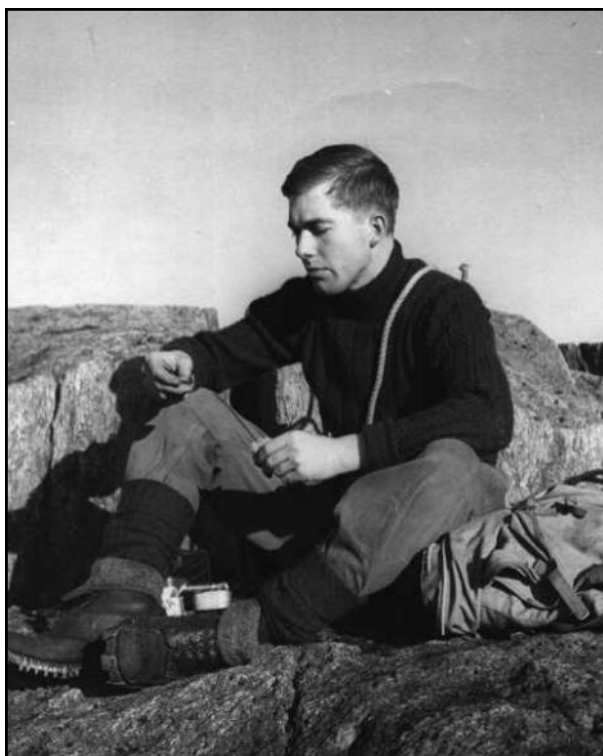


# —*Portobello Buddhist Priory*—



A Temple of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives



*Rawdon Goodier as a young climber*

## *Newsletter & Calendar of Events* May-August 2018

**Portobello Buddhist Priory**  
27 Brighton Place, Portobello  
Edinburgh, EH15 1LL  
**Telephone** (0131) 669 9622  
**email:** [favian.straughan@homecall.co.uk](mailto:favian.straughan@homecall.co.uk)  
**website:** [www.portobellobuddhist.org.uk](http://www.portobellobuddhist.org.uk)

## — Welcome to all —

**Portobello Buddhist Priory**, a ground floor flat in the Portobello district of Edinburgh, opened in 1998. It is one of a handful of temples in Britain which are affiliated to the Community of Buddhist Contemplatives. The training monastery of the Community at Throssel Hole near Hexham in Northumberland was founded in 1972 by Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett, an Englishwoman who trained within the Soto Zen tradition at one of its main monasteries in Japan. The resident Prior at Portobello is one of the senior monks from Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey.

The purpose of the Priory is to offer lay training within the Serene Reflection Meditation tradition (Soto Zen) to anyone who sincerely seeks to undertake it, and the prior's role is to support such training. The prior and members of the congregation are also involved in activities such as religious education, hospital and prison visiting.

All are warmly invited to join in the Priory's programme of lay practice, the purpose of which is to come to know and live from our True Nature, whose expression is our wise and compassionate living.

*With kindest wishes from Rev Master Favian, Prior*

*(For details of the day-to-day schedule at the Priory, please see back page)*

## - Weekend events at the Priory -

### May 2018

Sunday 13th      Renewal of Precepts      11am

### June

Sunday 10th      Renewal of Precepts      11am

### July

Sunday 15th      Renewal of Precepts      11am

### August

Sunday 12th      Renewal of Precepts      11am

**The Priory is open to visitors** as well as trainees every day from  
6.45am - 9.15pm

except Mondays, Thursday afternoons, and Sunday pm.

*(Visitors—please phone beforehand, and please note when the Prior  
is holding retreats elsewhere: see inside back page)*

# Newsletter

59th edition  
April 2018  
(& 19th e-edition)

## — Prior's Notes —

**T**o have this issue of the Newsletter devoted to Rawdon feels both right and fitting. We want to honour our dear friend's memory and pool our collective experience to produce perhaps a rounded sense of his life and legacy; what he has meant and given to our Sangha. And also, if you're like me, it's a wish to hold onto him just a little longer.

### **Inside this issue-**

<i>Time for Reflection: Rawdon's Address to the Scottish Parlia-</i>	3
<i>Rawdon: Stillness, Fearlessness &amp; Generosity of Spirit</i>	5
<i>Rawdon Goodier</i>	6
<i>Faith and religion: Rawdon's article</i>	8
<i>Rawdon and Portobello</i>	12
<i>Rawdon: Memories &amp; Reflections</i>	16
<i>Rawdon's quiet nature</i>	17
<i>Remembrances of Rawdon</i>	18
<i>Remembering Rawdon</i>	18
<i>Steadfast Rawdon</i>	20
<i>Climbing in Cornwall: Rawdon's article</i>	21

At the same time I can almost hear him chuckle at our attempt, given his renowned self-effacement and his deep appreciation of the Buddhist teaching on No-self; particularly as expounded by Great Master Dogen:

*'To study the self is to forget the self and to forget the self is to be awakened by the myriad things.'*

This expresses, for me, something of the ungraspable nature of Rawdon: both as uniquely himself and as a life formed and actualised by the 'inflowing world', that his spiritual practice opened him up to receive.

I can imagine also him saying; "OK but

let's keep it real and allow my humanity, the flaring of righteous temper or the passing judgementalism". Fair enough, but that humanity seemed to be carried lightly, companionably, where foibles were accepted as part of the texture of training and rarely seemed to overcome for long his compassionate and wiser instincts.

