

History of the Annunciation Trust

Any history is selective. The aim here is threefold: to tell some of the facts about the genesis of The Annunciation Trust & how it works; to highlight its distinctive ethos and how that evolved; and to give a sense of the ministry of those involved with the Trust.

I haven't found it easy to meet these three different but overlapping aims. The result doesn't flow smoothly. But I hope that you might find here whatever it is that you might be looking for. HM.

17/3/1993 The first meeting of AT was held at Long Green, Kingswood, Surrey, with HM and IA, GJ, SK and HY, the original trustees. Roland Bryan was also present. He had drafted the Trust's Deed, duly approved by the Charity Commissioners, and brought copies that the four Trustees signed.

The story of The Annunciation, which tells of how one person responded to God's unexpected call, spoke powerfully to HM as he sought to respond to a similar experience. Hence his choice for the name of the Trust that he set up to support him.

The objectives of the Trust were deliberately couched in general terms, as HM had no idea where he was going to find himself led by God. They were "to advance Christian religion by supporting people in their spiritual growth based on a pattern of prayer as practiced in the Christian religion."

In those early days the Trustees met once a month and HM was extremely grateful firstly for their support in the face of his uncertainty about where he was going, and some hostility from the Diocese; and secondly for their legal oversight of the Trust's finances. The trustees never sought to raise funds, but oversaw what monies came in. They hoped to be able to pay HM an incumbents stipend and some expenses [and were just about been able to do so]. HM paid his own pension contributions to the Church Commissioners..

25/4/1993 An Annunciation Trust 'Open Day' at Long Green, to which about 100 people came.

The Trustees met 6 times [with HM and the other Beneficiaries as they joined] in 1993; 4 in 1994; 5 in 1995; 5 in 1996; 4 in both 1997 and 1998; 2 in both 1999 and 2000; 3 in 2001 and 2002, 2 in 2003, 2004 and 2005. From 2006 they met annually.

The meetings were held:	1993-4	Long Green, Kingswood
	1994-2002	Glebe Gardens, New Malden
	2003	Stockwell and Burghwallis
	2004	Stockwell
	2005	Palfrey Street
	2006	St Mary Woolnoth
	2007-2012	Ham Common
	2013	Balham
	2014-	St Andrew's Convent Lewisham

From the beginning of 2016 the Trustees met by themselves in the spring and autumn of each year.

List of Trustees

Ian Archer	1993-2014	Sister Gabriel	2007-2008
Gordon Jeff	1993-1996	Jacque Bennett	2010-2014
Sue King	1993-1995	Ruth Yeoman	2014-2023
Helen Yates	1993-1996	Adrian Botwright	2014-
Frank Williams	1996-2006	David McCormick	2016-2018
Richard Buck	1998-2006	Alison Hunka	2023-
Sally Leeson	1996-1999	Tim Alban-Joanes	2023-
Ian Walters	2003-	Michael O'Halloran	2023-
Julie Foster	2007-2018	David Newman	2025-
Alison Frogatt	2007-2009		

HM moved from Long Green in Kingswood to New Malden in 1994, and Henry & Sylvia Morgan moved to Burghwallis in 2003 and there was one Trust meeting there that year. But it was felt that it was an appropriate time to change our pattern: the Trust was now securely established & an annual meeting seemed sufficient. So the Trustees began to meet annually, with the Beneficiaries, for the AGM in London.

The Golden Glory Weekends

The Beneficiaries decide to meet twice a year [spring and autumn] by themselves at Burghwallis for a weekend, as S&HM's home there was large enough to accommodate us all. These '**Golden Glory**' weekends were so called because the beer of choice in the house when we first met was a brew called 'Golden Glory, it proved so popular that some of those attending brought bottles of it with them, and the gatherings grew to be called 'Golden Glory Weekends'. They continue twice yearly and moved to Birlingham when S&HM did in 2011. PB's paper describes the pattern. In the early days when we were small in number, other people sometimes joined us & there was a pattern of shared silence, individual sharing and discussion, and also some external input [visit to the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, watching a dvd etc] As we've grown in size, there's been less silence and we've been hard put to do much more than our individual sharing.

S&HM were happy to provide hospitality in their home for GG. In 2014 it was agreed that SM should be reimbursed for the costs of acting as hostess. Their new home in Birlingham being much smaller, and with the number of Beneficiaries growing, we needed to find an alternative venue. We met at Holland House in 2016, and then shifted to St Andrew's Convent in Lewisham. There were clear advantages of meeting in a home, but a neutral location allows for a more corporately owned gathering.

