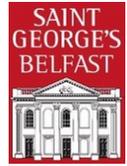


# The Parish Church of Saint George



## PARISH MAGAZINE

*An open door in the heart of the City*



The Transfiguration of Our Lord

**AUGUST 2022**



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Editorial Team: William Odling-Smee, Selby Nesbitt, Tony Merrick.

## From the Rector's Desk



Dear Friends in Christ,

As I write this, we have just enjoyed a wonderful visit from the choir of New College, Oxford. It was a splendid occasion, as the choir not only sang at the 11:00 AM Choral Eucharist on 24th July, but also gave a concert at 3:00 PM in the afternoon. 120 people were present at the 11:00 AM and I estimate about 150 or so were in attendance at the concert.

The choir was superb, singing music from the 16th century right up to a work composed just a few years ago by a doctoral student at the college. Despite the name 'New College', the foundation was in 1379 and from its inception, music was to play a key role in the life of the college. New College School was founded at the same time to provide choristers for singing the treble parts at Chapel services, and it also continues to do so with 14 boys accompanying the adult singers on the tour. The number of visitors at 11:00 AM and 3:00 PM suggests that there is clearly an acknowledgement and recognition of the value of really good quality choral music in Belfast. We have had other visiting choirs from Oxford, Cambridge and other English foundations, including a few Cathedrals. They always seem to draw quite a number of appreciative visitors. This is good and much to be encouraged as it raises the profile of proper, quality church music in an era when so much religious music is of poor quality, banal and sometimes of questionable theology.

However, the choir and music in St George's is also of the highest standard and probably amongst the very best anywhere in Ireland and certainly comparable to the highest standards in England. We all really need to do more to publicise the music in Saint George's and the very high standards achieved by David, Maeve, Daniel and the singers in the Parish Choir.

A new Girls Choir will begin rehearsals in September and hopefully before long they too will be singing at services. I would encourage every parishioner to pass on the word about our choirs and that people do not need to await the visit of an Oxbridge Chapel choir to be able to hear quality choral music in church; it will be there waiting for them on most Sundays from September onwards.

I am continuing to catch up with sick calls and visits to the housebound, despite losing a few days, mid-July because of a chest infection. Please do let me know (07902 792 080) of anyone you think would appreciate a visit?

Enjoy the rest of the summer and make the most of whatever holiday or break you may have.

Yours sincerely in Christ

*Brian Stewart*

## PARISH NOTICES

### Sanctuary Flowers 2022

7 August	Colin Young	In memory of his parents Margaret & James Young.
14 August	Helen & Richard Crowe	In memory of loved ones.
21 August	Carol Ward	In memory of Carrie Abell
28 August	Eleanor Maynard	In memory of Eric & Emily Boston

### EHOD: European Heritage Days

St George's will be opening its doors and joining in this annual event, celebrating local architecture, history, and culture on **Saturday, 10<sup>th</sup> & Sunday, 11<sup>th</sup> September 2022**. But we will need help! We usually break the Saturday into 2-hour slots for volunteer assistance and serve tea and coffee in the narthex. We also open on the Sunday from 2:00pm to 4:00pm. The event brings many visitors from near and far into the church and is a very rewarding experience. Please speak to the Churchwardens or Judith Fawcett if you can spare some time to help. Thank you.



The poster features a circular logo on the left containing icons for a globe, a smartphone, a laptop, and a microphone. The background is a blurred image of people. A teal banner at the bottom contains the event details.

# Kingdom Voices

Global stories of heavenly hope

An evening celebration for all, including input from Church leaders from Africa, South America and Nepal.

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## ECO-CONGREGATION IRELAND GROUP

### Small changes can make a big difference

By making small changes in how you use energy every day, you can save on your energy bills. A great saving for you. A great saving for the environment.

**Here's some quick and easy tips to get you started:**



**Thermostat** - Turn your heating thermostat down by 1°C to 20°C. In halls and bedrooms ideally, thermostats should be set between 15° and 18°C.



**Boiler** - Get your gas boiler serviced annually, not only will it be safer, but your boiler will be more reliable and run more efficiently.



