowering these children with opportunities for a brighter future. We deeply appreciate your commitment to this cause.



## A PLACE OF HOPE: REFLECTIONS ON MUTEMWA LEPROSY CARE CENTRE BY TIBOR KAUSER, CIOFS MINISTER GENERAL



Tibor Kauser, the Minister General of the Secular Franciscan Order, is a devoted servant of faith, deeply committed to the values of St. Francis of Assisi. With a heart for the marginalised and a mission to embody Gospel living, he has dedicated his leadership to fostering fraternity, service, and solidarity among Secular Franciscans worldwide.

His journey reflects a profound dedication to the Franciscan way of life, emphasising compassion, humility, and care for the most vulnerable. Through his ministry, he continues to inspire and guide the global Franciscan family toward a deeper commitment to love, justice, and peace.



I was honoured to visit the Mutemwa Leprosy Care Centre this February, an experience that deeply moved me. It left a lasting impression on me in many ways, touching different aspects of my personal journey.

First and foremost, the history of Mutemwa Leprosy Care Centre is a testament to resilience and faith. Since the time of John Bradburne, it has remained a vital reality—both a sorrowful reminder that such a place is still needed and a powerful witness to the unwavering dedication of those who serve the poor who live there.

Equally remarkable is the commitment of those who care for the residents. This is more than just a camp or settlement; it is a true community. The dedication of caregivers, who treat each person with dignity and respect, is both inspiring and deserving of deep admiration.

Moreover, the sense of family that exists within the Centre is tangible. Thanks to the love and attention of those who serve, the residents experience a true home—where they are known by name and their individual needs are met with compassion.

Anyone who contributes, in any way, to the well-being of this Centre and its people is part of something truly meaningful. They are serving the most vulnerable, the ones in greatest need. God's love is clearly present in this place, shining through

despite the tragedies that have shaped the lives of its residents. And through the hands and hearts of those who serve, that love is made even more visible. The impact of this place and its people is unforgettable, leaving a profound emotional imprint on all who encounter it.



*Eremenciana Chinyama and Tibor Kauser next to John's cross*

# PILGRIMS OF HOPE: THE JUBILEE YEAR

As we journey into the Jubilee Year 2025, declared by the late Pope Francis as a time of renewal, mercy, and mission, we are invited to step into our identity as “Pilgrims of Hope.” This powerful theme echoes the heart of what we stand for at JBMS: walking together in faith, service, and hope for a better future.

Being a Pilgrim of Hope isn't just about a physical journey—it's about a spiritual posture. It's choosing to move forward with trust in God, even when the path isn't clear. It's about believing in the possibility of transformation, in the world and within ourselves. And for the JBMS community, this Jubilee year offers an opportunity to renew our commitment to the mission.

As pilgrims, we are always on the move, always seeking, always trusting. And as Pilgrims of Hope, we carry not just our own dreams, but the dreams of many, especially those who rely on JBMS for support, justice, and opportunity.

Let us walk this Jubilee year together, rooted in faith and moving forward in hope.



## WITH HOPE AND GRATITUDE: BERNADETTE'S STORY

My name is Bernadette Chataika. I am 11 years old and currently in Grade Six at Little Rock International School. I will be sitting for my Cambridge final examinations this coming October.

I am the daughter of Maria, who lives at Mutemwa and is living with leprosy. Despite the challenges our family has faced, this incredible journey in my education has been made possible through the support of JBMS and the scholarship I received from Little Rock International School.



I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to JBMS for your generosity, kindness, and support. Your help has given me the confidence to pursue my dreams and believe in my future.

May the Lord bless you and keep you always.

# JOHN BRADBURN, PILGRIM OF HOPE

## BY DIDIER RANCE



The study of the heroic virtues of John Bradburne is part of the road to his eventual beatification. 2025 Jubilee of Hope is a good opportunity to take a closer look on this virtue. In his writings and in testimonies about him, Hope seems the theological virtue the most associated to his life as he is a witness to Faith and Love. But it is a misconception - John Bradburne was also a man of Christian Hope.

John Bradburne's life could seem to go from failure to failure for this fool, "skilled in fiasco" as he wrote to his mother in 1961. Since his conversion, he tried several times a consecrated vocation and failed. He tried dozens of professions and failed. He thought his vocation was to be a hermit, yet he never was a full-time one, even in Hare Street House or Mutemwa. At the beginning of his Christian life, he was full of hope and even enthusiastic every time he changed vocation. Each turn was thought to be God's choice for him, the true proper place till the end of his life. Then difficulties arose, and failure it was (as in Buckfast Abbey, Parkminster Charterhouse, his tentative eremitism in Holy Land, Louvain Novitiate, Prinknash Abbey, several Franciscan missions in Rhodesia, the 1973 crisis in Mutemwa).

