

+ A double-size Newsletter to celebrate our 200th edition, & proclaim the Holy Orthodox Faith +

**Orthodox Parish of
St Helen of Colchester**
Antiochian Orthodox Deanery of the UK & Ireland
NEWSLETTER 200 JULY-AUGUST 2013



WEEKDAYS AT ST HELEN'S: HOLY LITURGY 9.30 am

Tuesday 2 July
Placing of the Venerable Robe
of the Theotokos at Blachernae
Thursday 25 July
Dormition of Righteous Anna

Thursday 15 August
DORMITION OF OUR MOST HOLY LADY
AND EVER-VIRGIN THEOTOKOS
Friday 30 August
St Alexander, Patriarch of Constantinople



HIS BEATITUDE PATRIARCH JOHN X OF ANTIOCH AND ALL THE EAST on a visit to Colchester in March 2012. He was Archbishop of Europe for four years, and was elected Patriarch only in December 2012. With him is Fr Alexander, and in the background, left to right, are our friends Fr Michael Stokes of Frinton (RC), Fr Michael Rear of Manningtree (RC), and Fr Antony Bardsley (Orthodox) of Mettingham in Suffolk. *[Photo: Elena Kanaar]*

While we miss his pastoral care, we rejoice that our former Bishop is now Patriarch, and that a little bit of England and even a little bit of Colchester is known - and we think loved - at the heart of our Church of Antioch. Not that the problems of our Church in Britain and Ireland ought to take a great deal of his time and energy when the troubles our people are having in Syria are so great at the moment. The Patriarch lives in Damascus, in the Street called Straight, mentioned in the Acts of the

Apostles as the place where St Paul stayed after his conversion outside that city. Pray for His Beatitude, his Bishops and Priests and the people in our Church's homeland. And pray for the leaders of the nations, who seem to understand little about the situation of Orthodox Christians in the Middle East - though it was heartening to see a slight awakening to the matter by President Obama, shown in the letter he wrote, and reproduced in our June Newsletter.

An eye on the past, a glimpse of the present, but looking to the future

The 100th edition of this Newsletter in June 2004 was marked by a 'bumper' size issue. So was our 150th in January 2009. It would seem appropriate to celebrate our 200th in the same way. And to make an occasion to look back as well as forward. The present is built on the past, and so is the future. This is largely for those many now who have joined us since those early days, and may not be aware of anything of the history of our Parish.

The very first editions were called *Pilgrimage to Orthodoxy*: we started out in October 1994 as a group of persons of other Christian faiths who had decided to enter the Ark of Salvation which is the Holy Orthodox Church, together with a few who were 'cradle Orthodox'.

The Greek and Russian hierarchies had shown little interest in receiving the dozen or so Anglican priests around Britain who were interested, but His Beatitude Patriarch Ignatius IV of Antioch opened his arms to us in Paris and said, 'Welcome home!'

We Haigs were received into the Church by Chrismation in December 1995 and moved from Bocking near Braintree to Colchester to start the new Parish.

At first, by the generosity of St James' Anglican parish, we started worship in St Paul's church near the station. We count them as our benefactors.

However, that building was almost immediately declared dangerous and all activity there was stopped. The building was pulled down.

But the local Co-operative Society came to our aid, and for four years we worshipped very happily in their funeral chapel (again, now demolished) in Bourne Court off the Mersea Road. The Co-op too is counted among our early benefactors: we commemorate them in our prayers.

Then, in November 2000 we were allowed by the Borough Council to take a sub-tenancy of St Helen's Chapel, by the kindness of the owners, Chelmsford Anglican diocese. We have remained here ever since on various agreements—but these run out in September 2016, and the future after that is uncertain.

All along we realised that St Helen's Chapel is not big enough to make a permanent home for us, and we are aware of its smallness many times every year - really, even, every week.

So we have always been looking for a larger building, and for many years (even before we actually started in 1996) we have been looking for a bigger place.

