



# THE WALDENSIAN REVIEW



No. 128

Summer 2016

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## From the Editor

Dear Friends and Supporters,

Thank you for your help given in so many different ways: feedback, letters, messages, thoughts, prayers, financial support. Thank you for supporting our website and please remember to consult it as often as you can, whether buying from our online shop or looking for news and updates: [www.waldensian.org.uk](http://www.waldensian.org.uk)

We are collecting funds for our next Italian student in Cambridge (no names for sure yet!) and we hope you'll be as generous as you have always been in supporting this vital service in the training of future ministers. **Noemi Falla** has been a successful assistant minister at Bologna Methodist church in her first of the two probationary years before ordination, while **Marco Casci** has spent most of the academic year concentrating on studying for his finals at the Faculty of Theology. Please keep both in your prayers.

Sadly, two great friend of the Waldensians have died: **Ruth Cowhig**, founder of the URC Waldensian Fellowship, and **Randolph Vigne**, former President of the Huguenot Society and guest speaker at one of our Awaydays.

As usual I'll try to select a variety of articles that may interest as many of our readers as possible regarding past present and future events. Do please keep in touch, do let me know if you wish to add friends to our mailing list (online or postal), if you have changed your email and/or your postal address and **above all do try and come to our next meeting in London!**

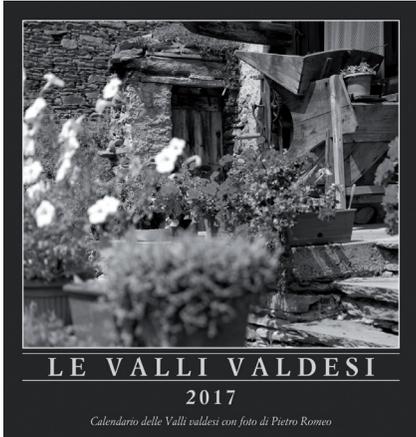
*With every blessing  
ESN, Editor*

## Waldensian Day in Cambridge 2015

On 19 September 2016 a packed and very interested St Andrew's Hall in Cambridge was gathered to hear: **David Cornick**, United Reformed Minister and General Secretary of Churches Together in England; **Ken Howcroft**, outgoing President of the British Methodist Conference; Mons. **Mark Langham**, latterly of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the Unity of Christians and now Roman Catholic Chaplain at Cambridge University; and **Rowan Williams**, latterly Archbishop of Canterbury and now Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge. Erica Scropo, the Executive Secretary of the Waldensian Missions, was moderator.

Erica Scropo illustrated the importance of the Waldensian Church in Turin both in the story of the Mission and in her own life. The Church was the last and most difficult of Beckwith's projects and it was also the congregation among which Erica herself was raised. When this first Italian Protestant church outside the Alpine *ghetto* opened its doors in 1853, the bells of the surrounding Catholic churches tolled the death knell and a century later little had changed, even in liberal Turin. In the middle of the 1950s in her State Elementary School long prayers to the Madonna and the saints were intoned, but not the Lord's Prayer, while Erica

*Cover: In the Hall on 19 September, from left: M. Langham, K. Howcroft, E. Scropo, D. Cornick, R. Williams.*



## WALDENSIAN CALENDARS 2017

As usual there are beautiful pictures of the Valleys and Bible verses in several languages. Unfortunately p&p has gone up and the pound down, hence all included £12. Still, however, this is much less than the commercial counterparts. Please order via the website or send a cheque (payable to *Waldensian Church Mission*) to: Milvia Walker, 19 Forest Approach, Woodford Green IG8 9BW

## WALDENSIAN DAY 2016 LONDON

Saturday 22 October  
10.30 a.m.–2 p.m.

Wesley Chapel, 49 City Road, London EC1Y 1AU

Our Patron (and host) Rev Dr **Leslie Griffiths** and 'our man in the Vatican', Rev Dr **Tim Macquiban** (Minister of the English-speaking Methodist church in Rome and Director of MEOR, the Methodist Ecumenical Office in Rome) will discuss the latest book by **David Willey** OBE, Rome and Vatican Correspondent for the BBC since 1972, *The Promise of Francis: the Man, the Pope and the challenge of change*.

10.30: tea and coffee

11–12.30: talks, questions and answers, book signing ...

12.30–1 lunch: bring your own, hot drinks provided

1–2: News from the Italian Churches and the Waldensian Synod from our 2016 Delegate and Chairman, Dr **Ian Nimmo-Smith**

Bookstall, CALENDARS, delicious *Gianduiotti* chocolates fresh from the Waldensian Valleys and Biscotti di Debora fresh from Cambridge.

**SPREAD THE NEWS** and above all, **DO COME!!!**

was sent to the lavatories before the Priest arrived for the obligatory hour of 'the Catholic Religion'. At the same time in Sicily the *Carabinieri* [State Police Force] had stopped her Waldensian Pastor uncle from setting out a stall with New Testaments in that these were 'Protestant Propaganda'! Therefore the Pope's visit had a special resonance for her. This was especially so when the Pope was given a copy of the Bible translated by Olivetan, who had been commissioned by the Synod of Chanforan in 1532, and ownership of one of these Bibles was a grave offence for the Inquisition. The Pope proceeded to kiss this Bible!

