

+ 21 May, Feast of St Constantine & St Helen, in our Celebration Year +

# Orthodox Parish of St Helen of Colchester

Antiochian Orthodox Deanery

NEWSLETTER 121

MAY 2006



## St Helen has watched over this Parish for 10 years - and over Colchester for 1000 years!

Our Parish and our Town share their Patroness. Of course she has plenty of praying-'time' in heaven, so we do not need to worry that she cannot cope with us as well. Indeed, many parishes from England's Orthodox past also look to her for inspiration and help - and nobody seems to complain that she neglects them!

Because of her supposed links with the town, and our constant Orthodox love of her, she was the obvious choice for a Patron. When we planned to set up the Parish some eleven years ago, and we enjoyed her patronage from the word 'go'. At her intercession God has established it in considerable peace-we have had no real rows at all, I think - and have not lacked a little prosperity.

Not that we have received everything we prayed for. Yet on the whole we have gone from strength to strength, though not in any spectacular way.

So blessed be our God, and praised be St Helen!

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Did you hear the radio programme on St Helen that mentioned our Chapel?

I thought it was very good indeed. MALCOLM BILLINGS travelled in Britain and even went to the Holy Land, presenting the subject in his usual helpful manner. He in no way underestimated the genuine problems about the story of our Saint, both in the supposed Colchester connection, and in the stories of her finding the Holy Cross.

But he managed it in a very positive manner, and St Helen herself came shining through as a wonderful inspiration for us all.

I for one think she is a marvellous Saint, and it is great that the people of Colchester have wanted her to belong to them in the way of our splendid story.

It causes no great difficulties whether she was born here or in Asia Minor, nor whether she was the daughter of a king or an inn-keeper.



St Constantine above and St Helen below, from Roman coins held in Colchester Castle



I just know that I love her. For ten years she has guarded us and protected us.

Our citizens have loved her for a thousand years. Through those centuries she has guarded, protected and inspired Colchester.

My desire is to remind both the people of this parish and all the people of this Borough of those facts, and help them to love her too.

**Father Alexander**

See over for cd of broadcast

**ABSENCE:** I shall be in Scotland Wed 3 May - Wed 10 May. For some of that period FATHER ATHANASIOS (07940-812760) will be at home for an emergency. Contacts are DENNIS HINDLE (868207) PAUL LANSLEY (562813) Sun 7 May Liturgy as usual, but no Vespers Sat 6 May (nor 3 June).

## Weekday Holy Liturgy at St Helen's

MID-FEAST OF PENTECOST  
Wednesday 17 May 9.30 am

3RD FINDING OF THE HEAD OF S JOHN THE BAPTIST  
Thursday 25 May 9.30 am

ASCENSION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST  
Thursday 1 June 9.30 am

## Feast of St Constantine and St Helen Parish Feast Sunday 21 May

10.15 am  
Third and Sixth Hours

10.30 am  
Divine Liturgy of the Feast  
with  
Veneration of the Holy Relic of St Helen

Join us

- on this special day
- in this special year  
for the

Parish Lunch at 12.30  
in the Castlegate Centre  
Please sign list to attend  
Offers of food to C Cobbold  
(01-206-263-565)

## St Helen's Chapel, Maidenburgh St, High St

St Helen's is 200m. down behind the George Hotel in the High Street. It is accessible from there only on foot. By car: leave Middleborough Roundabout (between dual carriageways Westway and Balmerne Hill), to Northgate; go straight along St Peter Street to Castle Park; continue round, up into Maidenburgh Street. Car Park, out of office hours: Oyster Court, close by in St Helen's Lane.

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

**St Fursey's Chapel, 111 Neville Rd,  
Sutton, near Stalham, Norfolk**

Divine Liturgy: usually first Saturday of month 9.30 am

**At St James Anglican Church, Clacton-on-sea**

Divine Liturgy: usually third Saturday of month 10.00 am

**At the Chaplaincy Centre, University of Essex**

Divine Liturgy: one Saturday per term 10.00 am

**Parish Priest: Father Alexander Haig**

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**Parish Website:**

<http://homepage.ntlworld.com/orthodox.colchester>

**Holy Liturgy  
ST FURSEY'S  
Saturday  
13 May  
9.30 am**

**CLACTON  
Saturday  
20 May  
10.00 am**



## Church Bookstall

### Postcard of St Helen's on sale

A very nice postcard of the church exterior is for the first time on sale, @ 25p. I am grateful to MIKE DAVIES for his assistance in producing it. You may wish to purchase these 'by the dozen' for sending out to friends. They have a few lines explaining the tradition and the meaning of the Chapel and St Helen herself.

### Broadcast mentions our church

A cd of MALCOLM BILLINGS' excellent BBC Radio 4 programme on St Helen @ cost price. It mentioned St Helen's Chapel. Thanks to DAVID DAVIES for arranging this.

## Calling our Young People

Please encourage your Orthodox youngsters (9-18 years) to attend the Orthodox Youth Camp 24 July - 4 August. It costs £155, but some help is available.

For many young people, it is very difficult to be Orthodox. They need any help they can get.

The Camp provides a place where they can enjoy themselves with similar youngsters, learn a little about the Faith, and enjoy lots of activities.

The Camp has my full, enthusiastic, backing. Details from me.