Patrons

In Nov 1995 the Trustees discussed the desirability of seeking Patrons of AT. Subsequently Edward Holland Bishop of Colchester agreed as did Bishop Martin Wharton [HM's Area Bishop] and Michael Whinney, Bishop of Aston. Jack Nicholls, [Bishop of Sheffield] replaced Martin Wharton when S&HM moved to Burghwallis to a house that he graciously let us have 'for no duty' thus leaving HM free for his wider ministry.

The Patrons were a helpful indication of the our respectability as a Trust in the early days, but they may no longer seem so necessary.

Expansion

From the beginning HM was open to the possibility of others joining the AT, without actively seeking them. As early as March 1995 the Trustees were talking with Richard Buck about it. His funding eventually came through the Diocese so he didn't need to join the Trust, but he continued to attend AT meetings.

Sylvia Coring & HM married in 1996, and she formally joined the Trust then. Together their home became the base of the Trust, with Trustees meetings held there till 2002, & then the Golden Glory weekends held there till 2016.

Others followed: Julian Maddock in 2000,

Paul Booth in 2004,

Sister Rachel in 2011,

Colin Brown in 2016.

Alison Woolley in 2019

Roy Gregory attended both the AGMs and the Golden Glory weekends as web master from 2005 until his stroke in 2012.

Ewan Clayton, Janet Lake and her partner Sue attended the Golden Glories occasionally while we met at Burghwallis. Catharine Armstrong attended from 2009 till 2011. We were able to be more open about who attended the Golden Glories while we were smaller in number.

Discernment

HM met Julian Maddock, probably in 1998, at the suggestion of Richard Buck, who knew that HM was researching a Report for the SCT. They met in a squat where JM was living, and straight away got on well, they continued to meet & became friends. HM & SM must have talked about the AT and how it worked and JM expressed an interest in perhaps setting up something similar for himself, and HM suggested that it might be simpler if he joined AT. And he did after meeting with the trustees approval.

Interestingly HM never asked him, or neither did JM ask HM, about their models of spiritual direction, or what training they had each received. Instead they simply shared their stories and recognised each other: that was sufficient. And that's been the pattern ever since with everyone else who's joined AT. A personal recommendation, followed by group discernment through the sharing of stories and mutual and intuitive recognition, and endorsement from the Trustees. It's a model that's served us well. Only once did we turn someone away, not because we doubted their calling or their gifts as a spiritual director, but because we discerned that it didn't feel right for them to join us. Its easy to invite someone to join, difficult & potentially painful to invite them to leave, so careful discernment is important.

At a meeting with the Trustees [5/11/03], it was agreed that:

[1] we should only consider as Beneficiaries those exercising a variety of ministries on the edge of the church;

[2] linking with the Trust involved both a commitment to attend meetings for mutual support and encouragement, and an opportunity for funding to be channelled through the Trust.

We've never worked together as a team. A couple of us worked with others in Soul Space at Greenbelt, and occasionally we work alongside each other. But we each primarily minister on our own. We are, we need to be, quite sturdy individuals to survive on our own. We have all gone through trials and tribulations.

We probably have some gifts in common, but we each have particular gifts, minister out of various traditions and in a variety of contexts. That makes for a broad and interesting mix but it requires mutual respect and toleration as well as a lot of love and a degree of spiritual maturity, of us all. It's not always easy.

There is a history of people working as we do, suffering from isolation and then burn out. The AT has tried to provide a prayerful, corporate, mutually supportive safe place where we belong to something bigger than ourselves, where we are accepted for who we are, and can share something of our calling without the need for 'translation'.

Funding

The early minutes tell that funding was always a concern. IA was frequently saying that he was worried and that there was only enough money for HM to keep going for a further short period. The Trustees hoped to be able to pay HM the equivalent of an Incumbent's stipend and some expenses. Amazingly there always seemed to be just enough to do that, but never much more. Where it came from was a puzzle to HM. His funding worked like stewardship in the Church of England: individuals who used his ministry were invited to make a donation to the Trust, but the treasurer was the only one who knew who actually did so, & what individuals did or didn't give.

The Trust has been extraordinarily blessed by two wonderful treasurers. HM often describes Ian Archer, the Trust's first treasurer as "the rock on which The Annunciation Trust stands". And the same can be said of Ian Walters and his assistant Debbie Reynolds. They have overseen the finances with love and efficiency. Without them there would have been no Trust.

When others joined the Trust the treasurer kept separate 'pots' for each of them, into which monies given in support of their ministries, were put. Each individual drew monies from their 'pot' as and when they wished. All HM's income passed through the Trust but that wasn't the case with everybody else. Everybody's circumstances were different, both with respect to the basis on which monies were paid into the Trust, and on which they were withdrawn. There wasn't a uniform pattern & never has been.