David Cornick underlined how valid this visit by the Pope was, it being the fruit not of theory, but of friendship which had begun with the meetings that the Argentinian future Pope had already had with the Waldensian Community in Rio della Plata. The fact is that he has introduced common baptism as a unifying point of departure as the essential intervention of the Grace of God and indeed of the Spirit which guides us together in the path to unity. He then added that the Second Vatican Council is a journey in its early stages, of which Turin is a splendid but not isolated episode. Pope Francis' Pontificate has led to a strong uptake in ecumenical relations with all the non-Roman Churches both in the West as in the East. Lastly Cornick cited, as an edifying example of initiatives from below, the exchanging of the bread and wine in a Easter Communion shared by Catholics and Waldensians in Pinerolo.

Ken Howcroft joked about the reaction of those who fear that in pardoning they will lose their own identity, and he recalled two episodes that occurred during his service as a Methodist Minister in Rome. He had been invited to take part in the 'Martyrs' Day Service' at the *English College* (since 1579 the Jesuit Seminary for England, from which country they had been banned); he learnt that between 1581 and 1679, 44 students from the Faculty had become martyrs for their faith. As the representative of a Protestant church, he felt a little uncomfortable, Howcroft recalled. Then, the preacher exhorted his current students not to forget that however many Catholics had been persecuted, the number is minimal compared to that of the Protestant martyrs when they themselves had been in power. A little later, on the occasion of the inauguration of the plaque on the side of the Methodist Church at Castel San Angelo to the Waldensian martyr Giovan Luigi Pascale, an English high Pontifical functionary asked if his presence might be considered opportune. Howcroft was deeply moved and it put him in mind of what Wesley had written to the Irish Catholics: 'If we cannot think in the same way, can we not however love in the same way?'

That prelate was Mark Langham, who has become an attentive observer and student of the Waldensian reality, and used this knowledge to illustrate the now decades-long reconciliation and drawing closer together with the Protestant churches, especially the Anglicans and the Lutherans and the recent Joint Catholic/Lutheran Theological Declaration on the Justification by Faith.

Rowan Williams revealed a profound reading, not only of the Pope's speech, but also of the speech of the Moderator and of the reply to the Pope by the Waldensian Synod, with which the Archbishop Emeritus agrees. Central when speak-

ing of 'Church' there is the article 'The' that divides so much and causes so much grief. In recent decades we have begun to consider many ways to be Church on our way towards a unity seen as a progression towards new and higher levels in accepting diversity as participation in the body of Christ. As regards Eucharistic hospitality, it is essential to find a meeting place between the Catholic and Orthodox conception, where Communion is Unity, and the Protestant position, in which it consists in sharing on the road to unity. The Waldensian declaration which follows Jesus' invitation during the Last Supper indicates the way forward. The ex-Archbishop of Canterbury is convinced that the day in which the sharing will be generalised is nearer than it appears. As regards forgiveness, it is a gift of Jesus Christ; in the exchange between asking and humbly accepting this charisma, one loses the status of victim and one obtains the freedom and reconciliation of the Holy Spirit. It is a bold process that involves profound transformation; indeed, in the recognition that as 'the other' has authority in the name of Jesus, so we all become children of God.

From the public, Bill Pickering, Anglican priest and sociologist of Religious Persecution, cited the still-existing discrimination in Italy and in the troubles the early Methodists had with the Anglicans. Lord Rev. Leslie Griffiths, Patron of the WCM, who had come expressly from London, said that gestures and symbols are very important. It is enough to think of the effect in the Northern Irish Peace Process that the photo had of the Protestant extremist Rev. Ian Paisley laughing with ex-IRA Commander Martin McGuinness. The Pope was joking with the Waldensian Moderator, and at the end of the service, his acceptance of the Invocation of the Holy Spirit by a female Methodist Lay Preacher was a potent message.

For the Methodist Alison Walker, a Minister in Florence for some years, Italian Catholicism has still some ground to make up. At Pentecost in 2012, as part of an ecumenical initiative, she found herself preaching in the Baptistry beside the Cardinal, who, despite the fact that she was dressed for the occasion in dog collar and clerical dress, really did not know how to treat her and was in total confusion. Professor Eugenio Biagini shared his experience of when he felt obliged to crave pardon for the Italian atrocities in Abyssinia, even though they had not been by himself nor indeed any member of his family. Ambassador Gianni Piccato, passing through Cambridge, testified to the importance in his education of having grown up in the religious pluralism of Pinerolo, where many of his teachers were Waldensians, including the outstanding Marcella Gay.



*Our Patron Leslie Griffiths with Rowan Williams.*

*Richard Newbury*

## News from Italy

Fourteen of the stakeholders of the **Methodist Ecumenical Office Rome** gathered in the *condominio* at Ponte Sant' Angelo Methodist Church, where the newly established Methodist Centre on the fifth floor next to our manse has been refurbished. Those not already resident in Rome were all able to stay in the building, in the Centre, in rooms in **The Wesley Rome** and with us in the manse. They represented the World Methodist Council (whose Officers minus Bishop Ivan Abrahams, who had been rushed into hospital, stayed on afterwards for their meeting to prepare for the World Methodist Conference), the European Methodist Council, OPCEMI, the United Methodist Church in the US and the British Methodist Church.