Most of you will know that on a number of occasions over the years we nearly obtained the nearby and wonderful St Martin's Church, long redundant. But each time, at the last moment, it proved impossible to reach agreement with its intransigent and over-demanding owners, the Churches Conservation Trust, a 'quango' of Government and CofE. Last year we tried again, but then had to give up any idea of ever having it. St Martin's remains to this day a tragic, little-used building, looking for a purpose.

I do not believe that we shall ever be able to be a really effective and prosperous Orthodox parish while we are based in a building as small as St Helen's. We must continually be on the look-out for a larger building, but whether we will get a suitable building in my time remains to be

seen. Doubtless, we are in the hand of God.

Our attendance has grown considerably, as is shown in the *Church Figures* table over page. Some of you may like to study the figures.

From Colchester we have also founded or nurtured three other communities:

- Clacton from March 1998, where we still have a mission with a small but loyal group of worshippers, in St James' Anglican church;
- St Fursey's in Norfolk from October 1998, the leadership however rejecting our care in July 2010; and,
- All Saints in Basildon, which we founded in October 2010, but in March 2013 happily handed over to St Botolph's parish.

To these may be added:

- a ministry in the University of Essex, continuing but now rather reduced;
- a ministry for some years at Chelmsford Prison; and,
- a limited ministry at the local hospitals, continuing.

Now in my 75th year, I am feeling a desire to give up as Parish Priest and simply be assistant to another Priest. The problem is that at the moment there is no-one to take my place. Please pray that the Lord may find a suitable candidate.

God bless you all.

Father Alexander

**Feast of the Repose of
ST HELEN
EQUAL TO THE APOSTLES**
Mother of
St Constantine the Great,
Beloved Patron of our Church
and Parish and City

who watches over us,
who (they say) built our church,
whom we love and admire,
whose story we cherish,
whose prayers we ask.



Saturday 17 August

4.30 pm Great Vespers

Sunday 18 August

9.45 am Mattins

10.30 am Divine Liturgy

12.30 pm Parish Picnic on the Green

2.00 pm approx Veneration of the Holy Relic

PARISH PICNIC

Bring your own food, with something to share with others
Enjoy the company of your fellow-Orthodox Christians
Meet an old friend and someone new
Cold drinks provided

An Idiotic Administration Disaster !

I was shopping in the town centre a few weeks ago and lost my Filofax! **DISASTER: it held my working diary and a huge amount of information - of no use to anyone else, but of great use to me in running the Parish!**

Besides my diary, there were addresses, telephone numbers, and much general information. My Filofax bulged!

Once I was reasonably well organised as an administrator. Now I am instantly turned into the worst administrator possible, with few records to keep things running smoothly.

Of course, I enquired at the bank and the shop I visited, walked the streets, phoned and visited the police station. But apparently nobody has found it.

Yes, I have always kept a desk diary in addition, but it has been more to keep a record of the past than for future commitments, and the index of details in my study is quite out-of-date.

Most email addresses are on the computer, but not much else, to avoid having to having to register with the authorities.

I have used the system for at least 25 years. For a recent birthday my dear children clubbed together to buy me a fine new leather cover. It has been very useful indeed, but I always feared this happening. *Now it has!*

We have offered prayers to St Menas, to St Phanourios, to St Nicholas, to no avail!

Now I must work out a better and more fool-proof system for the future, to protect me from myself!

Please, dear friends, can you help this idiot? Can you - generously, forgivingly - send me, by email, post, or in person:

- your name and names of your family,
- address,
- telephone numbers,
- email addresses,
- if you do not already, show whether you prefer to have the Newsletter by email
- any other details you think I need.

