



Autumn, 2016

# Broken Rites

# The Rite Lines



Autumn 2016  
Edition 105

The Newsletter of Broken Rites:  
working since 1983 as an interdenominational  
self-help and support group for separated and divorced spouses of  
clergy and ministers

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## Editor's report

I HOPE that this edition of *Rite Lines* finds you well. I must apologise for it being an autumn edition but life and a problem with my tooth have delayed the production. As I write this I am reflecting back over the different ways that we communicate with each other. We use humour and each day I recall Jenny's talk at the 2015 AGM and try to stand on one leg in the dark – and fail miserably. We do things and so I have invites to local lunches, in 2016 new volunteers started on the committee. We also have a Facebook group that is there for the moment and brings all these elements together – connection, humour and support.

Life is setting (especially as there is a new full-time team member at work) and I have a new dentist who has extracted offending tooth. Please continue to email me with items for the magazine. Valerie.

## Acting Chairman's Report

I WOKE on Sunday 24th April wondering just what had happened. How had I gone to an AGM and returned as the co-chair? I am still wondering, but at my first committee meeting on July 2nd I discovered that other members have experienced similar strange experiences. There must be something about our AGMs. Strange experiences or not, our committee is made up of talented, enthusiastic people who are willing to laugh as well as work together. And work we did. We made our way through a long agenda, checking that the things that need to be done this year and in early 2018 are all in hand as far as is possible at this stage and prioritizing those areas where there we need to campaign for change. Ongoing areas of work include this year's Church Leaders' Appeal and a publicity drive to attract more associate members. The biggest gap we are aware of is in our network of Area Reps and Link. The workload is not onerous but it is essential that we have people in place locally who are willing to welcome and support new members and enquirers as well as through the Facebook group.

Your committee is aware of many different areas where we could campaign for more services or for changes in the way things are done. As we continue to plan our future actions we would welcome your suggestions or your concerns about what is affecting you or your families

now or indeed anything that may be of concern to other broken Rites members. We may be unable to change things but on the other hand if there are issues that affect a number of people then we would like to know and consider whether we should as an organization campaign on your behalf. Please feel free to contact any of the officers. I can be contacted using [chair@brokenrites.org](mailto:chair@brokenrites.org) and am looking forward to working with *Broken Rites* in the coming year.

**Margaret Wilkinson**  
**Co-chair**

## Report on AGM for Summer Rite Lines 2016

THIS YEAR'S meeting at Church House Westminster was a friendly affair with plenty of opportunities to catch up with old friends and to make new ones. It was attended by 30 members, three associate members and three guests, two of whom were bishops. Sadly our President Frank Field was unable to attend because of delays with his train.

The report from the chair was Sue's last one. She highlighted our work with the Church Commissioners on tailoring the documentation regarding the Value-Linked (Shared Equity) Loans and also the importance of using social media. The secret Facebook group, now one year old, has grown in numbers and provides a safe space for members to share experiences and ideas and to offer support to each other.

We are all well aware of the huge contribution that Sue has made to *Broken Rites* during the past many years. (Is it six or seven?) Maybe this is why it was so difficult for us to find a replacement for her, so appointed two co-chairs instead, myself and Veronica Bale. We are immensely grateful that Dilys Stone and Rosina have agreed to continue as vice-chair and secretary respectively, thus providing vital continuity. Jonathan Tillin, a new associate member has agreed to fill the vacant post for treasurer following Lucille's resignation due to poor health and two new members have also taken on roles: Viv Rowett will take on the role of website editor and Anne Ingram has agreed to be archivist. We are still left with vacancies for a social media coordinator and also a number of regional reps and local links. Although much good work can be done on through the Facebook group there is really no substitute

for the one-to-one support and informal get-togethers that *Broken Rites* has offered for the past 33 years. Regional reps and local links are vital to the provision of such support and the time commitment is not great so do please consider whether this is something that you might be able to take on. We can provide mentoring and support for anyone who is new to the job.