To be with Rawdon was to feel a spacious acceptance, rather than an intrusive presence. A 'being with' in the moment, whether in animated dharma discussion or in sorting out practical considerations for the Priory, or over a curry lunch at his favourite Kalpna restaurant. Or in his final hours of life, where despite all, nothing seemed lacking.

Our funeral ceremony was both a loving farewell and a direct pointing to that which embraces all form:

The way lies wide open, nothing obstructs. Step forward boldly  
Sudhana!





## ***Rawdon's address, 'Time For Reflection', to the Scottish Parliament on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2002***

*(extracted from the Official Report of Parliamentary Business: Scottish Parliament)*

***The Presiding Officer (Sir David Steel):*** : *The leader of today's time for reflection is Mr Rawdon Goodier, who is a Zen Buddhist lay minister and who recently retired as the first chairman of the Scottish Inter Faith Council.*

**Mr Rawdon Goodier (Zen Buddhist Lay Minister and recently retired First Chairman of the Scottish Inter Faith Council):** Good afternoon.

"Reflection" is an interesting word that has several meanings, one of which features in the name of the type of meditation that I practise within the Soto Zen school of Buddhism—serene reflection meditation.

What do we do when we reflect? From my experience, I suggest that most of the time we are constructing rather than reflecting. We are not seeking to reflect clearly the nature of the reality that confronts us, as in a clouded mirror; we are building trains, or perhaps chains, of thought, ideas and theories.

There are many situations in our daily life that require such activity of the intellect. However, the need to engage in it can become tyrannical—we can become enchained by persuading ourselves that, indeed, we have no "time for reflection". In doing so, we lose the ability to listen, not just to what other people say, but to the unspoken language of our hearts.

Many people seem to recognise intuitively that the loss of time for reflection represents a diminishment of our humanity. They sense that there is something

wrong with a life of frenetic activity from which the only relief is the distraction of entertainment. That recognition is leading many people to explore the practice of meditation.

Although the cultivation of meditation is not a monopoly of the Buddhist faith, in one form or another, it is central to Buddhism, as it is the practice by which the Buddha Shakyamuni gained his insight into the nature of human existence. Although meditation is not essentially part of a package that necessitates adherence to specific religious beliefs, its practice leads to recognition of the need for ethical living and to faith in the intrinsic value of the practice itself.

Some time ago, I was shown an obscure 1692 quote in the large "Oxford English Dictionary", which exemplified one use of the word "reflection":

"the light of the moon reflected on frozen snow".

That description immediately brought back memories of my mountaineering years—of early starts across alpine glaciers or of late descents from Scottish hills. The words also resonate with the symbolism of much Zen poetry, in that they suggest, among other things, a place of stillness, but not of stagnation; a place of calm but bright anticipation from which we can step into the complexity of daily life and to which we can return at the end of the day—a place for reflection.

## *Stillness, fearlessness and generosity of spirit*

**I** have many warm memories of Rawdon. When I think of him now, these three qualities come to mind.

There was a sense of groundedness in Rawdon, reflecting a commitment to the meditation practice. I never remember him rushing anything, and what he said was the result of reflection. I think it was because of this that I felt a sense of safety when with him. He was trustworthy. It also produced a sense of awakesness in his presence. I was attentive when with him; his stillness radiated outwards. This did not prevent him expressing his vulnerabilities, but it felt like he was not dominated by these, and knew they were passing conditions.

This stillness also showed itself in a willingness to take action without holding back with fear. As I remember, it was he who first raised the possibility of a Priory in Edinburgh, which he discussed with the rest of the meditation group and then checked out publicly with Rev. Master Daishin at the end of a talk he gave while visiting Edinburgh. Rev. Master was suppor-

tive. I recall having a number of discussions with Rawdon which brought up fear in me, because he was suggesting a step into the unknown, which ran the risk of removing me from my comfort zone. These were productive ideas, and I learned a lot from accompanying him in some of these new developments, including how to let go of some of my own worries. I know that he was not immune to fear, but he was more concerned in doing what was needed.

The generosity of spirit expressed itself in a certain lightness of being. I felt that there was a twinkle in his eye, even when he was being very serious. He was always willing to help people, and supported me in some difficult times. He was happy to sit in silence with a person, but also had a kind word to hand when needed. He always wanted to include people in activities, where possible. He did all this in quite a quiet way.

So, thank you Rawdon.

*Neil Rothwell*

## *Rawdon Goodier*

**R**emembering Rawdon I have been going through old Priory newsletters. There are some photos of him with the sangha showing how he threw himself wholeheartedly into the life of the Priory. Laughing and smiling with Neil when they were given their brown kesas, at a tea for the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations.

Going into the Zendo now and seeing the chair Myra bought for him when he first was losing balance there is a deep pull of memory of him becoming more in need of help. Of David helping him to his sitting place. Rawdon bowing with all of us, his wish to train still so much a deep part of him despite the frailty. I can't see or even think of the chair without coming close to tears.

Alongside that is the sense that his training and efforts for the Sangha still help us. In the very fabric of the building he was instrumental in buying and in his strong example of training in adversity.

His poem '**Bowing**' is the piece of his writing which speaks to me most clearly at the moment:



*Rawdon at the  
formal opening of  
the Priory in 1998*



The outward expression  
Of an inward joy?  
Or gratitude?

Of this at times  
There is no doubt  
But neither is there  
Such necessity

Even in dullness  
Such simple action may ignite  
A spark of recognition  
Or even revelation,  
Though often not.

And then we may bow,  
How can one say?  
Inwardly?  
Into the dark?  
Simply because  
We feel so called to do.  
As bowing has no end  
No need to judge  
Which is the truer bow.