The Idiot parishpriest@orthodoxcolchester.org.uk

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's Street to Castle Park; continue round, up into Maidenburgh Street. Nuns Road NCP, off St Peter's Street, 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
Churchwardens: David Davies 01-473-745-167 **Dusan Radunovic** 01-206-710-073

The Parish of St Helen is Registered Charity No. 1134418
Parish Website: <http://www.orthodoxcolchester.org.uk>

At St James Anglican Church, Beatrice Rd, Clacton-on-sea CO15 1LE
Divine Liturgy: usually third Saturday 10.00 am

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

CLACTON

Saturday 20 July Holy Prophet Elias (Elijah)
10.00 am Divine Liturgy 11.30 am Holy Baptism
No Liturgy in August

The People Column

DENIS GOUBERT: Denis was a Channel Islander who did his first degree brilliantly at Essex, taught here for a while, and then spent many years at Moscow University. Rather attached to Orthodoxy, he yet remained a Roman Catholic, and his funeral was in the Catholic church at Wivenhoe, though I was able to attend. Our sympathy to his wife OLGA and son, our former altar boy, SVYATOSLAV. Memory eternal!

REV DAVID KINGSTON is a Church of Scotland minister and Garrison Chaplain. I was particularly interested in him because he is a Scot (I am half one!), and he, it proved, is interested in Orthodoxy, so we were glad to welcome him to lunch one free day. Alas, in Army manner, he leaves Colchester at the end of July, but I will remember him in my prayers, and wish him well.

VLAD GHITA from Romania came to St Helen's only recently, and has now left after his final examinations, but I record his great assistance on the Altar over Holy Pascha. We wish him well for the future.

THEODOROS THEODORIDIS has also been very helpful in the parish for some months, serving on the Altar sometimes, and recently assisting on the Soup Kitchen in St Nicholas Square (working in the Methodist team). He did his studies here and now is a lecturer, but leaves us shortly for the university in Salford, Manchester. Our thanks to him and best wishes.

MIHAIL MOROSAN, who is Romanian, and **ANASTASIOS KOTTAS**, who is from Austria but has a Greek father, have both been very loyal to the Church over the three years they have been studying here. We congratulate them on their degrees and commend them to God for their future careers.



THEIR EMINENCES ARCHBISHOPS PAUL AND YOHUNNA OF ALEPPO in north Syria were kidnapped by terrorists in April. At the time of going to press there is still no word of them. Yes, we must frankly say we fear the worst, but we still *hope and pray* that they may be alive and well. Please pray for them and their release. We as a parish know personally Greek Orthodox Archbishop Paul: he stayed here, serving in St Helen's in 2002.

Here and There

NEW MAYOR: It was a great pleasure to welcome to St Helen's the new Mayor of Colchester and his Mayress on his election in May, Cllr COLIN SYKES and his wife and fellow-councillor LAURA. They came for the usual quiet visit to pay their respects to St Helen, Patron Saint of Colchester, in the church dedicated to her, and by tradition built by her. Mayors have been doing this ever since we re-opened the ancient building for worship in 2000.