Like his father, John was also prone to periods of doubt, even depression and desolation, as his

closest friends recalled. A close look to how he truly lived divine hope could be summed up in this example, in Mutemwa. Always in great difficulties and, near the end of his life, knowing he was in great danger, he wrote *On dissolution*, joking about it all, while expressing his hope to receive the last sacrament before dying:

When comes that last most intimate event  
Called death, called sister death, to take me  
home,  
I hope I shall receive the sacrament  
Before my body goes to help the loam.

### *Lessons in hope: poems and letters*

But John Bradburne's life and writing refute the idea that he was not interested by hope: more than five hundred occurrences in the database. This shows that about half of them may be found in his letters, which are only a small part of the database. These show that he was a man expressing hope mostly in his life, and towards others, more than in poetic outpourings.

John Bradburne was, at first, driven by ordinary human hopes. In 1962, for instance, he pursued a long-cherished dream: to gain recognition as a poet. He revisited his collection of poems, selected a few, and sent them to Cecil Hardwicke, asking her to submit them to the publisher Gollancz. The response—a rejection—arrived much later, by which time Bradburne had already been in Africa for several months.

He learnt not to rely on human hopes, but on divine hope. He never despaired about this hope - faith and assurance that God wanted to lead him somewhere. Throughout the years, he became less and less prone to human assurance or hope. As it may, he had no enthusiasm for the greatest decision of his life: to live with people living with leprosy. Does that show that his hope was more and more a theological virtue and less and less a human sensibility and desire (as say a Christian philosopher: "real hope starts with the despair of all human hope" (Jacques Ellul). Fr John Dove asked the question: "How powerful was his mind and inspiration?" and answered:





Fr John Dove and John Bradburne outside his tin hut at Mutemwa

It certainly needed a powerful mind and inspiration to follow his exceedingly difficult call. Yet he did this with extraordinary faith and courage. He knew not where his vocation would lead him, he simply followed an interior call day by day in spite of huge obstacles - content, rejection, ridicule. He had no base, no Monastery, no religious house, nowhere he could call 'home'. He had no back-up system as for formal Religious, no Abbot or Superior to guide him.

His hope was mainly supranatural, concerning spiritual gift or hope in God in difficult circumstances. Some occurrences are especially worth noticing to see what hope really meant for him. When his friend John Dove joined the Jesuits, he wrote to him :

I felt pretty dim when you'd gone and a great sense of loss, and yet I believe firmly that such friendships as ours are made in heaven for an everlasting continuance there. I intend no presumption, but am full of hope by our dear Lord's mercy to me.

In 1950, when he arrived in Louvain, maybe understanding already this was not to be his way, he wrote to John Dove :

My soul's a desert just now, and I had today a fearful go of black depression and doubt. But I am learning to recognize these attacks not as signs of failure but of victory and progress.

In 1956-1957, he expressed his hope in God alone:

And so, dear Lord, have pity on my plight,  
Both robber and transgressor long I've been,  
And Thou art all my hope, my only Light,  
My Lord of Spring who makes the woodland green.

While arriving in Africa, his three wishes are an expression of his heart's hope. When violence burst in Rhodesia, supernatural hope became pre-eminent:

The world is all wars and rumours of wars but the Lord of Christmas remains, our peace, our hope, our salvation and our whole desire.

Where hope was to be found? He asked, and answered:

When we arrive in heaven, look not back  
But onward we to glee untold in worth:  
'Never a sparrow falleth to the ground  
Except Our Father knows'... there hope is found.

And, in his poem *Nunc Nuncio*:

Up surely space is held by pure suspense  
In expectation of the breath it lacks;  
That hope of 'spes' the Latin language backs  
Springs to the singer, flings to the defence!  
Space clings to hope of being at its midst  
The stilly vortex of the Lord of awe

At Mutemwa, he found that hope was present in the lepers, notwithstanding their condition:

Their souls are a kaleidoscope  
Of charity and faith and hope:  
Their pattern of vicissitude  
Is bright with promise, rainbow-hued.

After his expulsion from Mutemwa, depressed on Chigona, he still could be struck by hope:

... rise then, my spirit, soar  
I'll drink to it right now and blight confound.

