

**Orthodox Parish of
St Helen of Colchester**
Antiochian Orthodox Deanery of the UK & Ireland
NEWSLETTER 192 **NOVEMBER 2012**



WEEKDAY LITURGY AT ST HELEN'S, 9.30 AM

THURSDAY 8 NOVEMBER
ARCHANGEL MICHAEL & ALL THE BODILESS POWERS
WEDNESDAY 21 NOVEMBER
ENTRY OF THE THEOTOKOS INTO THE TEMPLE
FRIDAY 30 NOVEMBER
HOLY APOSTLE ANDREW THE FIRST-CALLED

St Martin's: at last, The End!

It has been a long, long journey to nowhere. I am exhausted by it, and very saddened.

This sadness is for our Parish: we have lost a golden opportunity to have a beautiful and suitable home in Colchester town centre, with the witness that this could have given to the Holy Orthodox Faith, to the Christian Faith.

I am also sad for that lovely building itself: St Martin's, West Stockwell Street, looks so empty, so unloved (in spite of the true care given by one or two local people). With the care and attention we would have lavished on it, it would have blossomed again, robed in the majesty of Orthodox beauty and worship.

We have discussed the matter over the past - yes! - 18 years. Now we have said, Enough is enough!

It is a bitter pill for me to swallow, for I have kept the possibility before us all this time. I have really loved St Martin's, and to me it has been a joy to have worshipped there for Holy Week and Holy Pascha in 2008 and 2012.

Clearly I must accept this, but not necessarily as the will of God: it may be the machinations of the Devil. It has been the 'rightness' of our cause that has kept me going since 1994, for the Parish and for St Martin's itself.

Over the years there was the problem of whether we would allow other groups to use it alongside Orthodox worship. Of course we said, No.

This time the problem has been the amount of money they expect for it. This is far more than we could afford, having (a) to put in heating, lighting, etc, and then (b) to

fit it out as an Orthodox church. Too much to lease, too much to buy!

So the Parish Council has decided to give in, throw in the towel, give up any hope of it. And I support this decision - with great sadness, and even with some hardness of heart, I am afraid, towards the Churches Conservation Trust.

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We shall now proceed on a different course. I have felt rather 'down', about it all. But my recent pilgrimage to Romania has renewed my soul, and opened my mind and heart to other possibilities.

The fact is we cannot long continue with what we presently have. St Helen's Chapel is just not adequate for a living, vibrant parish church situation. If I just pass on (whenever that shall be) the present building, lovely as it is, to my successors as Parish Priest, they will find themselves hamstrung by our present facilities—or, more exactly, by our lack of them.

So we must look at what we can and can't do. God help us to discern his will and give us the strength to do it.

St Martin's, right as it was, is now behind us. Like St Paul, *We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.*

Now we must get up, again look the Enemy in the eye, and get on with the work here in the name of Christ and his Holy Church. God will lead us. His Saints - St Helen and even St Martin the Merciful himself - will pray for us. His Angels will guard and protect us.

To him be the glory!

Father Alexander

ST MARTIN'S, WEST STOCKWELL STREET

Our Agent's letter to the Churches Conservation Trust

It has taken a little longer than anticipated to respond to you but as I am sure you can imagine the possibility of the purchase of St Martin's has been a hot topic with our congregation and church council.

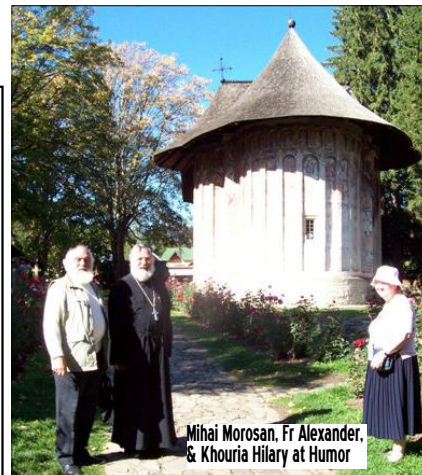
It was finally decided at a council meeting on the 23rd September that we have explored all the options available to us, keeping in mind our financial and other constraints, and I have to inform you that we will not be proceeding further with an offer for either lease or purchase St Martin's.

I have been asked to convey to you our bitter disappointment and the feeling generally within our community as a whole that the CCT had no real wish to find a way forward that would allow us to bring this beautiful building back into use as a centre for Orthodox Christian Worship and have in fact, it seems, deliberately and knowingly placed insurmountable obstacles in our path to prevent us from so doing.

We will now watch with interest to see if you find another 'suitable' partner and what use is finally proposed for the building.

With kind regards,
IAIN GOLDSMITH FRICS

PILGRIMS IN ROMANIA



Mihai Morosan, Fr Alexander, & Khouria Hilary at Humor

Romania is a lovely country. Khouria Hilary and I enjoyed our visit tremendously.

