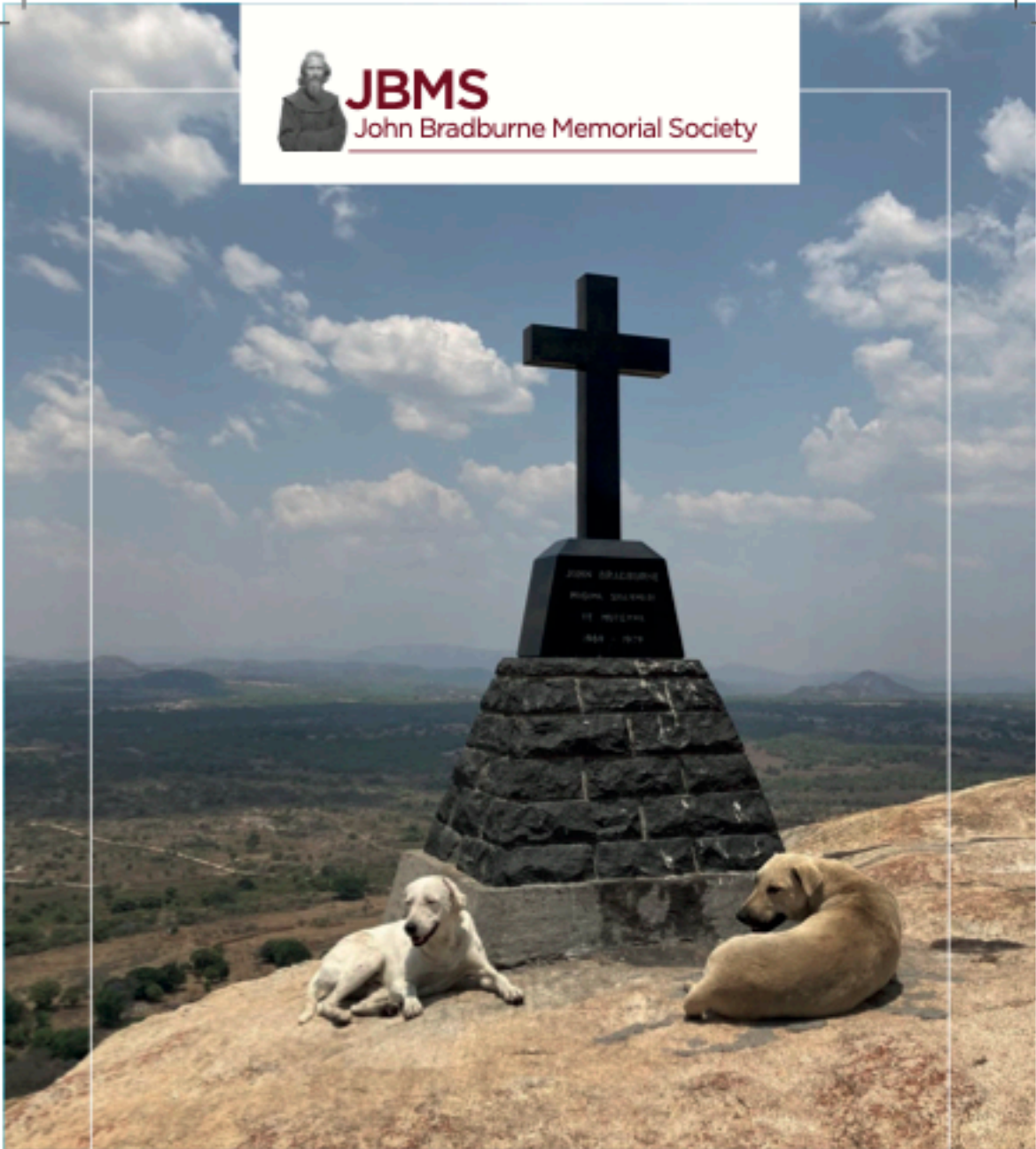




JBMS

John Bradburne Memorial Society



JBMS NEWSLETTER

Summer 2026

WELCOME TO OUR SUMMER NEWSLETTER

As summer arrives, we are delighted to welcome you to the latest edition of the John Bradburne Memorial Society Newsletter.