When the war had been raging around the Mutoko and Mutemwa area, a burst of hope is the answer:

Naturally speaking, all our prospects are pitch-black and Marxist.

Supernaturally speaking, there is abounding hope and joy in The Risen Christ.

Writing to friends at Christmas time, his best wishes are expressed as hope yet unconventional, to have confidence in God whatever arrives, and behave towards others as towards Jesus Christ:

I hope that you both have had a most blessed Christmas: you always look after everybody so warmly and you always please because you are always pleased with each of God's days as and how they come, and you treat all people as you would treat Christ: with a vast welcome.

His hope was deeply rooted in his love for our Lady:

I'd quicken not from woe

To hopefulness, Maria, save for thee;

And in a poem on *the Cloud of Unknowing*,

Be oned and have no other eyes but hers,

Seeing by faith what passes reason's reach

While Substance of our hope fulfilled concurs.

### ***Testimonies on John Bradburne's hope***

Even if there are less numerous than testimonies or reflections on John Bradburne's faith and love, we find testimonies about hope in his life. He has been seen by others as a prophet of hope, or a man of everyday hope: "a frequent expression of John

Bradburne was "Roll on the Kingdom". We may also notice his hope for others in the wars through which he lived. During the war in the Far East after one day of fierce trench battles, he suddenly leapt in front of the Japanese with his arms stretched wide and shouted at the Gurkhas: "God will protect you". Same could be seen in Rhodesia's Civil War and for the people living with leprosy. His life with them at Mutemwa and his feeling about them were under the sign of hope:

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 giving them hope of a better life to come. (Pauline Hutchings)

Cardinal Napier of Durban considers John Bradburne as "a prophet of hope for the afflicted and the marginalised". Yes, he was a man of Christian Hope!

## **WELCOME & OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE LCBL MISSION**

We are delighted to announce the Welcome and Official Opening of the Little Children of Our Blessed Lady in Zimbabwe (LCBL) Mission at Our Lady of Perpetual Help in the Diocese of Lancaster on the 8th December 2024. It was joyful occasion marking a significant new chapter of faith, service, and community. The LCBL Missionaries have come from Zimbabwe to Lancaster, bringing with them a deep knowledge of and heartfelt devotion to John Bradburne, whose life continues to inspire their work and witness.

Top Left: Sr Getrude  
Top Right: Sr Elizabeth  
Bottom Left: Sr Gladys  
Bottom Right: Sr Rozaria



Bishop Paul Swarbrick saying Mass welcoming the LCBL sisters to Lancaster Diocese.

# NEWS FROM MUTEMWA

The general health and wellbeing of our residents remains stable, with individualised care plans in place. Some residents continue to receive chronic care for wounds, mental health, and other conditions.

Food, clothing, and medication remain adequate thanks to generous donations. With winter approaching, we will distribute additional blankets and warm clothing.

Our agricultural projects continue to thrive. In the garden, sales of tomatoes, green mealies, and cabbages raised USD 2,128 during February and March. The piggery is growing steadily with 7 sows, 2 boars, 12 piglets, 3 gilts, and 13 porkers, with an additional 12 piglets recently born. Thanks to the drip irrigation system, green mealies and tomatoes are flourishing and currently available for sale. Groundnut harvesting has commenced with an expected yield of 1.5 tonnes to boost nutrition support, and maize harvesting will begin after the Easter holidays. In poultry, we maintain 491 layer birds producing an average of 11.25 crates



of eggs daily, while 70 roadrunner chickens have reached the point of lay. Our livestock includes 3 oxen, 1 cow, 1 bull, and 1 calf. Additionally, our 7 active beehives are thriving, with a honey harvest anticipated by the end of April.

Mutemwa continues to welcome pilgrims, with around 2,000 visitors per month. We thank all our supporters, partners, and staff for making these achievements possible.



# WORLD LEPROSY DAY

As we observed World Leprosy Day on 26th January 2025, we are reminded of the urgent need to raise awareness about leprosy, an often overlooked disease that still affects over 200,000 people worldwide each year. While many believe leprosy is a disease of the past, its impact is still deeply felt today, leaving countless individuals marginalised, isolated, and in need of support.

This year's theme highlights a powerful message: breaking the stigma associated with leprosy and promoting inclusion and dignity for those living with the disease. The fight against leprosy goes beyond medical care, it's about restoring human dignity, advocating for equal rights, and building communities of compassion and acceptance.

