



Colwich Chronicle: *Advent 2011*

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Who Are the Oblates?

We had a very successful Oblates Weekend on 2nd September for present and potential oblates of St. Mary's Abbey. Who are the oblates?

Oblates are lay men or women who spiritually affiliate themselves with a particular Benedictine community, as a way of deepening their Christian life in the world. They undertake to live according to the spirit of the Rule of St Benedict, as far as their circumstances and surroundings allow. They try to attend Mass frequently and say part of the Divine Office each day, and do some spiritual reading. After a time of probation they make an Act of Oblation, which can be renewed every year.

On 23rd October at Sunday Mass four new Oblates made their Oblation before **Father Luke Waring O.S.B.** in the presence of **Mother Abbess** and the community, family & friends: **Sally (Mary-Clare) Kinnish**, **Brenda (Monica) Hammersley**, **Joanne (Aelred) Northam** and **Paul (Bede) Northam**. There was a festive lunch in the Guest Room afterwards.

Joanne & Paul are expecting their fourth child on Boxing Day: please keep them in your prayers!



*Mother Abbess with Belmont novice
on a visit to Colwich*

Vocations News

Mother Abbess has taken over as Novice Mistress, with help from **Mother Prioress**. The Belmont Assistant Novice Master & noviciate paid us a fraternal visit on the Feast of the Holy Cross in September.

In August we held our third Come & See weekend for women wanting to experience something of monastic life. It was well attended, and those taking part said that they found it helpful in discerning their vocation.

We have had several aspirants, those who come inside the enclosure for a short while to experience the life at close quarters. For a few short weeks, we had a Postulant in the newly renovated Noviciate at the top of the house.

With the help of the oblates, Mother Abbess is doing vocations promotion, information packs for University Chaplains, priests and teachers.

The difficulty in attracting and keeping new members seems to be fairly general in religious life in the West. So we keep praying & hoping!

Rest in Peace

Our **Sister Anselma Örs** died on 1st January, aged over 90, in the nursing home where she had lived for many years. Her long life journey began in Hungary, and her body was laid to rest in our cemetery on 10th January.

Our friend **Mary Hilditch** of Rugeley died on 9th June.

Our long time cottage tenant, friend of many of our guests, **Laura Gray** died on 2nd August.

Help in the House

This summer we tried an experiment of employing two part time & temporary housekeepers, to help the Guest Mistress to look after the guests and answer the front door. This was successful, and we now have one part time housekeeper, local lady **Anne Tams**.

Skippy & Coco

The two standard poodles are thriving. **Coco**, the middle aged lady, has learned to love play. The puppy, **Skippy**, has done everything, yes everything, that puppies do. He is now as big as Chelsea (our dog who died last year) and he is still growing!



Community News

Last winter's snow & ice was beautiful, but challenging! We had our fair share of burst pipes, mostly in the monastic laundry. **Sister Theresa Mary** fell on the ice and broke her wrist, so **Mother Abbess** and **Sister Benedict** took over the kitchen for a while, including Christmas, New Year and Epiphany.

Mother Gertrude celebrated her 85th birthday this year, and is still smiling.

Sister Sheila, as busy as ever, is now preparing the decorations for the Church for Advent and Christmas.

Sister Monica is doing well after a knee operation.

Sister Benedict had a bit of cancer earlier this year, and is now better, thanks to the NHS and all the prayers.

Seventy Years Ago: World War 2: A Nun's Diary in 1941

Colwich, 5th May 1941

"Hitler is out to do his worst; night after night the planes roar overhead from dark to dawn, the sirens wail, searchlights sweep the sky already lit up by moon and stars. No guns or bombs are heard here because it is the northern towns, especially Liverpool that are being 'strafed'."

30th September

"It has been a record harvest all over the country we alone got 4 tons of wheat from 3 ½ acres! All the granaries are full, and flour is cheaper than it was before the war. Oats also a good crop. Vegetables have done well, and the fruit though not abundant has not altogether failed. We have indeed reason to be grateful to the good God".

25th December

"Thank God for our King! At 3 o'clock we listened to his speech – slow, hesitating, simple, no attempt at cleverness, but spoken from the heart. He ended by praying that God would bless us all."