

# A Short History of



# The Monnaie Chapel



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of  
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**Reprinted December 2025**

*Front cover from an illustration by Ceri Bishop  
and inside back cover by Gillie Drake.*



*Le Monnaie de Haut at the turn of the 20th Century.  
The greenhouse on the left is standing where the Chapel is today.*



*Frank Drake (second left) at an early age with Max & Tim Wetherall  
and his sister Dorothy.*



*The Monnaie School in the fifties.*

# Introduction

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In his book *Thy Son Liveth* my father Revd. Frank Drake fully described my brother's illness and the circumstances which finally lead to the building of the Chapel of Christ the Healer. Fifty-seven years later, I hope that this Brief History of the Monnaie Chapel puts Robin's story into a broader and more contemporary perspective.

## Early History

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My paternal grandfather, Aylmer Mackworth Drake, came to Guernsey in 1894 aged twenty-two, bought Le Monnaie de Haut and went into partnership with Tim Wetherall. Wetherall, Drake & Co became a successful tomato growing concern and Aylmer spent the rest of his life in the Island, became President of the Guernsey Growers Association, a Deputy for St. Andrews, a Jurat and eventually a member of the Controlling Committee which was set up during the occupation under the Bailiff, Sir Victor Carey to run the Island under the Germans. He died in 1941.

My parents, Robin and I had been evacuated during the war and we returned to Guernsey in 1948. Le Monnaie had been occupied by German troops throughout the occupation. The front lawn was turned into a vegetable patch; a bunker and gun emplacement had been built adjacent to the house and two rows of wash basins were installed in what had been the sitting room! My parents set to work and two years later opened the Monnaie as a pre-preparatory school for the three Guernsey colleges. It became extremely popular and within a few years had over fifty children on its books aged four to seven, whose parents seemed happy to pay twelve guineas per term!





*Dorothy Kerin in 1964 and with her nine adopted war orphans.*



*Burrswood today.*

# Robin and Hodgkins Disease

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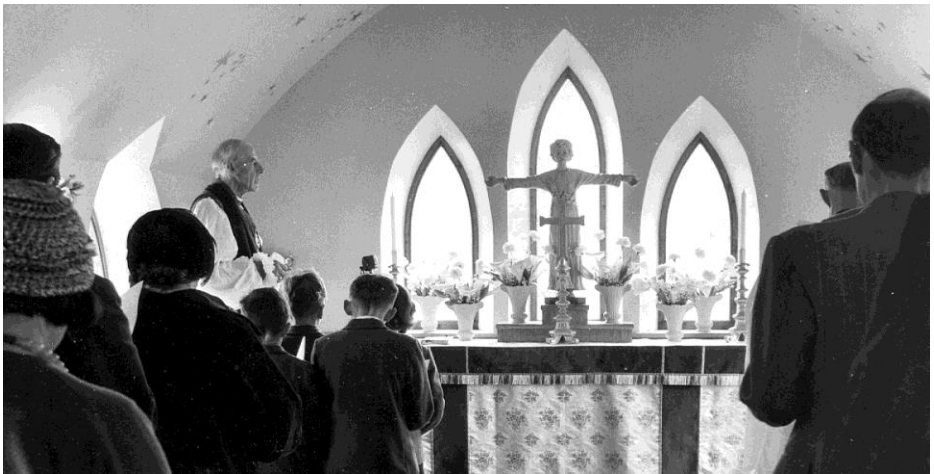
It was during the ten years of the school's life that disaster hit the family. Robin, twenty-four at the time and ten years older than me, was suddenly struck with Hodgkins Disease, or Hodgkins Lymphoma, as it is known today. In the 1950s it was incurable. My parents had been put in touch with Dorothy Kerin, who as a twenty-two-year-old, had been miraculously restored to health overnight after being confined to bed for five years with tubercular meningitis, peritonitis and diabetes. After what she believed to be her divine healing she established three Christian healing centres in the home counties, one of which was at Burrswood, near Tunbridge Wells in Kent.

It is not surprising that my father was drawn to Burrswood. A deeply Christian man and a schoolmaster by profession, he was ordained into the Church of England whilst in his early forties. He had always been very much aware of his family's heritage within the church: his maternal grandfather, Havilland Durand, had been the last of nine successive generations of Huguenot priests whose ancestor had escaped persecution by the Jesuits in Montpellier after the repeal of the Edict of Nantes in 1685.