Summer is a season that invites reflection, gratitude, and renewed energy. In the spirit of John Bradburne's extraordinary life and witness, it is also a time to remember the power of generosity, courage, and faith lived out in daily service to others. John's example continues to inspire people across the world, reminding us that compassion and commitment can transform even the most difficult circumstances into places of hope.

In this issue, we share updates on the continuing work of JBMS, news from friends and supporters, and reflections that help keep John's memory and message alive. Whether you have been connected with the Society for many years or are reading our newsletter for the first time, we are grateful for your interest and support.

Your prayers, encouragement, and involvement help sustain the mission of the Society: to preserve and share the story of John Bradburne and to support the ongoing work inspired by his life, particularly at Mutemwa in Zimbabwe.

We hope this summer edition offers inspiration, insight, and a sense of connection with the growing community of people who continue to be touched by John's remarkable witness.

With warmest regards

The John Bradburne Memorial Society





LEPROSY:

Leprosy is considered a disease of the past, however there are over 200,000 new cases of leprosy being reported worldwide each year. Leprosy is completely curable if detected early. 16 million people have been cured of leprosy over the past 20 years, so it is possible that one day the world will be FREE of leprosy.

WHAT IS LEPROSY:

Leprosy is a Neglected Tropical Disease (NTD) which attacks the nerves. The disease is caused by a rod-shaped bacterium known as *Mycobacterium leprae*. It damages the skin, nerves, eyes and left untreated can cause severe disability.

IMPACT OF LEPROSY:

Untreated, leprosy causes long term damage to hands, feet and eyes, leading to paralysis, amputations, ulcers and blindness. If detected early, leprosy is completely curable through a

course of Multi Drug Therapy (MDT), which was first introduced in the 1980's. MDT is a treatment course that lasts between 6 months to 1 year. MDT is free of charge worldwide. However many people in poverty stricken areas can't access treatment.

PREJUDICE:

Due to the misunderstanding and lack of information on leprosy, people affected by the disease can be left marginalised, excluded from their communities and experience prejudice. It is not only the physical effects of leprosy which can affect the patients but also the emotional and psychological effects of being shunned by their families and communities, their children being taken away from them and feeling totally isolated. The literal translation of Mutemwa means 'Cut off', this was certainly how the patients were when John found them in the 1960's discarded by the Government, local community and shut away.

THREE MEN WHO LOVED LEPERS: JESUS, FRANCIS, JOHN BY FR MGCINI MOYO, VICE POSTULATOR OF JOHN BRADBURNE'S CAUSE



A leper came to Jesus and, kneeling down, begged him and said, "If you wish, you can make me clean." Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand, touched him, and said to him, "I will do it. Be made clean." (Mark 1:40-45)

The care of leprosy patients follows the example of Christ Himself in the Gospels. St Francis and John, the Servant of God and son of Francis, followed in the footsteps of their Master, loved and ministered to lepers.

The Jubilee 2025, announced by Pope Francis in the Papal Bull "Spes Non Confundit" ("Hope does not disappoint"), had a significant impact on many of the Faithful. In Zimbabwe, within the Archdiocese of Harare, Archbishop Robert Ndlovu designated the Mutemwa Shrine as a Jubilee site. The annual John Bradburne Pilgrimage occurred in this context, celebrating the Jubilee of Consolation. Hundreds of pilgrims from across Zimbabwe and beyond gathered to honour John during the Jubilee.

This year's remembrance of John's life occurs during another meaningful moment of grace in the Church's history. Pope Leo XIV declared the Jubilee Year of St. Francis to honour the life and legacy of Saint Francis of Assisi, who died in 1226. This Jubilee Year marks the 800th anniversary of his death and aims to be a time for spiritual renewal, reflection, and emulation of St. Francis's virtues, including humility, poverty, care for creation, and love for the poor and marginalized.

St. Francis of Assisi was the hero of John Bradburne. After arriving in Africa, Bradburne told a Franciscan priest that he had three wishes: to help the victims of leprosy, to die a martyr, and to be buried in the Franciscan habit.