*Kathleen Campbell*

*As an example of Rawdon's many contributions to this Newsletter, we reprint here his fine article 'Faith?' which first appeared in the January 2011 edition —*

## *Faith ?*

### Faith and Religion —

**A**t one of our 'dharma discussions' at the Priory during the past year the subject of the role of faith in Buddhist practice was raised. I sometimes think that, by now, I should be able to produce a fluent definition of what faith is – however I find that this is not the case. Part of the difficulty is that, within our western society, faith is almost always equated with religion and religion/faith is generally perceived to be in decline – the retreat of the 'sea of faith'. In the last census in Scotland 27% of the population declared that they had no religion and a further 5% declined to answer. Thus between one-quarter and one-third of the population of Scotland are 'religionless' - are they also 'faithless'? Such a conclusion is, I think, highly debatable.

When faith is judged to be no more than an equivalent term for religion, it is generally associated with 'belief' in specific statements, texts or creeds, assent to which is required of those claiming membership. Conversely those who do not assent to the credal statements are excluded or, not uncommonly, persecuted. However I do not feel that it is necessary to equate faith with particular religious forms though there may be and often is, a connection – religion without faith has become a disconnected formalism, faith without religious expression of some kind may lack the manifestation of compassionate form.

### Waiting

When listening to the discussion at the Priory my mind was drawn back to lines in T S Eliot's 'East Coker', the second poem of the Four Quartets which contains several passages which have impressed themselves on my memory. Perhaps East Coker has a special significance for me as it was written by Eliot in the early months of the 1939-45 war at a time when, as an impressionable eight year old, I was evacuated with my mother to a remote Somerset village not far from East Coker during that period of uneasy waiting that followed the decla-

ration of war. The opening of the poem conveys both the character of a remote Somerset village and the tensions of the time. The passage I was trying to recall was:

*I said to my soul be still, and wait without hope  
For hope would be hope for the wrong thing; wait without love  
For love would be love of the wrong thing, there is yet faith  
But the faith and the love and the hope are all in the waiting*<sup>1</sup>

The word ‘*waiting*’ is interesting both in the way it is used by Eliot in this poem and more generally – its early uses were often connected to waiting in ambush for an enemy – which is certainly ‘waiting without love’ and is ‘hope for the wrong thing’! But later its meaning became extended to include a waiting upon in which one is willing to give and/or accept service as when we wait upon our teachers – in the sense of a willingness to make ourselves available. I associate this attitude with the Buddhist pilgrim Sudhana in the Gandavyuha sutra who was willing to ‘wait upon’ many teachers to learn the practices of a Bodhisattva.

The Welsh poet R S Thomas also had interesting things to say about waiting in relation to his experience of prayer – indeed he wrote two separate poems entitled ‘Waiting’ but the following one entitled ‘*Kneeling*’ resonates most closely with the Eliot quoted above:

*Prompt me god;  
But not yet. When I speak  
Though it will be you who speak  
Through me, something is lost  
The meaning is in the waiting*<sup>2</sup>

Within these quoted verses there is something which I find relates to our Buddhist meditation practice – and though zazen is neither waiting for or even waiting on – but ‘*just sitting*’ it seems to have some relation to the latter in the sense of being a willing receptiveness.

## **Faith in the Ultimate Source**

In his very helpful exploration<sup>3</sup> of the Buddhist understanding of faith Rev

Berwyn quoted, from the classic Mahayana work *'The Awakening of Faith'*, a passage which describes four faiths. Three of them we recognise as the three refuges of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha but the fourth is faith in the 'ultimate source.' Dogen maintains that 'Faith is one with the fruit of enlightenment, the fruit of enlightenment is one with faith. Therefore it is said that faith is the entrance to the ocean of the Dharma'.<sup>4</sup> This reminds one of Dogen's equation of practice with enlightenment.

I understand the Jewish scholar Martin Buber to have said that *'in the beginning was relationship'*. This to me chimes with the intuition of connectedness that we sometimes encounter in Buddhist practice and which is expressed formally in the teaching of dependent origination and, imaginatively, in the metaphor of Indra's Net. Whether we can equate 'faith in the ultimate source' with Buber's faith in the relationship 'at the beginning' is an interesting question. For Dogen, relationship as expressed in dependent origination does not appear to be ultimate. In the *Shobogenzo* Dogen posits something which he calls *Gyōji* or 'unremitting activity' as prior to dependent origination saying: 'Dependent origination (*engi*) is ceaseless effort (*gyōji*) because ceaseless effort is not caused by dependent origination'. (Kim, an authority on Dogen's texts considers that this is one of the most important passages in the *Shobogenzo*).<sup>5</sup>

Perhaps relations which cannot be conceived intellectually can be manifested in action. I am reminded of the experience attributed to Great Master Tozan, our 38<sup>th</sup> Ancestor, as expounded in his poem:

*Long seeking it through others,  
I was far from reaching it.  
Now I go by myself;  
I meet it everywhere.  
It is just I myself,  
And I am not itself,  
Understanding this way,  
I can be as I am.'*<sup>6</sup>

*Randon Goodier*

<sup>1</sup> Eliot T S *East Coker* III Lines 123-126

<sup>2</sup> Thomas R S *Kneeling*. Collected Poems p 199

<sup>3</sup> Rev Berwyn Watson JOBC 19.3 2004

<sup>4</sup> Dogen. *Shobogenzo Sanjishichibon bodaibumpa*  
trans.Kim 2004 in Eihei Dogen, *Mystical Realist* p 65

<sup>5</sup> Dogen. *Shobogenzo Gyoji* Trans Kim 1965 in *Flowers  
of Emptiness* p 193,198

<sup>6</sup> Sekida 1977 *Two Zen Classics. Hekiganroku* p267.  
See also trans. in the *Denkoroku*

## *Rawdon Goodier and Portobello*



*Rawdon and early members of the Scottish sangha  
outside the Priory*

**M**any good things resulted from Rawdon's life - these due to his admirable self-discipline, kindness, intelligence and humour as well as his many other fine and seemingly unique traits. He bought all of these to all his friendships and tasks.

