

The background of the entire page is a soft-focus photograph of several white daisies with yellow centers. Two butterflies are visible: one is a brown and white speckled butterfly perched on a daisy on the left, and another is a pink butterfly on the right. The overall color palette is warm and gentle, with a light beige or cream tone.

Broken
Rites

Annual Report 2016-17

Working since 1983 as an interdenominational self-help and support group for separated and divorced spouses of clergy and ministers

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Opinions expressed or implied within this publication are not necessarily those of the Editor or the Committee of Broken Rites and no responsibility can be accepted for any errors of fact printed in this booklet.

Annual Report from the Co-Chairs 2016-17

THIS REPORT can only begin in one way, which is by expressing our heartfelt thanks to Sue Attack who retired this year after 3 years as secretary followed by 4 years as our chair. Sue has been a tower of strength for anyone who needed support and a powerhouse in the committee. Not only will she be much missed but as we have discovered, she is a hard act to follow. We therefore now have two co-chairs, Margaret Wilkinson and Dilys Stone.

This has been another busy year for Broken Rites. The new guidance for Value Linked Loans for clergy widows and for ex-clergy spouses has been agreed and circulated. This means that there will be greater consistency

across the dioceses of the Church of England should anyone need a loan to assist with the purchase of a house. To our knowledge there are no equivalent schemes for members of other denominations. The new guidelines for Bishop's Visitors in the C-of-E have been drawn up but have not been issued yet as they are working their way through various committees and over legal hurdles. These too should help in ensuring greater consistency across the dioceses of the Church of England.

Broken Rites has been pleased to welcome a new people onto our team. Jonathan Tillin, an Associate member, is now the treasurer, Fiona Goode is now our legal advisor, and Anne Ingham is now the archivist.

With Anne's help our records are now sorted and up to date.

We were delighted to welcome Bishop Libby Lane to our 33rd AGM in April. She reflected on the role of Bishops in the Church of England in promoting healing and reconciliation in the Body of Christ so that the church can be a place of safety and support but how for so many people it can feel the opposite, impregnable and unrelenting. She suggested it is how a relationship breakdown is responded to by the institution of the church that signals whether it is safe or not. Bishop Libby then spoke about the increased awareness and understanding of emotional abuse and paradoxically how difficult it can be to recognize what is happening when one is being

abused in this way. She ended by saying “Broken Rites is a partner in this work and, in occupying one of the less visible and more painful areas of the church’s life, glorifies God by honouring those who may find themselves amongst ‘the least’, ‘the forgotten’, ‘the disregarded.’”

The appeal to church leaders’ in September was very successful and we received some encouraging comments along with the cheques so it does appear that the work we do is being valued by church leaders. However, this is not a sign that we are no longer needed. Our membership has grown and individuals continue to report that they are living in extremely difficult and distressing situations, whether through financial hardship or emotional distress. We continue to be extremely grateful to the church charities whose help has been an

absolute lifeline for so many of our members.

We are now more active on social media as well as maintaining our website. The confidential, member-only, Facebook group has 40 members. There is a second Facebook group which is open called “Clergy marriage in Crisis”. Both groups are signposted by open pages and we have received a number of enquiries through Facebook. We now need younger members who are used to this way of relating to join us in supporting new members and on the committee so that what we do meets the needs of their generation

Broken Rites is also continuing to look at ways of recruiting new Associate members and we are delighted that one of our Associates, Jonathan, is now Treasurer. We made our very first appearance at Greenbelt, not on the main stage

but sharing a table with members of WATCH as part of an awareness and recruitment drive.

In summary, we can look forward positively. Financially we are in a sound position but the need for Broken Rites is as great as ever and there is much work to be done. Key areas of work for the future include ensuring fair treatment for non-Church of England ex-spouses and partners, making sure that we have provision for male ex-spouses and partners, and raising the awareness of the role of emotional abuse in clergy marriage breakdown. What we need now are volunteers, especially those who are at ease using social media, as those younger clergy spouses/partners who find themselves in difficulty often prefer these methods.

President's report 2016-17

IT IS with pleasure that I once again provide a report for the Broken Rites AGM. I was sorry not to be able to attend last year's AGM due to transport difficulties and I would like to express my belated thanks to Sue Atack who retired last year after many years on the committee and four years in the chair. She will be much missed and has been replaced by two Co-chairs, Dilys Stone and Margaret Wilkinson.