Daniel Durand, the sixth in this line of exiled clergy, moved to Guernsey in 1780, became Rector of St Andrews and married 'the girl next door' Anne de Jersey, who lived up the road in St. Helène. Fourteen years later he was made Dean, a position he held until his death thirty- eight years later. Both my father's paternal grandfather and great-grandfather had also been Church of England clergy, so it was perhaps natural that he instinctively turned to God after being told that contemporary medical science had nothing to offer my brother.



*The Laying of the foundation stone by Dean Frossard in 1956. The builder Marcel Flouquet is on the right; architect, Cliff Moulin is standing foreground. Robin, Frank and Nicholas Drake are standing in the background.*



*The consecration of the Chapel by the Bishop of Winchester. June 9th, 1957.*



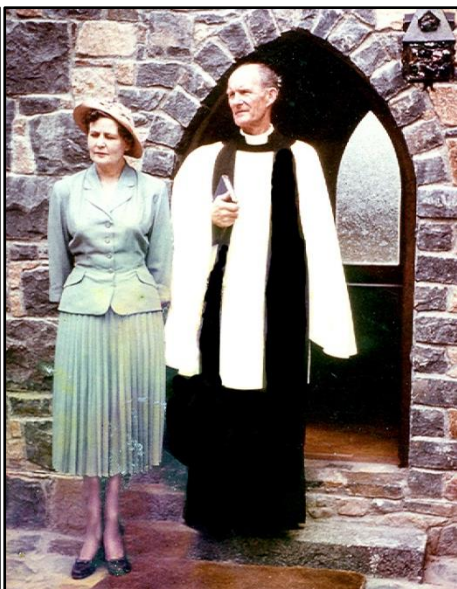
My parents and Robin spent a great deal of time at Burrswood and a strong link was forged. Greatly inspired by the work being carried out under Dorothy Kerin, my father founded the Monnaie Chapel as a satellite of the Chapel of Christ the Healer in Burrswood. It was dedicated by the Bishop of Winchester on 9th May 1957, five months before my brother's death. Miraculously, the building of the chapel, on what had been the chicken run in my parents' garden, was commissioned without any funds being in place! "Don't worry, God will find the money!" insisted Dorothy. And indeed, He did. A local benefactor quickly appeared on the scene whose only condition was that he/she should remain anonymous, a condition that has been honoured to this day.

## Thy Son Liveth

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Few things in life can be more devastating than the premature loss of one's own child and if ever there had been a time when my parents' faith was challenged it would have been after Robin's death. Their trust in God however remained resolute, due perhaps, to the circumstances that followed shortly after Robin's death which my father described in his book *Thy Son Liveth*:

*Throughout Tuesday, the last night of his life, his vitality increased. For over sixteen hours he laughed and chatted incessantly, his voice was amazingly strong and he was still joyfully awake when I fell asleep at about five minutes to two next morning. Then, at some moment during the next sixty-five minutes, he simply and very gently died. One could imagine no more perfect end to life in this world.*



*Robin (left) and Frank and Joanna Drake in the seventies*



*The first window to be installed in the Chapel was in memory of Robin from his family. Designed by Mary Eily de Putron.*

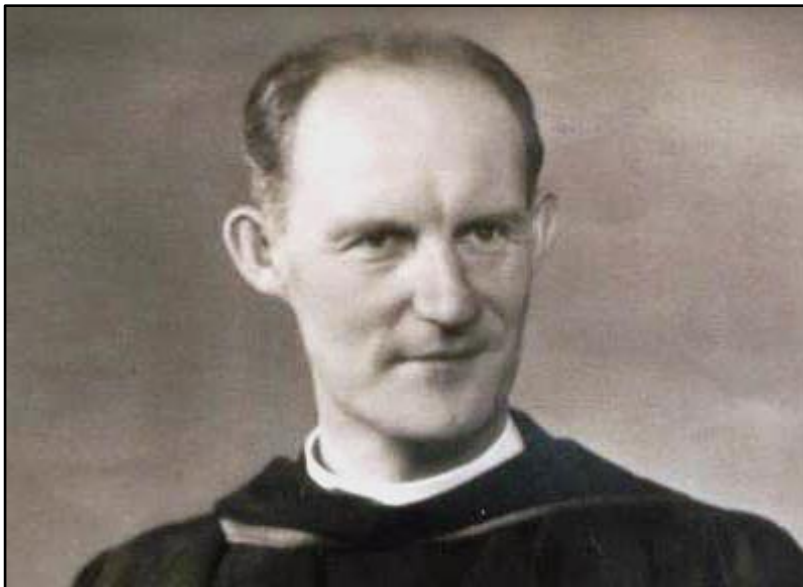
*So, in spite of Our Lord's promise: 'Thy Son Liveth', in spite of faith and trust and expectation that he would be healed, Robin was dead. Had Our Lord then broken his promise?*