I only know a little bit of his life, that to do with Portobello, but of course there was also all of his family life and professional life of which I'm largely unfamiliar (although I do know that botanical specimens he sent when he was working in Africa as a young man are still kept in the Royal Botanical

Gardens in Edinburgh).

I feel that without Rawdon it's unlikely we would have had a Scottish Priory and therefore of course the many good things that arose from that, the many people who were helped and will continue to be - hopefully for many years to come.

So now that he's no longer with us, and at the request of three lay sangha, I'll write a short note about Rawdon and Portobello in the early days...

I believe it was Rawdon who organised the raising of funds amongst the lay Scottish sangha in the first place in order to encourage the OBC to have a place of their own in Scotland. He probably did this together with Neil Rothwell, Ian Cameron, the Hubys and one or two others. At that time the sangha was meeting at Salisbury Centre (which I understand Rawdon had already benefited a great deal).

In 1998 when funds rose to about £40,000 he asked Rev Master Daishin for permission to start looking for property. Triodos had been approached and were willing to make a loan. Rev Master asked me to be the Prior and I went up to Edinburgh and Rawdon showed me one or two prop-

erties he'd already scouted out. After a second visit we'd seen one or two places that could have just about worked but he was still thinking in terms of Morningside or nearby. When we expanded the search it was clear we could get a bigger and more suitable property. We found the present one quite quickly. The owners had bought it for £70,000 two years before. I reported back to Throssel and Rev Saido said it was ridiculous to make a purchase on the basis of such a brief visit. We went back up together and went into the property. After about three minutes Rev Saido said "Okay, let's go and phone Rev Master".

The sale was by sealed bid and there were four other bidders. We asked Rawdon for advice and he said bid £91,100. This was a bit over the top but we put the bid in and were successful. The bid closest to ours was £91,000. Rev Master said 'He must have been tuned in'. [By the time I'd left in 2003 the property was valued at £150,000 and the loan had been paid off].

So Rawdon gathered together useful items as did we at Throssel and I went up with Rev Gilbert as well as Alex and Richard (who later became Rev Lucien). We set up a daily schedule starting at six in the morning and

for six months these two lived in and helped with the setting up. Five other young OBC sangha members moved into the area and joined in with the daily practice and with helping out including Val (who later ordained as Rev Caitlin and trains with Rev Mokugen).

Rawdon would come every week and cook up lunch for us. He would also be there for the Sunday morning ceremonies, for the weekly evening sangha meeting and for any retreats. Within a few months the mailing list had grown from 50 to about 300 and we had an inauguration ceremony... There was already a sangha in Aberdeen but two more small ones were added in Dundee and Aberfeldy. Angulimala Scotland was also established at Portobello Buddhist Priory with 20 prison visitors representing different Buddhist traditions active in Scotland.

Throughout all this time it was Rawdon's knowledge, practice, good humour and contacts that led to the success of the Priory.

A brown kesa was given at Throssel as a token of the OBC's appreciation and as a sign of respect for his practice.

It's said that in the days of the Bud-

dha it was not so difficult to become a bodhisattva, but in these modern days the arising of a true bodhisattva is much more difficult and rare. It's clear to me that Rawdon was one of these rare beings.

I feel much gratitude and happiness for the time we spent together.  
I will be remembering him - especially so for the next 49 days *(this was written at the time of Rawdon's death)*.

With every good wish to Rawdon's family and to all in the Scottish sangha.

*Rinchen Blake (formerly Rev Lenyn)*







*John Muir in 1916*

‘On no subject are our ideas more warped and pitiable than on death. ... Let children walk with nature, let them see the beautiful blendings and communions of death and life, their joyous inseparable unity, as taught in woods and meadows, plains and mountains and streams of our blessed star, and they will learn that death is stingless indeed, and as beautiful as life, and that the grave has no victory, for it never fights’.

— John Muir, *A Thousand-Mile Walk to the Gulf*

One night while driving back from the Priory, I asked Rawdon how he felt we should live our ordinary daily lives in relation to our practice. He thought for quite a while and then in his usual thoughtful and laconic manner said; “It helps to have a sense of humour”. What a profound piece of advice!

*David Campbell*

## *Rawdon: Memories and Reflections*

**N**early twenty years ago, I was in a difficult place. I was looking for something meaningful in my life, but I had no idea of what it could be... My second marriage had collapsed; I was working long hours... not to mention carrying a lot of hurt, guilt and baggage: enough to sink the Titanic...

At that time I worked most weekends - anything to fill the time so that I wouldn't have to think... One day, I came across a poster about a Buddhist weekend retreat. I had always been interested in History, in various aspects of Western and Eastern Philosophy, and in different religions. Seeing the poster, I realized just how little I knew about Buddhism, despite having attended a Tibetan group for a few months previously. So I decided to go, although at that point, it was mainly with the intention of filling up a few hours...