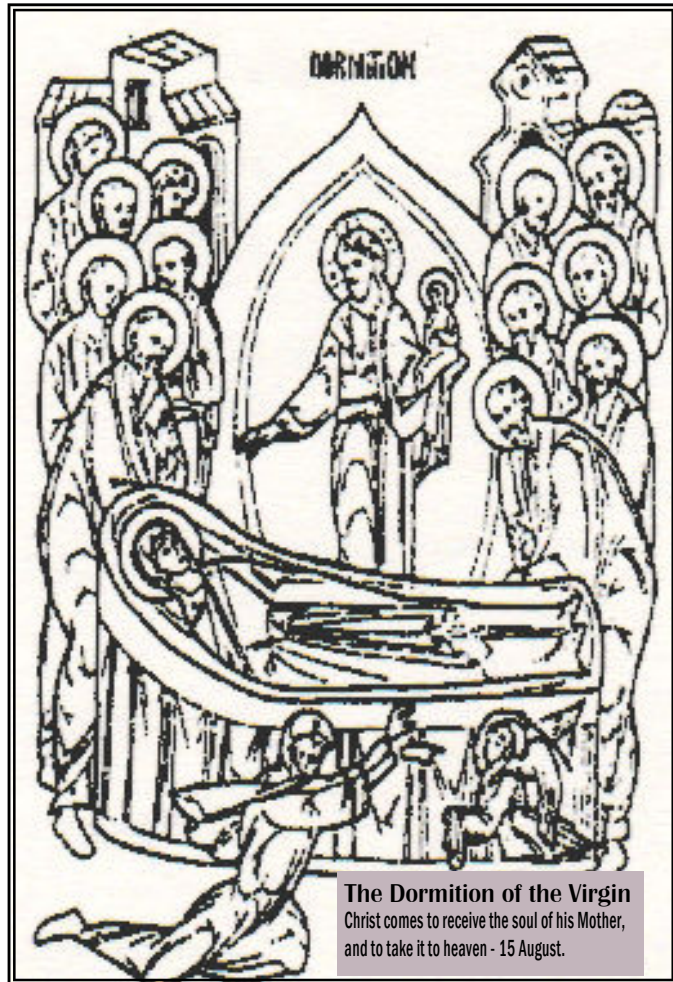
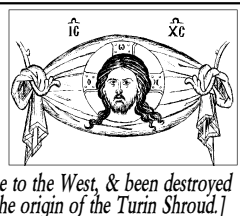
WELCOME TO CLACTON: Fr PETER KANE has arrived as Rector at St James, after a prolonged vacancy. We hope he has a happy and fruitful ministry here. We have received generous hospitality in that Anglican parish for some 15 years now, and look forward to continuing our association into the future.

CHURCH DECORATED: St Helen's is looking very nice now, painted by BOGDAN GHEBEA, of our own congregation, and his father CONSTANTIN. They managed it (for a very reasonable price) between two Sundays, though it has taken longer for us to straighten everything inside, where I am trying to arrange the Saints in appropriate groups. When we arrived here in 2000, Dennis Hindle with a few others painted the walls. Lower parts have been done since, but this was the first time that the walls had been completely repainted, and the first occasion the ceiling had ever been done. The Holy Altar has been tidied and cleaned very suitably.—And we now have the possibility of hanging a chandelier in the nave.

HOLY DOORS: I plan a new set of Holy Doors, and wonder whether we should renew the rather poor seating. The seats came to us when we opened—second-hand and free. They have served us well, but are mostly rather poor now.

ST JOHN OF KRONSTADT: I have long had a soft spot for St John, parish priest and confessor in St Petersburg at the turn of the 19/20th centuries. He was recognised for his holiness in his life-time, and had a great personal following from the Russian Royal Family to the peasantry. The Orthodox parish at Bath, under Fr YVES DUBOIS and now Fr SERAPHIM JOHNSON, and which we have known well and loved ever since its foundation about 1980, is dedicated to St John, unusually for a Greek-jurisdiction parish. Our thanks to Deacon ANDREW BOND of Mettingham who has given us a good-size icon of him, with little icons of scenes in his life around the main one.

Christ is said to have wiped his face on a towel and sent his imprinted features to heal the king of Edessa. This was the original of the icon. Not-made-with-hands. It was moved from Edessa to Constantinople, and celebrated on August 16, but later to disappear. [It could possibly have gone to the West, & been destroyed in the French Revolution, or even be the origin of the Turin Shroud.]



The Dormition of the Virgin
Christ comes to receive the soul of his Mother, and to take it to heaven - 15 August.

Is the Orthodox Faith just for me — or for others too?

Orthodox people are quite sure they have 'the knowledge of the truth', that their religion is the right and true one, that it is the way to salvation, and so on.

And they are right. That after all is what the word itself means: Right Glory, Right Belief. Unless it is the Truth, there is no point in standing up for it. No point in being willing to suffer or die for it.

