

# The Parish Church of Saint George



## PARISH MAGAZINE

*An open door in the heart of the City*



### MARCH 2021

## From the Rector's Desk



Dear Friends in Christ,

We are still awaiting a decision about whether we can reopen St George's for public worship. The latest information I have is that the N.I. Executive will review their lockdown provisions on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> March but that the current restrictions which apply up to Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> April will remain in place. The 18<sup>th</sup> March review will look at whether the lockdown can be eased or lifted from 1<sup>st</sup> April onwards. Whether we can reopen for services on 2<sup>nd</sup> April (Good Friday) and in time for Easter will be determined by what the Executive decides on 18<sup>th</sup> March and the Church of Ireland bishops' guidance, in the light of the Executive's decision. We will keep you posted via e-mail, facebook and the website.

I would like to thank the parishioners who have generously responded to the Altar hangings restoration appeal in last month's Magazine. Most of the costs involved have now been covered but there are still a couple of items which are, as yet, unsponsored. If you would like to contribute, then please get in touch. If you have agreed to contribute to this restoration work then please send you donation to the Hon. Treasurer, Mr Douglas McIlldoon, and please make cheques payable to 'St George's Church'.

As one of my colleagues recently noted, the ministry of the clergy during the last 12 months has been largely one of telephone calls, e-mails and internet contacts. Hospital and nursing home calls together with home visits are effectively banned except 'in extremis'. However, like many clergy, I have found that telephone calls in particular, allow me to have longer and more meaningful conversations with people than what is usual on a Sunday morning after worship. So if you need to speak to me on any urgent matter, if someone you know is ill, if you have a prayer request or simply would like to have a chat, please contact me. My landline at the Rectory is 028-9070-1350, my mobile is 079-0279-2080 and my e-mail is [bstewart1662@gmail.com](mailto:bstewart1662@gmail.com). Don't forget that the Royal Mail is still going strong and you can also write to me at: St George's Rectory, 6 Royal Lodge Park, BELFAST, BT8 7YP.

Please do continue to remember all affected by Covid-19, our vulnerable parishioners and especially those recently bereaved. Joy McCrory and David McElderry have both died recently; please pray for them and their families. If you have any prayers left, then offer up one for me as well – it would be much appreciated.

God be with you all.

Yours in Christ

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brian Stewart". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

# PARISH NEWS

## EASTER (GENERAL) VESTRY 2021

### The Easter (General) Vestry Meeting

Until further notice, it is proposed that the **Easter General Vestry** will be held on **Sunday, 18th April at 12.30pm**.

The Easter Vestry gives all registered vestry members the opportunity to participate in the running of parish business by voicing concerns, asking questions, standing for office, electing church and glebe wardens and members of the Select Vestry. Please consider allowing yourself to be nominated to the Select Vestry in order to make a contribution to the smooth running of the parish – a challenging but rewarding experience!

At the General Vestry meeting, two Churchwardens are selected, one of whom is nominated by the Rector and one is elected by the General Vestry members. It has become customary for our churchwardens to take up post for a period of two years. The appointment of a Rector's Churchwarden normally alternates with that of People's Churchwarden. The posts of Rector's and People's Glebewardens are made similarly but these office bearers normally serve a longer term. In addition, up to 12 other registered members of the General Vestry may be elected to the Select Vestry. It is important that we endeavour to achieve this quota since the number of ordinary Select Vestry members elected at the General Vestry meeting cannot be exceeded during the Select Vestry's term of office. Select Vestry members may be replaced if they stand down for any reason.

### The Select Vestry

The Select Vestry, chaired by the Rector, appoints an Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer. It holds monthly business meetings except during the holiday months of July and August, when it sets up a smaller Caretaking Committee, usually consisting of office bearers. The business focuses on Fabric, Furnishings and Finance but also includes overall responsibility for health and safety requirements, employment and management of lay staff, and Safeguarding Trust (child protection); confidentiality is expected. Members work collaboratively within General Synod law and civil law and are 'at the point of delivery' where the ministry and witness of the parish are maintained, developed and safeguarded both legally and financially. Working groups of parishioners with specific experience and skills may be set up for specific tasks and Safeguarding Trust would be an example of this in our parish.