After a full day of meetings to look at the development and sustainability of the Centre, we adopted a mission statement which is printed below:

### **Methodist Ecumenical Office Rome Our Mission**

The Methodist Ecumenical Centre Rome is a presence for the **World Methodist Council**:  
To be a channel of dialogue with other churches in the search for a deeper unity  
To foster relationships with other agencies and faith communities in order to promote better understanding and joint action for justice and peace  
To offer a ministry of prayer and prayer and reflection, of learning and growth  
To be a place of open hospitality to Methodists and all visitors to Rome.

In the evening we had a wonderful service in the church with 65 present to launch the Methodist Ecumenical Office Rome, including two Cardinals (Pell and Turkson), an Abbot-General (Benedictine) and an Archbishop, two Ambassadors (Britain and Ireland), two Methodist Bishops (the Chair of the WMC, Bishop Paulo Lockmann from Brazil, and Bishop Mike Watson from North Georgia representing the United Methodist Church), as well as the other stakeholders, pastors and teachers and neighbours and friends. The service was interrupted by some amusement when a part of my liturgical accoutrements fell down in the middle of the sermon when I was talking about the need for us to let go of our cherished traditions and learn from others. My bands fell off, my heart was free!! Afterwards we went upstairs for the formal opening of the Centre. Archbishop David Moxon unveiled a painting by a Greek Cypriot artist whose exhibition 'Reconciliation', to inaugurate the 50th anniversary of The Anglican Centre, had included this picture of *St Martin and the Beggar* with texts from Matthew 25, resonating with the social witness of the Wesleys.

On the final day, we were received by Pope Francis in a private audience. The Papal apartments were amazing in themselves, dripping with gold and groan-

ing with old masters (an El Greco here, a Fra Lippi there); marshalled through by Gentlemen of the Papal Household with Swiss Guards saluting at every corner, we waited in an anteroom where Pope Benedict had announced his resignation three years before. Bishop Brian Farrell and Don Tony Curren from the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity guided us through the reception by the Pope. We were greeted individually and then sat down to hear Gillian Kingston, the Irish Vice President of the World Methodist Council, deliver our address, to which the Pope responded. Then gifts were exchanged. The WMC gave Francis an elegant box made out of Appalachian wood containing a bust of John Wesley, while Gareth Powell, the Secretary of the British Methodist Conference, gave a handsomely bound copy of *The Hymns on the Lord's Supper*. In return, after a warm speech by the Pope, we were given a beautiful ceramic plaque depicting the Fountain of the Sacrament in the Vatican Gardens, surrounded by a scallop-shell border from the arms of Benedict, but also on the Wesley arms (as fellow pilgrims in the quest for Christian Unity?). This will be mounted and displayed in the new Methodist Centre.

Afterwards we were entertained at the PCPCU offices, where we had coffee and conversation over a wide range of issues before lunch at the Casa Santa Marta (where the Pope lives—he ate at the same time but not with us—he was entertaining the President of Croatia after our audience). We came away grateful that, after 50 years of the Second Vatican Council, we had reached a warmth of reciprocal hospitality and openness to discuss those things which unite as well as those things which still separate us. But we are fellow pilgrims on a journey. *Laus Deo!*

*Tim Macquiban*

## **Celebrating 17th February**

17th February is a big day in the Waldensians' calendar, as it celebrates the day in 1848 when, after centuries of persecution, the *Lettere Patenti* issued by King Carlo Alberto gave them freedom. No longer forced to stay in the 'ghetto' of their valleys, they could also take the gospel message throughout Italy – as they were challenged to do by Beckwith!

After having celebrated 17th February for the last couple of years in Torre Pellice, Villar Pellice and also many years ago in Luserna San Giovanni, this year I was pleased to be able to celebrate the occasion in San Secondo di Pinerolo, where Claudio Pasquet is Pastor.

As many of our readers know, the celebrations start on the evening of the 16th with *falò* [bonfires] being lit all around the Waldensian Valleys. From the field where San Secondo lit their *falò* this year you could see a number of other bonfires in the local area. Special to the *falò* at San Secondo is that in the foothills nearby there is a construction of lights in the form of the Waldensian emblem, the candle surrounded by seven stars. Another difference from other *falòs* I have attended was the enormous amount of food available! Those of us who had braved the rain and had walked up from the Church in the centre of the town and were a bit



*Pastor Pasquet and the members of the youth Group who served at the meal.*

hungry did not need to worry! There were also hot drinks including mulled wine – no mean feat given that we were in the middle of a large field. The singing around the bonfire is also a common feature at every *falò* I have attended – I especially enjoy the singing of *Il Giuro di Sibaud* – a rousing Waldensian call to faith in God. Interestingly, in San Secondo they sing it in the original French around the bonfire, but in Italian at the service the next day.

