



# JBMS NEWSLETTER

Published by The John Bradburne Memorial Society  
PO Box 32, Leominster, Herefordshire HR6 0YB, UK

Tel: 01568 760632

e-mail: [info@johnbradburne.com](mailto:info@johnbradburne.com)

website [www.johnbradburne.com](http://www.johnbradburne.com)

UK Registered Charity No. 1046483

SUMMER 2012

## FAREWELL MESSAGE FROM ROSE CHIHOTA Chairman of Mutemwa Leprosy & Care Centre (MLCCA) after 3 years service

Allow me to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation through the Chairman of JBMS UK to all the Trustees who serve with him, for the tremendous financial support that you have and continue to extend to Mutemwa. Your funding has enabled Mutemwa to establish some income generating projects. It has also enabled the settlement to drill a new borehole at the time that we were running out of water. I would also like to extend our thanks to the Beit Trust who have continuously partnered with us in a quest to find more water for us. We thank the Food Chain of Supermarkets, Afro Foods, for their generous donation of a brand new Nissan pickup truck and a

cash donation, and we also wish to thank National Foods Limited for their specific funding. These donations have laid a solid foundation for our income generating projects enabling the Centre to be self sustaining. We thank also our dear friends Leprosy International for donating to Mutemwa whenever we have approached them in time of need, and thank the Papal Nuncio for his donation soon after he came into office in April 2009. We also thank Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem for their donation of a grinding mill enabling us to grind our own mealie meal for our stock feeds. Finally I would like to express our appreciation to all those who have donated to Mutemwa during the past three

years. We thank you one and all.

### FIRST YEAR HIGHLIGHTS

We announced a Vision for Mutemwa and that vision is:

1. To improve the living standard of our residents in all aspects.
2. To create a culture of Self Reliance
3. To promote transparency in all our financial matters with all our donors.

Mr. Whencilous Dzenga was appointed General Manager of Mutemwa in 2009. We started off with 2 pigs and grew these to over 50 pigs that included those used as food for our residents and those sold to the public.



*Residents receiving donated clothes and blankets*

We started a market gardening project to grow vegetables for our residents with the surplus produce sold to the public. We planned and grew our own consumption and produced 5 tonnes of maize.

We engaged Vengesai Architects to examine and assess the residents' cottages with a view to making improvements. They undertook to do this work free of charge. We are most grateful to them for this most essential work. They produced their report which included recommendations to improve the roof structures. We also took a lot of photographs in order to document the damage that was caused by the rains. I'm happy to say some of these improvements were implemented in the following year.

#### SECOND YEAR HIGHLIGHTS

January 2010. We had a very successful visit from JBMS in the persons of Valerie Brierley and Christine Pratt. During their visit they appreciated the dilapidated conditions at Mutemwa and agreed that it was urgent that these negative conditions be improved. At a great cost JBMS undertook the renovations in August/ September 2010. The brand new look Mutemwa greatly boosted morale at the Centre. Visitors have been suitably impressed and they were inspired to donate to this worthy cause.

The General Manager, Mr. Dzenga, successfully negotiated a promotional partnership with Afro Foods which resulted in a cash donation and a brand new Nissan pickup truck that has been mentioned earlier in this report. 2010 was the first time we started a chicken project with 400 point of lay pullets and was a project that showed



*Poultry House due for extension*

promise. We also purchased our first 2 bulls for our community cattle project and a plough for our fields. In November Mr. Dzenga resigned from his post. In mid November Mrs. Margaret Chigwanda was asked and kindly accepted to take care of Mutemwa and facilitate a handover and takeover from Mr. Dzenga. We are most grateful for all he did for Mutemwa during his term of office.

#### THIRD YEAR HIGHLIGHTS

1st March, 2011, we appointed Margaret Chigwanda as Manager of Mutemwa Leprosy and Care Centre. She was very well received by the staff and residents. As Mrs. Chigwanda is from a nursing background she very quickly

implemented new systems at the Clinic and improved administrative skills at the Centre. The residents continue to enjoy a good life. Those patients who wish to cook for themselves were very happy to be allowed to do so. Even though this meant that we would have to pay more for their rations. But this we were prepared to do to keep them happy and motivated.