**So - consider nomination, come to the meeting on Sunday, 18th April, and vote!** And even if you are too busy to join the Select Vestry, come to the meeting anyway and participate! In recent years, the meeting has been held on a Sunday after the Sung Eucharist to try to make the event as convenient as possible for the majority and, you never know, we may be able to organise a sandwich lunch beforehand!

**THANK YOU**

Operation  Smile



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Operation Smile was our Lenten Project last year.

# THANK YOU

## Tsunami Fund

*In January 2020, Michael Clendinning made his annual visit to the Tsunami affected region of southern Sri Lanka. On his return, Michael prepared this interesting account of his visit for those who had supported his Tsunami Fund. Due to Covid-19 and other circumstances, this letter has only now come to the attention of the editor.*

I am writing to let you know about the work we carried out in the Galle region of southern Sri Lanka, in January 2020. This year, I took £6862 to spend on our projects. I thank McCracken Memorial Drama Society, St George's Parish Church and many friends in Northern Ireland for contributing £5362 to the fund. The additional £1500 was left over from the 2019 budget. Last year, we were unable to start work on two houses where the ownership of the land was in dispute. These disputes have not been settled yet.

In the closing paragraph of last year's letter, I showed this photograph on the left and stated that, 'if funds permit, I will return to demolish this collapsing clay house and replace it with a sturdy, brick dwelling fit for the family of four who live here'.



And this is it!



I would like to record my thanks to a number of people who made this ambitious project possible. Priyankara, my local contact, who bought the required building materials, hired the labourers and supervised the construction. An engineer friend of Priyankara's, who supervised the laying of the foundations, without charge. Finally, our team of builders who worked in two shifts to ensure that the house was completed within a month. A spectacular achievement. Priyankara's contribution to our projects, over the last 16 years, cannot be overestimated.

Some Belfast friends took a special interest in this project. These friends raised the majority of the money - some coming from a sponsored bicycle ride, in Italy - and two of them came to Galle, in the last week of January, where they joined the householder's wife, children and a few neighbours at the opening celebrations.

At the time of the opening, the householder, Mr Piyadasa, was in hospital having treatment for cancer. Two months later, on March 24th, Priyankara wrote to me as follows:

*Two weeks ago Mr Piyadasa passed away. Before passing he requested to stay a few hours in his home. Therefore he was discharged and brought to the new house then 2 days later he is dead. The family was given their kind regards to you and every one who was supported to build this house for them. There was no shelter to keep his coffin if this house wasn't there. They said they are lucky to receive this house for them.*

I have been in touch with Priyankara and sent our condolences to the Piyadasa family.

The photograph below shows the Lakshita family, outside their house. Priyankara is at the right of the picture. In 2004, the family's house was destroyed in the tsunami. Four years later, a charity replaced the house. Now inhabited by the next generation of Lakshitas, the family asked us for help, because their house had become dangerous to live in: the wooden beams supporting the roof were rotten and two interior walls had developed deep cracks. We replaced the beams with good quality, properly seasoned wood and repaired the walls. Priyankara tells me that many houses built in haste, following the tsunami, are now displaying worrying signs of structural weakness.



Our next project was for the Ramani family. When we met the Ramanis, they were living in this wooden hut. Beside the hut was their part-finished house. Mr Ramani is a labourer, his wife, a qualified teacher. However, Mrs Ramani stays at home to care for their disabled daughter. Fortunately, the family is supported by a village co-operative. Volunteers from amongst the villagers are building the walls and laying the cement floors of the Ramani's house. We agreed to provide the roof and its supporting beams. Taken on the day we inspected the completed roof, the picture on the right shows



Mrs Ramani, her daughter, Mrs Ramani's mother and my two Belfast friends. In addition to attending the opening of the Piyadasa's house, these friends accompanied me on a morning of visits to completed houses.