St. Francis's vocation was sparked by his encounter and kiss of a leper. On his deathbed, while dictating his final "Testament," he begins with the story of kissing a leper. Francis continued to serve lepers

and would go down to the colony outside the city walls. The friars also kept serving lepers by feeding them, caring for their wounds, and kissing them. This became an ongoing ministry for Francis and the friars.

Just as the vocation of St. Francis was born from an encounter with Jesus in the form of a leper, so too was John's. After many years of searching, John discovered his calling when he saw lepers at Mutemwa. Just as that kiss from a leper transformed Francis and the world, seeing lepers in Mutemwa changed John's life. John chose to live, and we can even say he chose to die for the downtrodden and those rejected by society.

Like his father, Francis, John loved nature. He decorated his living quarters with feathers and pebbles he found on his walks. John writes to his mother on May 25, 1969, saying, "It seems my mission is to bees only, to tell them that we men want to forget their stings and our own fear and avarice (which gives us guilty consciences) and to be friends with bees and the rest of creation."

This Jubilee of St. Francis inspires us to continue earnestly with John's cause. Many people still ask when the Church will declare John a Saint. A Cause is a lengthy and complex process, carried out at several levels within the church, and can take many years. John's Cause is currently at the stage where he is recognized as the Servant of God. We hope and keep praying that the process will soon advance to him being recognized as "Venerable," and eventually lead to beatification, sainthood, and canonisation.

Inspired by the Jubilee and the example of St. Francis and his son John, we pray and hope that the world will be guided towards a renewed appreciation of the beauty found in humble living, poverty, and caring for the poor.

MUTEMWA LEPROSY CARE CENTRE TODAY:



Mutemwa Leprosy Catholic Care Centre in Zimbabwe continues to be a sanctuary for individuals affected by leprosy and other disabilities. Founded on the values of love, service, and human dignity, the centre provides vital support for residents who are often rejected by society and their families due to illness or disability.

Today, Mutemwa is home to around 40 permanent residents who receive daily care, medical attention, daily meals, spiritual support, and a strong sense of community. The care centre also extends its outreach to support local villagers and families in need.

Thanks to the ongoing support from the John Bradburne Memorial Society and its donors around the world, residents are provided with: Basic healthcare and essential medicines, Nutritious food and clean water, clothing, hygiene supplies, and shelter, spiritual care and regular Masses, companionship, purpose, and peace.

Mutemwa remains a living legacy of John Bradburne's mission of selfless love. His spirit continues to inspire all who visit, serve, or support this extraordinary place.

RIP - FR BERNARD CHARLES BY KEVIN FOX SJ



Fr Bernard Charles died in September 2025. Bernard had spent a gap year in Rhodesia now Zimbabwe, in the late 60s, and lived for a significant time with John Bradburne. I remember asking Bernard, not long before he died, what he

thought of John as a candidate for canonisation. His answer was that if John wasn't a front runner, what hope was there for any of the rest of us? His boyhood was in Leeds, with university studies at St Andrews. Ordained in 1981, Bernard's ministry as a priest was in Bristol, Liverpool and London; but in earlier days gap year experiences had taken him to Australia, Nepal, the Philippines, Sudan and Zimbabwe; and it was in Zimbabwe that in the 1960s he had stayed for a while - maybe as much as a year - at Mutemwa with John Bradburne. Bernard was immensely consoled to know of John's recognition as a Servant of God; if John Bradburne is not a saint, he said, the word has no meaning!

JOHN BRADBURNE

BY FR CHARLES KANHONGWA, RESIDENT PRIEST AT MUTEMWA

1962-1968

Between 1962 and 1968 I used to meet John Bradburne at different places at the Archdiocese of Harare functions and gatherings but I did not know him very well then.

1969



In 1969 I used to attend some leadership and development skills courses at Silveira House in Harare. There I was very happy to come close to John and I had many good chats with him. He impressed me very much. His simplicity touched my heart. He would also attend and listen to some talks given by some lecturers. We could sit at the same table at meals.

It was in 1969 that John told me he was going to work at Mutemwa Leper Colony. I told him I came from Mutoko and my village was very near Mutemwa. And I had known Mutemwa from my early boyhood. As school children we used to go to Mutemwa to do charity work for the lepers. At this point John got more interested in me. He now wanted to know more about Mutemwa and the Lepers. My friendship with John grew that way.