Mid September, we received 1,200 pullets which was a fairly big project to be undertaken at Mutemwa for the first time as an income generating project. This project has continued to do well supplying us with food for the Centre as well as earning us an income. At its height in November we achieved a rate of collecting 39 crates of eggs



*Marge Chigwanda at the entrance to the clinic*



*Proposed area for new pig unit*

per day, a great achievement indeed.

The other community project we have is cattle. We now have six cattle which includes 4 heifers and hope to start producing our own milk for the Centre in the not too distant future.

I leave my post satisfied that we have established a solid foundation for income generating projects and that this will enable Mutema to be self sustaining one day. But I must also give a warning that despite our preparedness by securing all required inputs and putting everything in, rains failed us and our crops just wilted. So for this year we will need to purchase maize as it becomes available to avert hunger.

We also have to thank a number of other local Zimbabwean agro-food businesses and local banks who have helped us throughout my chairmanship, often in kind with specific requests such as fertiliser or point of lay pullets.

*We have highlighted Rose Chihota's farewell comments at the MLCCA AGM in April to show how much progress*

*has been made at Mutemwa over the last three years. However as Tim Brigstocke, the JBMS UK Chairman and Valerie Brierley, our new Treasurer, found on their recent visit to Mutemwa in April 2012 that although the patients at the settlement are very well cared for and the whole place looks in very good heart there are still some issues such as land ownership to be addressed. Mutoko the nearby township*

*has expanded enormously in the last few years. It is now classed as an Urban Rural Council instead of just a Growth Point and there are dwellings springing up literally on Mutemwa's doorstep. It is vital to get the issue of land lease resolved and we are indebted to Advocate Clement Phiri who has been working with the Ministry of Lands to resolve the potential threat of encroachment.*

*Rose, in her speech, has talked about our fledgling pig and poultry projects. Due to the generosity of two of our donors, the Leper League in Birmingham and another charity in Australia we have agreed major expansion of both the poultry facilities, for meat and egg production and also for a new pig unit. Quite simply the current facilities are not adequate and the health and welfare of the animals is compromised. Thus these two new significant developments will hopefully make Mutemwa more self-sustaining.*



*Current Pig Unit*

# JOHN BRADBURNE, LE VAGABOND DE DIEU

Published by Salvator Press

## New Book - By Didier Rance

*John Bradburne, le Vagabond de Dieu* is the first *Life* of John Bradburne to have been published in French, and is due to be translated into English. The author, Didier Rance, a French deacon with degrees in History, has been working for the last ten years in humanitarian and relief projects in Africa, and nearly 30 years with Aid to The Church in Need (ACN), and was National Director for France of this catholic charity. He heard about John for the first time in 1983, when he was asked by ACN to do fund-raising for Mutemwa, and since this time, John has been for him a life time companion.

In this book, we follow John year after year, sometimes on a daily basis, John is put into his historical, cultural, religious and spiritual context. During the past three years, with the support of the John Bradburne Memorial Society and linguist Professor David Crystal, the author has been travelling all over England, Belgium, Italy and Zimbabwe, in order to meet those who knew John and to catch the atmosphere of the places where John lived, prayed and gave his testimony of love for God and for others. He extensively studied John's poetry and letters, which are archived and a lot of unpublished material about John.



The author says of this book : "It is the twentieth book I have published, most of them on XXth Century martyrs and Confessors of Faith. In writing my previous books, I met or studied extraordinary figures, heroes of faith, but none as extraordinary as John. In writing this book, and subsequently, my feelings and wonder towards John are exactly what Jean Vanier wrote after reading this book : "The life of John touched my heart and my spirit, and brought me closer to God. It revealed to me a God so astonishingly marvellous, good, more intelligent, more creative than one may imagine Him. An extraordinary God who cannot be locked up in rational concepts or in a 'normal' religious life".