In arriving late and feeling somewhat flustered, I was met by a very quietly spoken man, who introduced himself as Rawdon and asked if I needed any help. After stating that I wasn't too sure of what was expected, or even if I was in the right place (on a variety of levels), he took me into a large hall filled with people sitting facing the wall. My initial thought was: 'what on earth have I let myself in for?'

The man showed me how to sit, and how to place my hands. He had such a kind manner and responded with considerable gentleness and humility, before explaining carefully what was happening. I don't remember much of what was happening around me; only that for the first time in a long time I felt at peace. His kindness and gentleness planted that first seed of Buddhism that day - a practise and teaching that has stayed with me ever since.

Over the years, Rawdon continued to give so much support, guidance and encouragement, not only to myself, but to many others. Rest in peace, Rawdon, you will be sorely missed.

In gassho and with sincere gratitude,

*Gabriele Smith*



### *Rawdon's quiet nature*

After reading the brief description of Rawdon's achievements at his funeral, I experienced an unfolding of various thoughts. Rawdon left behind more than just a wonderful history but thought-provoking lessons. My first realisation was the shock that I knew so little about Rawdon, and my initial reaction was sadness. The second, I found I was not alone; others from the group experienced the same from Rawdon's quiet nature.

In discussion with Willie I realised that Rawdon was modest to the point that he held no desire to be looked up to or had any need for that matter. In that respect is it possible that Rawdon's quiet nature was partly an active choice?

Turning towards Buddhism must have been a natural progression in his own spiritual development.

*Sheila Anderson*

## *Remembrances of Rawdon*

**I switched from another tradition of Buddhism to the Edinburgh Serene Reflection Meditation group from 1994 until the time I left Edinburgh in 1997**, and it was very much the stable and figure of Rawdon that was responsible for my sticking with it. I saw him as my father in the Dharma. He was infallibly good-natured and quietly guided the mood and conduct of the group.

Friday evenings at the Salisbury Centre involved two short sits and services, and then a shared herbal tea, and it was through this gently-held gathering that Rawdon evinced the heart of the tradition. Rather than a time to 'spill out' the conceptual mind in doctrinal discussion and questions, these teas were a 'ceremony of the social', an interface, bringing the mind of practice into everyday activity.

Therefore, I remember being somewhat surprised when an event was organised to stage an imaginary dialogue between Dogen (the 13th century ancestor of Soto Zen) and Thomas Aquinas (the Catholic theologian who lived at about the same time), and Rawdon took the part of Dogen, showing his deep doctrinal understanding behind his active practice.

I am extremely grateful for the example and friendship that Rawdon showed. His kindness and reliable grounding presence was crucial in allowing myself and many others to take to the tradition.

*Barney Milner*

## *Remembering Rawdon*

**While I lived in Edinburgh as a student I got to know Rawdon very well through my time at Wednesday meditation at Portobello.** Rawdon was always a dignified and intelligent presence. I felt he had much wisdom to share, which he did share often during the regular times he gave me a lift home.

I learned over time that Rawdon was an ecologist, a scientist like myself, and felt an extra connection to him. Therefore, when I came to organise "The Limits of Scientific Method", a discussion meeting at the University, Rawdon

seemed a natural choice to "represent Zen Buddhists" in the discussion. The discussion involved members of the University Physics Society, the University Philosophy Society, some Portobello Sangha members, and four speakers. The speakers were Rawdon (scientist-Buddhist) and three University Professors (physicist-Christian; physicist-agnostic; and philosopher-of-science-atheist). The discussion was genial and interesting, but of course there were many hard opinions and egos around the table.

But no ego or hard opinion from Rawdon, only calm and collected thoughts. The experience showed me how different beliefs, experiences, and aspects of our lives can be balanced through wisdom and practice, such as Rawdon possessed.

*David 'Doddy' Marsh*



*Rawdon with other sangha members at the Priory 10th anniversary*

## ***Steadfast Rawdon***

A word that came into my mind during Rawdon's funeral service was ***steadfast***.

A few years ago, in an unexpected act of benevolence, Rawdon took me to one side after Sunday morning service at the Priory and gave me a brief overview of our Ancestral Line that we had all just chanted. His explanation was a gentle act of generosity on his part, connecting me with our steadfast ancestors who have passed on the teaching and paved the way for us to follow.

I only began to take my first steps in Buddhist practice 17 years ago. Before that I had little understanding of Buddhism. But I now have come to see that Rawdon was steadfast in playing his part in paving my way by actively arranging retreats at the Salisbury Centre - retreats which my late wife Sharon may well have attended. And it was Sharon's example in my life that further paved my way towards the teachings of the Buddha.

In deep gratitude for those countless beings over the years who have paved the way for us to follow.

*Julian Goodacre*

***Jewel bright is the Boundless Sea, its surface churning with the waves of  
births and deaths; the gate to the Great Tranquillity dissolves the shapes  
of past and present, the forms of coming and going.  
We pray that the darkness of our delusion may be  
illuminated by True Compassion.***



*(The following article, written by Rawdon, appeared in the Climber's Club Journal 2004-05. It is included at the end of this memorial edition to illustrate other aspects of his life, including his love of climbing and his military national service in the Royal Marine Commando Cliff Assault Wing. Although the article is written primarily for climbers, it illustrates Rawdon's fine writing style and, obliquely, his personality. His dry sense of humour gleams through the text!)*

### *Some Recollections of Climbing in Cornwall 1952-55*

**I** was introduced to Cornish sea cliff climbing by Alan Imrie, a CC member and army captain studying Russian at the University of London, who I had met through the University Mountaineering Club. He'd visited Cornwall in 1950 and had done the first climbs on Cam Barra. My first visit was made with him in Easter 1952. I don't remember much about the climbing on that occasion: we did the first recorded route on Gurnard's Head; a new route on Wicca Pillar, and a couple of new routes of similarly modest standard on Carn Barra.