Unlike in the Pellice Valley, where 17th February is a school holiday, outside this area parents can request an authorised absence

for their school-age children. Despite being few in number, the children in San Secondo contributed to the service by singing a song based on Martin Luther King's 'I have a dream' speech. The church was packed for the service, which included Holy Communion, and the guest preacher (and after-lunch speaker) was the former Moderator, Maria Bonafede. After the service, about 100 of us sat down to a sumptuous meal with many courses – including *zuppa Valdese*, a soup made with stock, grissini, cheese, nutmeg and cinnamon. It was great to see people of all ages eating together – a real family atmosphere. During coffee there were speeches from the mayor and Maria Bonafede, who spoke about Mediterranean Hope – the Churches in Italy's response to the migrant crisis. The young people serving at the tables were all from the new youth group which has recently started here and which we have recently supported in a very small way.

In many congregations, especially in the Pellice Valley, the day ends with a theatrical performance or '*recita*'. The content can range from quite highbrow, a comedy or something written specifically for the event. In San Secondo they hold their *recita* on the following Saturday and this year it was '*Il Temp(i)o della Libertà*', which was about a family in Luserna San Giovanni between the early 1800s and 1848. It was excellently performed and was essentially about what the celebrations help us to remember! The play was also significant in that it had been written by Pastor Pasquet himself to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the *Lettere Patenti* in 1998.

*Nicky Raddon*

### **Louisa Boyce, benefactress to the Waldensians and founder of Casa Valdese of Vallecrosia (Part 3)**

The competition and threat from the Jesuits had not lessened with the passing of time and Louisa was keen for the orphanage to have official protection. Despite Benemann's suggestion to look to the Executive Board of the Waldensian Church for support, Louisa was thinking it might be a good time to seek the backing of the Italian government, so she went to Florence (until 1871 the capital of Italy),

where her cousin Sir Augustus Paget was based as British Ambassador. He had vast experience of the political situation, having represented Britain in Italy for many years, and both he and the American Ambassador, Marsh, advised Louisa against seeking governmental backing. From then on Louisa looked more and more to the Waldensian Church for support, not only for the Asilo, but for the little congregation of believers as well.

However, after about six years of working closely together, the relationship between Louisa Boyce and Paolo Benemann began to show signs of tension. It may have been their differences: an older aristocratic English lady and a young Prussian would perhaps not have had much in common outside their joint enthusiasm for and sense of calling to the work in Vallecrosia. Perhaps Louisa (who was at least arranging, if not paying for, Benemann's salary and a holiday) was too authoritarian, but sparks were flying and in early 1873 Benemann resigned and returned to Germany, just after Easter. Mrs Boyce was obviously greatly irritated by this, although Benemann writes that he was sad to leave and that his being asked to leave came 'as a thunderbolt from a clear sky'. However, he later wrote to Revel of the Committee for Evangelization (responsible for placing pastors in Churches outside the Valleys) that he had been accused of being coarse and had been forced into a position which left him no alternative but to resign. 'I told her that if what she was saying was true we would need to think about my resignation; as someone else would be better than me. Then she pleaded with me not to think about such a thing.' There may have been friction caused by the fact that both sides considered the Asilo their property: one financed it, the other had sacrificed much and worked extremely hard to make it the success it so obviously was. The bitterness was not to last and Benemann later returned to work in Italy again.

Mrs Boyce threw herself into finding a replacement for Benemann. It is also about this time that she decided to have a permanent home built in Italy. In 1873, in an area known as Poggio Ponente, she had her villa, Bella Vista, built. With a base in the area she could dedicate herself to getting a Pastor or Evangelist for Vallecrosia/Bordighera. In 1873 she wrote to the Committee for Evangelization offering to pay half the wages of the person they chose for the job. Matteo Prochet, the new President of the Committee, put forward two candidates, his two assistants Enrico Bosio and Antonio Bartolomeo Tron – both already in the Genoa area and able to visit the little congregation every fortnight or so, with the aim of sending a permanent pastor in due course. Her letters to Prochet at this time are full of comments about the suitability of the two pastors.

Tron took over the fortnightly visits to Vallecrosia from early 1874; however, this was not really a satisfactory arrangement, and on 28 July 17 of the congregation of Vallecrosia made a formal request to become recognised as a Waldensian Church; it may have been the frustration of not having a full-time minister which led to this decision. After nearly four years of visiting Vallecrosia, in 1877 Pastor Tron came to live in Bordighera in an apartment provided by Mrs Boyce. He was also responsible for the communities in Sampierdarena (until 1876), San Remo, Oneglia and Civezza, and therefore until resident in Bordighera he only visited

every two weeks. It was a time of great growth in the Protestant communities in Liguria and Tron was one of the main workers in the field.

It was also during Tron's time in Vallecrosia that Mrs Boyce bought the land for the Protestant cemetery (opened in 1882) and the foundations for the new Church were laid (November 1877). The church which Mrs Boyce had so desired, and for which she had spent time in England raising all but L1156 lire of the L9000 needed to fund the building work, was opened on 30 May 1878 by Matteo Prochet. Despite her obvious joy at the opening of the new church, almost all of Mrs Boyce's letters that survive of this time are on a completely different subject, Tron's health. Initially irritated that Tron was Pastor of several churches, which was hindering the work in Vallecrosia, the change in Mrs Boyce's letters about this time is that now her concern is for Tron himself, who was wearing himself out with all the work and travelling. She paid for him to see the English doctor.