The review of the membership led on to thoughts of absent members and whether those who are growing older can have access to Church of England retirement homes. This was followed by appreciation of the work of the committee in the past year and especially of Sue's contribution. The morning closed with an address by Bishop Alastair. He reflected on the complementary roles of the Bishop's Visitors and *Broken Rites* and hoped that the two groups would continue to work together fruitfully.

Bishop Libby Lane addressed the meeting in the afternoon. She reminded us that the bishops' role is to promote peace and unity in the church and thereby enable it to become a place of safety and healing. This safety and healing needs to be available to the whole body, especially those parts of the body which are suffering or marginalised. She said the institution of the church had been the cause of marital strain and breakdown for some clergy families and apologised for the pain and hurt suffered. She also commented that divorce rates among the clergy had been rising since 2011. Knowing that a number of those contacting *Broken Rites* have cited emotional abuse as one of their problems, Bishop Libby then discussed the nature of emotional abuse and how important it is that senior staff learn to recognise it if the church is to safeguard its members. But, she said, the whole church should also be active in preventing harm and providing a safe space for all its members. She acknowledged the role that *Broken Rites* has played in raising awareness and helping to heal wounds. She ended her talk with a brief outline of how she sees her role as a bishop who is also a woman. She longs for a church that does not render anyone powerless or marginalized and thanked *Broken Rites* for its work in bringing safety and recognition to some of those who find themselves among the forgotten and disregarded.

Bishop's Libby's talk was followed by a time of sharing of members' experiences, some of them painful. The meeting closed with a time of quietness and centering led by Katharine Harrison.

# Co-Chair's report for meeting 1 October 2016

THE BEGINNING of the quarter was spent trying to understand the role of Co-chair and to introduce myself to key people who support us. I have therefore introduced myself to Frank Field and have asked if he can provide us the recent statistics on clergy marriage breakdown which Bishop Libby referred to at the AGM. I have also made contact with Bishop Alastair who has once again provided us with a letter of commendation to go out with the Church Leaders Appeal letter. I am very grateful to the team who will be sending out that letter and the Co-chair's letter later this month. I have spoken to Fiona Goode and discussed Bishop Libby's suggestion of a network of solicitors willing to work with separating or divorcing clergy spouses.

The stall at Greenbelt was a first for Broken Rites and worked well. Thanks go to Katharine for taking the initiative and manning a space on the WATCH stall single-handedly through the weekend, including battling a tornado. I understand from Katharine that she made many good contacts there. Katharine has said that she would be willing to run another similar stand for BR as she felt that it was a useful way of making contacts and raising awareness of *Broken Rites*.

We now have two new Facebook pages. First is a second confidential page called 'Clergy Marriage in Crisis' which was set up in response to a request to join our original confidential page from a wife who was not wanting to separate but needed support. Those interested can join by sending a message to Katharine. She has also set up an open page with the title 'Broken Rites'. It can be found by anyone who searches topics such as clergy marriage, crisis, separation etc. It has a link to our website and enquirers can send a message to Katharine.

Progress has been made regarding a *Broken Rites* Dropbox, thanks to Jonathan who has kindly created a folder in his Dropbox. This should be seen as a temporary solution lest we fill his personal Dropbox up.

Vivienne Rowett has now taken on the role of website editor and can be contacted via [websiteeditor@brokenrites.org](mailto:websiteeditor@brokenrites.org).

There continue to be a number of vacancies for links and reps. I am pleased to report that Barbara Stapleford has agreed to be Area Rep for the East of England. I have created a map showing where our members

are and where the vacancies are which has helped me understand the challenges we face as an organisation with not many members covering the UK and the Republic of Ireland with Europe thrown in for good measure.

## Website Enquiries report

THERE HAVE been eight enquiries through the website since the beginning of July. Also of interest is the fact that one enquirer found us through the open Facebook page. This is a page set up by Katharine which signposts people to our website, informs them that there are confidential groups and also allows people to send a message to Katharine.