*Joanna and I dressed, celebrated the Holy Communion in chapel and telephoned Dorothy Kerin. She told us that at three o'clock that morning she had been woken by a hand shaking her roughly on the shoulder and Robin's voice calling to her loudly and joyfully: 'Muzz, I'm all right now'. Later, the doctor stated that death must have occurred at about three a.m.*

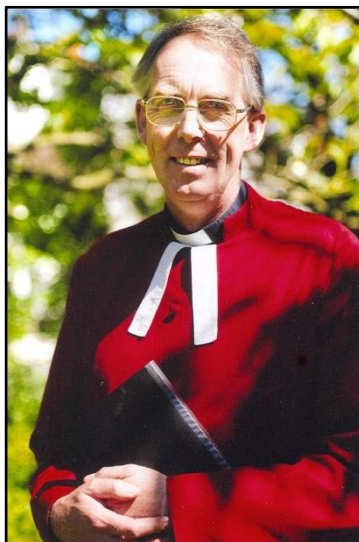
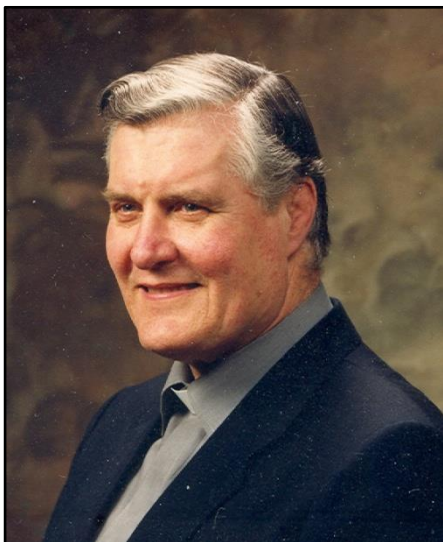
*That evening Joanna, I and a friend were correcting an old funeral leaflet, lent to us by the undertaker, so that a new one might be prepared for Robin's funeral. We changed the name and chose some hymns, but the words 'Entered into rest' were quite inappropriate for so young and vital a personality as Robin. What words should we use? We were puzzling over this when suddenly the telephone rang. It was Dorothy, far away in England. 'Frank', she said in an embarrassed voice (quite unlike the Dorothy we knew): 'I hope you won't think I'm mad, but I have an urgent message for you, to be delivered immediately. The words you want are these: "For so he giveth his beloved sleep." Now, does that make any sense? And she added: "It was Robin's voice that spoke to me."*

*Later she told us that these words, spoken to her by Robin, some eighteen hours after his death, were as clear and unmistakable as the words which Our Lord spoke to her when He gave her his message and which are recorded in her remarkable book: 'The Living Touch'.*

*So, Our Lord had not, after all, broken his promise for Robin was alive in the world of spirit. Imagine our relief and joy! Needless to say, the words: 'For so he giveth his beloved sleep' were printed on the front page of the leaflet for Robin's funeral and in due course, were incised into the cross above his grave in St. Andrews cemetery.*



*Revd. Frank Drake.*



*Revd. Piers Warburton (left) 1987-1989 and  
Revd. John Guille 1989 -1999 (now Very Revd.)*

## Re-adjustment

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In 1960 my father leased the school as a going concern and moved to Burrswood, where he took on the job as chaplain and my mother as hostess to the increasing number of people who were visiting the Christian centre. Their time there however was short lived. The tenancy of the school to an Englishman, unfamiliar with the ways of Guernsey, was not a success and my parents returned to the Island after my father had spent a period of service at the London Healing Mission. For the next five years they ran the Monnaie as a Christian Home of Rest and Healing, using the Chapel for daily services which offered the Laying on of Hands and Holy Communion. Due to the financial pressures of running a small home they closed the establishment and sold the property in 1967 but retained the Chapel.