Unfortunately Tron's illness coincided with a period of time when she needed to be in England, as her nephew (also described as her adopted son) had been sent home from the army ill and she felt it her Christian duty to be with him. But she used the time well – she employed a secretary to help her organise support of the work in Italy and used any spare time she might have networking with friends and acquaintances in England and Scotland, for it is at this stage that she seems to have been raising large amounts of money for the work in Italy – especially for the building of the Church – as well as continuing to use her own money to pay a proportion of the wages and accommodation costs of Tron and a number of evangelists, including one who was helping out in Bordighera during Tron's latest period of ill health.

Other than being in contact with Prochet about the possibility of Augusto Malan coming to Bordighera and arrangements for his accommodation, both Malan (1878–79) and his successor Giacomo Maraudo (1879–80) go unmentioned in the surviving letters of Mrs Boyce.

It must therefore have been a great relief to Mrs Boyce that the next Pastor stayed for longer. Davide Peyrot, originally from the Valleys, arrived after his ordination in September 1880 and only reluctantly left in 1883 due to ill health. Louisa was in England when Peyrot arrived, so they did not meet until her return to Italy in early 1881. When Peyrot and Louisa did eventually meet he got what he felt was a rather cold reception and described her as being 'like the Queen of these places and I merely her humble subject'. Despite this rather inauspicious start, they got on well and she soon described him as 'the right man in the right place'. Peyrot found her a great source of encouragement and advice in his work and he knew that Mrs Boyce had given him her complete approval. Peyrot amusingly described the church thus in an early letter to Prochet: 'Mr Billour is the Chairman of the Church Council and Mrs Boyce the majority. I have no place, never mind!' The young pastor seems to have spent a lot of time sorting out misunderstandings between significant members of the congregation such as Billour, members of the Biancheri family and sometimes also Mrs Boyce.

Trips to England were not holidays for Mrs Boyce (or for Prochet!) – in fact when in London she was often so busy she had no time to write letters. It seems

that most of her time was spent reminding people of the money they had promised to the work in Vallecrosia and organising meetings for either Prochet or herself to speak at. Drawing Room Meetings were popular, particularly amongst the Upper Classes, and were an extremely effective means of promoting a cause and raising often large amounts of money. Louisa organised at least two of these each trip at the home of her husband's cousin, Lord Shaftesbury, but others elsewhere as well. Pastor Tron also writes of the similar meetings she had held amongst English friends in Liguria. After one Drawing Room meeting in 1882, a Ladies' Committee was set up to co-ordinate support. She also managed, with Lady Edith Ashley (Lord Shaftesbury's daughter), to organise a 'sale of work' at the Royal Albert Hall in aid of the Asilo (including some items made by the children in Italy). The reason behind this continuous effort to raise funds is the second subject dominating her letters to Prochet at this time. There are frequent allusions to 'the matter of the Asilo'. Friends were enlisted to help and her return to Italy was particularly urgently anticipated by Prochet. The Minutes of the Committee for Evangelisation explain 'the matter' in more depth. Mrs Boyce had offered to hand the Asilo over to the Committee, but with no income to run it assurance was required from her that the financial burden would not fall on the committee. So Louisa's frantic busy-ness in England was to try to secure regular donations, which, added to what she would continue to provide, would ensure that the Asilo did not run out of funds. With the help of a friend, Major Frobisher, Louisa was trying to find an annual sum of L15,000 for five years, followed by L10,000 for the next five years. Hence she shrewdly joked, 'We must not however let friends in England think we already have enough ... for in that case they would think they need not occupy themselves further in the matter!'

The Ladies' Committee set up in 1882 was destined to be a great source of support for the Asilo. It was formed for the 'purpose of assisting Mrs Boyce' in the work in Bordighera and was led by a Mrs Frank Bevan as President. Amongst the members were Lady Edith Ashley, Mrs Frobisher, Mrs Jane Gilly (the wife of Canon William Stephen Gilly) and a Mrs F. Paget – the wife of Louisa's cousin. The group met four times a year, or more often if necessary. All members were resident in London, and this group of well-connected society ladies (including three titled nobility) were in an excellent position to organise events which raised significant amounts over several years. Without this support the Asilo might not have survived. Louisa visited their meetings whenever she could.

By 1883 Peyrot had worn himself out and was too ill to continue – he had also lost his wife and daughter. However, when it comes to discussions about a successor, Mrs Boyce began to make her feelings obvious. In a letter to Pastor Tron (now secretary of the Committee for Evangelisation), she threatened to withdraw her proportion of the Pastor's salary, as she had heard (from a copy of *La Rivista* sent to her in England by Peyrot) that the new pastor was to be relocated to San Remo. Furious, she also wrote to Prochet.

Next, two Pastors were not to be resident in Vallecrosia – something which continued to anger Louisa extremely – with a certain justice, as she was still paying at least half of the pastors' salary.

'That calamity' is the only reference in Louisa's surviving letters of the earthquake that hit Vallecrosia on 23 February 1887 at 6.20 a.m. The tremors continued for several days and Louisa described the event in some detail in her Annual Report to the Ladies' Committee in March 1888, starting with how it affected her home, Bella Vista, where she was when the earthquake struck. One entire Protestant family died when a house fell on them; all the students and teachers at school were saved, but the building and Louisa's home were both unsafe and uninhabitable. Mrs Boyce mentioned that the Asilo cook had contributed greatly to ensuring the children got out quickly as, being the only person up, she had sounded the alarm and lit the staircase, 'lest the terrified children should stumble in the darkness'. Donations arrived from churches in France and Switzerland, but L7769.50 was raised by Mrs Boyce herself, probably mainly by the Ladies' Committee, so that the Asilo was able to be rebuilt.