Margaret Wilkinson

## Report From Sue Atack (Ret'd Chair) – June 2016

I WAS prompted a couple of days ago, that I promised to write a report in my capacity as chair leading up to the AGM in April 2016. I must admit I had not remembered this and to be honest had 'switched off' once to some extent from the day to day activities of Broken Rites. However I am more than happy to do this. I have liaised with some of you over specific issues and hopefully passed on all relevant information but I am happy to fill in any gaps – please just ask me.

**Real Life Stories** – I forwarded these to Bishop Alistair immediately following the AGM, which was quiet appropriate as it was at the height of the *Archers* story and Bishop Libby also raised mental abuse during her talk. I forwarded a copy of the e-mail to Maggie?/Dilys and copies of short and long versions of these are on a pen drive forwarded to Dilys.

**Bishop's Visitors Guidelines** – my understanding is that the draft version of these has been finalised and I think the next step is for these to be presented to the 2016 BV AGM in November from whence they will be presented to the House of Bishop for approval and adoption.

Dilys has copy of e-mail regarding this sent to Bishop Alistair and his PA, as she is key contact between *Broken Rites* and BV, as agreed at our January meeting.

**Archivist** – I met up with Anne Tunley mid May and handed over all the material I was holding. I urged Anne to attend a committee meeting as a visitor, as to date I am the only BR person Anne has met, as nothing is happening in the North East/Yorkshire at present. Anne seemed to be comfortable with what was required but, I think, will need/appreciate support when lodging these in the archives.

**Budget for 2016-2020** – following Jonathan's agreement to continue as treasurer I asked him whether he would be prepared to draw up a budget. This seemed sensible to me, as he would then have ownership of this and a better understanding of our income and expenditure. Jonathan agreed to take this on.

**Value Linked Loans** – I have forwarded relevant e-mails to Ann Richards and/or Dilys Stone regarding this issue. My understanding is that the new guidelines and draft documents were going to be circulated to all the Dioceses sometime in May. Copies of the documents forwarded to me are included on the pen drive sent to Dilys and also forwarded to Ann Richards.

**AGM 2017** – I note that the Scottish group have held their spring meeting very close to the date of our AGM (the same day or the Saturday either side).

Finally I am sure someone will be flagging up in the summer *Rite Lines* about the changes to the committee. Currently I am forwarding correspondence onto whoever I think is appropriate.

Lastly, another huge thank you to those existing committee members who agreed to take on extra responsibilities and also to those who volunteered to take on a role. Many hands make light work as they say and I am confident once the sharing of the chair's roles and responsibilities is established this model will be of great benefit to the organisation.

**Sue Atack, June 2016**



# Ireland

ALL VERY quiet here. There have been no new contacts, but I am aware of a recent breakdown where I have made I-am-here-if-you-need-someone-to-listen noises.

My bishop who has long been a quiet supporter of BR is sending me to the clergy consultation at Windsor in July. I have been asked to give a paper on the theme How do we speak about God? I have suggested to the facilitator that I might speak about marital breakdown among clergy. This has been approved.

This may be an opportunity to do some awareness raising and do a bit of PR. I shall of course be speaking as myself not for BR, but if there happened to be any handy leaflets or flyers available I could collect them at the meeting on 2 July.

The other good news is that my bishop is paying for the cost of my travel on this occasion as I shall be going on to Windsor after our meeting.

**Helen Oxley**

# London & South East Group

WE CONTINUE to meet regularly, please contact Ann Richards for the dates and venues.



# Scottish Broken Rites Meeting 30 April 2016

ON A sunny but cool day, four of us met at the Mercure Hotel in Edinburgh. Sadly through illness and other reasons, some ladies were unable to come at the last minute.

Two of our ladies have recently moved to new flats and it was lovely to hear how they are settling in. For one of them it was the first time she has ever lived on her own. Many of us will be able to relate to that and will remember all the fear that ran through our minds as we tried to get used to living alone, especially after the bustle of life in a busy church house. It does take a lot of getting used to and doing everything new for the first time is quite daunting. As they both work in Edinburgh, they will be able to meet up from time to time and compare notes on all the ups and downs of moving to a new flat.