At the heart of our mission at JBMS is the Mutemwa Leprosy Care Centre in Zimbabwe, a sanctuary that has served those affected by leprosy since the 1930s. Mutemwa holds a special place in our hearts, not only for its enduring care but for the extraordinary legacy of John Bradburne, who devoted his life to serving the residents with unwavering love, humility, and compassion. His life's work continues to guide and inspire everything we do.

Today, the residents of Mutemwa continue to face challenges, access to medical care, social exclusion, and the ongoing effects of stigma. At JBMS, we are committed to continuing John's legacy by supporting those who call Mutemwa home.

We would like to extend our thanks to all our JBMS supporters who generously donated towards this special day. Your kindness helps ensure that the residents of Mutemwa receive not only essential care, but also the dignity, love, and community they deserve.



**SHINE A LIGHT ON HOPE AND RESILIENCE**  
**WORLD LEPROSY DAY**  
**2025**

Join us on **January 26th, 2025**, to raise awareness, fight stigma, and support the patients of the **Mutemwa Leprosy Care Centre**.

- ☒ Spread Awareness
- ☒ Donate
- ☒ Pray

[www.johnbradburne.com](http://www.johnbradburne.com)

**DONATE** 

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**Every donation makes a difference**



# A SHORT TESTIMONY OF DAN & BABS IZZETT



I was born in Zimbabwe in 1947 in Harare and lived there all my life until 2020 when we moved to the UK to be with our family. Six grandchildren, two sons and their wives. After I left school I went to college and worked for Water Development. Later I worked with a civil engineering company that built large dams in the nation.

While I was in Rusape building the dam I met my wife Babs in 1969. We got married in August 1970. In November 1970 I had a rash over my whole body which was misdiagnosed as a sexually transmitted disease. My wife and I knew that it was an incorrect diagnosis. I was treated for two years but it never got better. Eventually I was referred to a consulting physician who after extensive tests found that I had leprosy. I was 25 years old then in 1972.

Working back from that time and now knowing about leprosy and its symptoms, we worked out that I'd contracted leprosy between the ages of five and six. At the time of my diagnosis the only honourable thing I thought I could do was to make the offer to Babs to have our marriage annulled. To which she replied, no thank you, I love you and we'd made a commitment to God and people to stay married until one of us had passed away.

As there was no medical treatment for leprosy in 1972, we were advised to live life as normal as possible but keep our diagnosis a secret where possible. We've been blessed with two sons, and I continued to work in my civil engineering trade, which I did working for the City of Harare.

In 1976 I burned my feet as a result of standing in a basin of hot, near boiling water. Leprosy had destroyed all feeling in my feet up to my knees, from my hands to above my elbows and about 70% of my face. A typical result of having had undiagnosed leprosy for 20 years. My right foot was amputated in 1980 because of osteomyelitis, from the infection caused by burning my feet. The osteomyelitis had destroyed the bones in my right foot.

While Babs was pregnant with our second son her body was covered in brown patches. They were diagnosed as a hormone imbalance. Then one day when our youngest son was six weeks old she burned her arm and felt no pain. We visited the leprosy control officer and to our shock and dismay Babs was diagnosed with leprosy. The difference being hers was an early diagnosis. As a result, she has no nerve damage so no disabilities.

Babs had contracted leprosy from me before I'd been diagnosed with it! It was seven years after we'd got married. The generally accepted incubation period for leprosy. It's generally accepted that 95% of people are immune to leprosy. We were in the remaining five percent of people and unbeknown to us we got married! The result of having the disease has caused me to have a leg amputated below my knee, two toes and a finger.

Leprosy is not a kind disease! If left untreated it maims a person and affects your loved ones and others.

We came to have a strong faith in our Lord Jesus in September 1974. We've never been angry with Our Heavenly Father but at times we've been disappointed and frustrated because of complications resulting from leprosy and not understanding the purpose behind the challenges we faced. In 1981 we had a change in career and went into full time church ministry, this was in Harare. In 1986, we returned to Rusape to plant a church. We pastored the church for 26 years then



retired from ministry. On the west side of Rusape, in 1970 we built a dam to supply water for the town. Then in 1999 on the east side of Rusape we built a church that provided 'Living Water'.

We have multiple stories of God's provision in times of lack, in times of turmoil and need. He has been a good Father to us.

The Leprosy Mission asked us to share our testimony in 2000 which we did and since then we've travelled to many nations, spoken in numerous towns and cities. The objective; to be advocates for "leprosy sufferers" around the world. To fulfil the mandate from Jesus to: "Cleanse those with leprosy".

