

Conference talk: Let your light so shine: living and bearing witness in Britain today  
Living Witness & Local Saints

Introduction

St John declares that 'Christ is The true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.' We have heard some profound and inspiring talks this weekend. We were reminded that the Light of Christ is gentle, gracious and gladsome.

As every individual is unique, so too is every community and parish. We would like to share with you a little about our parish in Keswick, Cumbria. We are not coming from a position of expertise or to advise; far from it, but rather in thankfulness, humility, and to encourage. We all learn from each other.

When we 'retired' and moved from Brighton to our tiny cottage in Keswick, in 2007, we asked Aidan Hart to fresco the attic. It became our chapel, where we have had the blessing of singing Matins and Vespers daily for 12 years. We prayed for Christ's light to shine through our prayers and through the local saints. We had no plans

We decided to make simplicity the key to our lives, in the rhythm of each day. (I soon learnt that did not mean that we would not be extremely busy!)

Within a year, we had a congregation of about 20; Greek Cypriots, and also English converts, plus the offer to rent an unused Methodist chapel (which we have now purchased) on the village green at Braithwaite, a picturesque village 2 miles north of Keswick. The chapel building, currently being renovated, includes accommodation

We are greatly privileged to be in a beautiful location, by a stream, surrounded by trees and with a backdrop of the Lake District Fells. The rock pool, with a weir, is just up the track, and provides a wonderful baptismal pool for those adults willing to brave water that has just flowed down from the mountain.

Passing walkers sometimes drop in. As it was a former Methodist chapel, we initially had regular Methodist tourists turn up for a Methodist service, and then retreat in shock...but some stayed and experienced their first Orthodox Liturgy!

The following adjectives are frequently used by new members or our many visitors:

**Welcoming and warm:** we try to get the balance of making everyone welcome without that 'cringe factor' of them being singled out as a stranger.

**Young:** both in average age, (excluding of course the priest and his wife), and also folk who have little or no Orthodox background, as well as our wonderfully loyal core group of Greek Cypriots, Romanians, and English converts

**Vibrant:** what we lack in musical and liturgical perfection, is compensated by fervent worship. Our choir is developing well, but everyone sings, including children

**Sense of community:** After The Liturgy, we are blessed with several people who bring delicious food each Sunday for our communal meal which can go on well into the afternoon. There is great interaction between nationalities, ages and life styles. Groups spill over to the garden on fine days, and there is a swing on the green for the children

We must not paint a picture of perfection as ,of course, we have our fair share of trials and challenges. At present we have a very urgent need for a deacon. We try to live in the present moment, in stillness, faith and hope

*I will now hand over to Fr John*

## **LOCAL SAINTS LIVING WITNESS**

### **They came from the North**

**The Brits** were already here.

**The Romans** built the Wall.

**Christians** left their footprints

<b>Maryport</b>	early Christian graves
<b>Bewcastle</b>	an early monastery?
<b>and Vindolanda</b>	a Christian chapel and a bishops tablet

**They came from the West:** **St Ninian**

**They came from the North:** **St Mungo (Kentigern)**

**Itinerant bishops**  
**with a sense of mission**  
**they set out with nothing**  
**their purpose to preach and baptise,**  
**plant churches and found communities.**

**They came from the West:** **St Patrick, St Bridget,**  
**St Kenneth** and **St Columba**

**They came from the East:** **St Herbert** and **St Cuthbert**

**They came from West and East:**

**St Aidan + Lindisfarne**  
**St Oswald, St Hilda and St Ebbe**  
**St Bede** and **St Benedict Biscop**

**They went from North to South:** **St Finan** baptised **St Sigebert of Essex,**  
**St Cedd** became abbot of **Lastingham,**  
and bishop of the **East Saxons.**  
**St Chad** was bishop in **Lichfield**  
**St John of Beverley** was bishop **Hexham**  
**St Cuthbert** was enshrined in **Durham**  
**St Bega**

These 20 are all

They went

**On Shetland**

**Local Saints  
Living Witnesses  
to the Edge of the World**

the Norse built chapels and monasteries  
**everywhere**

## LOCAL SAINTS

St Ninian

St Mungo

St Patrick

St Bridget

St Kenneth

St Columba

St Aidan

St Oswald

St Hilda

St Herbert

St Cuthbert

St Bede

St Benedict B

St Finan

St Cedd

St Chad

St John Beverley

Whithorn

Keswick

Cumbria

Cumbria

Dearham

Iona

Lindisfarne

Kirkoswald

Whitby

Derwentwater

Durham

Jarrow

Monkwearmouth

Lindisfarne

Lastingham

Lichfield

Beverley

## LIVING WITNESS LIVING TRADITION

- 1 **We started with nothing**, and that was a blessing.  
We had to live by faith
- 2 **we don't 'run the parish'**.  
God is in control, it is better that way.
- 3 **We don't have to organise too much.**  
We have to let the Holy Spirit in
- 4 **By 'keeping our 'hands off'**,  
God gives us so much more.
- 5 **God will take away** cherished conceptions.  
Are we up to the challenge?
- 6 **We live in the days of intense social change**  
Our environment is no longer Christian (let alone Orthodox)  
The most powerful voices are secular.
- 7 **Most of us are not monastics.**  
We should not give the impression that this is what we have to be
- 8 The **greatest challenge is to live by mercy and compassion.**
- 9 **The Gospel is seen in holiness**

This as always been so and always will be

**10 Where will the church be in 20 years time?**

**11** When pressures are on  
**God is training us**  
**how to stand**  
**in everything**  
**in peace**

**Fr John Musther**