But Orthodox are not usually quite so good at passing that Faith on to others. We want the world to be saved; we should want our loved ones, our friends, neighbours and families, and indeed the whole world, to come into the knowledge of that Truth, that is, to Christ himself, the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

We should be propagating our Faith whenever we can—without of course being objectionable, which would do more harm than good.

We have no right to try to force others into Faith. The best way to spread it is by being a good and holy person.

But we should also seek to comfort others and strengthen them when they are in need, physically, mentally, or spiritually. A true and appropriate word, uttered sincerely and in love, can sometimes help a person over a stile and bring them to Christ our God.

Take no notice of those who say Orthodox are not interested in making converts, though it was not possible in Orthodox countries under the yoke of either Islam or communism.

Orthodoxy by its nature is a missionary religion.

A Word from the Fathers: The Transfiguration (6 August)

When the soul is counted worthy to enjoy communion with the Spirit of the light of God, and when God shines upon her with the beauty of his ineffable glory, preparing her as a throne and dwelling for himself, she becomes all light, all face, all eye.

And there is no part of her that is not full of the spiritual eyes of light. There is no part of her that is in darkness, but she is made wholly and in every part light and spirit.

The sun is the same all over, not having any back part nor any part that falls short, but is wholly glorified with light all over and is all light, being alike in every part.

Fire too—the very light of fire—is all alike in every part, and does not contain in itself first or last, greater or less.

So also the soul, when she is perfectly illumined in ineffable beauty and glory by the light of Christ's countenance, and when she is granted perfect communion with the Holy Spirit and is counted worthy to become the dwelling-place and throne of God, she becomes all eye, all light, all face, all glory, all spirit.

The Homilies of St Macarius

FELLOWSHIP OF ST ALBAN & ST SERGIUS Branch Pilgrimage to the Monastery Saturday 27 July

11 am Coffee & Talk - Take a picnic lunch.
Tour in the afternoon. If you wish, stay for Vespers

Church Figures

For those who like numbers, here are some to illustrate our Parish life.

Sunday Liturgy Average Attendance shows a generally *slow-but-steady* overall growth since we began. In calculating the average we include Easter night attendance, but not Weddings or Baptisms taking place after a Liturgy.

The figures show we are attracting some newcomers to join us, but, alas! not very many.

Even more sad is that some join the Orthodox Church with great enthusiasm and determination, but then withdraw. Others of course move away but remain faithful Orthodox.

	Baptisms	Chrismations	Marriages	Funerals	Sunday Liturgy Av. Attendance
1995	-	5	-	-	-
1996	-	4	-	-	10
1997	-	1	-	2	16
1998	2	5	-	1	20
1999	-	-	-	-	17
2000	2	6	2	1	22
2001	2	1	2	3	26
2002	2	2	1	4	27
2003	1	2	1	4	29
2004	3	1	1	5	29
2005	-	1	-	2	32
2006	6	-	1	4	33
2007	9	-	1	2	40
2008	4	2	1	4	41
2009	7	6	1	3	44
2010	2	1	-	1	40
2011	10	-	3	6	41
2012	6	-	3	4	44
2013 so far	6	1	-	2	51
Church Roll presented at AGM					
2012: 75 2013: 75					
Present Newsletter Circulation					
Posted/collected/delivered 166					
Emailed, Parishioners/Friends 150					
Emailed, Antiochian Clergy 20					
TOTAL households receiving 336					

What about our Society? Society, Government, and the Church

Wednesday 24 July, 7.30 pm for 8 pm
Eld Lane Baptist Church
with Sir Bob Russell MP

British society, built upon Christianity and its values, is now slipping away from that position. Bob Russell, MP for Colchester, sometimes maintains a Christian position but takes a very secular approach. This meeting may help formulate our beliefs. All Welcome.

Arranged by Seeking God's Blessing

The Cambridge Orthodox Institute needs your financial help

The Cambridge Institute was founded in the late 1990s to serve the growing Orthodox community in Britain. It provides lectures and courses, and has served the Church well. Its courses can be for degrees or certificates, and are academically recognised outside the Church.

