



John of Gaunt



THE MILITARY & HOSPITALLER ORDER OF ST. LAZARUS OF JERUSALEM
COMMANDERY NEWSLETTER

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From the Chancellor's Desk...

A pet interest of mine is to follow the on-going debate regarding the relationship between faith and science; a much older debate, as the news this month has reminded us, is about the relationship between religion and politics. The view that religion/faith has no place in either camp has its champions; often loud, erudite, evangelistic champions. In the science/religion debate meet Mr Richard Dawkins and the often called new atheists. In the politics/religion debate meet... well Prime Minister Cameron who seems to think the church can have nothing pertinent to say on issues regarding debt, health and education. I am neither a Luddite nor an anarchist but I do believe the Christian church – that's you and me – have a divine appointment to offer in

both word and deed a prophetic message in our places of work, our communities, our nation and our world. So Mr Cameron with full respect for the difficulty of your job please tell me why in a G8 nation 30% of our children are raised below the poverty line and who do you think has been working toward the “Big Society” for the last 300 hundred years; and Mr Dawkins tell me please which gene, which part of the evolutionary process inspires kindness and generosity, teaches us to love and forgive even those who would eradicate us. As Christians we have much to say and do as regards reaching a promised land where sickness and suffering are no more, where the nations will be healed and fed. Science and politics may be tools we can use to help us get there but when they start to believe their own press their arrogance will need deflating, their pomposity pricking and their ears opening to the word of God – not least the Good News in Jesus. To boldly and relevantly declare the challenge of our faith does not make us, as some would have it, out of date dogmatists or fundamentalist terrorists. This year I celebrate 20 years as a priest, last Saturday I saw ten new priests ordained; long may they, I and you (royal priesthood that you are – see 1 Peter 2:9) be “turbulent”!

Blessings be upon you

Chris

Events Corner

COMMANDERY EVENTS

Tuesday 16th August – Guided tour of Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral

Sunday 21st August from 3pm - Barbeque

Saturday 3rd September - Treasure Hunt

Friday 9th September - Canal Cruise

Wednesday 14th September - Dogs Race Night and Potato Pie Supper.

Friday 7th October - Handbag Party.

Friday 28th October - Quiz Night

Saturday 14th December – St Lazarus Day Carol Service

EVENTS ELSEWHERE

6 Aug	King Offa Investiture
17 Sept	Edward the Confessor Investiture
3 Sept	Marches Investiture
1 Oct	National Vigil & Investiture (South)
8 Oct	St Wilfrid Investiture
23 Oct	Aragon Investiture
5 Nov	National Vigil and Investiture (North) under the banner of John of Gaunt
3 Dec	St Wilfrid Annual Carol Service

Further details at www.st-lazarus.org.uk calendar of events

St Lazarus Lotto Summary 2010-2011

On 7/7/2010 Pool 9 £86 was shared by numbers 34 and 36 each one winning £43.

Since that time six Jackpots have been won (all outright) ranging from £45 to £122 the last one being Pool 15 which was won on 18/5/2011.

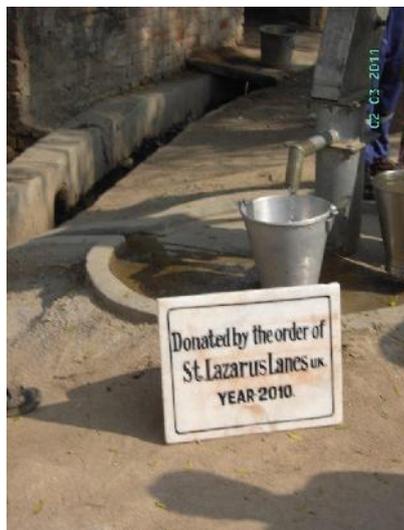
During this time 25 Bonus Ball prizes of £10 have been won 16 Bonus Balls drawn were “not in play”.

In the four weeks since then four £10 Bonus Ball prizes have been paid out in Pool 16 and the Jackpot (carried forward) currently stands at £44.

ONLY FIFTEEN NUMBERS ARE CURRENTLY AVAILABLE TO PURCHASE

Friends of the RV Mission

As most of you will know, we are a member of FoRVM, having paid for a number of tube wells to provide clean drinking water, and by the sponsorship of 10 children in Barrackpore. Here are photos of the latest tube well, together with our plaque; also there is a photo of the 10 children we sponsor; how they have grown since our sponsorship began!



You can view these pictures, and more, together with other interesting information about the RV Mission at the Friends new web Site.

www.forvm.org.uk you can also go to the website by scanning this QR code with your smart phone if you have a scanner app installed.



