



## St Barnabas Bulletin - Summer 2017

### **Better than ever before**

The major refurbishment project that featured on the front cover of our last issue has been successfully completed on time and on budget.



The works have included re-roofing a large part of the nursing wing, both chapels and the kitchens as well as adding large amounts of additional insulation, new double glazed windows and doors onto the balcony (see left) as well as modernising the interiors.

The Chairman of the College, Sir Paul Britton, is delighted. "We have been able to finance all this work while also funding the Nursing Wing and

maintaining the College's finances in good shape," he enthused.

"This is the largest building project we have undertaken for decades and the building now looks marvellous. I warmly thank all who have contributed to so generously to make this possible. Congratulations to everyone who has managed and executed the project so successfully."

Please turn to page 3 to read more from the Bursar about the works.

## Caring for retired Anglican Clergy

# Characters from the College:

## Fr George Wood

By Cliff Caswell



**Fr George Wood heard God's calling as German flak tore into his aircraft on a dive-bombing run and turned it into a spiralling missile.**

Flying the twin-engine Westland Whirlwind – one of the most potent fighters of its generation – the young Royal Air Force flight-sargeant was pinned into his seat as he battled to escape from the cockpit. He remembers calling into the abyss for God's help.

“My squadron had been attacking an airfield in France. As I released the two bombs I was carrying, they were hit by flak and the aircraft was blown to pieces,” Fr George recalls. “All that was left was the cockpit and I was going to hit the ground in about 30 seconds. I called out “M'aider (the

French for 'help me') and the next thing I knew I was free and in my parachute.”

None of Fr George's squadron mates had seen his dramatic exit, and he was listed as missing, presumed dead. Less than two months later he confounded all expectations, returning to the UK and duty after evading capture by the enemy in France.

It was not until after the war, however, that Fr George would go on to fulfil the calling he had first heard when he had been less than a minute from death. “The sense of vocation did not really manifest itself again while I was in France, nor was ministry the reason for going to South Africa,” he says. “I went to sell printing ink and to make money, but the industry was a bit shady and Church was a way of easing my conscience.” Having set himself up as a businessman in South Africa, he began to feel the beckoning of a new life and recognised a call to ministry as a priest.

“I was the last person who ever expected to become a clergyman,” he says, “But in spite of that I let it be known it was what I wanted.” After training in Pretoria, he was eventually made a deacon in 1955 and ordained priest the following year.

His ministry took him into prisons and helping those detained with serious mental health issues in Pretoria. He found himself working with a wide cross section of communities.

“I had gone to South Africa to become a millionaire but I ended up doing something far better,” says Fr George. “I began by thinking I would never be a priest, but it turned out I was the right person for the role. I also met my wife Joan in the country, and we had five daughters together.”

Fr George's varied ministry also took him to Zululand, where he was privileged to be made a Dean, before he returned to the UK to look after his father who had dementia.

“I'm 95 now and have had a wonderful life. It is great to be here at the College of St Barnabas,” he concludes. “It is a lovely community and I have many new friends.”

# Our biggest project this century

By Paul Wilkin, College Bursar

**Planning for works to refurbish the whole of the central block began as long ago as 2008.**

The project would include the central 'spine' of the buildings, the service wing to the north, the main chapel at the front and small chapel on the eastern end. We needed a new roof (lots of tiles to replace!). We needed to put in insulation (there wasn't any!). We wanted to install double glazing to keep our Residents warmer and reduce our energy bills. We also needed to upgrade and tidy up the wiring in the loft space (it was like spaghetti junction without any lights!).

Our M & E Consultants suggested we install a heat recovery system. The warm, damp air extracted from each *en suite* shower room would be cleaned, dried and re-circulated back into the corridors. The planners liked that idea and on appeal also approved the installation of heritage-grade double glazing.

When we received the first estimate of costs we decided to split the project into two smaller ones. Readers of the *Bulletin* may remember that the Central Block West project was completed in 2011.

In late 2014 the College Council approved the updating of the plans and costs for the remainder of the Central Block. Fundraising started in earnest with the help of the Dean of Westminster, a President of the College. Early in 2016 Tenders were invited and the contract was awarded to Valley Builders Ltd, from East Grinstead. They proved to be an excellent company to work with. By this time three of our sixty Residents had joined the project team. Residents were briefed and work started in September 2016.

The first thing to happen was the arrival of a temporary kitchen, as the main kitchen, which provides meals for all residents, had to be closed for up to three months. The chefs were excellent, continuing to provide superb meals and the service was maintained without interruption.

We were extremely lucky with the weather, with only two days lost due to frosts making scaffolding unsafe to walk on. Seven Residents' rooms have been improved. All the College Residents will also benefit from the improvements to the kitchen, both chapels and the main block.

The whole project cost over £900,000 and took 32 weeks, with practical completion agreed on 28th April 2017. It was funded by a combination of grants from individuals and Trusts, a Homes and Community Agency grant, an interest-free loan from the Almshouse Association and our own reserves.

We are delighted that our Visitor, the Right Reverend Christopher Chessun, Bishop of Southwark, will preach at a Service of Thanksgiving on Sunday, 2nd July 2017.



# Changing Times

By Mike Herbert, Fundraising Manager



**This edition, we are asking our existing supporters to give a copy of the *St Barnabas Bulletin* to a friend whom they think would be interested in the College and our work.**

We believe that our supporters are among the best people to explain to others why our work is important and why they want to help. This is something we haven't done before, but we are sure that the enthusiasm and commitment of our supporters will convince their like-minded friends that we are worthy of their help, too.

If you have been given this copy of the Bulletin by a friend, he or she will be able to tell you something about us, why they feel an affinity with our charity and why our work is important to them.

They will also be able to tell you that we respect our supporters and do not take them for granted. We do not, for example, bombard people with junk mail, spam email or unrequested telephone calls, or sell or share our supporters' details to other charities or to businesses.

If, having heard what your friend has to say, and having read this edition of the Bulletin, you would like to find out more about the College and our work, we would be delighted to hear from you.

You can contact us through our website [www.st-barnabas.org.uk](http://www.st-barnabas.org.uk) or by dropping a line to me, Mike Herbert, at The College of St. Barnabas, Blackberry Lane, LINGFIELD RH7 6NJ.

Thank you for your interest in the College and our caring ministry.

## **Consent forms from Existing Supporters**

If you have not returned your completed consent form to us yet, please do so urgently, as we will not be able to contact you again if you do not!

Our final cut-off point is the 31st July. Please remember this does not apply to people who give by standing order or to organisations that support us (e.g. PCCs). Thank you.

Caring for retired Anglican Clergy