Two scenes remain in my memory, however, from that visit. The first was our meeting with AW Andrews at his house at Tregerthen near Zennor, in a room dappled with sunlight reflected from the sea. Andrews was then an old man, but still keen to talk about climbing in a sense of direct connection with the beginnings of climbing. (He had, after all, with Archer Thompson, written the first ever rock-climbing guidebook for Lliwedd in 1909, after having done his first climb there in 1905, the same year he pioneered *Ledge Climb*, the first route on Bosigran Main Face. Forty years later, with Pyatt, he wrote the first climbing guidebook for Cornwall.) Subsequently, I became a recipient of the small poetry cards that he used to send to his friends at Christmas. The second incident was when we were walking down the lane to Wicca Pillar. We were waylaid at the gate of Tregerthen Farm by a girl of memorable beauty who, probably unused to passers-by, wanted to know where we were going and what we intended to do with the rope we were carrying. We explained that we were going climbing which caused wide-eyed astonishment. Did people really do that sort of thing in Cornwall? But, on that first visit, it was not the specific climb or incident so much as the character of the granite and the ambience of the climbing in the continual presence of the sea that made a lasting

impression. No other climbers were encountered on the cliffs.

On those few occasions when my name has been noted in climbing literature, it has generally been as a 'Marine climber'. I am not displeased to be so classified, for there is no doubt that the fullest development of my climbing abilities occurred when I was doing my National Service in the Royal Marine Cliff Assault Wing (CAW). However it obscures the fact that I was already a climber and a member of the CC before doing National Service in 1953-55, by which time I had climbed in the Alps for three seasons.

I started climbing in my first term as a zoology student at University College London in 1950 and continued with an enthusiasm which was not entirely helpful to my studies. The University College Club promoted a broad approach to mountaineering — with the emphasis on Scottish winter and Alpine climbing but, at that time, it did not harbor outstanding rock-climbers — so, until I joined the CAW, V Diff (*climbing grade—very difficult*) was about my limit — but thus indeed, with one or two notable exceptions, was the general situation in the CAW in those days.

It was by no means easy to arrange to do one's national service in the Marines, and even harder to get into the small Cliff Assault Wing. There were many hurdles to be overcome: basic training, commando course, etc; however by the autumn of '54 I found myself in the position of 2nd Lieutenant in the CAW with about one year left of my service to run. I think I was the first 'civvie' climber to join the CAW, though there were others soon afterwards, including Peter Cullinan, Alan Blackshaw and Barry Biven.

Most of the Wing's rock-climbing training took place in Cornwall where they had a small camp in huts near Sennen. From this base I immediately became involved, with NCO instructors (who were 'Regular', not national service marines) in the running of cliff leader courses — these was not just rock-climbing but involved getting ashore from landing craft, the firing of grapnels and much abseiling in full kit and nailed boots. All the rock-climbing training was done in tricouni-nailed boots.

On occasions there would be a sort of 'in-service' training for the officer and NCO instructors. Depending on who was in charge, these could be days of significant physical challenge: running up and down Sennen beach carrying telegraph poles; falling off impossible boulder problems at Logan rock; boulder



hopping or traversing at water level until everyone had fallen into the sea. I have vivid memories of one more light-hearted occasion. We were rather late starting out from Sennen and I think that the original intention must have been to climb at Bosigran. It was a very hot day and for some reason or other we arrived in great thirst at the Tinner's Arms at Zennor just before lunchtime. Taking pity on our parched condition the landlord (who knew us well as good customers) very unexpectedly presented us with the substantial remains of a keg of scrumpy. Rather against our principles — and undoubtedly against standing orders — we consumed a considerable quantity of this potent brew before deciding that duty demanded we should do some climbing. It was now rather late and we decided, probably fortunately, not to go to Bosigran but to climb on Wicca Pillar instead; so off we set in very cheerful mood, across the moorland to Wicca. A glimpse of adders initiated, with much hilarity, an adder hunt (not something I would have approved of in my later career). Unfortunately, one of the instructors had the misfortune to actually catch one which, unsurprisingly, bit him. His cry of alarm did nothing to abate the carefree mood of the party who then started climbing in a rather unserious manner on Wicca Pillar. After a short time the snake victim complained that his arm was painful and starting to swell in an alarming manner. This complaint was initially met with a rather jovial and unsympathetic response but, upon inspecting the said arm even the most callous concluded that medical attention was desirable. So, after an exciting lorry ride to Penzance (the driver had not been allowed to share in the cider) the victim was delivered into the hands of the ministering angels at the hospital. Some of the latter were particularly attractive and it was unkindly insinuated that the victim's many visitors over the ensuing days were due to reasons other than comradely sympathy. His recovery and release from hospital was, unbeknown to the hut warden, celebrated by a very successful party at the Count House from which the nurses emerged impressed by our chivalry and the splendour of CC properties.