## Healing Services

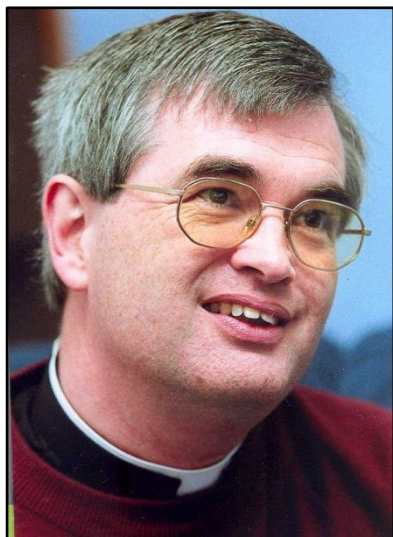
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Over the next twenty years or so my father's life revolved around Christian healing in the Monnaie Chapel. He started the 10.30 a.m. Wednesday morning services which incorporated prayers for the sick, the Laying on of Hands and Holy Communion. His deeply held convictions about God's ability to heal through the power of prayer established the Monnaie as the centre of the Church's Ministry of Healing in the Channel Islands. Whilst today the Laying on of Hands is widely accepted as a channel for God's healing power, in the fifties and sixties it was considered to be very much on the fringe and indeed, caused the raising of venerable eyebrows throughout many parts of the church establishment!





*Revds. Ryc. Smith (left) 1999-2007 and John Ironside 2007-2011*



*The Very Revd. Andrew Sharp (left) 2011-2013  
and Revd. Denise Dekker 2013-2015*

My father continued taking services until shortly before his death at the age of eighty-six in 1987. Piers Warburton, the Rector of St. Andrews at the time kindly agreed, with the approval of the Dean, to carry on the Chapel's ministry. After Piers' retirement two years later it became the responsibility of subsequent St. Andrew's Church incumbents: the Revds. John Guille; Ryc. Smith, John Ironside and Denise Dekker. Canon Andrew Sharp gallantly stepped in during one of the long inter-regnums.

Since 2015 services have been conducted by members of an ecumenical team of clergy from all denominations across the Island, including both Catholic and Methodist.

## Wheelchair Services

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Monthly Wheelchair Services became a regular feature in the late 1980s. Arrangements were made with the States and several of the private nursing homes for wheelchair-bound patients to be brought to the Chapel for special services that had been organised on their behalf. A ramp was especially built for the purpose and chairs were removed to make room for the dozen or so wheelchairs. The services were popular with the patients and well supported, although eventually the facility was stopped because of staffing demands and other practical considerations. The ramp became a memorial to my mother who instigated the scheme and later became a member of the wheelchair congregation herself.

## Time for change

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Andrew Sharp moved to Northern Ireland in January 2013, leaving us with a problem as to how the Chapel's ministry should continue. The concept of a single member of the clergy having sole responsibility had always worked well; each individual had brought his own personality to the services and members of the congregation had settled into a



comfortable and predictable routine. The re-structuring of the Island's churches, in common with those on the mainland, meant that pluralities would become the order of the day and inevitably workloads would be increased as a result. Denise Dekker, on the Island temporarily from South Africa, had been taken on as a House for Duty incumbent for the parish of St. Andrew and her burdens were such that we felt it would be unfair to ask her to take on responsibility for the Monnaie as well.

After much prayer and discussion, we decided to set up a rota, made up of a wide spectrum of the Island's clergy who would be willing to take six services or so a year. Denise kindly agreed to take on the role of Clergy Co-Ordinator, so that the chapel's vital link to the Church of England would remain intact. At the time of writing, this system has been running successfully for a year. We have a widely ecumenical group which includes clergy from the Churches of England and Scotland as well as from the Baptist, Roman Catholic and Methodist Churches. Together they offer a stimulating and varied take on what still remains the Channel Islands' only church dedicated exclusively to the Christian Ministry of Healing.







*The original Canards, painted by Hilda Proktor.*



*Les Canards meeting room today.*

# Les Canards

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Our meeting room in the field opposite the chapel has an interesting history. Immediately after leaving school, I had bought two hundred day-old turkey poults, housed them initially in a purpose-built wooden shed in the field owned by Wetherall, Drake and Co. and subsequently marketed them before Christmas to members of the public. Affectionately christened "Les Canards" by Mary-Eily de Putron, the shed became redundant and was adopted by my father as a meeting room for coffee and discussion after the morning services. Mary-Eily was a long-term family friend who designed and made nearly all of the Chapel's stained-glass windows in her studio at Fontaine Fleurie, her home above the Hotel de Havelet.