In 1973 I invited John and his friend, Fr John Dove SJ, to come to my Priestly ordination which was going to take place at All Souls Mission on 19th May 1973. He happily came with Fr Dove and I gave them my first Priestly Ordinations Blessing. From that time, John would often invite me when I was free, to say some Holy masses for him and his patients at Mutemwa. On several occasions he would ask me to hear his confession.

November 1972

John told me he had been sacked and he was then staying on the Chigona Mountain. He was very angry with them.

For four months John operated from the mountain but visiting the settlement two or three times a day. He did not want to let his patients suffer.



It was now the rainy season. John was advised to come down from the mountain. Some good friends helped him. A small brick hut was built for him close to the settlement but he was sacked again. He moved to the present pre fabricated tin hut which was built for him. He stayed here for 6 years, from April 1973 to September 1979.

2nd September 1979

John was abducted and for three days John was nowhere to be found. Very providentially his body was found by Fr David Gibbs of All Souls Mission. The body was lying by the roadside along Nyamapanda Road at Mudzonga.

John was killed by some villagers. John had been found very innocent. He was asked not to go back to Mutemwa. It was not safe for him to keep staying there. The only option to save John's life was to send him to Mozambique for safety. He would safely be accompanied or escorted to ensure he travelled well. John resisted and insisted on going back to Mutemwa. John's refusal to be saved from danger angered the people who wanted to save his life. In anger they killed him.

Burial mass at the Catholic Cathedral in Harare

I was present at the Burial Mass for John Bradburne. I did not see the drops of blood underneath the coffin. I was in front of the procession with other Priests. Fr Victor Riederer told me after mass that

there was a miracle of blood under the coffin. Fr Riederer was master of ceremonies that day.

Pilgrims 1980

After the death of John Bradburne a group of about 60, was formed by Fr Victor Riederer SJ to visit Mazowe Valley where John Bradburne once stayed. John had great devotion to the Sacred heart of Jesus, to Our Lady, to St Joseph and St Francis of Assisi. The Pilgrims included both blacks and whites of the Catholic Cathedral Parish of Harare. Together we travelled to Mazowe on the same bus. Some of the Catholics who helped organise the pilgrims were Mr Eddie Smith, Mr Fernandez, Ms Petronella Kwedza, Theresa Mathiesa, Mr Cuthbert Chiduku, Mrs Ndanga. The Pilgrims to Mazowe were encouraged by Archbishop Chakaipa while we waited for political stability at Mutoko and at Mutemwa

1981-1982

The Pilgrimages to Mutemwa started. Fr John Dove was then very much behind these events. He was the man who made us understand who John Bradburne was.

Mutemwa today

Mutemwa is now a home to thousands of people from all over Zimbabwe and beyond. It is becoming an international shrine for both Christians and non-Christians. The work of Bradburne was admired by everyone in Mutoko, including our traditional leaders. John understood our African Culture and respected it. John worked tirelessly at Mutemwa. He made sure he had enough medicines for his patients. His great and close friendship with Dr Luisa Guidotti of All Souls Mission Hospital gave him great hope in his work. Dr Luisa always helped John in his needs. She regularly drove to Mutemwa to deliver some medical supplies to John.

Since it was war time and unsafe for Dr Luisa to travel alone, we could see Fr Fidelis Mukonori SJ driving Dr Luisa to Mutemwa, St Martins Chikwizo and other Hospitals. Fr Mukonori was a very close friend of both Dr Luisa Guidotti and Sr Caterina Savini of All Souls Mission.

CROSS THAT STANDS ATOP OF MOUNT CHIGONA

BY DELIA HYDE

Nearly forty years ago, my brother Dominic and I visited Mutemwa Leprosy Care Centre with our Grandpa, Herbert Condon Mallir. Known as Bert to his family and friends, Grandpa had been in correspondence with Father John Dove, John Bradburne's close friend, biographer and frequent visitor to Mutemwa, and it was through Father Dove that the visit came about.