We made plans for *Broken Rites*' representatives to attend the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland during the week beginning 23 May. Two ladies were going to this to give out our leaflets and talk to ministers and other people who are at the Assembly about Broken Rites. Believe it or not, there are still Church of Scotland people who have not heard about us!

We discussed the next AGM (see details elsewhere) which will be on Saturday 29 April 2017 at the Kirk of the Canongate in the Royal Mile in Edinburgh. We hope to have three previous Moderators from the Church of Scotland as our speakers – they have all been very supportive of *Broken Rites*. Their names will be confirmed later – in Scotland people are unused to take speaking engagements so far in advance! Things here move at a much slower pace.

Zara Phillips, daughter of princess Anne, was married in this Kirk some years ago. The church was founded in 1688 and completed in 1691. The master mason in charge was James Smith. A plaque on the front of the church bears witness to it having been built through a large bequest from a local merchant, it reads: "In 1688 King James VII ordained that the Mortification of Thos. Moodie, granted in 1649 to build a Church, should be applied to the erection of this structure." Previously the residents of Canongate had used the Abbey Church adjacent to the Palace of Holyroodhouse, but King James VII ordered the construction

of the new Kirk of the Canongate, allowing the Abbey Church to be converted into a Chapel for the Order of the Thistle. The current Thistle Chapel is attached to St. Giles' Cathedral. This is also a military church, the Church of Edinburgh Castle.

As usual there was a lot of laughter as we reminisced about days of old when we were at the beck and call of all and sundry who came to our manses and rectories. I am sure we all have good memories of those days as well as the sad ones.

We plan to meet again in the autumn.

This comes with best wishes to all at *Broken Rites* for a happy summer with lots of warm sunshine. For those of you who are going off on holiday, have a wonderful time.

**Patricia Robertson  
Area Rep Scotland.**

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**As always, a reminder that *Rite Lines* our twice yearly Newsletter is only as good as the items sent in by its members. Please continue to send in news, items of interest, ideas, photographs, meetings, even experiences which may help others.**

EVERYONE WELCOME  
**2017 AGM**  
Saturday 29 April 2017  
Kirk of the Canongate on the  
Royal Mile in Edinburgh

## East Midlands

REALISING THAT one of our long term Area members, Anne Gray, is unable to attend any of our group gatherings as she is virtually housebound, I asked her if she would like a visit from a few of us to which she enthusiastically said yes. Having suggested that we might meet for lunch nearby, we decided that a bring-and-share lunch would be ideal at her home. So I asked the new ladies in her county, Lincoln, and another member from Leicester, who knew her already, if they would like to join us, and bring food; all agreed. This time we chose a weekday and on Wednesday 4 May, five of us arrived at Anne's home on a sunny afternoon and enjoyed food, fun and made new friendships, also we felt free to share things that concerned us.

For the other members who were not with us (there really wouldn't have been room), and so they wouldn't feel left out, there is to be another gathering on 25 June, at the Red Hot World Buffet, Leicester, as we did last November. It was a popular venue and some of us did not get to the Richard III exhibition as planned then, so might take the opportunity this time.

Two enquirers were referred to me in March and April. The first said she had once been a BR member, but recently issues had reared up and would like to talk to someone, so I paid her a visit. She will join us on the 25th, but is not sure whether she will renew membership. The other lady, in the neighbouring area where there is no representative, has received the Help and Info pack, but after a second phone call from me has said she will contact us again when ready. It is possible that she might move down to Norfolk.

**Viv Tillin**

## Greater London & South East

APART FROM the continuing Sunday Lunch meetings, there is little to report.

**Ann Richards**

# Jonathan: Treasurer

THANK YOU for placing your trust in me. I have journeyed alongside *Broken Rites* for a number of years now and have some feeling for your ethos and dedication. I offer myself to your work in the hope that you and your strengths may not be diminished.



Although I have known divorce, I know my journey can bear not an iota of resemblance to your individual or collective experience; but I offer my perception that there is a pain which struggles to encounter peace.

Therefore, my intention is be in the background and simply enable you to be *Broken Rites*. I shall take my duty of care seriously and with the utmost confidentiality and I shall do all I can to make *Broken Rites* as effective as possible, working with your committee as a team-player.