Although the facilities were rudimentary, Les Canards served its purpose adequately for many years. My parents actually lived in it for a short period between selling the Monnaie de Haut and moving into their cottage in St. Saviours! I was reminded of this by Dr Jim Dickson who visited my father there as a patient. Many years later Jim hand crafted a wooden cross and generously donated it to the chapel. Made from yew growing in the grounds of St. Andrew's church, it sits on a windowsill in the present-day Les Canards and is a reminder of the Chapel's link with the parish church.

In 1998 John Guille was approached by Robert Hitchins of La Haye du Puits, who was anxious to set up an appropriate memorial for his wife Elizabeth, who had been ill for some time prior to her death and had been a loyal and enthusiastic member of the chapel congregation. The new building was dedicated by Bishop John Perry, Chairman of the Burrswood Trustees, on 29th September 1998. We have recently replaced the plastic-coated handrails outside Les Canards and the Chapel itself with stainless steel.



# Memorial Trees

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In 2009 we set up a scheme which enabled the Chapel and St. Andrews Church congregations to purchase a memorial tree in memory of a loved one. These would be planted in our field opposite the Chapel. We sought advice from a number of local organisations and after much discussion we decided that oak trees, rather than mixed varieties, would provide the best long term sustainable solution. They would support, we were assured, a natural habitat for a wider range of wildlife than any other single variety.

Several of the sixty-five English oaks that have been planted on the field's perimeter have had ashes from the crematorium sprinkled amongst their roots. Today the field and trees are managed to provide a natural, rural environment, where horses are grazed, rather than manicured parkland.



*Memorial Trees planted in 2014*

# Wheelchair Walkway

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After a programme of fund-raising throughout 2021, we built a walkway for wheelchair users. At the time there was widespread concern that the Island's twelve hundred wheelchair-dependent people were deprived of recreational areas which were sympathetic towards their particular needs. The gravel path runs northwards from our meeting room, along the top edge of our field, ending in a newly-created parking area overlooking a large pond.

The Jeanne Groves walkway was named after a member of our congregation who had been involved with the chapel for over sixty years. Her nephew Anthony Groves, came over from England with his wife to officially open the walkway on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2022. A small marquee was set up and Pimms and a slice of Guernsey gauche was enjoyed by the invited guests who had helped with the fund-raising.



*Our wheelchair walkway*

# The Power of Prayer

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Those involved in the running of the Chapel have always been very much aware of the power of collective prayer as expressed in the book of Matthew (18:20):

*For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.*

Members of our congregation pray together for those whose names have been submitted and later in the service they are offered the Laying on of Hands. Those who go forward to the altar express their concerns to the priest and receive prayers and a blessing either for themselves or on behalf of another person. We see these prayers as complimentary and in no way as an alternative to conventional medicine. Many would argue that there is an important spiritual dimension to the impact of disease, whilst others who may not accept this would certainly agree that a calm and peaceful mind can have a major influence on recovery. Ask any psychiatrist.

Every week we pray for:

*All who tend the sick, counsel the distressed, sit with the dying, or advance medical research and*

*For those who, in the Island administer the agencies of health and welfare we ask Your guidance that in all they do human worth may be valued and the service of human need be fully resourced.*

There have been innumerable cases over the years in which the burden of illness or bereavement has lessened or been removed altogether through prayer. Here are a few recent examples:



## Robyn and Luca

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Robyn and her husband Nigel live in Wendover, Bucks and had been trying for many years to have a baby. They were beginning to think that this might never happen. Robyn's friend Ruth was on holiday in Guernsey and whilst visiting the chapel noticed that prayers could be said for those in need. Ruth left a prayer request for Robyn asking that she might be able to conceive; later prayers were said for her in the

chapel and shortly afterwards - to her delight - Robyn discovered that she was indeed pregnant.