For the publishers contact: [www.editions-salvator.com](http://www.editions-salvator.com)

## Fr Liam McCarthy OFM Reports

### MUTEMWA

\* Preparations are now getting under way for the 33rd Anniversary Celebrations in September on the 1st and 2nd Sept. The theme this year is "Love one another..." Each year the numbers coming for the Celebrations are increasing. The John Bradburne Site is being cared for by Robert who keeps the grounds in good shape. Some time ago the thatched roof on the abduction hut was restored and the small clinic hut nearby was repaired.

\* The township of Mutoko is expanding on all sides – and especially towards Mutemwa. In order to safeguard the Site and its approaches a joint committee of JBMS Zim., MLCCA, and Mother of Peace met with the town Engineer Mr Makore in order to present their recommendations. It is hope to preserve a greenbelt on the approach to the Site – for the present pilgrims who go there and for future generations. The question of the leases on the grounds were also discussed and it is hoped to have these updated.

\* While passing through Rome I called on the Franciscan Postulator who is responsible for Beatifications. He received me kindly and explained that a good foundation work for processing a Cause is a comprehensive critical life of the Candidate proposed. Recently Didier Rance, SFO from France has produced a fine biography of John Bradburne. There is also the need for continued prayer and devotion and the gathering of evidence of eye-witnesses. The contact with Rome will continue.

\* The care of the lepers and other patients continues to be well done under the attention of the administrator, Margaret Chigwanda and the staff.

***Fr Liam McCarthy is both Treasurer to MLCCA and Spiritual Director to JBMS Zimbabwe. The Archbishop of Harare has asked him to help with the process of preparing a detailed Cause File on John Bradburne.***

# JOHN BRADBURNE - AN INSPIRATIONAL MAN WHO CHANGED MY LIFE

By Ben Bradshaw

It was just by sheer coincidence that I was ever told the story of John Bradburne. It was the summer of 2010, and I was spending a month working with the Church in Zimbabwe as part of my training for the priesthood in the Church of England. Almost just to make conversation as we were driving from one place to another, I asked my Zimbabwean friend and guide-Fr Nicolas Stebbing CR, if leprosy was still an issue in this African country. It was at this point that Fr Nicolas told the story of John Bradburne, a story that was to change my life and my outlook on my own life forever.

John Bradburne was born in 1921 in Cumbria, after serving in India during World War Two he started an incredible spiritual journey that was to culminate with his martyrdom in Zimbabwe in 1979, where he had spent the last ten years of his life caring for people with leprosy.

John knew very early on in his spiritual journey that he was called to lead a celibate life where he was completely committed to God. John lived for God. He travelled all over England as well as Europe with little to no money and never with any real plans, and John was fine with this. He was a man who was not constrained by the usual worldly requirements or desires. He had no desire to be rich, to own a house, to have a family, to buy a flash car, to have a well-respected job or even to broaden his own knowledge by reading countless theological books. All John wanted in life was to pray to God and to draw ever nearer to God through his amazing poetry and music that he would create on a daily basis.

As John's relationship with God grew deeper, he felt called to go to what was then Rhodesia, now known as Zimbabwe in 1962. At first John's desire to go to Africa was to find a cave where he could live in complete solitude and be alone with God, however, John in fact ended up assisting and living at a Catholic mission base instead. The interior battle for John of wanting to be alone with God, whilst also feeling called to serve God's suffering children never went away. Like many saints of previous generations, John had been uniquely touched by the hand of God and was drawn into a deeper and deeper contemplative

relationship with Him. It was a relationship that sometimes meant all worldly things seemed pointless and simply frustrating distractions getting in between John and God. However, despite these deep contemplative feelings, John, like many saints before him, was also overwhelmed with God's love and a desire to serve his suffering children which we see in John's life as he served the lepers in Zimbabwe. Ultimately, I think these two parts of many a saint's life can rub up against each other, which can create the odd bit of friction and lightening! John did get angry and could be rude at times, and I think that is wonderful, because it shows John's human side. In my mind, it is only a matter of time before John is officially named as a saint, but saints are still humans, with faults, doubts and weaknesses.