A little about me. I am a retired engineer/teacher who founded the Derby-based rail company Signet Solutions back in 1996. A CofE Reader and a Companion of the Northumbria Community, I live in Belper with my wife Vivienne (who will be well-known to many of you). My hobbies are my miniature steam locos and amateur radio.

**Jonathan**

EVERYONE WELCOME  
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Kirk of the Canongate on the  
Royal Mile in Edinburgh

# Rite Lines Summer 2016

Last summer I took some photographs at Straffan Butterfly Farm.  
These pictures are now in use on some of BR's literature.

I began thinking about one of the butterflies which I witnessed hatching  
from its chrysalis:

Now at liberty  
Emerald wings questing  
Possibilities

Ulysses explores  
Butterfly existence.  
Soaring free, she thrives.



*I suspect that this was not actually a Ulysses – they are turquoise, but I needed  
three syllables for the haiku to work.*

**The Rev Helen Oxley**



# Lincolnshire

*Viv Tillin suggested I do a little write-up of a recent meeting in Lincs, so here goes... sorry it's a lat-minute thing – life's been a bit hectic, but I knew the deadline was soon so I allocated this evening for writing it, then a visitor came unexpectedly, so I'm working late! (Now the internet connection has gone funny – apologies if it only arrives next morning...)*

CONINGSBY IN Lincolnshire isn't a place that most people will be familiar with, so I begin with a bit of information: "RAF Coningsby in Lincolnshire is the Royal Air Force's Southern Typhoon Main Operating Base (MOB), home to two front line, combat ready squadrons...." and



*At Ann's place*

this is why some of us who enjoyed a day out there at the home of one of our two members (I think there are only two of us – we are spread out here!) in Lincs kept popping out of the door to catch a glimpse of whatever noisy thing was flying overhead. Not having a car or a jet plane, it would have been difficult to get there and back from my home in Louth by public transport, even though only a few miles north, so I was grateful for a lift from a clergywoman friend Christine in the ministry team here. Five of us gathered in Ann Gray's cosy living room on a sunny day, where we shared chicken, quiche and salad, even some wine, and also more of our on-going stories with each other, and some tears and laughter too. We're all at different stages in the journey of survival, and it's good to see those who are further on, and hope to be encouraging to newer members. Christine came to pick me up, and joined in with our chat and took the picture here. She was concerned to hear that we have not all been well supported by our various churches, echoing points made by bishop Libby at the AGM. Thanks to all who travelled to be at that meeting, and for Ann's hospitality.

**Vivienne Rowett**

Do any members have a Bishop's Visitor who would be willing to write an article on their role for *Rite Lines*?



Please remember to send in news, items of interest, such as a fascinating hobby, or about where you live; ideas and even experiences which may help others, all these can encourage one another along life's journey. We welcome input from Associates, Bishops Visitors, Bishops and other Senior Denominational. Contributions are invited by email to [editor@brokenrites.org](mailto:editor@brokenrites.org) or by post to the address on the back page. The *Rite Lines* newsletter is available in alternative formats of large print or electronic. If you would prefer to receive your copy in either of these formats please contact the editor.



**The AGM  
will be at the  
Kirk of the Canongate,  
on the Royal Mile  
in Edinburgh  
*Saturday 29 April 2017***

**Accommodation:** there's a Travel Lodge and a Premier Inn about a 10-15 minute walk from the venue. They are both not far from Waverley Station and just about five minutes from the bus station.

Some ladies who live not too far away have offered accommodation for up to nine people. Contact Shirley Douglas 01896 759254 or e-mail on [eshirleydouglas@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:eshirleydouglas@hotmail.co.uk)

# A visit to the Holy Land

IN 1973 I visited the Holy Land on a parish pilgrimage. It was a 'never-to-be-forgotten' experience – we saw all the wonderful places and worshipped everywhere. Last October I went on a tour – not a pilgrimage – with the Church Mission Society. 25 of us stayed in Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Nazareth. We saw many of the holy places, and much else besides. It took a while to get the old pilgrimage mentality out of my system, as this tour had a very different emphasis.