In the early days any monies that went generally to the Trust went in to HM's 'pot' by default, and Trust expenses were paid from HM's 'pot' alone.

When the Spiritual Counsel Trust, of which HM was the part-time Warden, combined with the AT, the Trustees agreed in March 2006, that "the monies that had come from the SCT, including the Plum Trust money, should be deemed to be monies given in support of Henry's ministry, save for £1000 which will go into a '**Common Pot**' for general use.

It was also agreed that the then three Beneficiaries pay 1% of their monies that went through the Trust each year, into the Common Pot. In May 2009 this was increased to 2%. The reason for the Common Pot was so that each of the Beneficiaries contributed fairly to the overheads and any donations made, rather than these being born out of the common fund supporting HM.

It was also agreed that all monies received by the Trust not specifically allocated by the donor to one particular Beneficiary would not be "reserved funds" and therefore available for HM as the original Beneficiary the trust was formed to support. This was later changed.

There is no longer a 'Common Pot'. Currently the monies received from The Plum Trust, is used to cover the administrative costs of the Trust, and the balance is disbursed among the Beneficiaries, and others known to the Trust who exercise similar ministries and who have a financial need.

The Website

At Soul Space in 2004 RG suggested to HM that it would be a good idea to put 'Approaches to Prayer', currently out of print, on the internet so that it could be widely available. HM thought that was an interesting idea but had neither the time or the skill to do anything about it. 'Leave it with me' said Roy, 'I have a friend who does web-sites and I'll have a word with him,' Well he did and came back with what his friend would charge us. It was more than either HM or the Trust could afford, so we had to decline his offer. Roy's friend was an atheist, but his wife was a committed Christian and she told her husband that as the book was about prayer, and it would be made available free on the web, he ought to do the job for nothing, which he then kindly offered to do. Cheekily HM asked if he would be willing to create an AT web-site with 'Approaches to Prayer' as a part of it and he agreed to that as well.

So then we had a web-site, which has grown since its creation. Roy was web master until his stroke and JM then took it on, giving it a makeover in 2013.

In 2009 RG & HM edited 'The God you already know'. Pub SPCK.

Personal Stories

Henry Morgan

I was ordained 1970 in Southwark and served in several parishes there until 1993.

1986-88: I was a member of the second Southwark SPIDIR Course.

1988-93: Chair of Southwark SPIDIR

1991 Edited 'Approaches to Prayer'. Pub SPCK

The breakdown of my marriage at the end of the 1980s, led to a time of considerable personal turbulence. In the autumn of **1989** I had a powerful religious experience one night, in which God spoke to me. I knew I had to take the experience seriously, & place it at the centre of my life, without any idea of what that would mean. My spiritual director affirmed me in trusting it. Gradually it became clear to me that I could not honour my experience and remain a parish priest, and God seemed to be inviting me to find another way of being the priest I felt myself to be. I had no idea what that might mean: to be a priest outside the structures of the institution, with no idea what I should do, or how I would survive. Over the following years I had a number of other affirmative religious experiences.

1992. I had a Sabbatical based at home, praying regularly through the day, doing a little spiritual direction, and following where the Holy Spirit led.

In August I visited Francis Dewar in Durham, where he was exercising a ministry outside the institutional church, and was greatly encouraged.

A friend said that they would gift a sum of money into a charitable trust if I would set one up. A Methodist director recommended someone who would help with the legalities, and four friends agreed to be Trustees. The wording of the aims of the Trust were deliberately writ broad as we didn't know where God was leading me, & we wished to avoid having to change them as things developed.

This felt very scary at the time: a friend introduced me to a meeting as 'a man who is about to jump off a cliff'. I had let go of my role, home, financial security etc. But I felt that it was what God was calling me to do, so there wasn't really much choice. I said that I would try it for 5 years and see what happened.

Jan 1993 I resigned my living & moved out of the Vicarage into a house lent us for a year by a friend.

All of the above left me with considerable sympathy for any who found themselves with a similar calling, and a strong desire to be supportive of them in any way that I could.

1993-1995. I co-led two SPIDIR Courses.

Sept 1994-2003 Hon Curate of St Johns Old Malden with a house provided for no rent and some duties in the parish, but mainly I was set free to follow my sense of call

1995. I was invited to Finland by the Lutheran Church to lead their first conference on spiritual direction, and have since visited regularly. I have subsequently led similar meetings in Norway and Lithuania.

1997. I led a Consultation for spiritual direction in Bradford Diocese and continued to do so annually until 2009. I've since led similar Consultations in Derby/Sheffield, Ripon, Newcastle, Southwell, Leicester, Hereford. I've also worked in over 20 other Anglican Dioceses.