We were royally entertained by Michail Morosan's parents, Mihai and Traudi, from the very start. They met us in the early morning at Bacau airport and whisked us off to their home in Suceava.

Then, with some stops for breath, it was a seven-days whirl of entrancingly-painted monasteries, one after another.

There is a magnificent tradition of churches painted inside *and out* in Moldavia, the

Continued over page

FELLOWSHIP OF ST ALBAN & ST SERGIUS Tuesday 8 November 7.30 pm
in St Helen's: Fr Alexander on his recent pilgrimage in Romania. All welcome.

St Helen's Chapel, Maidenburgh St, High St

St Helen's is 200m. down behind the George Hotel in the High Street, but accessible from there only on foot. By car: leave Middleborough Roundabout (between dual carriageways Westway and Balkerne Hill), to Northgate; go straight along St Peter Street to Castle Park; continue round, up into Maidenburgh Street. Nunns Road NCP is the nearest car park.

Saturday: Great Vespers usually 4.30 pm (check before coming)
Sunday: Mattins 9.45 am (or Hours 10.15 am), Divine Liturgy 10.30 am

Confessions: Saturday after Vespers, or by arrangement
Holy Marriage, Baptism, Funerals, Memorials etc: by arrangement

Parish Priest: Father Alexander (Alistair) Haig

17 Maidenburgh Street, Colchester CO1 1UB

Tel: 01-206-530-530 Mob: 07-947-047-201 Eml: parishpriest@orthodoxcolchester.org.uk

Rdr Andreas Moran, 6 Woodlands, Welshwood Park CO4 3JA Tel: 01-206-865-697

Rdr Alexander Haig Jnr, detached service in Winchester parish

The Parish of St Helen is Registered Charity No. 1134418

Parish Website: <http://www.orthodoxcolchester.org.uk>

Churchwardens: David Davies 01-473-745-167 Dusan Radunovic 01-206-710-073

At St James Anglican Church, Beatrice Rd, Clacton-on-sea CV15 1LE
Divine Liturgy: usually third Saturday 10.00 am (Clacton Community)

At St Agnes Chapel, 18 St Agnes Road, Noak Hill, Billericay, CM12 9UR
Divine Liturgy: usually first Saturday 10.30 am (Basildon Community)
Rdr Paul Brighton-Cross 01-702-305-527 orthodox.basildon@hotmail.co.uk

At University of Essex Chaplaincy Centre: Divine Liturgy: one Saturday per term 10.00 am

HOLY LITURGY

BASILDON
Sat 3 Nov
10.30 am

CLACTON
Sat 17 Nov
10.00 am

UNIVERSITY
Sat 24 Nov
10.00 am

The People Column

NEW VICAR at St Peter's, North Hill, Rev Mark Wallace, is son of the Rev Alastair Wallace, a colleague of mine when I was an Anglican Priest in Bath. Thus there were *two* Rev Alistairs/Alastairs, serving in adjoining parishes. It was a pleasure to attend Rev Mark's induction, to welcome him to Colchester - and to meet his father again after 23 years.

PHILIP HALLIWELL used to attend St Helen's occasionally with Tatiana and their four children when they lived near the Monastery. A few years ago he went to study for the Priesthood in America. We learn from the internet that he has just been ordained Priest to serve in St Innocent's Mission in New York State. Many years, if you see this, Father, to you and yours!

VESELIN & ANTOANETA LAZAROV were civilly married a long time ago in Bulgaria, and have grown-up daughters. It was a pleasure to crown them in their Church marriage in St Helen's in September. Many years!

Here and There

CHURCH BREAD: I am very grateful to KALISTHENE ARISTODIMOU, DANIELLE CHRISTOU and KYRIAKI MOUSKOVIA who have baked Church breads for St Helen's. Are there any other volunteers, please? Thanks too to others who bake for Clacton and Basildon. A new generation is required to take this on. We need a *number* of women or men to do this, to supply this essential element of Church life. *Do consider offering to make the Bread.* You will find it a real privilege and blessing to your own life and home.

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY is an important date in the national calendar of British people. Perhaps it supplies some of the 'religion' element lessened by people's not going to church very much. On the Sunday nearest 11 November, it commemorates those who died in the First World War (1914-18), which ended on the 11th day of the 11th month. It is the feast of St Martin and of St Menas. It also commemorates men and women who served in subsequent wars, such as WW II, Korea, Falklands, Afghanistan. At St Helen's we observe an Act of Remembrance after the Holy Liturgy, with the two-minute Silence and the National Anthem.

THE NATIVITY FAST begins on 15 November, 40 days before the feast—though in some places it does not seem to start until 6 December or even later. Not as strict as the Paschal fast, it makes a good preparation for the feast of the Nativity.