After an interregnum in 1888, Tron returned. Mrs Boyce was overjoyed, feeling that her prayers had been answered, and thanked Prochet for having remembered her request for Tron. She was sure that the congregation would be pleased, too, and added that she hoped that Tron 'may see some fruit of his labours'. Indeed, during Tron's second period as Pastor, the Vallecrosia Church saw slow but constant consolidation of the congregation.

Probably the most significant problem faced by Tron in the early years of his ministry was the relatively sudden death of Louisa Boyce on Friday 20 February 1891. It seems from the letter Tron wrote to the French publication *Le Témoin* on 23 February that she had been ill for three or four days and had suffered greatly, but had borne it as a true child of God. 'She has been set free from her body, from suffering and free from every tie that had kept her from being with Christ. She has been truly liberated from every earthly tie and we are now living in pain and grief.' Tron not only wrote her obituary for *Le Témoin*; he also seems to have co-ordinated her funeral, as well as writing regularly to Prochet to ensure he knew what was going on. The funeral and burial are described by Tron in a letter to Prochet. He mentions that initially there was an 'unfortunate incident' with the English minister, upon which he does not elaborate. First there was a service at Bella Vista, during which Tron seems to have done the Bible readings and two other ministers gave a talk and said the prayers. Tron concludes by adding 'I have to say ... it all went well, thanks be to God – even the English were happy with how it went. Thank goodness!' Tron was obviously distraught and later in the same letter he wrote: 'And now my friend, my counsellor, always my powerful and valuable help in my work here is no more! It is all finished for her down here. Five months on from my mother's death at the same age, my truest friend has died, my second mother! Bordighera is empty! She who loved me like her son, who always encouraged me, who always gave me or helped me to have whatever necessary for the work here, has disappeared in an instant!'

*(... to be continued: full version available online)*

*Nicky Raddon*

## The Medieval Waldensian Sermons

Probably only a few people know that the medieval Waldensians of the Alps left a rather substantial literature written in their own language, that is a late and peripheral variety of the *langue d'oc* in which the better-known *trobadors* wrote their poems.

This literature is comprised of short poems, treatises, biblical translations and sermons. It is preserved in around 20 manuscripts, composed between the late 15th and early 16th centuries in the Waldensian Valleys of Piedmont. These manuscripts, gathered by the first historian of the Waldensian movement, Jean-Paul Perrin, at the beginning of the 17th century, were later scattered throughout Europe. Some of them were purchased by the Anglican archbishop James Ussher and moved to the library of Trinity College Dublin when he died in 1661. Some were given to the library of Geneva by the Waldensian preachers Antoine and Jean Léger in the second half of the 17th century. Others were brought to the University Library of Cambridge by Samuel Morland, who had been sent to the Duke of Savoy in 1655 to persuade him to stop the persecutions against the Waldensians. Finally, we do not know yet exactly how some isolated manuscripts moved to the libraries of Carpentras, Dijon, Grenoble and Zurich.

Despite its great importance for the study of the medieval Waldensian movement, this literature is still unpublished for the most part. Even if it had captured the attention of the fathers of Romance philology during the 19th century (and despite a bloom of studies in the 1970s–80s), at the end of the millennium knowledge of the Waldensian literature and language was little advanced, compared to the beginning of the studies. The most striking example of confusion was represented by the sermons. The lack of printed editions for almost all of them was accompanied by frequent errors in establishing whether a text could be classified as a sermon or not, as (for example) it was difficult to distinguish between a sermon and a short treatise without a complete review of all the texts.

At the end of the first decade of the millennium, the time was ripe to start a thorough exploration of the *corpus*. Thanks to the publishing house Claudiana of Turin and to the Waldensian Studies Society (and with funds from the Waldensian '*Otto per mille*'), a new series of publications has been planned. The aim of the project is to carry out the critical edition of groups of homogeneous texts with their Italian translation, source research and notes; the first group of texts will be that represented by the sermons, because of its importance for the reconstruction of the ancient Waldensian preaching. In 2009, a census stated that the texts which could be defined as 'sermons' are 204 overall. Since that year, about 20 dissertations upon the Waldensian sermons have been assigned to undergraduates of the University of Turin, and most of them are now working for Claudiana as participants. The project is supervised by Luciana Borghi Cedrini, professor of Romance Philology at the University of Turin; it is officially supported by the Waldensian Studies Society and the Waldensian Faculty of Theology of Rome (in close collaboration with Lothar Vogel, professor of History of Christianity at the Faculty). From July

2011 to April 2013, Federico Bo was in charge of the group; after his sudden demise, this position was appointed to me in July 2013.