1998. Edited 'A time to Reflect' pub Lion

The Spiritual Counsel Trust was in decline and Bob Hardy [Bishop of Lincoln] its Chairperson asked if Southwark SPIDIR would take it over. He met with Gordon Jeff, Janet Unwin and myself. We declined, but it was suggested that if the Bishop of Lincoln could persuade the majority of his trustees to 'fall on their swords' then SPIDIR could nominate some new ones currently engaged in the ministry of spiritual direction. That is what happened.

In 1997 I was appointed as a new trustee, along with Jan Selby and Allison Frogatt. After a year I stood down as a trustee and from 1998 was paid part time for 12 months to review 'The State of spiritual direction in the UK' to see if there was a continuing role SCT could play. I talked with many people, wrote a report, and made some suggestions.

1999 I was appointed part time Warden of SCT in order to develop my suggestions and was paid on a part-time basis. This was hugely significant both for my ministry and for the AT. My finances were now more secure, and as Warden I was encouraged by Bishop Bob Hardy to be creative in exploring my ministry. I was able to embark on a number of initiatives that would not otherwise have been possible without Bob's support..

[1] In 2000 I was invited to visit Bradford and then Lincoln Dioceses to offer spiritual direction, which I continue to do. The original understanding was that the local Diocese provided accommodation and travel costs. I subsequently offered spiritual direction in London, Burghwallis and Doncaster, and then Birlingham

[2] At the invitation of Bro Bernard SSF, I helped him in setting up 'Soul Space', offering spiritual direction and associated activities at Greenbelt. I was involved from 2000-2005. SCT offered some funding to Soul Space as did AT after 2003.

[3] In 2000, with agreement of Bob Hardy the SCT Chair, I went to the first meeting of what became Spiritual Directors in Europe; and later served as its Secretary and then Chair. I visited Belgium, Finland, France, Denmark, Lithuania, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Spain, Holland, Germany, Norway and Slovenia for SDE meetings.

[4] Conscious that spiritual direction is a lonely ministry I started three group consultations for mutual support and invited a number of directors to join. The membership varied. One group met 11 times between 2000-2009, another 8 times between 2001-2008, and the third 6 times between 2002-2005.

[5] I learnt about Reginald Somerset Ward and Norman Goodacre, and realised that I stood in a line of English spiritual directors. RSW's story had echoes with mine. I met with both NG and David Smith, his successor. It is not possible to over-estimate how hugely affirming this felt: to recognise that I stood within a native English tradition of spiritual direction.

[6] I heard about 'The Road': a hidden fellowship of men and women committed to a life of prayer, begun by RSW.

SCT had accumulated funds to pay me, but did no fund raising, and so the funds gradually ran down.

In November 2003 SCT decided to merge with AT, bringing IW as a trustee who became the AT treasurer, and some funds that went into my 'pot' as did the Plum Trust monies. So indirectly SCT continued to fund me, until I retired. A simple ceremony to mark the occasion of the merger took place at the Bishop of Sheffield's home in August. Bishop Jack Nicholls had been persuaded by Bob Hardy, on the latter's retirement, to take on the Chair of SCT. A move of significance as he later made housing available to S&HM, and was a gracious supporter of them both.

In 2002 Sylvia & I moved from New Malden in London to Bughwallis just outside Doncaster. I was concerned to continue to be available to meet with people in London, and was welcomed by the Sisters of St Andrew to stay in their house in Vauxhall when I was in London. I subsequently went with them when they moved first to Balham and then to Lewisham, where I was surprised & delighted to find myself staying in their convent directly across the road from where I had served my curacy from 1970-3. The Trust AGM was held there from 2014, and the Golden Glory weekends moved there in 2017.

My model of working

I've worked experientially for a long time and I've appreciated the importance of small groups, so the SPIDIR model of training in spiritual direction, emphasising the nurturing of a gift that was already embryonically present, suited me very well. It taught listening skills; encouraging personal reflection on our spiritual journey; listening and learning from each other's stories, and input from the various traditions of spiritual direction. Days began & ended with corporate prayer.

I led several national events while Chair of SPIDIR where my assumption was that as the meeting was about spiritual direction, the process of the meeting should honour the principles of spiritual direction as far as was possible. So, it was key that we created a safe space in which to work; that we prayed together; that we listened to each other; and that we assumed that collectively, under God, we would be given the wisdom that we needed.