For most climbers rock-climbing in the dark is simply the result of serious miscalculation, but it was part of our marine training. Whatever doubts one may have had about its military significance, it was certainly a remarkable and rewarding experience: a new appreciation of the character of rock demanding one's full attention. It was generally undertaken at Sennen when there was some moonlight. Of course, the feasible night climbs at Sennen were generally quite well-known to us by day; nevertheless, climbing them at night, even by moonlight, was a very different experience. One's sensitivity

to the granite and one's awareness of the sea was enhanced: white horses on a dark sea; sparks struck off the rocks by tricounis – careless move – the enemy might see.

There was not a continuous tradition of seeking new and harder routes in the CAW: perhaps it was not seen as very relevant to military strategy and, one suspected, in the case of some of the Wing's senior officers, that it was not expected of us lest it become expected of them. However, the potential had been foreshadowed by the ascent of The Mitre on Chair Ladder by John (Zeke) Deacon and John Kinnaird in 1954. At the end of 1954 I noted in my diary that I had spent 77 days during the year actually climbing, not including hill-walking.

I spent the first three months of 1955 in the Cairngorms (the CAW was also involved in the running of snow and mountain warfare courses both in Scotland and Norway) and I didn't meet up with Zeke till the early summer when he returned to the Wing from Malta. The first new route that we climbed together seems to have been *Socket Wall* at Cam Barra in late June. I found him an ideal climbing partner: keen to explore and a delight to watch in action on the rock.

It must have been at about this time that Mike Banks rejoined the CAW as its commanding officer. This initiated an acquaintance, then friendship and highly intermittent climbing companionship spanning Cornwall, Scotland, the Andes and the Dolomites across the many years since that time. I don't think I am doing Mike an injustice by suggesting that in those earlier days he was a climber whose courage significantly exceeded his technique. I have to admit that he never fell off while climbing with me, but one often felt that a fall was imminent and only prevented by moves of a rather desperate character. Perhaps I was spoiled by climbing with Zeke who never gave this impression. However, this meant that seconding Mike was never dull and he is a remarkable example of a climber who improved greatly with advancing age — a fact confirmed for me 40 years later when he led me up *Little Brown Jug* with great fluency.

I have no doubt that the subsequent development of the climbing partnership with Zeke was stimulated by the Biven/Peck debut at Bosigran in early August. In July I had taken leave to climb in Chamonix with Mike Cunningham. We had

an ambitious programme, largely frustrated by dismal weather. However, following a meeting with Tom Bourdillon and Hamish Nicol at the Biolet we took their advice on a route they had written up in the *CCJ: The North Ridge of the Peigne*. This was the hardest Alpine rock-climb that I achieved and I returned to the sunshine of Cornwall from the rain of Chamonix fired with enthusiasm for big things, to find, in the Count House Log Book, the Biven/Peck entry of their first ascents of Doorpost and *Suicide Wall* which they had pioneered a few days previously. I think that we were more intrigued than piqued — though there may have been some slight initial feeling of having been beaten to it — but there were plenty of other opportunities. In my case, however, these opportunities had to be realized soon as by that time I knew that I would be bound for foreign parts by early November. Within a few days we had arranged to take time off to return to Bosigran to climb Doorpost and *Suicide Wall*. Unsurprisingly, my clearest recollections are of *Suicide Wall*. Whatever pique we may have felt initially was swept away by the feeling of joyous admiration for such a fine route.

I think that at that time Zeke and I were fairly well-matched on all climbs — though in Zeke's case he was to go on and become a climber of really outstanding ability as witnessed by the Cornwall guidebook, whereas my life was to take a different course when I finished national service in the autumn. However, even then it did not escape me that, on *Suicide Wall*, Zeke made a much better job of leading the traverse pitch from the Pedestal than I did following — not that the next pitch, which fell to me to lead, was a walkover.

Within a few days Zeke and I embarked on the exploration of a girdle traverse of Bosigran that was to become String of Pearls. As I noted in the introduction to the interim guidebook, "There can be no other cliff in Cornwall which lends itself to a girdle traverse of such character as Bosigran Face. Most of the other cliffs are broken by gullies and zawns, or have insufficient height, but the Face has none of these disadvantages and gives 750ft of continuous climbing". I had pondered the possibility of such a traverse for some time but had not been too confident of my ability to carry it through. Now, however, the time seemed ripe.

It was a blazing hot August afternoon when we started out from the vicinity of *Ledge Climb*. The first two pitches were not too demanding and the route seemed to suggest itself without any sense of artificiality and not too many options. The first moves of which I have distinct recollection are those linking the Doorway belay to the pedestal of *Suicide Wall*, involving the gaining and traversing of *Bow*

*Wall* (I seem to recall that we christened the wall on that day) – great positions on marvellous rock. The working out of the route and the actual climbing took longer than we expected and it was 8pm when, sunburnt and parched, we roped off from the belay on *Nameless*. Next day, in similar weather, we returned to complete the remaining and rather harder part of the route; however, we did not like having had to split the route in this way and returned two weeks later to complete the whole traverse in four and a half hours.

All editions of the Bosigran guidebook, except the Biven/McDermott, describe the route from left-to-right. I can understand the rationale of this, but have my doubts about it. To explore these doubts fully would take more of this account than appropriate but, briefly: the original orientation of the route involved a relatively gentle prelude on classic ground and a conclusion in Beaker Route, which is delicate, pleasing and not too demanding. The greatest difficulties lie in between. The revised orientation involves a very fierce start and its conclusion, *Little Brown Jug* is a great independent climb with a tough finish. I get a feeling that this is gilding the lily. There is also the consideration (irrelevant, perhaps, to those who consider climbing an athletic but not aesthetic activity) that the original climb heads seaward while the revised version, as it were, heads into the land. I have not done it in this latter direction (though I have read that it is judged easier), but I suspect that, to some extent, it detracts from full awareness of the wonderful situation one is in. In moving seawards and westwards with the sun one ends at the little breche between the Main and Seaward Cliffs and can then wander down to enjoy the evening light in Halldrine Cove.