There were complications, however. Her doctors warned that the child was likely to have Down's syndrome and suggested that she should consider terminating the pregnancy. In her letter of 22nd October 2010 Ruth made another request for prayers on her friend's behalf:

*It is like asking for a miracle all over again. I simply ask that you bring the situation before the Lord and that we pray for the best possible outcome, she wrote.*

The baby was born on 31st March 2010 with high blood pressure and jaundiced, but free from Down's syndrome. Thanks be to God. In a later letter Ruth concluded:

*I am humbly grateful and bless the day that my footsteps were guided to Le Monnaie Chapel.*





# Jane

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At school Jane was a dark, attractive girl who loved animals. Her mother describes her as a private and artistic person. She was a competent seamstress who made many of her own clothes and later became a dab hand at curtains and upholstery. She held a good job for many years in Trust Company Administration.

When she was thirty-two Jane developed severe abdominal pains. Her doctor suspected that she was suffering from endometriosis, a condition said to effect 6% - 10% of all women. The next eight years were a nightmare of uncertainty and growing discomfort; eventually she underwent a thorough examination under anaesthetic by another surgeon and was advised that her abdomen, a mass of cysts, lesions, scar tissue and infection, had developed into 'a borderline case for cancer'. Because she was still young, she was advised to have a partial hysterectomy, but Patricia, her mother and a nurse by profession, persuaded Jane that this was not enough so on 27th May 1998 both her ovaries were removed.

Everyone was deeply shocked at what the operation had brought to light: her ovaries, womb and surrounding tissue were infected with full-blown cancer. Jane was devastated and believed she was going to die. She endured six months of chemotherapy and several more operations. A scan revealed a shadow near her liver and it appeared that the cancer was spreading.

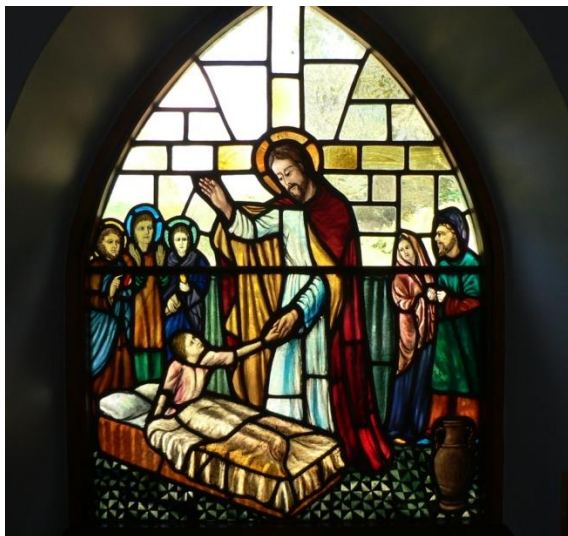
It was at this point that Patricia started to seek God's help. She prayed a great deal, but it wasn't until her association with the Monnaie that Jane's condition really started to improve. In her booklet *Precious Lives* Patricia describes her first visit:

*When I walked through the door of the Chapel, I thought how beautiful it was, so peaceful and tranquil. I immediately felt a presence. I sat there for quite a long time feeling desperate for help. I prayed to God,*

*asking Him to help Jane and make her well and to help me to care for her. I left feeling happier and at peace.*

*We went to the service the following Wednesday and Jane received the Laying on of Hands. I felt my heart open up to the warmth that flowed from the service... the chaplain asked everyone in the congregation to pray for Jane. I was really moved. I sobbed my way through it.*

Two days later they both went to see the oncologist who told them that the shadow on the X ray had disappeared and her count had dropped by half. Over the next few months, she went from strength to strength. She took on full time employment again, looked after her own home, did voluntary work in a care home and was married! Her CAT scan revealed that she was normal, and she has remained so ever since. Thanks be to God!



# Pat

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A deeply Christian lady, Pat has lived in St. Andrews for many years and has always been a keen and supportive member of the parish church. She sang in the choir and parishioners queued eagerly at the annual fête for her husband's home-made hamburgers!

Sad to say, she has also been a long term sufferer from depression, tragically brought about through worries over her disjointed family. Her son Michael lost out in the battle over access to his children after an acrimonious divorce, depriving Pat of the joy of watching her grandchildren grow up. Her fatherless, unmarried granddaughter became a mother at the age of eighteen and - as if she hadn't suffered enough - Pat's daughter had died of cancer.

