

## **Very Reverend Nicholas Frayling BNTVA Chaplain writing about the 2007 Ceremony**

Just occasionally, an event goes completely without a hitch. One such event was definitely the gathering at the National Memorial Arboretum on Tuesday 15th May to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the first Malden Island test. The service had been meticulously planned by the organisers: the bugler, the organist, the chapel — all were exactly right, and a very large turnout of members of the Association made for a really memorable afternoon. Even the weather, which had been atrocious during the morning, smiled on us as we walked to the Memorial for the laying of the wreaths and photographs.

The refreshments which followed, in a large marquee, enabled members and friends to talk together unhurriedly over some splendid food and to renew — or in some cases rediscover after many years — old friendships. For me, there was a particular poignancy in the announcement the day before by the New Zealand Government of the conclusive results of the long term tests in New Zealand on veterans' health.

It will come as no surprise to members of the BNTVA that their long-held opinions on the direct causal link between exposure to radiation and various illnesses was triumphantly vindicated. Powers that be take note!

However, as I said in my address at the service at Alrewas, the service was not an occasion for politics, but more for thankful remembrance. I said 'To remember is to pay tribute, and those veterans who have died —and for that matter their widows and families — deserve nothing less.' I was able to speak about the Cross and its power to transform suffering into hope and sorrow into joy. I never cease to be humbled by the lack of bitterness of people who have suffered greatly but who still manage to find consolation in faith and joy in shared experience.

I am delighted, now in my 20th year, to be associated with the British Nuclear Test Veterans' Association and, if you will have me, hope to continue for many years to come. My grateful thanks to all who enabled the Staffordshire event to go so smoothly, and with my prayer that God will bless all our members in the coming days.

Nicholas Frayling