Several of our Colchester people have greatly benefitted from its work, and through them the Parish and the wider Orthodox community.

Until now it had to work from borrowed premises, Wesley College. Now it has purchased a building of its own, to widen and consolidate its service to the Church. They have named it Palamas House after St Gregory Palamas.

This purchase has left it short of funds for doing its work. It is appealing for regular gifts from those who recognise its worth. A leaflet with details is available in church.

Would you be interested in making a regular gift to help its work progress? Of course, one-off gifts are also very acceptable.

Gift-Aiding your donation increases its value enormously, for the Institute can then reclaim the income tax you have paid on it.

You could even think of going on one of the Institute courses yourself - look at their website or see posters in church.

JULY DAYS

Mon 1	Unmercenaries Cosmas & Damian of Rome
Tue 2	Placing of Robe of Theotokos at Blachernae S Stephen the Great, Prince of Moldavia S John of Shanghai & San Francisco
Thu 4	S Andrew of Crete, S Andrew Rublev
Fri 5	S Athanasius of Athos, Uncovering of Relics of S Sergius
Sat 6	Virgin-Martyr Lucy, S Sexburga of Ely
Sun 7	Pentecost 2, All Saints of Britain
Mon 8	S Edgar the King, the Peaceable Kazan Icon of the Theotokos
Thu 11	Great Martyr Euphemia the All-praised S Olga, Princess of Russia
Fri 12	S Veronica who was healed by Christ
Sat 13	Synaxis of Archangel Gabriel S Mildred of Minster-in-Thanel
Sun 14	Pentecost 3, Fathers of the Fourth Council
Mon 15	Gt Prince Vladimir, S Swithin of Winchester
Wed 17	Gt Martyr Margaret (Marina) of Antioch Passion Bearers Emperor Nicolas &c
Thu 18	Martyrs Gd Duchess Elizabeth & Barbara
Fri 19	Uncovering of Relics of S Seraphim
Sat 20	H Glorious Prophet Elias (Elijah)
Sun 21	Pentecost 4
Mon 22	H Myrrh-bearer Mary Magdalene
Wed 24	Martyr Christina of Tyre Passion-bearers Boris & Gleb
Thu 25	Dormition of Righteous Anna
Fri 26	Martyr Parasceva of Rome
Sat 27	Gt Martyr & Healer Panteleimon
Sun 28	Pentecost 5, S Samson of Dol, S Irene of Chrysovalantou
Wed 31	S Joseph of Arimathea

AUGUST DAYS

Thu 1	<i>Beginning of Dormition Fast</i> Procession of Holy Wood of the Cross
Fri 2	Transl of Relics of Protomartyr Stephen
Sun 4	Pentecost 6
Mon 5	S Oswald, King & Martyr
Tue 6	Holy Transfiguration of Christ
Fri 9	Apostle Matthias
Sat 10	Martyr & Archdeacon Lawrence of Rome
Sun 11	Pentecost 7
Tue 13	S Tikhon the Wonderworker (1783)
Thu 15	DORMITION OF THE H THEOTOKOS
Fri 16	Transl of the Icon Not-Made-With-Hands
Sun 18	Pentecost 8, REPOSE OF S HELEN OUR PATRON
Tue 20	S Oswin, King & Martyr
Fri 23	S Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons
Sat 24	New Hieromartyr Kosmas of Aetolia
Sun 25	Pentecost 9, Apostle Titus of Crete
Wed 28	S Moses the Black, S Augustine of Hippo
Thu 29	Beheading of S John the Forerunner S Sebti, King of the East Saxons, Monk
Fri 30	S Alexander, Patriarch of Constantinople
Sat 31	Placing of Cincture at Chalkoprateia Hieromartyr Cyprian of Carthage S Aidan, Bishop of Lindisfarne

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