Our final, major project was for the Nihal family. The Nihals have two sons, the elder is a disabled adult, in his twenties. Mr Nihal earns a living harvesting coconuts, his wife remains at home to look after their son. Prior to our completing the work on this house, the porous, corrugated iron roof let in rain water from even the shortest and lightest of showers. As a consequence, the interior walls were damp and speckled with mould. We



provided a new roof, replaced some wooden beams and rendered the exterior walls.

In addition to these building projects, we arranged for four families to receive monthly payments of £15, for the next year. We have given the Ramanis and the Nihals this money to defray the cost of the medicines they have to buy. And we suggested to Mrs Piyadasa, who works as a tea picker, that we would like to support her seven-year-old daughter's education. We also renewed a payment to an ambitious and hard working girl whom we first supported three years ago.

This year, we have helped four deserving families. They all live close to the breadline and, in addition to their worries about finding the next meal, two of these families have constant concerns about the health of a family member, and a third is adjusting to the loss of a husband and father. The work we have done this year, has enabled our beneficiaries to put into the past all their anxieties about the vulnerability of their dwelling. I hope you will agree that this is an achievement in which those who support the Tsunami Fund can take pride. Priyankara and I join these families in sending our thanks for your generous support.

I hope you have found this letter cheering at a time when all the news is grim and worrying. More cheer; my friends, who visited Galle last January, have already held a fund-raising event for next year's projects.

Best wishes

Michael

*Michael intends to go to Sri Lanka in January 2022. At St George's, we will support his work with Galle's deserving families by organizing a retiring collection next November. (Editor)*

## CONGRATULATIONS ON REACHING YOUR CENTURY

### W. A. (Billy) Adair



Billy Adair celebrated his 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday on 16<sup>th</sup> February and, together with the Queen and the President, we congratulate him on attaining this venerable age.

As a young man Billy worked for Ewatts, the linen merchants. But he then moved to The Queen's University where he lectured on Church Music in the Music Department. It was at this time that he was associated with Edith Devlin, who many St George's parishioners will remember, in many of her various ventures.

But Billy was not only a lecturer. He was a practitioner of the highest repute. He was the Organist and Choir Master at St James' on the Cliftonville Road. When this church closed he moved to St Mark's, Dundela in a similar capacity. Recently, with a number of others, he moved to St George's.

But Billy was no stranger to St George's. He would often come and listen to our choir, and he often has contributed to this magazine on a variety of musical topics. And as a first class organist, he served a term as President of the Ulster Society of Organists and Choir Masters (USOC).

So, to wish Billy many happy returns on his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, we have put his picture on the front cover.

We expect to have more articles, Billy!

## LENTEN LUNCH AND CHARITIES

A very big thank you for your support of the recent 'Soup and Cheese' lunch and for your generous donations to our two Lenten Charities and for your photos.

*Embrace the Middle East* is a Christian charity working with communities in many parts of the Middle East. Their Lenten Appeal 'Inspired by Hope' will focus on much needed services in the Princess Basma Centre, Jerusalem, which will support the families of disabled children who are unable to reach the Centre during the COVID pandemic.

'For Such a Time as This' is the *USPG* Lenten project supporting the Green Schools program run by the Church of South India. It provides educational materials for projects undertaken by young people in the fight against Climate Change.

The Lenten Appeal will continue throughout Lent so if you haven't made a donation but would like to do so, you can donate in the usual way by electronic transfer to the St George's bank account using, if possible, the reference Lent2021 for clear identification. (Sort-code: 98-00-10. Account: 09028029).

Or you can write a cheque to St George's Parish Church and send it to: The Hon Treasurer, St George's Parish Church, 105 High Street, Belfast BT1 2AG. Please include a note to confirm that the donation is for the Lent Appeal. Thank You.

