BISHOP’S LETTER  32

12 August 25

 Dear Friends,

August brings us, once more, some warm weather! Lovely for the days off but more of a struggle for the working days.

Still, even with working I have enjoyed some days off, walking and wandering, occasionally round some National Trust properties which is always a delight.

It reminded me that 13 August is the day we remember Octavia Hill who, with Canon HD Rownsley and Sir Robert Hunter founded the National Trust in 1895.

Octavia wasn’t someone who had my ‘days off’ in mind regularly, she was a woman of strong Christian faith with a heart for the poorest in society. Even before the National Trust she had interested John Ruskin in her schemes for improving the homes of the poor.

I enjoy the history of the National Trust great houses but the woman who was instrumental in that was much more concerned with the poor and improving their homes. Octavia worked to bring social reform, she served on the poor law commission 1905-1908, all driven by her strong Christian Faith.

I was reflecting, as I looked at a beautiful Georgian house, that her legacy to me is to bring joy in my leisure and learning but the difference she really made was to the lives of the very poorest. There may be nothing to show for that 120 years on but her contribution would have transformed many lives at the time.

I wonder what difference we might make today as a direct result of our Christian faith? It is unlikely to have the kind of legacy the National Trust gives but each of us can make a difference to the lives of those around us. Let’s make a conscious effort to do that today.

With every blessing,



The Venerable Alison Booker

Archdeacon of Oakham