In all our travels I had the privilege of visiting Mutemwa Leprosy Centre. The visits have always been extremely rewarding. This is a picture of me with one of the patients. Mutemwa is miles away from Harare, neglected by distance but cared for by the precious people at the Care Centre.

*Who is this John Bradburne  
A wanderer from another nation  
He came to those  
Who were not his own*

*He came to those  
Who stole his heart  
He came in love  
He gave compassion*

*He lived like a hermit  
He gave all he had  
A life martyred for others  
Mutemwa was a privileged place*



## JOIN US FOR THE JBMS SPECIAL MASS AT WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL

Mark your calendars for a truly special occasion on Saturday, 13th September at 2:00pm as we gather at Westminster Cathedral for the JBMS Special Mass. This inspiring event will be followed by an afternoon of engaging talks, uplifting music, a fascinating exhibition, and refreshments. To book your ticket:

Call: 07979 187498 or book online at: <https://www.johnbradburne.com/product/special-mass-at-westminster-a-celebration-of-john-bradburnes-life-cause/>



# WHAT I LEARNT AT MUTEMWA

BY LEO PASSI



*With my grandparents, Father Dove (centre), my father and younger brothers. I am looking over the shoulder of my father. c1995*



*The hut from a slightly different angle, today, thirty years later. Now at a similar age to my father in the other photo.*

I arrived in Mutoko on Sunday afternoon, greeted by the town's bustling energy and roadside vendors selling everything from crispy maize cobs to modern appliances. Aquinamary, the Mutemwa Leprosy Centre supervisor, picked me up from Sky Fuel Station, just yards from the bus stop.

At Mutemwa, Brother Alois, a Franciscan intern from Murehwa, showed me to my guest room where the Franciscans live. I soon met Brother Emmanuel, a South Sudanese friar-in-training, whose knowledge of his homeland fascinated me. Our days followed a simple rhythm—morning

Mass, hearty meals, and work around the Centre. I shadowed Brother Emmanuel at the Piggery, observed local women tending crops, and joined pilgrims climbing Chigona Mountain, a place of spiritual significance since John Bradburne's time. The summit offered breathtaking views, marred only by increasing litter and deforestation.

One evening, Emmanuel and I hiked Mutemwa Mountain. It was a tough ascent, but the panoramic sunset and conversations made it worthwhile.





*With Brother Emmanuel and Tinashe atop Mt Chigona*

We encountered pilgrims like Tinashe Tendai, who came seeking peace through prayer. At the summit stands a modest cross, honouring John Bradburne's decade-long dedication to serving people affected by leprosy.

Before leaving, I toured the patients' quarters with Father Silicio. Some, like the blind Mozambican man and 104-year-old Jessie Brown, greeted us warmly, while others carried heartbreaking stories. The structures, built with donations, stood as a testament to enduring support. By noon, I bid farewell to Aquina, squeezed into a crowded pickup to Mutoko Business Centre, and caught a bus to Harare, gospel music blaring. Grateful for my time at Mutemwa, I left feeling blessed.



*The inscription reads:  
John Bradburne, Mudiwa Shamwari Ye Mutemwa, 1969-1979  
John Bradburne, Friend of the Lepers of Mutemwa, 1969-1979*

# TESTIMONIES:

## To the John Bradburne Memorial Centre

I picked up a booklet 'John Bradburne - Saint of our Time', from my local church when I was attending for Sunday mass.

As I was born and brought up in Malawi but left in 1974, I read with interest and was moved by the holy and humble life of John Bradburne and especially of his time in neighbouring Zimbabwe.

My daughter had been suffering for many years with anxiety and panic attacks without any cure in sight. The panic attacks were debilitating and affected her quality of life.

For some strange reason I felt compelled to pray through John Bradburne's intercession for my daughter's symptoms to improve.

I am pleased to say that I almost immediately started to notice an improvement in my daughter's panic attacks and her condition is much better to the point that I can now hope that one day she will live a normal life.

I am grateful to have picked up the leaflet in my local church and I shall pray that John Bradburne's holy life and generosity will be recognised by the church.

With much gratitude,  
Anonymous

When JBMS held the service for John Bradburne at Westminster Cathedral, my partner and I travelled up from Devon even though we did not really have the money to go. On exiting the cathedral we were standing on the busy London street looking around for a cash withdrawal machine when we looked down at our feet. There, neatly rolled up was £60. The money had no identifying marks on it. We stood there for about ten minutes looking around at the crowd trying to identify someone who was returning for it. No one came - we kept the money as it would have been impossible to establish who dropped it. I am not sure if this qualifies but we have always seen it as a miracle.