*Judith Fawcett*

## PARISH CHURCH OF SAINT GEORGE: 2021 LENTEN QUIZ

This is the third St George's Lenten Quiz, of recent times at any rate. In past years we have charged you a pound for the honour of trying and have offered a very modest prize for the winner. The upside of this arrangement, and of the generosity of participants, is that the Parish has been able to make donations to WaterAid and to Operation Smile. During Lent this year, St George's is collecting money for the Inspired by Hope appeal run by Embrace the Middle East and for the USPG Lenten Appeal called For Such a Time as This. Full details, including how to make a donation, are on page 8 of this Magazine. It would be difficult to collect for the quiz in the present circumstances, so please just have a bit of fun with it, and if you feel able to make a small donation to the nominated appeals, then please go ahead. The answers to the quiz (*they will be published in the Parish Magazine at a later date*) are all **marine species**. Have fun!

Diane Patton and Nicholas Hunter

NO	CLUE	ANSWER
1	Disney 6: Bond 13	-----
2	King of the jungle	-----
3	May charge you a lot	-----
4	Sounds like an indigent canine	-----
5	Essential for salads	-----
6	Destroys above	-----
7	Mine's a pint	-----
8	Absorbing!	-----
9	I'm really struggling with this one	-----
10	Cheat	-----
11	Digits' end	-----
12	A fragile celeb	-----
13	We are mural!	-----
14	Fencing master?	-----
15	It's a pound	-----
16	Fathers and Mothers seek sandy residence?	-----
17	Child	-----
18	Iberian gunboat	-----
19	The fisherman's friend?	-----
20	In a fast car with a cup of char	-----

## THE BILLET DOUX

by Paul McLaughlin



Kipling was right when he described the differences between East and West. My darling, for that is how I thought of her, had the gently rolling Castlereagh Hills looking down benignly on her mother's neat little semi, while the hunched and humourless Black Mountain scowled down over my terraced home from a thousand feet.

Her estranged father, a dinosaur in the buttoned-up uniform of the Royal Ulster Constabulary, walked his beat close to her home on almost permanent border patrol between the two of us. I was persona non grata, although the Latin would have stuck in his gorge. No one was good enough for his daughter. Certainly not 'a wee Fenian' from a council estate.

The little resort of Ballyholme, along the coast from Belfast, had been our neutral zone. We walked its lanes and fields and salty, shingled shore, holding hands, her head soft against my shoulder, safe and secure. We were just Lorraine and Paul, not sons and daughters, not Protestant and peasant as her Da had called me and we talked of the future and how big and free it would be.

Lorraine had a telephone at home. Sadly, I did not, so for ten weeks her letter of love had arrived each Tuesday morning. A decade of the happiest weeks of my seventeen-year-old life. Perfumed with the magic of a rich and romantic bouquet of flowers, a hint of orange – I wish I could remember its name - it caressed our hall mat, small and delicate as it waited to be ushered into our dining room.

My father picked it up each week sniffing it like an over eager spaniel, waving it in front of his face like a fan. "Aye, the Billy Doo is right on time big fella and it smells like a Brisbane bordello"

I ignored his comments as always. His colourful language testament to too many years in the Royal Navy.

"That wee girl must be out a fortune for an eejit like you", he said laughing.

I had always considered him wise, but he had no idea of the power of love. He was nearly fifty for heaven's sake with no understanding of the affection we shared. Dad knew the expression Billet Doux. I pretended I did when he'd first used it, but my French to English dictionary had done the rest.

“And there’s not even a card on St Valentine’s Day” he said mockingly.” She must have spent all her money on that scent”. His words hung in the air like doubts as he retreated into the scullery to prepare my mother’s breakfast.

I tore open the envelope with a *‘who needs a silly card anyway’* and an *‘ours is not a one-day love’* silently playing on my lips.

I read its last line first as always and the fragrance of the *‘All my love, Lorraine’* in a flourish of her beautiful handwriting right at the end was a joy to inhale. I returned to the beginning to enjoy every treasured word, every shared syllable and breathed easily at the *‘Dearest Paul’* opening. Then a little faster through the *‘We’re from different worlds’* part and, with some considerable difficulty, as I had a real lump in my throat, at the *‘I’m too young to get into any kind of relationship’* bit. Tears fell heavily on the *“loveliest time of my life”* line, and a numbness crept behind my eyes as I read *‘Perhaps in a few years we can meet again’*.