This has been another busy year for Broken Rites. The number of members has increased and thanks to the generosity of church leaders in response to the biennial appeal it is on a sound financial footing. In addition to its main role of providing peer to peer support, the emphasis has been on working towards

greater consistency across the various dioceses of the Church of England through the new guidance on Value Linked Loans for clergy widows and ex-clergy spouses and partners and also the new guidelines for Bishops Visitors in the Church of England. I am pleased to learn that Broken Rites will now try to raise awareness of the needs of separated and divorced clergy spouses in all major Christian denominations in the United Kingdom and that there was a successful Broken Rites presence at greenbelt this summer and plans to return there in 2017.

The committee, Area Reps and link members have continued to provide an essential network of support for women and men at the time of a marital crisis and, unlike

so many other organisations are able to continue that support as long as it is needed. It is important to remember that the experience of clergy marriage breakdown is often extremely stressful and painful and may take some time to resolve. I understand that Broken Rites will also continue to raise awareness of the problem of emotional abuse within clergy marriage and the effect that this has on the spouse and any children. As Bishop Libby Lane commented in her address to the 2016 AGM "Broken Rites is a partner in the work of promoting healing and reconciliation and, in occupying one of the less visible and more painful areas of the church's life, glorifies God by honouring those who may find themselves

amongst ‘the least’, ‘the forgotten’ and ‘the disregarded.’”

Broken Rites has responded to newer ways of offering support. As social media develops this does mean that different age groups as well as men and women may prefer to be supported in different ways. It

is gratifying to know that Broken Rites has embraced this challenge through its website and the different portals on Facebook. That this support is all provided by the same women and men who have been through the crisis is a testament to the growth and transformation

which can occur. Finally I would encourage all members of Broken Rites to consider whether they are able to give back to the organization, whether by offering their help, spreading awareness or by encouraging others to become Associate Members.

Precis of Bishop Libby’s Keynote Address to Broken Rites

AGM APRIL 2016

BISHOP LIBBY expressed her thanks for the invitation to speak, especially to a group of people who have often been wounded by bad decisions made by the Church of England, the institution of which she is a bishop. A bishop’s calling is to promote peace and unity in the

church, and thereby to enable it to become a place of safety and healing.

The description of ‘the Body of Christ’, as found in 1 Corinthians, shows that our relationships within that body are necessarily part of the whole. This includes the total experience of our lives, from the successes to the failures.

Being part of the Body of the Christ means ultimately resurrection and hope. The church thus needs to be a place of safety and healing for the wounded, because if one suffers, all suffer. A wound left to fester damages not only the individual but the whole of the body. As a bishop called to promote healing, the

question needs to be asked, how to ensure that the church provides a safe place for healing?

Bishop Libby did not answer that question directly, but described some of the analysis which has been carried out on the subject of marriage breakdown amongst clergy. She admitted that the institution had itself been the unwitting cause of stress and breakdown. She apologised on behalf of the church for the wounds which have been inflicted.

Clergy divorce statistics show an increase for each of the years since 2011, yet the numbers of referrals to Broken Rites have remained constant. Of these, a significant number has cited emotional abuse.

Using information from Joshua Miles, MBACP, she described the nature of emotional abuse in some detail. The reason why there is an increase in the reporting of this in

clergy marriage breakdowns might be because of increased incidence or increased awareness. It could be exacerbated by the emphasis in some parts of the church of the 'headship' of the male over the female in the family and in church. She stated that it is important that senior clergy in the church should be alerted to this and become engaged with it.

One way of providing a safe church for clergy families might be the appointment of a person trained, equipped and financed, to recognise and respond to signs of emotional abuse. There should be proper safeguarding procedure and protocol in cases of potential risk or actual crime. The body of the church is called not only to 'cure' but to prevent harm.

Bishop Libby referred to the book 'Public people, Private Lives' by Jean and Chris Burton, which

has identified a number of key pressures on clergy families and suggests how the church might make improvements in pastoral care. Families have been labelled as 'not coping' without a fair assessment of the work-related pressures which could be causing this.

'Being safe' does not mean suppressing conflict, but dealing with it to protect respect and self-esteem. "No one should be rendered powerless and voiceless."