John first went to visit Mutemwa village in 1969 so that he could view firsthand the conditions that the lepers in Zimbabwe at that time had to live with. He was appalled. Mutemwa in 1969 was a waste ground of humanity. Lepers were uncared for and unloved. John realised straight away that he could not walk away from these children of God, his brothers and sisters in Christ. While he had no medical background, John knew the one thing that he could offer the lepers was love. He could put smiles back on their faces.

John hardly left Mutemwa for the next ten years, he would not desert his family- the lepers. John's love of the lepers meant he refused to leave Mutemwa even when civil war reached the local area in 1979. He knew the dangers of staying but he would not leave Mutemwa until the last leper had also left. On the 2 September 1979 John was abducted during the night, on the 5 September his bullet holed body was found by the roadside. John Bradburne had been martyred; he had been killed for refusing to walk away from the place God had called him to serve; he refused to leave God's suffering children. Since John's death many miracles have been attested to his intercessions and these mark further steps along the road to his sainthood.

As I wrote at the start of this article, John Bradburne's inspirational story has changed my life. I had always been fascinated by St Francis of Assisi and it is no

coincidence that John and Francis had many parallels in their lives. Indeed, there are not many people who have walked as closely as John in the footsteps of St Francis, and certainly not in the twentieth century. It is the fact that John was a man of our time, a modern man, which makes him so inspirational.

John has showed all of us an alternative way of life, a life where we put God first ahead of everything else in the world. Where love is at the centre of everything that we do and service is given to our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. John was counter-cultural. Many people dismissed him when he was alive as a mad man and as a fool because he went against the worldly ideals. He was not interested in materialism, consumerism or self-service. John shows us an alternative life to what modern society offers. John shows us that freedom and happiness is not built on anything that the world can offer, but is only built on living for God.

I went back to Zimbabwe in 2011 and visited Mutemwa. The leprosy village is much improved from what it was like in the 1960s and 1970s but it is still desperately in great need. The John Bradburne Memorial Society (JBMS) do a remarkable job in fundraising and carrying on John's loving work and care for the lepers of Zimbabwe. John Bradburne's name is famous in Zimbabwe, each year thousands of people commemorate the anniversary of his death on September 5th, yet this great man is still relatively unknown in his own country.

John Bradburne has changed my life because he has shown me that it is possible to live an alternative life to what the world expects. That even in this day and age it is possible to follow in the footsteps of the Desert Fathers and St Francis if that is what God is calling you to do. Last summer I walked 322 miles without taking any money or food with me, I wanted to see what it was like to rely completely on God and on the Church as John had so often done in his life. It was a wonderful experience! I had a fleeting glimpse of a life completely given to God and it was incredibly appealing. The walk also raised vital funds to keep John's work going at Mutemwa through the JBMS.

## MUTEMWA RESIDENTS' PROFILES MAY 2012

### PETER RAPOZA

Born Maputo about 80 years ago. He is destitute and was once married. His wife died and left one daughter.

1951 - He migrated to the then Rhodesia to find a better life.

1952-1960 - He was working in Msasa at S.M. Machadu.

1980-1983 - He was a builder at Mutemwa with brother Lawrence.

2011 - He was admitted to Mutemwa Leprosy Centre.

#### Challenges:

Asthma. He is partially blind. He has contractures of the fingers due to injury from a shelling machine at Mudzinganyama Farm.

#### Likes:

Socializing with other people.

To pray.

To work even though his fingers do not allow him to do much.

Mr. Rapoza is happy living at Mutemwa especially for all necessities he is getting and the good care given to him.



### ENOCH CHIPETEKURE

Born Mutoko about 86 years ago. He was once married, the wife died and left one son. The son does not know that his father was admitted to Mutemwa Leprosy Centre.

#### Challenges:

He suffers from leprosy. He came to Mutemwa in 2006.

He is destitute, his legs give him pain and he is unable to walk.

Money permitting he would like to have a set of dentures.

#### Likes:

He loves to pray.

He likes cigarettes.

Loves sour milk and sadza.



### LAZARUS MABVIKO

Born in Mozambique in 1948. Single and never went to school. He worked in Chinoyi at Mataya and also on Corberwood Farm in Karoi.

#### Challenges:

He is destitute.

'Not having a wife is a challenge.'