Trip to Mutemwa. I remember we arrived at Mutemwa to such a warm welcome from the leper community, who called out Baba Mallir when they saw Grandpa walking in. We understood Father Dove had spoken about him to the Mutemwa community over the years, and we could see everyone was excited to meet him. Having met everyone, we walked up to the top of the hill to visit the large cross Grandpa and Father Dove had organised to commemorate the bravery of John Bradburne. We had seen photographs of the cross before, but it was even more striking than we had imagined, situated on the open hillside and mounted on a beautiful stone base. It was wonderful to see after all the years of hearing about Grandpa's work and fundraising mission to support Mutemwa.

Background on our Grandfather. He was born in India. The story of how his family came to be there began with his grandfather John Mallir, who was of Anglo-Irish descent, born in County Galway. He'd left Ireland and spent two decades in Europe and Africa having joined the British Army in 1857. He was finally transferred to Rawalpindi in India 1874 where he died in 1875. His son, Grandpa's Father, Herbert King Mallir, had been born in Guernsey three years earlier in 1872. Like his Father, he was posted in India through military service in 1891, with the Royal Garrison Artillery on the India Unattached list as a military engineer and made India his home for much of his life. Interestingly,

he did move to Rhodesia in the late 1920s for a few years with his two daughters Collette and Sylvia and attended their weddings in Harare and Bulawayo before heading back to Kulu in the Himalayas in 1930, where he became a fruit farmer and passed away there in 1958.

Grandpa himself was born in Jhansi, central India on 4th February 1909, however the family then settled in Lahore. He originally attended St Anthony's College, but after unrest in Amritsar in 1919, his father moved him to St George's College, a Roman Catholic boarding school in Mussoorie, located in the foothills of the Himalayas at 6,500 feet.

At 18 he left India and joined the merchant navy, becoming First Officer on the Orient Line. During the Second World War his ship called into Simonstown Naval Base near Cape Town, allowing him to meet up with his sisters Collette and Sylvia. Having arrived in England, he left the merchant navy and trained as a Mathematics teacher. He met our Grandmother, Delia McHugh in Liverpool. They married and settled in Essex, both working as teachers. They had two children, our Mum Anne and her brother Gerard.

In his retirement, Grandpa moved to Beccles in Suffolk; Delia had passed away before I was born. It was during this period in Suffolk that Grandpa travelled extensively again and first learned about John Bradburne. He began a long correspondence with Father Dove and threw himself into fundraising for the leprosy patients at Mutemwa. He never returned to India.

The Fundraising Mission. Grandpa was a well-known figure in Beccles. Most days he could be seen walking very determinedly with his sheepdog Moss, heading towards his local common, a large open space of grass, gorse bushes and golfers.

Of all the communities and causes he encountered in his well-travelled life, it was Mutemwa and the brave patients living with leprosy that truly captured his imagination. He was determined to raise funds. His fundraising method was ingenious, he collected lost golf balls on the common and sold

them back to the golfers in bags of 20 balls in return for donations in the form of cheques, made out directly to Mutemwa.

He even trained his sheepdog Moss to spot and collect lost golf balls on the common, using sheepdog commands in Welsh to direct Moss left and right around the gorse bushes in the great golf ball hunt. Grandpa also enlisted the help of my brother and I during school holidays. We spent hours and days hunting for golf balls, whilst Grandpa recited poetry - Kipling's Gunga Din was a favourite. He continued his fundraising and golf ball hunting right into his late seventies. On one visit to the common, he ventured too far into the gorse bushes and scratched the retina in one of his eyes. The doctors were very concerned he might lose his sight in that eye. He prayed, asking John Bradburne for his support. Wonderfully, he did not lose his sight.

A few years after Grandpa had passed away, I wrote to Father Dove in 2001. Between us we arranged for a plaque to be put up on John Bradburne's cross in Mutemwa, in memory of Herbert Malir who had donated the funds for the Cross having been so

moved by the bravery of the leprosy patients and their warden John Bradburne. It felt important to mark the connection our Grandfather had with Mutemwa over all those years.

This year, twenty-five years on, I wrote to Kate at the John Bradburne Memorial Society, to donate to the John Bradburne Memorial Society and the Mutemwa Care Centre. I wanted to do this in memory of Grandpa and our Mum Anne, also a long-time supporter of Mutemwa, who died on New Year's Eve 2024.