I felt the pain in my chest and just like the songs said, my heart ached. It actually ached like a dulled blade had gone through it.

The letter lay on the table, pink and helpless as a newborn. But its work was done.

Over a cup of cold tea and under the scrutiny of my perplexed mother, I pictured my Lorraine on the beach at Ballyholme, the sprinkling of freckles across her nose, the blue-black of her hair spun like ebony in the wind. But I was not with her.

The longing gripped my stomach in a cramp, and I remembered her silly little romantic saying that *‘time fades everything except love’*. I had been faded.

I packed the Valentine’s card I had written for myself into my army surplus shoulder bag and headed off to school.



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## THE SILENCE OF ETERNITY by Billy Adair

Here is a question: When is a hymn-writer not a hymn-writer? Answer: When he is a Quaker, (for Quakers don't write or sing hymns, but do write poems).

The Society of Friends, or Quakers, was formed by George Fox in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, as a protest against the formality of institutional religion, with its outward forms, liturgies, ceremonies and sacraments. Its worship was marked by quietness, stillness and complete silence, until moved to speak by the Holy Spirit. No elaborate cathedrals or churches, no organs, choirs, music or singing; simplicity in everything, including life itself. That is the background in which 'Dear Lord and Father of mankind' was written.

John Greenleaf Whittier (1807-1892) a distinguished American poet, admitted, "I am not really a hymn-writer but a poet" so the 'hymn' we are about to consider consists of the final 6 verses of a 17 verse poem Whittier wrote in 1872, entitled 'The Brewing of Soma'. I have never heard of the stuff, but Soma was a potent drink made from a plant of the same name, brewed by Hindu priests, and declared to be the drink of the gods. It not only made one drunk but produced a state of frenzy, which led on to wild and sensual orgies.

In the first part of his poem Whittier describes these pagan writes, then asserts they were finding their way into the traditional worship of the Christian church! He castigates the ceremonial of the Catholic church, her priests, vestments, sacraments and incense, and also condemns evangelical revivalism, with its noisy songs and emotional preaching - to the Quakers and Whittier all sham religion. So he wrote:

In sensual transports, wild as vain  
We brew in many a Christian fane  
The heathen Soma still

Thank goodness he changed his tune and from the twelfth verse begins to describe what for him is Christ's religion. And so the hymn begins as we know and love it:

1. DEAR Lord and Father of mankind,  
Forgive our foolish ways!  
Re-clothe us in our rightful mind,  
In purer lives thy service find,  
In deeper reverence praise.

In the second line, Whittier did not write 'our *foolish ways*' but 'our *frenzied ways*'. To him true religion is not expressed in ceremonial, but in 'our rightful mind', with 'purer lives', and 'deeper reverence'.

2. In simple trust like theirs who heard,  
Beside the Syrian sea,  
The gracious calling of the Lord,

Let us, like them, without a word  
Rise up and follow thee.

As far as we are told, when called, the early disciples had no credal or ritual discussion, but left their nets, and without a word rose up and followed the Master. 'Simple trust' was all Jesus asked, and still does.

3. O Sabbath rest by Galilee!  
O calm of hills above,  
Where Jesus knelt to share with thee  
The silence of eternity,  
Interpreted by love!
4. With that deep hush subduing all  
Our words and works that drown  
The tender whisper of Thy call,  
As noiseless as Thy blessings fall  
As fell the manna down

Verse 4 is omitted from most hymnbooks, but 3 & 4 really belong together, emphasising the importance of silence to the Quakers. The Gospels tell us that our Lord, being human as well as divine, became tired sometimes and withdrew by himself to pray to his Father. What a beautiful picture Whittier paints here in pure poetry – the Son of God sharing with His Father, 'the silence of eternity', their communion 'interpreted by love'.

5. Drop thy still dews of quietness,  
Till all our strivings cease;  
Take from our souls the strain and stress,  
And let our ordered lives confess  
The beauty of thy peace.
6. Breathe through the heats of our desire  
Thy coolness and thy balm;  
Let sense be dumb, let flesh retire;  
Speak through the earthquake, wind, and fire,  
O still small voice of calm!