My son is autistic. I have often asked for John's protection and that of Father Dove - mentally placing myself on John's hill. When we came to the UK my son's condition was such that I wondered if he could attend a mainstream at school. Indeed the

psychologist who saw him last year was amazed at what he had achieved without intervention - he was never statemented at school and even if he had been, he was at a small village school and it is doubtful that he would have received more intervention than he got. The university that he now attends is ranked 11 out of the 100 or so universities in the UK for accountancy which he is studying. It is a constant process of prayer and holding my breath and at this point I would like to ask for your prayers for my son.

There are many times I pray and give thanks for what I believe has been intervention of John Bradburne, but I will be content with these two.

All the best  
Anonymous

# INTRODUCING JOHN BRADBURN TO CANADA

John's nieces, Kathy Bradburne and Teresa Yonge, met with the Auxiliary Bishop of Toronto, Bishop Robert Kasun, to discuss John Bradburne in Canada. The meeting was productive, helping to introduce John to the Canadian community, where many of Bradburne's family live.



## JOHN BRADBURN PILGRIMAGE WALK 2025 SATURDAY, 6TH SEPTEMBER 2025

This year, JBMS will climb Melmerby Fell, located about 5 km northwest of Cross Fell and the same distance from Skirwith, where John was born and spent his early childhood. The walk will be 11km and will take approx. 5 hours. The terrain is partly boggy with possible cold winds on top of the Fell. Participants should be reasonably fit and appropriately dressed for the conditions

### ✚ Pre-Walk Mass

Before the walk, a Mass will be held at St John the Evangelist Church, Skirwith, CA10 1RQ—where John's father was vicar and where John was baptised. All are welcome to join the Mass even if not partaking in the walk.

(With kind permission of the Church of England Diocese of Carlisle)

### ✚ Post-Walk Gathering

After the walk, join us in Skirwith Village Hall for tea, talks, and an exhibition on John Bradburne's life.



### Booking & Contact

Reserve your place & donate:

📞 [www.johnbradburne.com](http://www.johnbradburne.com)

✉ Email: [info@johnbradburne.com](mailto:info@johnbradburne.com)

☎ Call Kate: 07979 187498



# IN MEMORIAM: POPE FRANCIS

The passing of Pope Francis has left a profound mark on the global Church. As we reflect on his extraordinary legacy — a papacy marked by humility, compassion, and unwavering solidarity with the poor and marginalised — we at the John Bradburne Memorial Society give thanks for his life and witness.

Pope Francis embodied the Gospel of mercy and encounter, values that deeply resonate with the mission and spirit of John Bradburne. His dedication to those on the peripheries of society, and his call to care for our common home, remain lasting inspirations to us all.

We also offer our prayers and support for Pope Leo XIV (Cardinal Robert Prevost) as he begins his ministry as the new Holy Father. With great hope, we look to his leadership to continue the Church's journey of compassion and justice, and in particular, to accompany us in advancing the cause for the beatification of John Bradburne — a man whose life radiated joy, humility, and sacrificial love.

As Pope Francis now rests in Christ's eternal peace, we trust that his spirit endures — in the hearts of the faithful, and in the Church's continued mission to serve the least among us.

**Requiescat in pace, Papa Franciscus.**

**Ora pro nobis, Pope Leo XIV.**



## Support the John Bradburne Memorial Society (JBMS)

The John Bradburne Memorial Society (JBMS) seeks to continue the work of John Bradburne and in accordance with his wishes to relieve people in the area of Mutemwa, Zimbabwe, from sickness, hardship and distress from leprosy and other causes, with the object of improving their conditions of life and to attend to their physical and spiritual welfare to include by the provision of supplemental food, medicines, medical care, clothing and shelter, whilst spreading awareness of John Bradburne's life so that others may, by his example, be encouraged to act with similar compassion and to support his beatification.

**To learn more about the work of JBMS visit [www.johnbradburne.com](http://www.johnbradburne.com)  
or call us on 07979 187498 or email us on [info@johnbradburne.com](mailto:info@johnbradburne.com)**

**To see the vast collection of John Bradburne 's poetry visit  
[www.johnbradburnepoems.com](http://www.johnbradburnepoems.com)**

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