#### Likes:

He is happy with the treatment given to him in terms of food, clothing and shelter.

## GIFT AID

*Please may we encourage all of our donors who pay Tax to fill in a Gift Aid form. It is a simple process which all taxpaying donors (or their spouses) can use to enable JBMS to recover 25% of the amount you kindly give from income tax you pay at no cost to yourself. Forms are downloadable from the JBMS website [www.johnbradburne.com](http://www.johnbradburne.com) or can be posted, call 01568 760632*

## Ms Anscitaria Nyamutswa retires from Mutemwa after 21 years.

Ms Nyamutswa or "Mai Clever" as she was affectionately known at Mutemwa retired from work as Nurse Aid at the end of December 2011.

Born June 1946 she joined Mutemwa in November 1990 from Mary Mount Mission Hospital in Rusape, Zimbabwe.

She worked with early Mutemwa Matrons and in particular Mary Hardwick.

"Mai Clever" remained a dedicated worker who took on jobs others would consider filthy and difficult. She got on well with patients and attributed this gift to, in her own words, "putting God in my work".

She advises that when one works in a community with residents who suffer from chronic illnesses one needs patience. This is her story:-

When I joined the staff at Mutemwa, I was initially scared of contracting leprosy, but I was soon comforted to learn that treatment was then available and that the residents were burnt out leprosy people who were just like us. I also observed that other family members did not catch leprosy despite living in the same household. I attended workshops once or twice yearly, offered by Tropical Diseases Unit (TDU) in Harare and my knowledge of the condition was enhanced.

In the end I was not only their nurse-aid but the residents became my personal friends and I shared food with them.

I learnt a lot from the medical helpers especially in how to take slides for the diagnosis of leprosy. My experience working at the Settlement made me realise how important it is to care for the chronically disabled residents especially in the area of eye and foot care, exercises and rest and above all to allow them to take 'short steps' on their way to recovery. Thank you indeed! We have learnt that short steps get you there. Mai Clever was a member of the Mutemwa Mother of Peace Prayer Group and we will not forget her dedication to doing errands for the Chapel during her days off.

She will be missed greatly by all at Mutemwa and especially the prayer group.

We wish her all the best in her deserved rest.



### TESTIMONIES AND LETTERS SUMMER 2012

Yet again prayer has been answered through John.

I wrote to you a few years ago regarding John's intercession for people in need of housing, and how successful the prayers were.

A dear friend of mine, Anne, whose husband is terminally ill with cancer, needed to move to a bungalow from the council, and after praying to John, they now

have the keys to their new home. I am praying now that they will be able to sell their own house, and thus have this time together without extra stress.

John was able to help a young doctor who needed a home nearer to his place of work. Our prayers to John helped to get him what he needed. His younger sister (a nurse) also needed to find accommodation which was also achieved.

I am so grateful to John for his intercession. He also gives me a

sign through sending bees which makes me very happy.

Please keep Mark and Anne in your prayers

**Margaret Murray**

I am very touched by your work. I lived at Mutemwa from 1974 until 1985. My aunt Ruby was a helper at the hospital. I was only seven in 1974. I remember attending daily Mass with Baba John as we used to call him. He was a very kind and loving person. It was very sad when

Baba John was killed. They were difficult times in the country. I was too young to understand Baba John. I am not surprised at all that miracles are happening through his work. I feel very privileged to have known him personally.

My memories of Baba John have been renewed and I can just about hear his voice. He was fluent in Shona, the native language. He had an infectious laugh, and yes the hair band! When I came to the UK, I used to say to myself I hope one day I will find John's relatives and tell them how good a person he was, also that he seemed happy and contented with his life, although from an observer of my age he was very poor compared to the average white person in the then Rhodesia.

I was very impressed when I last visited Zimbabwe, I went to Mutemwa retracing my childhood. Things have improved so much. It was good to see some of the patients who still remembered me and my sister.

I would really like to give back to Mutemwa. I owe a lot of what I am today to my experience of living at Mutemwa hospital. My aunt Ruby and Baba John taught me to Love. I now work as a Cognitive Behavioural Therapist Nurse at South Hackney Community Mental Health Team in Hackney, London.