This is not original thinking, but with hindsight I can see that I brought this model of working into the AT, the GG weekends, the Diocesan Consultations I led [see Paul Booth's paper as the Bradford Consultation pushed me into deepening this model considerably], the Support Groups I set up, the way SDE worked in its early years, and elsewhere.

It's a wonderful and rich way of working. But not everybody finds it easy, some prefer to have somebody tell them, rather than learn to trust themselves under God, and they may find this way threatening. It surely requires a degree of spiritual maturity.

I have never charged for spiritual direction, as a matter of principle, but charged parishes or Dioceses for my services with the Trustees nominating what they reckoned to be an economic rate per day. My financial position was always precarious, there was usually only enough money in the Trust for me to keep going for a few more months, and uncertainty about our housing was also a regular concern. But it was a gift, albeit an uncomfortable one, that taught me to trust. The support of the Annunciation Trust, and the Spiritual Counsel Trust has been a huge blessing, without the work & commitment of the various Trustees, none of the above would have been possible.

Sylvia Morgan

When Henry and I married in January 1996 it seemed obvious to me that I should become a member of the AT which now would be largely supporting us both, financially, through prayer, and the fellowship of those early trustees.

For several years after a divorce in 1988 I had been seeking to live a simpler, prayer focused life, working part time at a book shop in Dorking, and doing some gardening work, in order to give time to and create a home for my teenage son and daughter still at school. In 1993 I received a considerable (for me!) tax rebate which after much prayer and reflection with my Spiritual Director enabled me to take the two year SPIDER Course in Spiritual Direction, led by Henry Morgan and Sue King.

My SD was Rev John Gordon Clark whom I had met through TSSF, The Third Order of the Society of St Francis in 1992-3. I was finding in the TO a warm, non-judgemental, acceptance of myself that sadly had been lacking in the institutional church, and just as important, an encouragement of the way I was choosing to live. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God....." was my mantra then and has continued to be to the present. I was professed as a Tertiary in the TO in November 1995.

A loving, ever present God had brought me through some very long dark, isolating tunnels into a deep experience of trust in my self, my belonging in the world, and above all the knowledge that no one and no thing are outside of God.

It is difficult to separate the AT from my married life, now over 23 years. It has been a privilege to share the ups and downs and be part of the changes that have developed, particularly welcoming new beneficiaries over the years, and sharing between us that same warm, non-judgemental acceptance as we have listened, encouraged, disagreed and prayed, waiting in silence together. I have learned much of how God sustains our trust in him/her from our GG times of sharing and enjoyed hosting them for a number of years. We have had much fun in the process! Whatever changes may occur in the future I hope that co creating the kingdom of God on earth will remain its central inspiration and purpose. "...to be a beneficial presence in the world."

The Holistic massage never developed as I had hoped, though I'm glad I took the course. It reminded me how truly wonderfully we are made! I have continued to see people for SD, usually 8-10 in each place, and helped on the Spiritual Growth Courses in Guildford and Sheffield.

I have been Area Formation Guardian, Acting Area Minister, and Novice Guardian in South Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Area, and am currently North Cotswolds LG Convenor in the Severn Area, and have two novices in my care.

July 19th 2019

Julian Maddock

1970-ish: I had an experience in which I felt touched by God. I knew I was loved, and I knew I could trust God. This was a radical change from my previous thinking about God. I kept this experience pretty much to myself. I started going to church and became confirmed a few years later.

1989: I did the 3-month course on 'Apostolic Spirituality' at St. Beuno's Jesuit Spirituality Centre in Autumn 1989, which included the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius as a 30-day, silent, individually-guided retreat. It was here that I first experienced giving spiritual direction and realised that I wanted to do more of this.

1990–1992: I trained to be a spiritual director on the 2nd and 3rd years of the Ignatian Spirituality Course in London.

1991: I was invited to be a novice director under Michael Barrow sj at Campion House, Isleworth. This was an opportunity to give spiritual direction in a retreat setting with daily supervision over two weeks in the summer holidays. I was invited back in **1992**.

1992: I started to get my first directees.

1995: I was asked to join the team of the Ignatian Spirituality Course as a trainer on year 2. A few years later I became the year leader. I worked variously on the 2nd and 3rd years of the Course since then.

I was fortunate to live in very cheap social housing and I was able to stop employment (as a verger at St James's, Piccadilly) and focus more on spiritual direction and training. This has grown to become a full-time ministry way beyond my expectations back in the early 90s.

1998: On the initiative of Richard Buck, HM and I met as part of his research for the Spirit Counsel Trust. We became friends and this led to the invitation to ...

2000: ... join the Annunciation Trust.

2002–2011: I worked at a part-time hospital chaplain. This was an important experience that has coloured my experience of life.