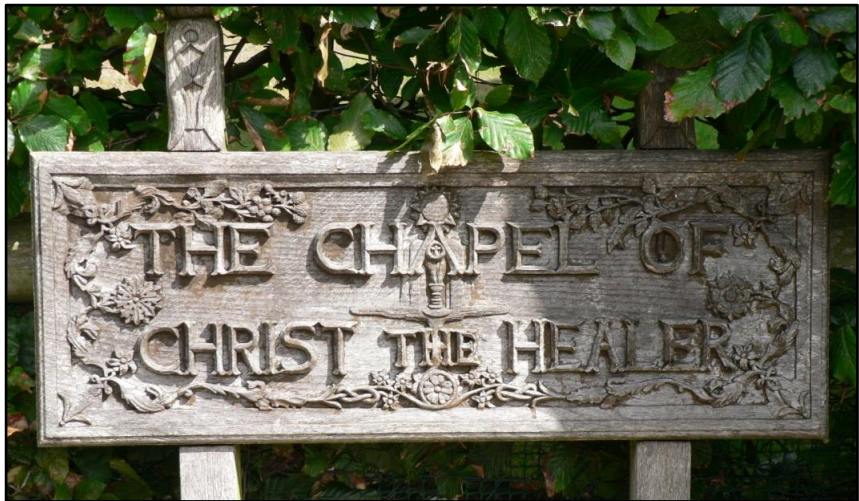
Her depression grew worse and she found that - despite her strong faith - Pat was unable to compose herself sufficiently to attend services at the parish church, although she could manage the quieter, more intimate atmosphere of the Monnaie. "I was somehow drawn to the chapel" she says, "and discovered that there I could find my communion with God." Her psychiatrist, seeing the strength of her faith, insisted that she should continue her visits there whenever possible.

Shortly before Christmas she attended the Wednesday morning service and stood at the altar for the Laying on of Hands, sobbing uncontrollably. Suddenly she felt a hand on her shoulder behind. Seeing the distress that Pat was going through, a close friend and her husband had decided to join her in prayer. Lead by Denise, who was taking the service, the four of them prayed aloud that Pat should be given the strength to overcome the horror that she was being subjected to.

On Christmas Eve a fortnight later, Pat was at a particularly low ebb: her voice had long since diminished to a whisper and she was particularly depressed at the prospect of spending Christmas without any of her children, grandchildren or eleven-year-old great grand-son. She went to bed early and wrapped herself in the thickest blanket she could find. Soon she was covered by an intense warmth and fell into a deeper sleep than she can ever remember.

On Christmas morning she woke up refreshed, enlivened, completely free of depression and - to the amazement of her family when they telephoned - her powerful, normal voice restored to its former glory!

Later, when Pat told her psychiatrist what had happened, he was bowled over, saying that he had considered admitting her to hospital. Her depression hasn't returned and Pat is convinced that her healing was the direct result of the prayers that had been said on her behalf and in particular, a delayed response to the event at the Monnaie two weeks earlier.



# Margy

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One of the little girls in the front row of the Monnaie school photograph is Margy, whose warm and very early memories include the building of the Chapel. In those days the seating was on hard, small and very uncomfortable wooden pews, designed with children in mind, not adults. It wasn't until the eighties that today's comfortable wooden seating was installed, thanks to a generous donation by David and Jane Swiffen.

Today Margy likes to visit the chapel from time to time, partly for its ambience and nostalgic associations but also to pray for friends and family who have suffered and succumbed to cancer. She is convinced that their peaceful passings were helped by prayers that she and others had offered on their behalf.

She herself had suffered from a frozen and very painful hip. Whenever she tried to move her leg every tendon and muscle jarred and, despite her frantic efforts, there was frequently no response. Her doctor prescribed diazepam and diclofenic. With the help of her son, Margy managed to hobble into the Chapel and received the Laying on of Hands from John Ironside, the Rector in charge of the Chapel at that time.

"I felt a a trickle of warmth flow through my body. I returned to the doctor for a check-up a week later and he was amazed that I had healed so quickly and he certainly hadn't expected me to be moving so well. I have since stopped taking my medication.

"The Monnaie Chapel is such a special place!"





*In recent years the Chapel has hosted an increasing number of weddings.*



*Dear Father in Heaven, we pray Thee to bless this Chapel in the future as Thou has blest it in the past.*

*Grant that it may increasingly become a powerhouse for Thy loving healing power and protect it from all vandalism both spiritual and physical.*

*Grant that no discouragement or hindrance may ever be erected against those who come to seek Thee here and, in the fullness of time, when we are gone, send those as shall love and serve this place as we have tried to do. Amen*

**Revd. Frank Drake**



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