CMS has many interests in the Holy Land, particularly in Palestine, and we were privileged to meet people from organisations working for peace and reconciliation. These people were inspiring to say the least and gave us an in-depth picture of what life is like in Israel and Palestine. This was not about taking sides or making judgements, but about hearing facts and meeting people. We also learnt a lot about the complex history of the region. The two great conflicts of the 20th century hugely influenced how things have worked out – not least the drawing up of arbitrary boundaries around the whole of the Middle East. In the West, the atrocities of the Holocaust provoked a wave of guilt, and this precipitated a move to a 'Jewish homeland' which had been mooted at the end of the 1890s.

Our first few days we stayed in Jerusalem for an action-packed sight-seeing tour. How things had changed in 40 years! Everywhere was heaving with tourists and pilgrims. There was a big military presence, checkpoints and guns, especially when moving from Israeli to Arab parts of the city. The bazaars were as enticing as ever, though! The hotel was good and we enjoyed the food – we had buffet meals all through our tour, and by the end of ten days we were quite looking forward to something a little less predictable!

Jerusalem is a divided city – Israelis in the West, Palestinians in the East. The west is affluent, clean and well run with good shops and restaurants. We were taken on a bus tour of East Jerusalem, and it was a very different picture, with neglected buildings, few rubbish collections, a water supply that is often interrupted: you can tell Palestinian homes by the tanks on the roof to store rainwater. Palestinians do not have a vote in Parliament, and few choose to stand for local government, out of protest. So they don't get regular services.

In Bethlehem we visited three organisations supported by CMS. We had lunch at the Bethlehem Bible college with a talk from the Director.

His family had lived for generations in a village in north Palestine which was overrun by Zionists in 1948 and its people made homeless. This is a story we heard time after time: peoples' roots torn up and unable to return home.

Thousands of Palestinians live in refugee camps in their own land, and still Israelis are taking their land to build their own illegal settlements in the West Bank and elsewhere, and surrounding them with 8- metre-high protection walls. Of course, there is on-going retaliation. It is very hard not to take sides ... but that is the one thing one must not do. Taking sides causes even more conflict.

The story of dispossession was echoed at our visit to the Holy Land Trust, which works for reconciliation and trains people in non-violence. We spent a whole morning at Musalaha – another group which works at grass-roots for reconciliation: taking Jewish, Christian and Muslim young people on treks together in the desert, working with women's groups and enabling them to understand their differences and work together.

Again and again we heard accounts of people being made homeless or having their crops and olive trees destroyed. All the people we met knew what they were up against but continue working, praying and hoping that their small efforts will help to bring peace.

In Bethlehem we were privileged to be invited into people's homes for an evening meal. Six of us had dinner with Johnny and his family. They were Greek Orthodox Christians – mum, dad, and three children. They told us how many Arab Christians were moving abroad where there is better education and better jobs. They are leaving behind a world of discrimination, checkpoints and military rule. But this means that Christians are becoming a smaller and smaller minority in the land.

Our final visit was to a school in Galilee for children of all faiths – Jewish, Muslim, Christian and Druze. Over 4,000 children living and learning happily together. It was founded by Elias Chacour, now Maronite Archbishop of Galilee but whose family, like so many others, had been thrown out of their village in 1948. His vision for reconciliation is so hopeful, so full of love, joy and peace, that we were all uplifted.

There is so much more I could say: this tour opened my eyes to so much. It has opened my heart and mind also, so that I can better 'pray for the peace of Jerusalem'.

**Gillian Murray**

# Broken Rites Officers 2016/17



President:	Rt Hon Frank Field MP
Joint-Chairpersons:	Margaret Wilkinson and Veronica Bale
Secretary:	Rosina Elston,
Treasurer:	Jonathan Tillin
Newsletter Editor:	Valerie Hales
Membership Secretary:	Veronica Bale
Non C of E Representative:	Ruth East
Interdenominational rep:	
Website editor:	

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