Thus there needs to be a 'whole church' approach to providing a 'safe church' with clearly defined responsibilities, and opportunities for communication to enable the whole body to listen and respond to all its member parts. In the absence of this, Broken Rites has played its part in raising awareness and providing a safe place for the possible healing of wounds.

Bishop Libby pledged that, from her place of influence, she will seek to make systems work for people, and not the other way round.

To conclude, Bishop Libby considered her experience of becoming a woman bishop. She is now one of nine, so is less of a novelty so more 'normal'. She stated that her sense of calling comes from God and the promise of God's faithfulness to uphold her calling in 1 Thessalonians 5:24.

She stated that she brings herself to her office, so that includes herself as a 'woman', but it is not essentially different from the calling of a male. "If those who struggle for gender equality insist on anything, it includes our right of women not to be defined as a whole gender simply in contrast to men or by any predetermined characteristic such as 'sensitivity'."

In conclusion, she quoted Philippians 2, which gives the example of the humility of Jesus Christ as a measure and inspiration for the creation of a 'safe' church which never renders anyone powerless or marginalised. She thanked God for the partnership of Broken Rites in the work of bringing safety and recognition to those who find themselves amongst the forgotten and disregarded by the church as it is now.

After the Address, comments and questions were invited from the floor. When asked how Broken Rites' voice might be heard more effectively by the Church of England authorities, Bishop Libby suggested that a list of clearly articulated objectives concerning accountability and responsibility for providing a 'safe place' for clergy families might 'get some traction'.

Sue Atack reported that, in response to an expression of disbelief that clergy families were affected by emotional abuse, she had submitted four 'Real Life Stories' of such behaviour to Bishop Alistair for information to the House of Bishops.

There was discussion about the role of the Church Commissioners in the 'body' of the Church of England. Bishop Libby explained that their legal requirement is to generate financial resources for the Church's payment to clergy and their pensions, and to maintain and provide housing. Their aim is to invest in projects which bring in 'the best possible return'. As such, they are 'part of the conversation' in any discussion of the welfare of clergy families.

The Church Commissioners include people with great legal expertise who could provide legal

advice and support if their role were to be expanded.

Bishop Libby advised that any search for greater support from the Church of England by 'Broken Rites' on behalf of its members should be characterised by targeting objectives.

There was an open sharing about the experience of members in church life as clergy families:

- an attitude of an 'Us' and 'Them' approach to personal issues,

- the neglect of families who are involved with sexuality and gender differences, as indicated by the refusal to recognise same-sex marriages or even to recognise that the Church itself creates acute distress by hard-line attitudes,

- the lack of a person outside the hierarchy who can listen to clergy spouses in confidence, but who also has power to 'make things happen' if need be.

It is the experience of many that there is little attempt by the Church to instil a sense of responsibility in clergy who behave abusively. If they are brought under a Clergy Discipline Measure, this could mean the loss of stipend with the consequent loss of income for the whole family. Even so, a Clergy Discipline Measure seems to some to have little effect, and clergy are often re-instated after a period of censure.

Diocese in Europe Report from Viv Tillin

ONCE again all seems quiet on the European front for which we are truly thankful. I am stepping down from being the Broken Rites representative after many years in which, happily, I haven't been able to help anybody. Referrals would normally be made

by the Bishop's Visitor for this large Diocese and none have been forthcoming, except back in 2008 when the then BV chatted with me about a possible contact.

I am pleased to say that Helen Oxley, Broken Rites representative

for the whole of Ireland, and who lives in the Republic of Ireland (which, interestingly, although remaining in Europe is not part of the Diocese in Europe, because it has its own bishops) has agreed to take on this role.

Out and About

Greater London and Kent

Members in the London region continue to meet for Sunday lunch about 3 times a year. A particularly memorable and well attended meeting was arranged by a member in the common room of the block of apartments where she lives.

Others have enjoyed the hospitality of a member who lives near Canterbury.

We all value these occasions as a way of keeping in touch with each other and Broken Rites in general and, last but not least, enjoying good food!

Ann Richards

Editor's Report

The 2017 Annual Report will be my final edition as my term of office is

completed. It has been a privilege to edit the newsletters and reports and to attend the Committee meetings. The working of Broken Rites serve the individual and the group in a variety of ways. It has been a busy time in my life and the task got somewhat caught up in that but I would recommend the role as an opportunity to see the friendship across the different elements that make up Broken Rites.