8 November is the feast of the Archangel Michael and all the Bodiless Powers—the Holy Angels, who praise God in heaven and assist us on earth - and don't we need that help! Holy Liturgy 9.30 am

ROMANIA *continued from page 1*

north-eastern part of the country. They have survived wars, conquests, communism, and the weather (hot summers, cold winters), and many still shone brightly in the September sunshine. They were often built as thank-offerings by St Stephen the Great, King 1457-1504, and his successors, or by bishops.

Mihai himself is a celebrated fresco- and icon-painter, and we saw numerous examples of his work and his late brother Gavril's. I personally have admired their work since the late 1970s, when I first saw it in Jerusalem and Nazareth. In the 90s they painted the iconostasis at St George's Antiochian Cathedral in London.

We visited the ancient Monasteries at Suceava, Humor, Voronet, Moldovita, Putna, Sucevita, Dragomirna - so many that, I must admit, I have to sit down and think carefully to sort out in my mind which is which.

Most of the Monasteries seemed prosperous, mostly well supplied with monks or (particularly) nuns - some contained a hundred or more nuns.

As well as the *quantity* of them, I was impressed by the apparent *quality* of their life.



Nearly everywhere we were given a warm welcome and excellent hospitality. I was a little concerned that their spiritual life might be overburdened by the need to care for the ancient and magnificent buildings and the vast number of pilgrims and visitors that must bring. But I was impressed by few if any signs of laxity in spiritual practice.

We also visited at least one entirely modern Monastery of nuns, away in the country, with modern buildings in traditional style. I suppose that young monks or nuns can indeed find such quieter spiritual homes if they feel they should

A Word from the Fathers: St Ambrose of Milan (+397)

History instructs. The law disciplines. Prophecy foretells. Correction shows us our faults. And morality suggests what should be done.

But in the book of Psalms there is something more than all this, and at the same time a sort of medicine for man's spiritual health. Whoever reads the Psalms finds a special remedy to cure the wounds caused by his own passions.

Whoever is at pains to read the Psalms will find in them a sort of gymnasium for the use of all souls, a sort of stadium of virtue, where different sorts of exercise are set out before him, from which he can choose the best suited to train him to win his crown.

If anyone will study the deeds of those who have gone before him in order to find something worthy of imitation, he will discover that just one Psalm contains the whole of their history. And in one short reading he will discover a complete treasury of past memories.



Christ away from the masses .

Of course it was not just buildings that we visited. We venerated St Stephen at Putna, St Paraskeva at Iasi, and St John the New at Suceava. Before them, I prayed for you - for all our people, especially our Romanian folk.

These great churches and Monasteries are all memorable. But in many ways the memory I shall most treasure is of Putna.

For at Putna there were no outside frescoes, and the ancient inside ones had long disappeared. Yet the whole interior has been painted in recent years by that remarkable partnership of Mihai and Gavril—and shows that the art of iconography and fresco-painting is not just an ancient art, but a living, vibrant one.

There are still men and women willing to dedicate themselves to this special, church-enhancing and Christ-glorifying art. We saw several modern churches with a current scheme of new or restorative frescoing in progress, with mostly young men and women at work.

The Holy Orthodox Christian Faith is very much alive in Romania. Often thought 'rather backward', it is a country with much to teach us in the West, particularly in Britain - the strength of the spiritual life, the inherent life and vitality of Christianity, the power of the Cross, the glory of the Resurrection.

NOVEMBER DAYS

Thu 1	H Unmercenarys Cosmas & Damian of Mesopotamia
Sat 3	S Winifred of Holywell, Wales
Sun 4	Pentecost 22
Wed 7	S Willibrord, Apostle of Frisia
Thu 8	H Archangel Michael & All the Bodiless Powers
Fri 9	S Nektarios Kephalas, Metropolitan of Pentapolis
Sat 10	S Justus, Archbishop of Canterbury
Sun 11	Pentecost 23, S Martin the Merciful, Bp of Tours, Martyr Menas of Egypt
Tue 13	S John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople
Wed 14	Holy Apostle Philip
Thu 15	<i>Beginning of Nativity Fast</i> , S Malo of Brittany
Fri 16	Holy Apostle & Evangelist Matthew
Sat 17	S Hilda, Abbess of Whitby
Sun 18	Pentecost 24
Tue 20	Martyr Edmund, King of the East Angles
Wed 21	Entry of the Mother of God into the Temple
Sat 24	Hieromartyr Clement, Pope of Rome
Sun 25	Pentecost 25, Gt Martyr Katharine of Alexandria
Mon 26	S Stylianos of Paphlagonia, Protector of children
Thu 29	Hieromartyr Philoumenos, Custodian of Jacob's Well
Fri 30	Holy Apostle Andrew the First-called

A fuller list of the month's Feasts and Fasts is available in church

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