## Here and there

**DR TOM ANDREWS:** We were saddened to hear of Tom's death. Retired, he had been a respected GP at Cromer, Norfolk, with a gentle, delightful, character obvious to all. A good friend of our St Fursey's community, he actually helped build our Chapel there, greatly aiding Reader STEPHEN. An icon of the Holy Apostle Thomas is to be placed in the Chapel in his memory, but the building itself is his real memorial. Our sympathy to his wife BARBARA. Memory eternal!  
**CONTINUING ANGLICAN BISHOP ROBERT WAGGENER** and his wife NANCY visited this Parish last October, meeting some of you over coffee. It is marvellous to hear that they have now begun the journey into Holy Orthodoxy in Lynchburg, Virginia. With some twenty of their people, and another priest, his wife and a dozen people, they are founding a new Orthodox Parish (Western Rite). We wish them well and pray that they may be much blessed as Orthodox. Robert will be the first known "continuing Anglican" Bishop to become Orthodox. A married man, he will now be a Priest, and is likely to be ordained in six to twelve months' time.

**IN CHURCH:** It was so good to see JOHN (JONATHAN) JONES in church on Good Friday. He has been quite ill, but is now back at work. We pray his health will continue to improve.

**PHILIP SHERRARD** was a highly respected English Orthodox theologian. He died a few years ago. A Symposium in his honour is to be held 3/4 June at Kings College London (where he taught), with a list of eminent speakers, including his friend BISHOP KALLISTOS. He was brother-in-law to RICHARD COBBOLD, and his wife DENISE was godmother to CHRISTODOULI. **CONGRATULATIONS** to MANYA PAGIAVLA, who has been awarded her PhD on El Greco, the great Greek painter. Manya has been at the University of Essex for some years, so we have got to know her well. She is as yet uncertain where she will now work, but we wish her well.

The new Mayor was invited for Sunday 21 May but is unable to attend then. I hope he will be able to make his Visit on taking office during the week.

## 'It is clear the Greeks are by nature superior'

The *Times* recently reported that a Leeds University professor tells us that the Greek philosopher Aristotle was right to argue that the majority of human beings could and should be enslaved, because they are slaves by nature.

We are not sub-human, and may even be extremely creative and intelligent - but we do not understand the way to the good life. Western society wrongly values economic prosperity and seeks eternal youth. We ought rather to seek our *intrinsic goodness or happiness*.

Northern Europeans are natural slaves because our climate is too cold. Asiatics and Africans are natural slaves because the climate is too hot.

We would all be better off, the Professor appears to say, if we natural slaves put our lives under the control of the natural, rational slave masters - 'the Greeks of course.'

**Certainly it puts the rest of us in our place: three cheers for the Greeks, natural 'Masters of the World'!**

### St John the Theologian...

...is a wonderful figure, one of the Twelve Apostles, the youngest - only a lad - the 'beloved disciple'. He was at the foot of the Cross comforting Mary Theotokos. As he died, Christ entrusted them to each other. Later he worked in Asia Minor, as Bishop of Ephesus. Alone of the Twelve, he escaped martyrdom, dying in peace at a great age.

According to tradition he wrote the fourth Gospel, the three New Testament Letters, and also the Book of the Apocalypse or Revelation, composed on Patmos.

One of his feasts falls on 8 May, another on 26 September.



## Holy Week and Pascha

We had a really lovely Week, due to the love and devotion of servers, singers, cleaners, flower-arrangers, food-providers - and of course *all* who attended services. Our thanks to them all. We really seemed to enter more deeply into the Saving Passion and Glorious Resurrection of our Lord and God Jesus Christ.

### Deanery Clergy Meeting

The clergy, some of their wives, and a few others are meeting in a Derbyshire retreat-house for a couple of nights at the end of May, to discuss Deanery affairs. It has been a long time since a similar session, though there have been meetings of a few hours.

## A Word from the Fathers: St Constantine the Great

**S**tanding, as he did, alone and pre-eminent among the Roman emperors as a worshipper of God; alone as the bold proclaimer to all men of the doctrine of Christ; having alone rendered honour, as none before him had ever done, to his Church; having alone abolished utterly the error of polytheism, and discountenanced idolatry in every form:

so, alone among them both during life and after death, was he accounted worthy of such honours as none can say have been attained to by any other; so that no one, whether Greek or Barbarian, nay, of the ancient Romans themselves, has ever been presented to us as worthy of comparison with him.

*Eusebius of Caesarea, The Life of Constantine AD 327*

### MAY DAYS

Tue 2	Joyful Commemoration of the Dead S Athanasius the Great
<b>Sun 7</b>	<b>Pascha 3, Myrrh-bearing Women</b>
Mon 8	Holy Apostle John the Theologian
Tue 9	Translation of Relics of S Nicholas
Wed 10	Holy Apostle Simon the Zealot
Thu 11	SS Cyril and Methodius
<b>Sun 14</b>	<b>Pascha 4, Paralyse Man</b>
Mon 15	S Pachomius the Great
Wed 17	Mid-Feast of Pentecost
<b>Sun 21</b>	<b>SS Constantine and Helen, Parish Feast; Pascha 5, Samaritan Woman</b>
Thu 25	3rd Finding of Head of S John S Aldhelm, Bishop of Sherborne
Fri 26	S Augustine, Apostle of the English
Sat 27	S Bede the Venerable
<b>Sun 28</b>	<b>Pascha 6, Blind Man</b>
Thu 1 Jun	<b>Ascension of Jesus Christ</b>

A full list of the month's Feasts and Fasts available on request