AGM Edinburgh

There is a list of B&B's printed on the back of the AGM Agenda with the map for the locality. Not only are we meeting in Scotland – the Welcome from Patricia will be in Gaelic. I thought this poem could be included in our newsletter - the

words I relate strongly to these words and I am sure others will too.

It was given to me by the late Patty Burgess who was a Deaconess and a lady who gave up all worldly possessions and gave her all to helping people from all walks of life. She died at 97 and her funeral at St Giles in Edinburgh told her life story which was truly remarkable in all she did for others.

Comes the Dawn

After a while you learn
the subtle difference
Between holding a hand and
chaining a soul
And you learn that love doesn't
mean leaning
And company does't mean security
And you begin to understand



Leicester June 2016

We tried for an autumn get-together but so few were able to make it and the distance that the two who could join me would have to travel really made it impractical, so we have decided to wait for the spring and now is the time to start organising it though we may have met as you read this.

I was in touch with most of my members by phone in December, and also sent them each a Christmas card with our newly devised special insert.

There have been three new referrals to me this year one of whom has moved to Norfolk and one declined membership. The Link for Lincolnshire is supporting the other lady who lives within easy reach.

Having been on the committee or the last 14 years I attended my final meeting in January. The journey down to London has become increasingly difficult for me physically, so I have tendered my resignation as Representative for both the Diocese in Europe and for the East Midlands.

Helen Oxley, in the Republic of Ireland, has agreed to take on the role for the Diocese in Europe and I would like to think one of the ladies in the East Midlands would take over from me, to continue getting us girls together and to support any new enquirers.

I shall miss being part of a great team who endeavour to keep the wheels of Broken Rites turning. I have made many friendships which I hope to continue in as many ways as I can.

Viv Tillin

'Secret Facebook Group' – facts and joining information

YOU WILL of course need to already be a Facebook member to join! Opening a Facebook account is easy, but we can help. All postings can only been viewed by those within the Group – they are NOT visible on the general Facebook pages, or your own Timeline, so postings can be made in the confidence that they will only be read by other Broken Rites' members. If you would like to join the Group please contact your Area Rep who will help you join or put you in touch with someone else who can.

Enquiries Co-ordinator's report 2016

THERE WERE 33 enquiries through the website in 2016. I have not been notified of any enquiries that have not come through the website.

As in previous years the majority of these enquiries have come from people married to a member of the clergy whose marriages were at the point of breakdown. In addition this year we had a number of women whose marriages had ended years ago. Most of these women were still having problems but there were some who recognized that they had come through a difficult time and now wanted to offer help to those who needed it, Sadly these enquirers did not know of Broken Rites at the time their marriages were in crisis. By contrast, we also had a number of

women who were struggling in their marriages and were looking for help to remain in them. This year we also had the first enquiry from someone in a clergy/clergy marriage. We also had three enquiries from abroad, two from the USA and one from Canada. We had four enquiries from men, three of whom were members of the clergy, including one whose wife was also ordained.

As usual we also had a number of enquiries that were not specifically related to clergy marriage breakdown, including for example a woman who was devastated to discover that her husband had been considering ordination but had not told her.

More and more of our enquirers are finding out about Broken Rites

through the internet and through our presence on social media. so perhaps we can be hopeful that more people will find help when they need it.

Margaret Wilkinson
Enquiries co-ordinator

EVERYONE WELCOME

2017
AGM

Saturday 29 April 2017
Kirk of the Canongate on the
Royal Mile in Edinburgh

Website reports

Web-Editor's report

This post is currently vacant so there have been no major changes to the website this year. It has been kept up to date.

The post of editor is not demanding and there is excellent support provided by PSLweb. If you are used to using Word or other word processing software then you will have most of the skills needed for the role. Please see the job description in the AGM pack for more details.

Margaret Wilkinson
Co-chair

Web-based communications report.

Web-based communications are becoming an increasingly important

part of the work of Broken Rites. Nearly all our enquiries now come through the website. Some enquirers have found out about Broken Rites by searching Facebook and finding our Facebook pages. Very few enquiries now come through the traditional routes such as a phone call following a word of mouth contact.