Thanks to Kate's help, we are also arranging to put up a new plaque on the cross this year. I love the thought that this part of our family's history, and Mutemwa's, won't be lost.

(The photo on the front cover is the image of the cross on top of Mount Chigona which Herbert's memorial plaque will go on)

TOBERMORY BY DIDIER RANCE



© Didier Rance: Wikis Commons

The multifaceted richness of John Bradburne's poetry, when considered in relation to his life, offers vast scope for study and deeper exploration, with numerous layers of meaning. One could easily write a book—or more—on his relationship with the sea and the ocean, mixing his recollections of travels across many seas and oceans through the years, personal reflections, religious feelings and deep devotion to God, Christ and Our Lady.

An apparently quite unimportant example of this richness was his brief stay at Tobermory in October during his first fishing campaign on a trawler near the Hebrides as a stoker apprentice after his pilgrimage to Lourdes with his friend John Dove and the "miracle in my body and soul" which made him a devotee of Our Lady. His trawler had anchored for a short time in front of the little fishing port on the Isle of Mull. In fact John did not even stay in Tobermory, he only saw the port, the scenic village and the cliff above them from the sea, he was not allowed to land as "the likes of me can't go ashore. 12 hours in 24 in the coal hole". He wrote to his mother.

Tobermory - the name means "Well of Mary (Our Lady)", a well located near the village -, is known for his port, his few dozens of houses painted in various and bright colours and his whisky distillery. It inspired John even if he had only a glimpse of it, especially an inscription on the cliff. He wrote a poem about Tobermory and this inscription and

explained it was linked to an event which happened there. 'A little girl fell from a high cliff there, but was unhurt. Her parents had the words 'God is Love' set on the cliff-face'. Surely John was ablaze by this religious inscription in a place linked with the Virgin Mary, and also by the sight from the trawler of the coming night on the harbour, cliff, hills around and the sea, and the pure sky with his stars jewelling the darkness.

Tobermory

Tobermory, Tobermory!
Hebridean harbour town;
From a trawler, Tobermory,
I beheld the night come down.

Moor and mountain, Tobermory,
All surround your sheltered place;
Crowned with stars and Northern light-shine,
I could feel your silent grace.

Tobermory, there is written:
'GOD IS LOVE' upon your shore;
Thus His Name in clearest legend
Signs your beauty evermore.

If we find, as it seems, no remembrance or allusion during the next twenty years to Tobermory and his brief kind of stopover at this little harbour in John Brabburne's poetry, it became part his personal "mythology" or at least its name and what it evoked for him (the sea, the North, fishing and maybe suffering linked with religious thoughts), shortly after he settled at Mutemwa Leprosy Care Centre and Tobermory returned from time to time as a minor theme and illusion through the years in his poetry up to the time of his death

In this month of September 1969, in his poem Dovecot, John links Tobermory with the eisteddfods (Welsh gatherings) when he discovered the informal gatherings of the residents, for song and stories. The name Tobermory maybe reappeared in his memory as symbol of a remote place with traditional gatherings?

In August 1971, in Jotting Terrestrial, through a flight of fancy ("the Fish of Peter's See / Called Ichthos"), memories of his weeks in the Northern Seas in 1949 return to John, and he mentions Tobermory and St Kilda in this poem.

In the same month, in Tattermalion, we find an assonance between Timbuktu and Tobermory - maybe for the pleasure of alliteration.

Again in the same month, in Zebulon's Pendulum (continued): Chaconne, John evokes Tobermory with the other reminiscences of the Northern seas, to weave the poem towards an ending dedicated to Mary.

In January 1977, in Uncruel She, he marvels at the meaning in Latin of the word Mary linked with sea, which leads him to recall 1949, Tobermory and, above all, Our Lady.

In September 1977, in the long poem Historia salutis, he blends the memory of this port with reflections on Holy Scripture.

In March 1978, in Your heart shall be where'er your treasure, we find a poem on the Son of God, and John evokes this "Child who rules / The stars, from Bethlehem to Tobermory / And from The Bear to Polar Bear..." in order to convey the extent of the Son of God dominance.