John of Gaunt Commandery is in the process of setting up a weblog which can be viewed here,

www.johnofgauntcommandery.blogspot.com or by scanning this QR code. We hope you like it, please let us know.



Garden Party at Prescott

Gareth is “splatted” by the Commander. See more pictures in the Blog Gallery



Operation Monkey-nut

I was a National Serviceman, conscripted into the Army during 1955-56 and for most of my service was a member of the Border Regiment, mainly with the British Army of the Rhine (BAOR). As the tension with the Soviets was generally rather high at this time with serious incidents such as the Hungarian Revolution, this was deemed to be active service. Someone within the Ministry of Defence obviously had a sense of humour as our battalion (the Border Regiment) was posted to serve quite close to the Inner German Border (IGB), at Gottingen, south of Hanover. Looking out of my barrack room window, which was on the second floor, one could see the very picturesque rolling countryside of the Russian Zone only a few miles away.



Border Barracks looking towards the Russian Zone

To show the Russians that the British Army was at the utmost readiness we had to have a continuous presence and show of strength near the border zone. This was carried out on a rotational basis by the infantry units posted to BAOR and lasted for several days. Of course we drew the short straw and our duty commenced in the middle of winter, when it was biting cold with a Siberian

wind whistling across the East German plain. Unsuitedly kitted out, as we had not, after eighteen months, been issued with winter kit (I had to draw mine the day before I handed it in to go for demobilisation!) we had, however, been issued with sleeveless leather jerkins, a scarf and advised to wear our pyjamas under our working denims.

The programme was mainly concerned with 'flying the flag' in numerous border villages and areas where we could be observed by the Russian and East German guards, particularly from their very tall and sinister looking guard towers. For the period of the duty we were under the control of a representative of the British Frontier Service (BFS) a civilian organisation made up mostly of ex-military personnel and former German customs officials. Its first director was a Royal Navy officer, Captain Guy Maund DSO and it was under his leadership that the BFS adopted its quite distinctive naval-style uniform with silver rank badges. Members of the Service were given honorary Army ranks with its director that of a full colonel.

Initially, just after the Second World War, the Service took over from the British Army to control the flow of refugees and to prevent smuggling, concentrating on the borders with Denmark, Holland and Belgium leaving the Soviet occupation zone almost entirely unguarded. This changed, however, after the blockade of Berlin during 1948-49 and the BFS together with the German Federal Customs Service were deployed along what became the IGB from Lubeck down to Gottingen (where our barracks were located) some 410 miles. Although the BFS had, in the past, been subject to numerous restructuring in 1955 it underwent some drastic changes passing from the jurisdiction of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to that of the War Office and subsequently

the Ministry of Defence. Additionally the staffing was rationalised and substantially reduced hence our involvement in border patrols.

We set off in platoon strength, about 35 personnel, from our barracks in canvas covered 3 ton troop carrying vehicles (TCVs) to meet up with the BFS representative. He was at the rendezvous point in a dark green VW beetle and turned out to be a most informative and entertaining guide. Our first duty was to drive slowly through numerous small villages on the IGB stopping occasionally near the Soviet guard towers to ensure that we had been seen. Obviously we had as our presence was acknowledged with a few cheery waves from the guards. Our BFS rep told us that they had a number of defectors each year from the Soviet guards the most recent being the previous day. He explained that the border security was to keep people inside the Russian zone and not to stop people getting in. After a short journey we de-bussed and marched to the edge of one of the small villages where a similar village could be observed about 600 yards away down a narrow straight road. Near the village was a frontier post with a distinctive barrier across the road and numerous guards present. Our BFS rep informed us that many people in our village had relatives in the village behind the barrier but if they wanted to visit them they had to go through one of the designated border crossing points, the journey often taking more than two days. He said that relatives often tried to contact each other by approaching as near to the border as possible but were rarely successful. This situation was commonplace all along the border.

We passed through some of the villages slowly in our vehicles and some we marched through watched by a few silent but possibly thankful West Germans. A more interesting part of the duty was to make our presence felt much closer

to the official border which was formally established on 1st July 1945 as the boundary between the Western and Soviet occupation zones of Germany. On the Eastern side it became one of the world's most heavily fortified frontiers with a continuous line of high metal fences and walls often up to four meters high. Additionally there was a profusion of barbed wire, alarms, watchtowers, booby traps, minefields and anti-vehicle ditches. In some places the fields on either side of the border had a wide ploughed strip filled with sand so that any disturbance of the ground could be easily spotted as it was patrolled along its length by some 50,000 armed guards.