My model of working (culled from other things I have written)

One thing has not changed in all the years I have worked as a spiritual director: I have no doubt that God loves each person who comes to talk, that God deals with each person uniquely, and that this is not affected by anything they do or not. I feel free to allow people to express whatever they want and to choose whatever they want because I believe that nothing can separate us from the love of God.

I am a spiritual director first and foremost because I want to be with God. In the early days of practising spiritual direction I kind of got it the wrong way round. It was a place I found God. Indeed, I used it as a substitute for treading my own path into God, and into knowing myself.

After some time I realised this and started to do the work that was mine to do, rather than using my directees to do the work for me. That is to say, I wanted very much to pray, and I no longer allowed my resistance and fear to stop me from doing what I most wanted.

Finally, I have come to see that spiritual direction is a way that God keeps me turned towards God's self; that each person that comes holds God out to me and gives me an opportunity to draw closer to God, and to myself; and I begin to glimpse that each person is another myself, God in little space.

I've been offering spiritual direction for nearly 30 years as I write this, and I still catch myself in the old belief that I have to help people, as if that were possible. God has frequently to remind me to trust. I don't primarily do spiritual direction to do good in the world. That's not really my thing. I'm not nearly kind-hearted or concerned enough – and I'm in awe of those who spend their lives in care. I do it because I need it. Spiritual direction is God's gift to me. It stops me becoming delinquent. It is how God keeps me close.

Paul Booth

I was ordained in Bradford in **1979**, and served in parishes in the Bradford Diocese (now part of the Anglican Diocese of Leeds) until **1997**. Before ordination, I had worked as a waiter, hotel hall-porter, sales rep, maintenance man and painter & decorator. I have always been a 'jack of all trades', and master of nothing in particular!

In **1989** I had faced the pain of my wife leaving me, as a result of which I found a new pattern of ministry which enabled me to care for our three children in the vicarage and continue to serve the parish. In **1994** I was taken seriously ill with Guillain-Barré Syndrome, a paralysing condition of the auto-neurone system. During my extended stay in hospital, I had a significant spiritual experience one day that renewed my trust in the presence of God. But I was off work for several months, and struggled to sustain the stamina needed for full-time parish ministry. In **1997** my world was turned upside down when it became clear that the only option was for me to take early retirement on health grounds. I was invalided out of parish ministry. And I felt invalid.

Out of two 'wilderness' years, grew two surprising new shoots of ministry: the training of Lay Readers (authorised theologically trained lay ministers in the Anglican Church), and spiritual direction. I was invited to join the Bradford diocesan Spirituality Group. This group published a regular magazine called 'Explorations', and arranged occasional days and courses to help develop the practice of prayer, and foster a deeper spirituality within the churches of the area. The group was also involved in promoting and organising spiritual direction. "Spiritual direction; what's that?" was my response! It was new to me. Then someone (Alison Froggatt, who later became a Trustee of the Annunciation Trust) invited me to go along to a consultation of spiritual directors at a local retreat centre. Though uncertain of what it would be all about, I felt compelled to go. I went. I felt like a fish out of water, but sensed there was something here that I needed to explore. Before long I found myself sensing that this (spiritual direction) was what I had been built for! Alison had discerned something in me that I had been completely unaware of myself.

At that first consultation I remember having a long conversation with Henry Morgan by the inglenook fireplace. I vividly remember the occasion and the place – but very little of what we talked about. I think we simply told each other something of our own stories.

By **2002** I had been asked to help facilitate a course for new spiritual directors when one of the staff moved away from Bradford mid-course, and I found a steadily growing number of people coming to me for spiritual direction. At this stage I was able to work part-time, and so an accounts clerk job at Bradford Diocesan office (definitely *not* what I was built for!) became my 'tent-making' while I increasingly saw the spiritual direction as my 'real' work.

Further conversations with, and huge encouragement from Henry led to me meeting with the Trustees in London, and being invited to become a beneficiary of the Trust. So in November **2004** I became the fourth practitioner in the Annunciation Trust.

In **2008**, on Henry's invitation, I attended the annual gathering of Spiritual Directors in Europe (SDE) at Manresa, Spain. I found spending time with spiritual directors from a variety of nationalities and traditions immensely enriching and stimulating. I have continued to be a member of SDE.