His last poem which mentions Tobermory is written in March 1979. In To the Midnight Sun, we find a kind of poetic fantasy with music instruments and dances mentioned, in which Midnight Sun is order to "shine bright for glory : Of the Lord of Tobermory", along with other places

The Tobermory example and others show how episodes of John's youth, even quite short and seemingly forgotten for decades, may return and be used as ingredients for his creative imagination linking nature, places, his own story and his deep devotion to Our Lord and his Mother.



BEATIFICATION PRAYER

God our Father, your servant John Randal Bradburne showed the power of Your love by his life and death. May his love of Christ and of Mary His Mother, together with his selfless service to those considered least in the world, be a model for us to follow.

We therefore ask for a favour through his intercession, so that his generosity and holiness may be recognised by the whole Church.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

AMEN

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be.



THANK YOU TO KITAIID

Thank you to the charity Kitaid who so generously donated football strips for all the children living at Mutemwa. They were overjoyed to receive their football kits and we thank Kitaid for their support.



NEW BOARD

We would like to warmly welcome the new Mutemwa Board in Zimbabwe who will be overseeing the continued care of Mutemwa and supporting the ongoing progress of John Bradburne's cause. We are grateful for your willingness to serve and guide this important work.

A special welcome to the new Chair, Rosinah Hove, along with Phylis Zvenyika, Victor Mashoko, Sylvia Makome, Rose Musimwa, Pius Rateiwa, Maxwell

Karombo, Dr Rudo Zimunhu, and the two new priests who are posted at Mutemwa, Fr Ignatius Mukombe and Fr Charles Kanhongwa.

We pray that your leadership will be blessed with wisdom, unity, and compassion as you help steward the mission at Mutemwa for the benefit of all who live, serve, and find refuge there. May your work honour the spirit of service and faith that continues to inspire this special place.

JOHN BRADBURNE PILGRIMAGE



If you have participated in the John Bradburne Pilgrimage Walks over the last few years, you may have noticed a rather large group of young Catholic adults, and wondered who they were! These are members of "YouCAN" (Young Catholic Adult Network), a community of hundreds of UK young Catholic adults, committed to bringing members together through in person events. These Events take place across the UK, and would include Spiritual Retreats, Evangelisation Training, Pilgrimages, both in the UK and abroad, and social events of various kinds.

An interesting feature of YouCAN, is that it operates through a WhatsApp Community, and attracts new members either by personal recommendation, or via social media platforms, and especially Instagram.



Being easy to find via Google search, there is a constant stream of new members, including recent Catholic Converts, joining the Community. These young converts, often from non-religious backgrounds, seemingly find their Catholic Faith quite by accident, and are hungry to learn more and make new Catholic friends. They are quite an inspiration!



Unlike many young Catholic adult groups, YouCAN is not a localised Community, and is not Parish based. Founded by me in collaboration with the English Benedictines and English Dominicans, the Community is still firmly rooted in Monasticism, with many Retreats, known as "Monastery Days" organised in our beautiful Monasteries situated throughout the UK. Featuring Mass, Confessions, Adoration and *Lectio Divina*, these days provide important opportunities to interact with our Religious Communities and provide vital "time out" for our young people, many of whom work long hours.

Having said all of that, it would be wrong to assume that YouCANNers don't know how to enjoy themselves! The highlight of the YouCAN year, for example, is our Summer Party, this year taking place at Belmont Abbey in July. With organised walks, visits to local places of interest, and dancing in the evening, they are the perfect event to have lots of fun and meet new people too.

This year YouCANNers will be walking with the John Bradburne Pilgrimage, so do say "Hello". You will find them very sociable and full of life: just what you might need during a long walk in our stunning Northern England landscape!

Rina Bird

Co- founder and Principal Admin to YouCAN UK

For those interested in taking part in our John Bradburne Pilgrimage on 13 June, please contact us on info@johnbradburne.com or call 07979 187498



TESTIMONIES:

Dear Fathers and Members of the John Bradburne Memorial Society,

I hope this message finds you in the peace of Christ. My name is Br Meck Sibanda OFS, Executive Director of Christian Youth Volunteers Association (Formation 2024).