Here is another illustration from the Old Testament, like the manna reference in verse 4. In 1 Kings 19: 9-17 Elijah, after his contest with the priests of Baal, withdrew to the quietness of Horeb, the Mount of God. There God revealed Himself to the prophet, but not in the earthquake, wind or fire just quietly, in 'a still small voice'. Today God is still speaking to us His servants, when we are quiet enough to hear His 'still small voice of calm'.

I am sure most churchgoers love this 'hymn', but to approve or accept Whittier's form of worship, or his assessment of us as Christians, is another matter.

## 'HARD-WORKING AND FULL OF INTEGRITY'

*The following letter was received by one of the editors of the church Magazine from Mr James Little, a former parishioner of St George's and the editorial team thought it should be shared by everyone who knew David.*

Although Cathy and I moved to England again nearly seven years ago, we retain a remote interest in St George's. We were stunned and can fully imagine how shocked everyone in St George's must have been at the news about David McElderry's premature and sudden death, so we send our deepest condolences to everyone in the congregation.



When we moved back to N Ireland from England in 1995 after our first spell here, we knew how good the choir was under Nigel McClintock and were delighted that all three of our sons joined it. We knew Nigel (and Daisy and Jim Adams) already but nothing like as well as we did David, so it was terrific to find that he had joined the choir himself a few years earlier and was already a key member of the wider congregation and indeed the Select Vestry. David sang in the St George's Singers too for some time till he reached the stage where with work commitments he no longer had time.

In subsequent years we marvelled at David's commitment as under successive organists, David's loyalty to the choir never wavered. For example, he might have driven from working as far away as Limerick in order to arrive at the choir practice just in time, having had nothing to eat. He was always very encouraging to the young men who moved from being trebles to the 'back row', one of these being our middle son, Timothy who sang as a counter tenor beside David until he went to university and again during holidays. When David came to our youngest son, Alastair's wedding in Southwark cathedral in 2018 and was able to catch up with all the family in person again (none of us living in NI any longer), everyone was so delighted to be able to renew the old friendships.

Several generations of choristers have benefited from the example set by David, often simply by 'being David'; someone who 'did the right thing' was supportive, loyal and using his many gifts in the service of the church. He often told me how much he was enjoying still being in the choir and how much he valued the outstanding work being done by David and Maeve Falconer, including their innovation to cope with the Covid-related restrictions.

I first met David in the mid 1970s at *Music in May* concerts held in Ballywalter and Hillsborough. He had joined Wells Kennedy organ builders from school in 1973 and begun to study for the relevant professional exams. Much of his training was 'hands on' and Wells Kennedy maintained most of the organs used in those concerts, so David attended them all along with the owner, Christopher Gordon Wells. When I was appointed to my first post as Organist and Choirmaster in 1977 just before we were married, Christopher and David tuned the organ of that church, and then I had a very enjoyable number of years from 1979 at a church in Newtownards whose superb organ

Wells Kennedy had built recently. It was always David who came to do tuning and maintenance and our family friendship really developed from then. David and I were both members of the Ulster Society of Organists and Choirmasters (USOC) and it was through visiting various churches with Wells Kennedy organs that I realised more and more both how high were the standards of that firm and how much Christopher and David worked as a team as David's skills and knowledge rapidly developed. As is well known, David eventually became Christopher's business partner and then the outright owner of the firm.

David played a key part in Wells Kennedy quickly becoming the pre-eminent organ building firm in N Ireland carrying out significant restoration work and being commissioned to build brand new instruments. St George's members might not know that two of the largest new organs built by Wells Kennedy are in beautiful churches in Edinburgh city centre and David continued to visit there regularly to maintain these and others. He was held in the highest regard by leading figures there, not least by Dr John Kitchen, Edinburgh City and University Organist who I know has written to David's sister, Norah.

