



## St Barnabas Bulletin - Summer 2016

### We can't thank you enough



The response to the letter from College Patron Dame Judi Dench along with that from Myrtle Hall (*left*) has been truly wonderful, raising over £100,000.

When Dame Judi (*below*) learned of how the College had helped Myrtle she was so impressed that she wrote to our supporters urging them to help us in our work. "I am so grateful to everyone for their generosity," said College Chairman, Sir Paul Britton. "This shows that people really appreciate what we do and want to ensure that we can help as many as possible."

Regular readers may remember that Myrtle's story was featured in the Bulletin last year. She was a trained primary school teacher before spending many years as a missionary in Nigeria where she helped to found two schools for physically handicapped children. Sadly, her mobility has declined, but the power wheelchair, for which the College fundraising team raised the money, has enabled her to retain her independence.

"I am thrilled that my letter has helped to raise so much support for the College," she said. "The care that we receive here is wonderful and I am delighted that this will mean it can continue to be offered to those most in need."

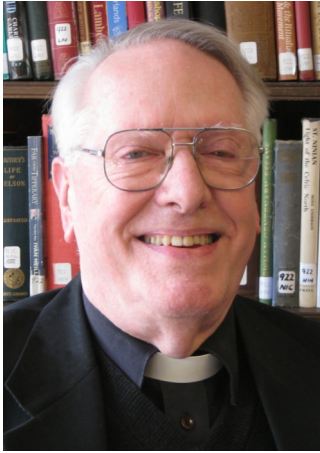


## Caring for retired Anglican Clergy

# Characters from the College:

## Canon John Laird

By Cliff Caswell



**It started as a means to gain secular experience, but Canon John Laird's teaching gift has been an important feature throughout his ministry.**

"I came from a Church-going family but I wasn't aware of a calling in the traditional sense," Fr John admits. "It was more that many people were saying I should be a clergyman and it was this that engendered vocation.

"However before going forward for selection I felt I needed some real-world experience, so I read a degree in Classics and became a teacher at a London grammar school. After that I started my training for ordination at Ripon Hall and St Catherine's College, Oxford at the age of 24."

After being made Deacon and becoming a Curate at Cheshunt in St Albans Diocese, he was asked by the Principal of nearby Bishops' College to join the staff. Four years later Fr John became its full-time Chaplain before later being appointed Vice-Principal and finally Principal.

It was during his time at Cheshunt that he married his wife Margaret. When Bishops' College was amalgamated with another, he became Vicar of three Bedfordshire parishes. By then the couple had two sons and the family moved to Keysoe, Bolnhurst and Little Staughton, where they remained for more than three decades.

"The Church has seen many changes since then," he reflects. "These days priests move every few years, but it was different in the 1960s. The parishioners expected this to be my life's work. I became 'part of the scenery' and they didn't seem to want me to leave. In addition, the Bishop had insisted that my work should continue to have an educational character, so I became Assistant Chaplain at Bedford School."

During this time, Fr John's wife Margaret was appointed Third Church Estates Commissioner, responsible for chairing the committee that dealt with the sensitive issue of schemes for pastoral reorganisation. She also had oversight of bishops' houses and redundant churches, as well as membership of various committees and working groups.

"Margaret lived at Lambeth Palace during the week and was home with me at weekends," he remembers. "We finally left Bedfordshire in 2001, 32 years after I was appointed, when I was 69. That was when I became Domestic Chaplain to the Marquess of Salisbury. The Cecil family is strongly Church of England and there is a fine chapel that is used for services every day. It was a great role."

After Margaret died, Fr John moved to the College of St Barnabas, where he joined several old friends, including Canon Robin Osborne (*see previous Bulletin*) whom he had known for more than fifty years. "The College is a wonderful place to live and to continue a ministry that has always had an educational slant," he smiles. "It is a special place, with some very special people."



## **Our Fundraising Volunteer, Brigid Goddard, talks about her time at the College.**

“In 2009 I retired from my job at The Clothworkers’ Company and had decided that I would do some voluntary work in my retirement. The Clothworkers’ Foundation had supported the College of St Barnabas in the past and I visited the College some years ago on behalf of the Foundation to see the results of their grant and met David Hills, the then Chairman. It seemed a natural progression on retirement that I would offer my secretarial services to the Fundraising Office which at that time consisted only of the Fundraiser, Mike Herbert, who had no other support.

“My skills were put to good use in the early days, helping to build the supporter base for the major Central Block West appeal, attending fundraising meetings and writing the minutes, and helping to develop appeal materials. At that time I agreed to offer eight hours a week and also helped with the task of sending out appeal letters before the College contracted an external company to carry this out. Subsequently I helped with donor development work for the Fire Suppression System and Stair-lift Appeals. In 2010 a fundraising assistant was employed but I continued supporting the office on a weekly basis, mainly working on ways to help tackle the serious challenge of the ever-widening social funding gap.

“Having always worked for more traditional organizations, I felt that I was well-suited to the College and it has certainly provided stimulation and interest for me in my retirement.”

**Volunteers’ Week is an annual event which takes place at the start of June. It celebrates the contribution made by millions of volunteers across the UK.**



As part of our 2016 College Festival  
we invite you to join us for our

# OPEN AFTERNOON



**SATURDAY 11th JUNE**

from 2.30 p.m. to 4.30 p.m.

**Live Jazz      Morris Dancing**  
**Conducted tours of**  
**the historic buildings**  
**Afternoon Teas      Barbecue**

*Charity Commissioners registered number 205220*

Caring for retired Anglican Clergy