Keep up the good work.

**Perpetua Robert**

Re the CD Alive to God  
Hearing John's voice in this little house transforms the energy in it. We are meeting the whole man and his entire being here in the poetry and songs which brings him into our midst, with all the love and inspiration and deep compassion and love of life that is John.

**Sister Marie**

I have been visiting Prinknash Abbey for many years. As the Community has now moved back into the old Abbey, the male guests are housed in what was for many years The Noviciate. There were many postulants and novices in those days and all were kept separate from the professed community in their own prefab wing. This is where John Bradburne would have been during his short time there.

It was small and rather cramped. This is what one of the brothers, who was in the Noviciate with John and knew him well told me.

'When John was at Prinknash it happened that all the postulants and novices were allowed an annual Christmas Treat. They all gathered together one evening for feasting and drinking. It was an evening in which plenty of food and alcohol all were allowed to indulge. During this evening the Novice Master was of course present. The proceedings went like this; all sat around together and each one present had, in turn, to sing for his supper as it were. One might sing a song, another tell a joke, another tell a short story, or recite a poem.

When it came to John's turn he halted the merriment and indulgence by standing up to his full height, raised his glass with a grand gesture and said: 'A toast to the starving!'

This of course flattened the proceedings. The Novice Master was angry with John.

I think this says something of where John's heart and allegiances truly lay. He was, if he knew it or not at that time, on his vocational way down the social scale, so that like Jesus and St Francis, and St Anthony and others, the only way for him was to throw in his lot with the poorest of the poor.

John left Prinknash on the morning of the next Good Friday

**Tony Millar OFS  
Minister Furness Fraternity**

My husband and I just came back from two months leave. One month in Zimbabwe and one month in South Africa. The parishioners from Braeside parish in Harare had just gone on a pilgrimage to Mutemwa. They visited the residents there and the little hut where John lived. They also went to John Bradburne's grave just the week before we arrived. I was disappointed to have missed it. A friend of mine even gave me some sand from the grave, and told me she really enjoyed the visit. John was a really special person, so many people speak so well of him.

Some of my friends are saying a novena prayer to him, and they say how powerful the novena is.

Zimbabweans are really strong in their faith, all the churches I went to were packed. They hardly complain about the hardship and just carry on with their lives. I was so touched.

**Valerie Peterson**

I knew John Bradburne from the time I was working at Silveira House in 1972 when he used to come and visit his friend Fr John Dove and when I used to go to Mutemwa to visit him with Fr Dove. John, as I remember him was very devoted to his friends, the Mutemwa patients, and Mutemwa as a place. He would arrive at Silveira House from Mutemwa by public transport in the afternoon bringing a box of stencils which he wanted run off that afternoon in order for him to return to Mutemwa the following morning. I used to run off stencils (one copy per stencil) in which he had typed all the poems he would have composed during that week or month until late in the evening sometimes failing to finish them that day. Whenever I finished them he would then say: 'Thank you very much, I will take you to watch a film at a cinema tonight'. He would then go to Fr Dove and say: 'John (Fr Dove), would you like to go to a cinema tonight, I have invited Sister to come with us, but remember to take enough money to pay for us all'. Once at the cinema he would order the things he loved most and then ask Fr Dove to pay. He would say: 'John you know Sister loves ice cream and chocolate, can you buy her that.'

When we visited him at Mutemwa, he would take us to lunch at his tin house, with the food which we would have brought with us from Silveira House. He was full of humour and jokes. He loved singing and playing the harmonium in the Chapel at Mutemwa. I really enjoyed his company, he wasn't short of something to say at any given situation.

**Sister Angelina Katsukunya**

In thanksgiving for two intercessions to John Bradburne which have been answered. Both being my unemployed son-in-law and a 33 year old grandson Alexander.

They have been unemployed for two years and 19 months, both in the London Financial City, but they have both been re-accepted in their chosen professions. I have prayed earnestly for them. They have family. Thank you dear John!

My own health has improved and my husband Frank's leg ulcers have healed. Please would you send me ten more prayer leaflets. God bless your work.

**Patsy Collinson**