

## Towering o'er the Wrecks of Time

I'm sure that some of us sometimes feel like 'wrecks of time'! The phrase is from a hymn by John Bowring (1792-1872), the subject of the hymn is the cross of Christ:

Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure, by the cross are sanctified;  
peace is there that knows no measure, joys that through all time abide.

At the moment there is a plain wooden cross hanging in our chapel, perhaps not towering over us, but certainly prominent. It's there because it is the season of Lent, the time of preparation for Easter. The cross is made from two very old pieces of timber from the Abbey.

There was a lot of building work at the Abbey before we moved here from Cockfosters in 1981, and still plenty of things lying around when we did move. I remember walking back from the Monastery of Christ our Saviour one day, I saw an interesting piece of wood lying around and picked it up. Someone called me: What are you going to do with that? I answered to the effect that I would think of something. The piece of wood had been the threshold of the door to the little stone building at the south west corner of the Abbey. The building was probably the wash-house, and, according to one old lady who visited us, the rather cold place where the servants could take a bath. It is now our laundry room.



When we decided to have a wooden cross in the chapel for Lent, I used that piece of wood as the horizontal member of the cross. The distinctive shape of the ends has been created by the wood rotting around the wooden pegs holding the door frame together. If you look at the back of cross, you can see that the wood has been worn into a curve by people's feet—think of all the people who crossed that threshold!

Of course, Lent gives way to Easter, we don't stop at the symbol of Christ's sufferings, we continue to the celebration of his Resurrection. When you feel like a 'wreck of time', remember: there is hope—and you don't actually have to wait for the liturgical season of Easter to experience it!

Sr Benedict, Turvey Abbey