A very important task within the project is represented by the direct inspection of the manuscripts preserving the Waldensian texts. Since 2012, the Dublin collection has been put under close attention and four inspections have been carried out (two by Federico Bo and two by me). In November 2014 I spent a week in Dublin and another in Cambridge. There I could enjoy the great hospitality of Margaret and Ian Nimmo-Smith (thanks to whom I also had the chance to attend an Anglican service, which was very interesting for me). I had a very fruitful time in the University Library, where I had the opportunity to see and work on all the Waldensian manuscripts. I also met an Italian ‘emigrant’, Simone Maghenzani, PostDoc at Robinson College (Cambridge), but unfortunately I could not manage to have a talk with Peter Meadows.

My colleagues and I will be occupied with the Waldensian sermons until 2018 at least. My tour across the libraries will lead me to Geneva and Dijon quite soon; and it will surely bring me back to Dublin and Cambridge in the next months and years. The path leading to the critical edition of the Waldensian sermons is still long, but at the end we hope to offer an important opportunity for the comprehension of this ancient dissident religious movement.

*Andrea Girauda, Turin*

## **Refugees at Prangins Lakeside in 1689 Who were they? Why did they come here? Where did they go?**

Following the re-publication of my father’s book *The Waldensian Story: A Study in Faith, Intolerance, and Survival* by Claudiana last year, I decided that I wanted to commemorate the occasion in Switzerland with a small book launch.

Since the time of the Reformation, the Waldenses have enjoyed a close relationship with their fellow Protestants across the border in Switzerland, finding refuge here from 1685–1689. After considering several options, I decided to hold the event at Prangins, a small town on the shores of Lac Leman (Lake Geneva) not far from where I live. Prangins is the port from where the Waldensian refugees set sail across the lake on the start of their Glorious Return, under the command of Henri Arnaud. The Commune and the Parish agreed to let us use their beautiful church (Le Temple) looking across to the grand Chateau de Prangins, which houses the Swiss National Museum.

Pastor Christian Gysin kindly agreed to be the speaker. After studying theology at Basel, he was ordained into the Eglise Evangelique Reformée de Suisse, but he has also served many years as pastor of the Waldensian Church in Basel, as well as serving for short periods in Abruzzi, Sicily and Venice. He and I had never met before, but Christian told me that he had met my father once in London. I also learned that his wife Dora is the daughter of the Waldensian pastor Liborio Naso, who was well known to my father and grandfather – and also a cousin of Erica Scropo Newbury! So it’s a small world.

On Saturday 16 April around 40 people of mixed nationalities, some Swiss, some English and other internationals, gathered at the Temple. Pastor Gysin gave us a delightfully engaging talk in which he amazingly managed to condense some 800 years of history into the space of an hour! I then gave a short 'Trip Advisor' slideshow presentation, of places in the Alps where one can still find traces of Waldensian history. Naturally, the main focus was on Torre Pellice and 'the Valleys', but also on the areas just over the border in France which I first visited with my father when he was researching for his book. At the end we shared a glass of wine together while my friend Valerie Offord manned the bookstall.

Many people expressed their appreciation of Pastor Gysin's talk, and nearly 20 books were sold. That concluded the indoor part of the event, but the final activity was to walk down to view the memorial which stands by the spot on the shoreline where Arnaud and the Waldenses set sail in 1689.

*Joy Stephens*



*Pastor Gysin and his wife Dora Naso at Prangins.*

## **Prescot Stephens**

### ***The Waldensian Story: A Study in Faith, Intolerance, Survival***

Finally Claudiana has reprinted this book, for which so many had waited for so long, and which is unique among Waldensian histories in that it was conceived of, and written in, English for a non-specialist readership. This has rendered it a valuable means for bringing the Waldensians to a worldwide readership. Serious and informative, whilst always remaining accessible, it is ideal for any reader, including those who believe that they already know every detail about this 'People's Church', for it can still widen their horizons, thanks to the author's range of viewpoints, given the new breadth of sources.

There can be no doubt that, without English intervention over the centuries, the Waldensian Valleys and their Church would look very different today, or even exist at all. One only needs to compare the situation of the Waldensian communities in France, for example. As is outlined on the back of the 2015 Waldensian Calendar, there were constant links even before the Reformation, for example with the Lollards. However, there are three foundation-stones that cannot be ignored: The intervention of Cromwell against the confessional cleansing of the Piemontese Easter (1655); the material aid and financing of the Glorious Return (1689) by William of Orange, who with the Glorious Revolution (1688) had become William III of England; the foundation (1698) of the SPCK (The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge) with its worldwide evangelising role, which translated and printed Bibles for the Waldensians; then under the umbrella of the 18th- and 19th-century Evangelical Revival, there was the crucial work of Canon Gilly and Colonel Beckwith in the Waldensian Valleys under the aegis of the Waldensian

Church Mission (founded 1825). It is one thing, however, to receive aid and succour from an unconventional country which went from being a small nation on the margins of Europe to a global imperial power; it is another to analyse the whys and wherefores from an historical, political and confessional perspective. This is especially so given the high level of admiration and esteem in which this group of heretical mountain-dwellers were held and continue to be held over the centuries at all levels of British society and not just among the elite.