I want to share a personal testimony. A few weeks ago, I was faced with an urgent need for school fees for my son which had to be paid by 23 December. With no other options left, I turned to the intercession of John Randal Braddburne. I gave my whole heart to prayer, pledging to support his beatification. Miraculously, the funds came through just in time.

This experience has deepened my devotion to John Bradburne and I am eager to pray more fervently for his beatification.

Br Meck Sibanda OFS

Executive Director, Christian Youth Volunteers Association

I first learned of John a few years back when doing a search for Catholic poets. What I discovered was far more, a remarkable pilgrim in constant discernment of the Lord's will and who followed wherever it led. His verse reveals an uncontainable joy and his life the compelling testament to a singular focus on God. In a world of increasing distractions, much of it focused on entertainment or personal pursuits, John provides a simple but profound alternative to the self-absorption plaguing our tech-addicted world. He witnessed people in need and simply went to them. There he found the joy and satisfaction no artifice of man can replace. In Mutemwa John saw Christ where most of us would hesitate. His purpose was not to fix leprosy or poverty, but simply trust that God wanted him there at that time. What our Lord would do with those years he left in the hands of providence. Such holiness is attractive, but too easily dismissed by the notion he possessed a grace we lack. This could be true, but perhaps only because we haven't disposed ourselves to that same gift. John's life reminds us that joy rooted in

Christ is contagious and that trusting in God's Will, however difficult, is always rewarding.

Robert Nachtgall, USA

Memories by Pamela Fenwick

I have been thinking of all the times I saw John. One was in 1963. We were sitting outside on our veranda in our house at Daramombe Mission having supper by candlelight with some visitors from America, a Quaker Professor Steers and his wife from Haverford West University in Pennsylvania. He had come to interview us and others about our memories of the missionary poet, Rev Arthur Shearly Cripps who lived a hermits life among a group of villagers and ministered to their needs. Professor Steer was asking questions, and his wife was writing down the answers. Fr Cripps had died not long before we arrived at the mission in 1958.

As we sat talking a figure appeared with his small bag of clothes on a stick over his shoulder. I think he was planning to walk as a hitch hiker to Salisbury (now Harare). John joined in the party and slept in our spare room before leaving very early next day. It struck me that he and the poet were much alike! They both cared for the sick and needy and the very poor.





From the left: Rev. Fr. Dr. Tomasz Bledrzycki, Rev. Fr. Miroslaw Baranowski, Rev. Fr. Janusz Stanislaw the Apostolic Nuncio, Fr. Ignatius Mukombe, Mutemwa priest and Rev. Fr. Dr. Krzysztof Bielawny on the far right.

We were truly blessed that Archbishop Janusz Stanislaw Urbańczyk, Apostolic Nuncio to Zimbabwe visited Mutemwa. During his visit, he met with the resident priests and spent time with our patients, listening to their stories and sharing in their faith. He visited the hut of John Bradburne, reflecting on the profound spirituality that continues to echo through this sacred special place. His presence was a powerful reminder of the Church's closeness to those who suffer and those who serve. We are deeply grateful for this visit of encouragement, solidarity, and hope and we pray for the beatification of John Bradburne

I am now retired but when Parish Priest of St Wulstan and Edmund, Fleetwood, we started a prayer ministry in John's name for the sick and housebound of our parish.

It was the brainchild of my lifelong school friend Peter Garside. We have a fleet of Eucharistic

Ministers who take the Blessed Sacrament to 30-40 parishioners every week, and it was felt that instead of just being ministered to, they could become prayer warriors for us, as we face and deal with all the pastoral challenges we now face.

The idea was taken up enthusiastically by our housebound and those in care homes, so we produced a prayer leaflet and asked them to say the prayer every day for us, or at least on Fridays as they prepare to receive Holy Communion.

We've been going about four years now, and there's no doubt, their ministry is bearing fruit.

Every good wish,

Canon Alf Hayes



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 supplementary 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 or call us on 07979 187498 or email us on info@johnbradburne.com

To see the vast collection of John Bradburne 's poetry visit
www.johnbradburnepoems.com

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PO Box 32, Leominster, Herefordshire HR6 0YB, United Kingdom
01568 760632 | 07979 187498 | info@johnbradburne.com
www.johnbradburne.com
www.johnbradburnepoems.com
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