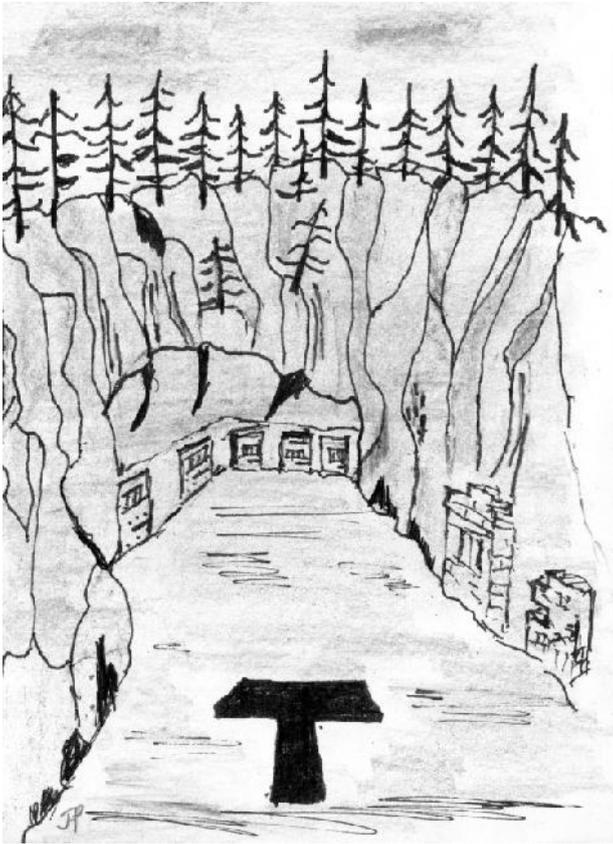
Our side of the border was in some ways less obtrusive as in addition to the armed forces presence there was a German organisation of 'frontier police' known as the Bundesgrenzschutz. This force was very military and was really an army by another name. They had a distinctive green uniform and were quite well armed. They were very adept at camouflage and patrolled parts of the border in a clandestine manner using the heavily wooded areas to observe without being seen themselves. Robin Hood and Lincoln green came to mind. Although we kept our eyes peeled as instructed we failed to spot any of them.

We de-bussed yet again quite close up to the border and as near as possible to the ploughed strip on our side. We formed up smartly in three ranks and with drill square precision fixed bayonets. Headed by our platoon commander and the BFS rep we marched for a mile or so past a number of guard towers prompting the habitual wave and acknowledgement from the Soviet guards proving, as the rep said, that in some ways this was just a game although a serious one.

The following morning we were briefed by the BFS rep about the coming day's duties which apart from a similar procedure to that of the previous day would involve an actual small incursion into the Russian zone. This was more like it and we all looked forward eagerly to this part of the proceedings so that we could say we had actually set foot in the Russian Zone and perhaps 'dine out' with a few drinks in the NAAFI on suitably enhanced stories.

After the normal duties of the day we embarked on our long awaited trip to the Russian zone. We de-bussed and followed a narrow track, in silence, to the border fence which had a well hidden but purpose made gap through which we proceeded soundlessly to a viewpoint near a railway where we were now 'unofficially' in the Russian zone. Our timing was quite good as we had been briefed about what was to happen next concerning border procedures. A large steam locomotive clanking and clattering slowly came to a halt at a designated point on the border and the crews were changed over as they were not allowed into each others territories. The Russians of course knew we were there, observing, but again it was all part of the game.

The next part of the duty was more of a history lesson and again we had been briefed. All the briefings and descriptions had not prepared us for the next experience as we were to visit, not very far away, a disused quarry that had been used as a prison for political prisoners before and during the Second World War. Often people will tell of experiences where cruelty and barbarism have taken place and the atmosphere is heavy with a distinct aura of evil. It was a rather dull day and we could just see the top of the quarry outlined against a forbidding grey sky with numerous pine trees silhouetted around the rim. There was not a sound, not the note of a bird to break the eerie silence.



Cut into the walls and floor of the quarry were small cells just big enough for a person to stand up in the chest high hole so that only the head and the top of the chest were visible. This was one of the camps that incorporated a well equipped hospital not for the prisoners benefit, however, but for the fiendish medical experiments which were regularly carried out there.

At the end of the war, when the allies released the prisoners from these camps, this one in particular was targeted by the former inmates and others and the hospital destroyed. The numerous operating tables had for some reason been made of sculptured stone and these were smashed to pieces all except one which was left as a stark reminder and perhaps a suitable memorial to those who had perished at the hands of these inhuman so called medical people.

We left the quarry and made our way back to the vehicles in silence. This was in stark contrast to the normal behaviour of the platoon members who were always laughing and joking. On reflection, although we were not involved in any direct conflict, perhaps as a small cog in a large machine we were helping by our presence to try to discourage, in the future, this unacceptable face of human nature.