Wilberforce, the unstinting Conservative activist for the abolition of slavery, campaigned also for the Waldensians; and the young Gladstone on his Grand Tour of Italy deviated from the well-trodden itinerary for young gentlemen of Venice, Florence and Rome to stay in the Waldensian Valleys. Beckwith, as we know, found his vocation in reading a copy of the national bestseller, *Researches among the Waldensians*, by Canon Gilly in the library of his General, the Duke of Wellington, and was thunderstruck. Many others, however, with less illustrious names followed in their footsteps and have contributed to, and financed, a tide of outreach works throughout Italy.

The Stephens family fall into this category. Prescott Stephens (1918–2012) was the son of Captain Richard Stephens RN, and their family links with the Waldensian Church Missions go back to the mid 19th century. Later they brought the first groups of English visitors to the Waldensian Valleys, often exploring by mule. The Stephens family also toured and evangelised throughout the rest of Italy, about which experiences Richard Stephens wrote extensively. Prescott, who first visited the Valleys when he was 8 years old, also made contact with groups of Waldensians throughout the length of the peninsula when he was stationed in



*Richard Newbury and Simone Maghenzani.*

Italy during the Second World War; post-war he was active in the WCM, in which he served in almost every office including that of President, having humbly declined the office of Patron. His son Mark is our present Treasurer and his daughter Joy, a missionary, flew from Geneva for the day to attend the presentation in Cambridge of this fine book by Simone Maghenzani and Richard Newbury.

Rowan Williams, Emeritus Archbishop of Canterbury, has commented on how important it is for us to remember these

ancient British links with the Waldensians, while Diarmaid McCulloch, the illustrious Oxford Professor of Church History, has declared that British Protestants can be truly proud of the aid and comfort they have furnished for the survival of this ancient church; the Church historian Euan Cameron, Professor at both Oxford and the Union Theological Seminary in New York, in a heartfelt new Preface warmly recommends us to read this book. The original Preface by the distinguished Waldensian historian and Moderator emeritus Giorgio Bouchard is equally enthusiastic.

*Erica Scropo*

## Government gives to Waldenses

Too good to be true? No! For every donation which you make to the Waldensian Church Missions, the Government will add a further 25%, providing you are a tax-payer.

Since 5 April 2000 the new Gift Aid scheme has replaced Deeds of Covenant and the process is much simpler. This applies to all donations of any size or frequency. Thus a gift of only £1 made once will be increased by 25% as will a monthly donation of £100.

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Some of you have already completed such a form, but for those who have not, I would urge you to consider seriously this opportunity for the Waldensian Church Missions to benefit from the Government's generosity, but more importantly, to enable our giving to our friends in Italy to be increased.



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## The Waldensian Church

It is the native Protestant Church of Italy whose origins pre-date the Reformation. It arose from an evangelical movement founded in the twelfth century by Waldo, a rich merchant from Lyon, who was to inspire St Francis: he gave all away to the poor and started preaching the Gospel in the vernacular, which caused conflict with the Papacy. Travelling in pairs the Waldensian itinerant preachers, having learnt the Scriptures by heart, set off to found underground communities from Sicily to Russia. The ensuing persecution by the Inquisition drove them into their mountain fastness in the Alpine Valleys of northwest Italy, where they remain in what are still called the Waldensian Valleys. At their Synod in 1532 they voted to join the Genevan Reformation, a decision that brought even more persecution upon this exposed outpost of Protestantism. Their sufferings were recorded in Milton's famous sonnet 'On The Late Massacre in Piedmont'. Their survival down to the present has been a remarkable testament of faith.

The Waldensian community was emancipated in 1848, but did not reach full freedom until 1984. Since the Italian unification in 1860 they have established churches throughout Italy and, following emigration, in the USA, Argentina and Uruguay. In 1979 the Italian Methodist Church combined with them and they hold a common annual Synod, which is the controlling authority of the Church and takes place in Torre Pellice. The Churches of Rio de la Plata have their own Synod, Board and Moderator.

The 60 parishes have founded 120 outreach activities ranging from schools, hospitals, children's and old people's homes, radio stations, and ecumenical community centres, often catering for the needs of the most deprived and mafia-ridden parts of Italy, especially the disadvantaged South and the new immigrant communities.

The Waldensian Church has a theological college in Rome, a publishing house, Claudiana, and a weekly paper, *Riforma*.

## The English Committee of the Waldensian Church Missions

This was founded in 1825 as a support group for the Waldensian Church in Italy. Since 1979 its finances, together with those of the Vaudois Pastors Fund, have been administered by Trustees under the terms of the Scheme drawn up by the Charity Commission and dated 18 January that year.

The Committee seek to arouse interest and financial support in England and Wales for the Waldensian Church. Twice yearly we publish a *Waldensian Review* and occasionally other literature. We also arrange meetings for Waldensian pastors visiting this country and support students of Theology who want to spend the compulsory 'year abroad' studying in this country.

There are similar Waldensian support groups in Scotland, Ireland, USA and in various European countries.

**The English Committee in aid of the Waldensian Church Missions**  
Established 1825

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*The Waldensian Review* is sent twice a year to those who are interested in the Waldensian church in Italy, its history and present-day work and witness.

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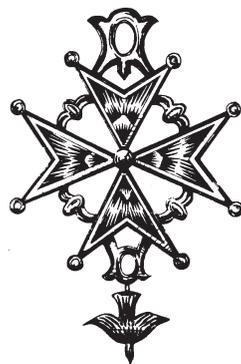
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