The work done by Wells Kennedy was meticulous, both in relation to the parts that could be seen and the many hidden parts. The skill that Christopher and latterly David brought to what is known as voicing of pipes led to instruments that produce really characterful and musical sounds. A particular feature of their new instruments was the organ cases so that they looked beautiful too.

Perhaps the pinnacle of the work that David could look back on with most satisfaction was the restoration of the organs in St Patrick's cathedral, Armagh and in the Guildhall in Derry, along with the building of a highly acclaimed large new organ in St Columb's cathedral in the same city. Latterly, David was asked to take over the maintenance of the two best known organs in Belfast, those in the Ulster Hall and St Anne's cathedral.

Christopher and David looked beyond their immediate work and devoted time to the Institute of Organ Builders, their relevant national professional body. It was through meeting several of the leading lights in this body during the Incorporated Association of Organists Congress which was based in NI in 2011 (where several Wells Kennedy organs were visited, and David provided invaluable help) that I heard first-hand how well he was regarded by his fellow professionals elsewhere.

David looked after his employees in what might be described as a paternalistic way. But no one benefited more from David's sheer kindness and compassion than Christopher Gordon Wells himself. Christopher suffered considerable illness for a prolonged period before he died in 2007. He had been widowed long since and his one daughter, Fiona lived in England, so David devoted an enormous amount of time to caring for Christopher as well as somehow managing to keep the business going and continuing to sing in St. George's choir. David's many friends were lost in admiration for his selfless dedication.

In time David was deservedly elected to serve a two-year term as President of the Ulster Society of Organists and Choirmasters (USOC). He carried out his duties with his usual pleasant manner, diplomacy, dedication and ability to engender good teamwork among committee members. I was fortunate to

be one of those committee members. Around then, I helped to run an annual series of concerts for USOC called *Spring into Summer* that ran for five years and involved both local choirs and organists (including Desmond Hunter, the NI world-class player who was a longstanding friend of David) and internationally known players from elsewhere such as John Kitchen mentioned above, Gerard Gillen from Dublin and Martin Baker from London. David attended every single one of the 15 concerts over that period, and, where appropriate, ensured that organs in churches being used were in tune. He was also only too happy to help with serving post-concert hospitality and would be among the last persons to leave after the clearing up (the mundane part!).



During the annual three-day visits to various parts of Great Britain undertaken by USOC, it is normal practice for the vote of thanks at each venue to be shared round various members. David was often nominated when a venue with a new organ or an historic one that had been restored was being visited. That was because his opinions were always so insightful. His aural perception was so highly developed that he noticed things many others didn't, yet he chose aspects to which to give particular praise and kept any reservations for private conversations. Also, he spoke very clearly, with great charm and with that characteristic twinkle in his eye-but that was David wasn't it?

I also remember well the knowledge that David quietly brought to short trips a small group of enthusiasts made over the years, one to Holland, one to Cambridge and one to historic organs in City of London churches.

David's contribution to church music in N Ireland was enormous (though he had wider interests too and regularly attended Ulster Orchestra concerts). Through the Wells Kennedy firm David became known to clergy, organists and office bearers of a large number of churches of all denominations. I've said quite a bit about what he did and a little about what he was like-but how to sum that up and leave nothing out? - 'Kind, tactful, loyal, modest, intelligent, hard-working and full of integrity'. He was also generous with time and money, usually very quietly. Others might think of additional attributes. Some of our memories will fade as is the case with everyone-but in David's case members of many congregations all over N Ireland (and beyond) will see and hear a reminder of David's skill and dedication every Sunday for decades to come. In our family and others, we have a memento in the form of the CD '*Sing my soul*' made in 1996 which features David singing in the St George's parish choir with two of our sons as trebles and the third as a bass-and with Cathy on some tracks featuring the chamber choir. (I was there turning pages for the then assistant organist, Chris Gray, now Director of Music at Truro cathedral!). We also have photos of David at some family occasions. It's such a pity that we must revert to memories already for David as he still had much to contribute-but he has left an indelible mark on our lives and on the lives of so many people.