1999-2014	Member of Bradford Diocesan Spirituality Group
2002-2013	Staff member or team leader of discernment courses for new spiritual directors
2004-present	Beneficiary of the Annunciation Trust
2004-2015	Leader of residential retreats and quiet days, including a number of Creative Writing Quiet Days
2006-2009	Member of the Soul Space team at Greenbelt festival offering spiritual direction, and opportunities to explore creative ways of praying
2008-present	Member of Spiritual Directors in Europe (Company Secretary since 2011)
2010-2015	Facilitator of spiritual directors' consultations

Ian Walters

My introduction to spiritual direction came in 1985, when the then chairman of the Spiritual Counsel Trust (SCT) the late former Bishop of Grantham, Dennis Hawker, invited me to a meeting at which I met trustees and also Fr David Smith, who had become warden of the trust as spiritual director, on the gradual retirement of Norman Goodacre. Norman continued to see or write to a number of his people for some years after this. SCT had been formed in 1966 to support Norman and his successors working mainly within the tradition of Reginald Somerset Ward (RSW). I became a trustee and eventually the new treasurer, being a chartered accountant. Norman was still writing many letters weekly to his directees in the 1980's and even the early 90's, I remember him submitting very modest requests for postage and stationery costs and blessing me in his letters with a modest amount of unexpected but highly appreciated guidance and inspiration too.

David Smith became my spiritual director from the mid 80's, and I travelled perhaps 4 monthly, to Lincoln to see him, and in 1992 he suggested I be admitted to "The Road" in the tradition and teaching of RSW. I received a copy of the Road Book. Dennis Hawker was approaching retirement as bishop of Grantham, and the new Bishop of Lincoln Bob Hardy agreed to become chairman and meetings of the trustees then took place in the Bishop's House in Lincoln.

In the early 1990's two very special meetings were held at Edward King House in Lincoln, I think in consecutive years. The objective was to reflect upon the history of the trust to date and to consider the future. David Smith and the trustees were joined by Norman Goodacre and a number of long standing directees, possibly the first time they had ever met each other. David gave a talk about the tradition of RSW, and the history of the SCT to date, and those present were given time to reflect together and discuss.

David Smith decided for health reasons that he needed to step down as warden of the trust, although he continued as spiritual director to a few, including myself, for some time. A new warden was sought, and Henry Morgan was duly appointed.

When Bishop Bob Hardy retired in 2002, Bishop Jack Nicholls took over as chairman and trustee's meetings were held at Sheffield. During this time the trustees decided that with Henry having his own small charity (The Annunciation Trust) supporting him, that it would be desirable and much simpler to combine the two. I was given the task of investigating the legal and financial implications and ensuring all SCT directees were duly informed. David agreed to try and continue as long as possible seeing SCT folk who did not feel they wanted to find a new director, but gradually due to age and health he had to fully retire. The trustees duly consented to the process of dissolving the SCT and this was finally completed in 2006. The SCT was removed from the Charity Commission list of charities in 2007. All this had coincided with the longstanding treasurer of the Annunciation Trust, Ian Archer, wishing to retire, and I agreed to become treasurer of the new larger Annunciation Trust.

On my appointment as vicar of the Gosberton Group of Parishes in Lincolnshire, I acquired a part time personal assistant to help with administration, Debbie Reynolds, who had retired from a career in banking. Debbie volunteered to assist me with the day to day financial management of the Trust, and in keeping financial records etc.. She says she has enjoyed this role and is an enormous help to me as honorary treasurer. In my early years as treasurer, records were written up by hand, and many cheques used to come for banking.

Nowadays records are mainly computerised, and most incoming donations arrive by standing order or direct transfer, but there is still a fair amount of manual work which Debbie mainly attends to. All names and transactions are kept

extremely confidentially, and we make every attempt to comply with the latest GDPR regulations. The directors are not aware how much their ministry is supported financially by any individual donor, which was always considered appropriate.

I have been most encouraged to be able to follow a trail from my first involvement with SCT in 1985, to see how the Annunciation Trust has grown in recent years. I consider this is a most important and beneficial ministry for today, which is becoming even more widely appreciated throughout and beyond the traditional parameters of church.

July 2019

Sister Rachel

I qualified in medicine in 1985. God has always been a very real presence in life since I was a child and I had known for some time before I qualified, that perhaps I would not 'simply' be a doctor. In 1986 I joined the Order of the Holy Paraclete at Whitby, taking my first vows in 1989 and my life vows in 1992.

During that time, I continued to work part-time in Whitby alongside the GPs in the town and also took my advanced diploma in therapeutic counselling.

Spiritual direction has been a part of my own life since I was at University when I encountered the vast landscape within me, through discovering contemplative prayer. As a young sister, I worked in the retreat house that the Order ran and was privileged to see at first hand and work with many different retreat leaders and spiritual directors who visited the house. Sr Rosa who lived in the house at the time became a mentor figure, teaching me about spiritual direction and giving me opportunities to experience different styles of working with people. With her encouragement, I started to lead retreats and see retreatants on an individual basis and rapidly realised that this was work that was mine to do.