JHP.

✠ Gerard's Jottings.



The things that have happened, and are happening, worldwide, since my last 'Jottings' are truly beyond belief and many of us, I'm sure, are inwardly shouting ... "*Stop the world — I want to get off!*" Sooo... I will not take you down that path but tell you instead about my MRI scan!

Prologue: Many months ago I had an eye test which eventually resulted in an MRI scan. Nothing was found. I changed Consultants and Hospitals and at the first visit was told that another MRI scan was required ... which I had a few days ago (at the time of writing!)

Change of scene: ... There I was lying on my back with my head firmly secured, stuck into a hole in this enormous Linear Accelerator / Magnatron or whatever they call it ... waiting patiently (no pun intended!) ... then ... 'all of a sudden' ... all hell was let loose! Do you remember Val Doonican singing a song about *'THE THING'*? I discovered what it was!

It started with a few knocks, then a 'rivetting' sound which accelerated until it turned into a 'pneumatic drill' which got louder and louder before it stopped suddenly. Then the heavy mob moved in and started hitting the underneath of the 'sled' on which I was lying with big 'sledge hammers', once again varying the rhythm and the volume/intensity until each blow bounced me up and down. Thankfully it then stopped, but after a period of sort of heavy breathing some fool must have shouted "*Encore!*" and it started all over again.

After repeating this cycle for what seemed an age, it stopped, and I could hear the lovely Mozart Clarinet Concerto that had been playing through the headphones all the while.

It had all been concentrated around my head, very noisy and physically disturbing, especially to a sensitive soul with dicky ears! As I lay there awaiting further instructions I remember thinking that the whole experience was like a '*fast forward*' of the Theosophical theory of reincarnation, and that the final Mozart was indeed heaven sent. However, Richard Dawkins et. al. would have had totally different thoughts, I am sure!

Scene 2: This started with the appearance of 'an angel in blue and white' who announced that it was all finished and I should rise very slowly in my own time. She put her arm around me until my Meniere's Syndrome settled down. I took a chance and asked her if I could possibly see just one picture. When I was dressed she allowed me this great privilege and I was gob-smacked. She said to me; "You have a beautiful brain.", and there it was before my very eyes! I can now confound so many of you doubting Thomas's out there by declaring, having seen proof positive, that I actually do have a brain ... and she said that it was beautiful ... so there!

As an erstwhile teacher of singing and voice production it was fascinating to examine my resonating cavities, cranial structure (again no pun intended!) etc. and discuss them with the, by now, very interested Radiologist. We exchanged the 'inner secrets' according to our different perspectives ... to her obvious delight. How

anybody with a modicum of nous can insist that all this is a product of natural selection or normal evolution is totally beyond my comprehension, and it makes me suggest that if such were the case, by now a cat should be able to operate a tin opener ... or am I getting rather cynical in my old age?

We are indeed 'a Temple of the living God', made in His own image and likeness, (when due consideration is given to the 'inner dimension' in which we live and move and have our being) and that is surely one of the most mis-understood statements in Holy Writ!

Why do the devotees of evolution and natural selection come to a full-stop at the so-called 'big bang'? Why don't they ask one more question after they state confidently "... when the conditions were right ...". "What conditions, and where did they come from?" In the same vein, when having a go at *Genesis*, have they ever considered that the 'time scale' used in Sacred Writings might be different from that which we are used to? It certainly is in the Spiritual Dimension, and such consideration might answer a lot of their questions.

Who knows, it might lead them to an understanding of how and why in *Gen. C. 1 v. 3*, we are told that God created light, in *v 5* He called the light Day, and the darkness Light; but it wasn't until the third day that God created the sun and the moon and the stars and set them in the firmament of heaven to shine upon the earth. (*v.16 & 17 Latin Vulgate*) Sooo ... what was the light He created on the first day? Might I respectfully suggest that if we use God's great gift to us of an open mind, and read the Bible from a mystical point of view, we might progress a little in wisdom and understanding?

"He that loveth wisdom loveth life: and they that seek her early shall be filled with joy. Teach me ,O Lord, the way of Thy statutes: and I shall keep it unto the end. Give me understanding and I shall keep Thy law: yea, I shall keep it with my whole heart. The path of the just is as the shining light: shining more and more unto the perfect day."

Incidentally, the scan was later pronounced as clear. My next project must be to find a hospital with an MRI Scanner which can locate and photograph the Soul!

Bishop † Gerard J. Crane

The John of Gaunt Commandery newsletter is produced on a quarterly basis by Conf. David Green, to whom all articles and comments should be sent.

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