There are now two Facebook pages which anyone can see. One is called Broken Rites and the other "Clergy Marriage in Crisis". These pages signpost people to our two groups. One is a confidential group for Broken Rites members only. There are 40 members in this group. Group members find it a source of support, comfort and hope in times of need and a way to share

information. The Clergy marriage in Crisis group is also a confidential group and is open to anyone who is either a clergy spouse or partner whose marriage or partnership is in crisis or to people who are separated or divorced from clergy spouses/partners, whether or not they are members of Broken Rites. This group has eight members. A number of these members have subsequently joined Broken Rites. Membership of both groups is facilitated by a group manager. Anyone wanting to join a group can message her through Facebook and she will make the appropriate checks.

Katharine Harrison
Web-based Communications
Co-ordinator

Treasurer's Report: year ending 31st December 2016

I'm pleased to record that our current account has seen a boost this year and we have not needed to access our reserve account. The approved Income and Expenditure Accounts and Balance Sheet are provided along with this report, as is the Auditors' Report.

Income

Income is derived principally from your subscriptions and our Appeals. Our income enables Broken Rites to be 'Here for You'.

Subscriptions

I have records of 96 members subscribing in 2016, of these

thirty-six pay by standing order. There are five Associate members, two of whom pay by standing order.

To those who subscribe I say 'thank you'; to those who are new I say 'welcome'; to those who have been members for longer than a year and have not subscribed last year I encourage you to do so!

At the very least a subscription (however small) helps us to be here for you. Perhaps, as importantly, the evidence of subscribing membership proves the significance of our cause to those who might prefer we had

no voice. It is difficult to assert there are some 140 members when, consistently, only two-thirds subscribe.

Appeal and Donations

Broken Rites issued our bi-annual appeal to Church Leaders in 2016 and received a total of £5,200 from twenty-six bishops in the Anglican Communion. As in 2014 our thanks go to Bishop Alastair for his commendation letter sent out with the appeal. Thanks are due also to those who sent out the appeal letters. I sent a personalised 'thank you' letter to all who so graciously responded.

We also must express our gratitude to those who have made donations over and above their subscriptions or in other ways.

Interest

Interest on savings is negligible.

Expenditure

Expenditure reflects our ethos of being 'There for Others' primarily in the self-help communities facilitated by the Repts and Links; enabling the meeting of members both personally and via social media.

By far the greatest expenditure is on reimbursement of travel fees for meetings: being such a geographically diverse group this

is hardly surprising. There is little doubt that these times are challenging and productive; though maybe there is scope for change in this digital age.

Although refunded, the bank charges reflect a level of difficulty encountered by not operating with a debit card or internet banking. The auditors have made certain recommendations regarding this in their Report and I shall follow up in due course.

Assets

Broken Rites holds no reported assets.

Accounts Management

We use an Excel Workbook to track our accounts. It means I am able to provide management accounts on a frequent basis to the Executive Officers and in a timely fashion for committee meetings. The format of the report is similar to that which produced the Annual Accounts.

Jonathan Tillin

BROKEN RITES

34th Annual General Meeting 2017

Saturday 29th April at

Canongate Kirk Hall, 153 Canongate, Edinburgh. EH8 8BN

(follow signs through churchyard to hall behind the Kirk – open 10.00am)

10.30am (coffee and registration) – 3.30pm

Speakers: *The Moderatorial Triumvirate* –

Subjects:

Changing the culture that leads to abuse;

When faith makes it more difficult;

What happens to a vow when it is broken?

Buffet Lunch available £7.50

payable in advance please

If you are not a member but would like to join us on this occasion as a guest of Broken Rites please contact our Chair: Maggie Wilkinson
020 8650 2312 or email: chair@brokenrites.org. It would help too if you would indicate if lunch is required.

Broken Rites Officers 2016-17

President:	Rt Hon Frank Field MP
Co-Chairpersons:	Margaret Wilkinson and Veronica Bale
Deputy Chairperson:	Dilys Stone
Secretary:	Rosina Elston,
Treasurer:	Jonathan Tillin
Newsletter Editor:	Valerie Hales
Membership Secretary:	Veronica Bale
Non C of E Representative:	Ruth East
Website editor:	websiteeditor@brokenrites.org