A neurological illness left me needing to work out how to deal with severe and chronic pain. This took me on a journey further into prayer and solitude and I learned that for me, here was the 'pearl of great price'. To follow this calling meant that finally I had to leave the Order and after a time of discernment I was released from my original vows re-professed as a solitary religious in 2009.

Still living under vows, and living a recognisably monastic lifestyle, I needed to earn enough money to live. I had a conversation with David Goodacre, son of Norman (see AT history and influences) who was one of the spiritual directors I had worked with years earlier whilst at the retreat house. At his instigation I contacted the AT, initially for advice, but having been offered the opportunity to become a beneficiary, I joined the Trust in 2011.

Work has to be the means to an end for me – the end being the living of the solitary religious life, which allows me the space to engage with prayer and God. Therefore, any work I undertake has to 'emerge' out of the life I lead. Offering spiritual direction has been a large part of that, but also leading retreats and quiet days, and teaching on prayer and spiritual direction.

Since 2012, I have been the Bishop's adviser for spirituality for the Diocese of Peterborough and in 2019 had the Dunstan Award conferred on me by the Archbishop of Canterbury, for renewal of prayer and the religious life.

To be present to God, oneself and to others; to learn more of how be present to God in this moment, whatever this moment might be; 'to want God more' is the fundamental pathway for me. What I offer to others arises out of that.

Alison Woolley

As the newest beneficiary of the Annunciation Trust (AT) – permanently since May 2019, and temporarily during a shared discernment process with its beneficiaries and Trustees in the previous 12 months – my own role in its developing story is inevitably, in many areas, very minimal. However, I am conscious that the request by Paul Booth (an Advisory Board member for 'Seeds of Silence', discussed below) that other beneficiaries and Trustees explore the possibility of me becoming part of AT back in 2018 began the process of re-awakened discussions about the future shape of the Trust and where the Spirit might be drawing us to extend similar support to others.

My own need for such support emerged in a not dissimilar way to that of other beneficiaries: the growth of a ministry that seemed to be valued by those to whom it was offered but which fell largely outside of the readily recognised structures and vocations of the church. Following completion of a part-time, research-based theology PhD that investigated the role and value of chosen practices of silence in the faith lives of contemporary Christian women, in

2016 I set up the Seeds of Silence project in Bradford with a small grant from a local Christian charity. Whilst completing my research I also trained as a Spiritual Director on the Bradford Diocese training course (2012-2014).

Seeds of Silence (SoS) exists to support and encourage Christians and other interested people in developing a practice of silence. It does this by providing free workshops, training and other support to laity, spiritual directors, pastoral counsellors and those in training for both of these ministries, ordinands and clergy in the Bradford area. I offer similar input across the UK on a freelance basis and also maintain a website that acts as a signposting hub to events, books on line resources and other organisations that also support engagement in silence as a spiritual discipline. Part of my work through SoS also includes informing people about, and offering spiritual direction, often – but not exclusively — to those who are seeking an SD whose own long-term practice of silence better equips them in supporting the directee's own development of this discipline. I combine my Seeds of Silence role with 2.5 days a week working as a Music Therapist with children and young people with complex learning difficulties, which I have been doing since 1997.

When the relatively sudden cessation of funding for SoS a year earlier than had been expected put the future of SoS in doubt at the end of 2017, an interim, and then generous subsequent grants from AT enabled me to continue the day a week of SoS work in Bradford and maintain the website until alternative funding was offered from the Society of Saint John the Evangelist from March, 2019.

Since this time my work in SoS has continued to grow and has recently become more closely linked with the Leeds Diocese (within which the former diocese of Bradford now forms an Episcopal Area) who are hosting information about SoS training and events in the Bradford EA on its Digital Learning Platform. This is a slowly evolving partnership which I hope will be fruitful in the coming year.

Although I have not been part of AT for long, I have been very grateful for the support – both financial and personal – and in particular the affirmation that being invited to become a beneficiary has offered. The kind of ministries we all give ourselves to so wholeheartedly are often seen as operating at the edges of the church and Christian community – if they are seen at all – but are perhaps more aptly understood as those that quietly and unobtrusively contribute to upholding what is offered by the more visible structures of the church. Without the shared times and space that AT offers to be with others whose experience gives them a mutual understanding of the sense of alone-ness that so easily engulf these more hidden ministries I know that I would find it far harder to continue in this vocational work.

22nd July, 2019

Please see Additional Documents.

Spiritual Counsel Trust Report 2000

Helping a group build up Spiritual Capital

Golden Glory Report