During the summer of '55 the Bivens continued to make their forays to Cornwall, mainly to Bosigran. The week after we completed *String of Pearls* they put up the magnificent *Little Brown Jug*. By some chance we never met up at Bosigran, so the warm, friendly relationship and in some instances climbing companionship that Peter Biven talked about only started to develop later. Our first encounter was at Pordenack where we found them exploring what was to become *Sea Fury*, by which time we felt we knew them from their climbs. It must have been about this time that I first met up with Wilfred Noyce in Cornwall, at Logan Rock. He was CC Guidebook Editor at the time and, having heard of the new routes that were currently multiplying, he asked if I could start to prepare an interim guide in co-operation with the Bivens. In consultation with Peter Biven. I started on this immediately and then handed it over to him to complete when I departed the scene soon af-

terwards.

My swan song in Cornwall with Zeke was *Raven Wall* at Bosigran, about which I retain some misgivings. It was certainly a tour-de-force at the limits of our climbing capabilities at that time (and, for me, for all time), but the use of some aid at the crux (though I gather less than was often used subsequently) reduced its attraction for me so that I retain greater affection for *Autumn Flakes* which I had done with Peter Henry a few days previously. Perhaps my feelings for the latter climb are not uninfluenced by the fact that it was the last climb at Bosigran that I was able to lead, about 20 years ago.

All this may sound to have been a bit of an idyll and indeed it was. I still retain an unalloyed gratitude for the experiences it afforded though, at the time, I was not unaware of certain ambivalences in my situation. Some of these I have touched on elsewhere, in Tobias and Drasdo's *The Mountain Spirit* (1979), notably the intuition that it might be more rewarding to approach climbing and mountaineering as an art to be cultivated rather than a sport to be pursued. Perhaps my concern to develop my career as a biologist pointed me towards a more 'diffuse' yet more comprehensive relationship to cliffs and mountains which later found expression in work on the plant ecology of African mountains, the fauna and peri-glacial geomorphology of mountains in Wales and Scotland — and the natural history sections to several of the North Wales CC Guidebooks before such sections went out of fashion (what does that tell us about climbing culture or lack of it?).

Within days of the *Raven Wall* ascent I was handing in my uniform and equipment at Eastney Barracks in Portsmouth. A month later I sailed from Southampton to Cape Town on my way to Zimbabwe and a different life.



*Rawdon with Rev Master Daishin in 2008 at the 10th anniversary  
of the opening of the Priory*



*Thank you to all the contributors to this issue of the Newsletter.  
Deadline for next issue is mid-August 2018*





## **- Events elsewhere in Scotland with the Prior -**

### **May 2018**

Friday 25th	Aberfeldy evening retreat	7.30-9pm
Saturday 26th	Dundee morning retreat	10am-1pm
Sunday 27th	Aberdeen morning retreat	10am-1pm

### **June**

Friday 22nd	Aberfeldy evening retreat	7.30-9pm
Saturday 23rd	Dundee morning retreat	10am-1pm
Sunday 24th	Aberdeen morning retreat	10am-1pm

### **August (no group visits in July)**

Friday 24th	Aberfeldy evening retreat	7.30-9pm
Saturday 25th	Dundee morning retreat	10am-1pm
Sunday 26th	Aberdeen morning retreat	10am-1pm

### **For further details please phone :**

<b>Aberdeen -</b>	Eddie Shields	(01224) 861732 (or mobile 07870 140427)
	or Joyce & Gordon Edward	(01467) 681525
<b>Aberfeldy -</b>	Robin Baker	(01887) 820339
<b>Dundee -</b>	Liz Evans	(01337) 870402 (or mobile 07763 188461)
<b>Highland -</b>	Ann Milston	(01309) 696392 or hgz@inbox.com

## — Day-to-day schedule at Portobello Buddhist Priory —

**Daily** (Every day except Mondays, Thursday afternoons & Sunday p.m.)

### MORNING

7.00 Meditation  
7.40 Morning service

### EVENING

7.30 Meditation  
7.55 Walking meditation  
8.00 Meditation  
8.30 Evening office

### Early morning practice

You can come for early morning meditation, followed by short morning service.

7.00am –  
8.15am

### Evening practice

Meditation, walking meditation, meditation, evening office.  
You are welcome to stay on for tea.

7.30pm –  
8.45pm

### Introductory afternoons

- are usually (but not always—please check dates below) held on the second Saturday of each month. A short talk will be given about Buddhist practice and the Serene Reflection Meditation (Soto Zen) tradition, with meditation instruction and discussion.

**Saturday 19th May, Saturday 16th June, Saturday 14th July, Saturday 11th August**

2.30-4pm

### Wednesday and Friday evenings

Midday service and meditation, followed by tea and a Dharma talk /discussion, evening office.

7.30pm–9.30pm

### Sunday mornings

**Meditation** from 9.30am onwards, followed either by a Ceremony, Dharma discussion or Festival at 11am. It is fine to arrive or leave at 10.45am

9.30am–  
12.30pm

### Festival mornings

Priory open for meditation from 9.30am, or come at 10.45am for the ceremony.

*Portobello Buddhist Priory is Scottish Charity no. SCO31788  
Prior: Reverend Master Favian Straughan*