*James Little, Epsom, Surrey. February 2021.*

## *Endpiece by Jo Calder*

### **Lent Now Cancelled – Will Easter Be Too?**

As we now know, Northern Ireland has had “lock-down” extended to 1<sup>st</sup> of April – and this is certainly **no** April Fool’s Day joke. I found it very hard when the Christmas Eve Eucharist 2020 had to be cancelled but had hopes we would have returned to a more normal way of life before Easter 2021. After all we also had most of our Easter 2020 Services taken away as we all were asked to observe the Government guidelines.

I missed not having Ash Wednesday Eucharist with imposition of Ashes when we would have been observing the beginning of Lent 2021. I know Fr Brian is doing his very best to put some form of Service online and observing each Sunday during Lent as he provides the Sunday Eucharist as well as having held an Ash Wednesday Eucharist online. I know we can tune into these each week, but I feel sorry for any of the congregation who does not have access to a computer at home.

I always look forward to Holy Week in particular – Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday Eucharist and the Meditations, Good Friday with the Stations of the Cross and The Three Hours, but particularly Easter Eve Eucharist when traditionally those being confirmed were presented. Last year they were unable to have this very important Christian “passage” taking place; I read in the February Magazine Fr Brian was hoping to ensure it would happen this year, and I know he will do all he can, though he also has to abide by the situation. And of course there is Easter Day itself, the most important of the Holy Week Services.

I am sure that, although at the moment we cannot be in Church to observe Lent, we will keep the words of Fr William very much in the forefront of our minds *“Lent is a time of discipline and self-denial. During this time we should make sure that we are hungry at some time every day.....”*. Usually I do give up something trivial for Lent, usually biscuits or chocolate, but after reading Fr William’s words I have been trying to do as he suggested and having nothing but a main meal in the evening.

As this was the beginning of Lent I decided to watch a programme called **The Road To Calvary**, which was narrated by Hugh Bonneville, the British actor. Before going into acting he was a Theology Graduate from Cambridge University. He spent two weeks in Israel visiting all the well-known places so familiar to us all. He

began the programme by saying *“this is a place where history and faith come together.. Whether you are a person of faith or of none, you cannot escape the fact that the last six days of this man’s life, and his death, changed the world. “I’m not going to chart the religion that grew out of these events. I’m interested in the events themselves: what happened in that final week of Jesus’ life, how he died, why he died and who killed him.”*

Mr Bonneville stated he felt in that single week the power struggles between the Jewish Elders and the Romans, the clashing of religious passions and the politics of the time all combined to cause the biggest event to change the world - the killing of Jesus. He discussed John the Baptist and the fact Herod wanted rid of him because of what he was teaching, that the Jewish Hierarchy certainly didn’t want Jesus to “usurp” their authority and take over, and it is thought Jerusalem had only been under Roman Occupation for 20 years when Jesus entered the city on the first Palm Sunday. According to historians who he interviewed Herod and the other Jewish “Aristocracy” all had beautiful mansions and in order to keep this form of life they had no option but to co-operate fully with Pontius Pilate, and Jerusalem had already been in turmoil before Jesus came to the city.

The programme also dealt with the Disciples, and the roles they played, their loyalty, and particularly that of Simon Peter and Judas. This led to a discussion of the theory that Judas had wanted Jesus to prove to the Jewish Elders and the crowds who he really was, and he had not wanted to be the one who turned him over to be crucified. I know this theory has been expressed before on many occasions. There was also a part dealing with the Synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, and how these differed from the Gospel of John.

During the documentary we could see the crowds in Jerusalem as it is today, and this was interspersed with how the city may have looked with its crowds back when Jesus was there. Some of the ancient sites are still there today, others have been turned into museums or sacred sites. The programme even showed an exhibit in a jar of a toe with a nail through it and is regarded as being taken from someone who was crucified.

I found the programme very interesting and was good to see how Jerusalem may have looked at the time of Christ. Again, not being a theologian I don’t have the knowledge to discuss all that was put forward in the documentary, but for me it was a good way to start the beginning of a less than normal Lent.