**Kitchen** - Don't boil full kettles for one cup of tea, but make sure you have enough water to cover the element.



**Bathroom** - Take a shower rather than a bath, showers generally use 20% less energy than baths.



**Laundry**- Run your washing machine full load whenever possible.



**Lighting** - Always turn the lights off when you leave the room even if it's only for a few minutes.

### HELP YOUR LOCAL WILDLIFE

If you're feeling the heat, so is your local wildlife. If you have access to any outside space, here are a few quick and easy things you can do to help the wildlife around you.

LEAVE OUT FOOD  
FOR HEDGEHOGS



Use wet dog or cat food (avoid fish flavours). Their usual food may be out of reach deep in the cooler soil.

KEEP SHALLOW WATER  
DISHES FILLED



For birds, hedgehogs, bees and other insects. Use a shallow dish, or the lid of a jar. Add stones to give insects somewhere to land.

ADD A RAMP TO YOUR  
POND IF THE WATER  
LEVEL GETS LOW



If you have a pond, you'll be seeing the water evaporate in the heat, and steep sides make it hard for wildlife to climb out.

## East Coker by T S Eliot

In that open field  
If you do not come too close, if you do not come too close,  
On a summer midnight, you can hear the music  
Of the weak pipe and the little drum  
And see them dancing around the bonfire  
The association of man and woman  
In daunsinge, signifying matrimonie-  
A dignified and commodious sacrament.  
Two and two, necessarye coniunction,  
Holding eche other by the hand or the arm  
Whiche betokeneth concorde. Round and round the fire  
Leaping through the flames, or joined in circles,  
Rustically solemn or in rustic laughter  
Lifting heavy feet in clumsy shoes,  
Earth feet, loam feet, lifted in country mirth  
Mirth of those long since under earth  
Nourishing the corn. Keeping time,  
Keeping the rhythm in their dancing  
As in their living in the living seasons  
The time of the seasons and the constellations  
The time of milking and the time of harvest  
The time of the coupling of man and woman  
And that of beasts. Feet rising and falling.  
Eating and drinking. Dung and death.

*Submitted by Geoffrey May*

## THE RECCE

by Paul McLaughlin



My Dad says we are doing a ‘reconnaissance’ and must support our mother as we travel to a place she knows and loves.

He has to work the April Tuesday our mother has chosen to make the trip to Kilkeel in Co Down. It’s only 35 miles down the road, but nearly twenty years since she has set foot in it.

The advert in the morning newspaper had been short and to the point. **‘Cottage to rent, month of July, sleeps six, £20, viewing a must’**. A telephone number completed it.

My father had made the call and arranged for our pre-holiday visit to check it out. He called it a ‘recce’, a word I knew well from the War stories in the Victor boys’ comic, and that sounded like a proper adventure to a nine-year-old and a brother four years his junior.

The green bus pulled out of Oxford Street station, the pungent aroma of petrol competing favourably with the sludge smell of the low tidal river Lagan as the three of us were now joined by our Aunt Jean in two seats in the single decker.

We eventually headed across the river, passed through a string of picturesque and not so picturesque villages before coming under the shadow of the mighty Mournes and finishing our one-hour trip in the town square of Kilkeel.

The town was so much bigger than my little imagination could have coped with. Even in 1961, there were lots of shops and the Wednesday market had drawn customers from across the south of the county and beyond.

The sun was shining, we had the day ahead of us. What could possibly spoil our fun? Well, a two mile walk to our dream cottage certainly helped.

“Why can’t we get another bus, Mammy”? I said. Well it was more of a whine really, but my mother quick as a flash replied, “I used to walk this road six or seven days a week, sometimes twice a day when I wasn’t much older than you young man. Be glad this is only a one-off. Wait ‘til we come for our holidays.

“And anyway, there isn’t a bus to where we are going”.

I walked ahead in a sulk, my brother holding my mother’s hand like a traitor, our aunt Jean waving her hands and commentating on the journey. “Over there’s where the McManus’ lived, Sally. That was Mister Harper’s old house up on the right.....I closed my ears and took another bend that lead to another bend and then another.

“Nearly there lads”, she shouted and when mother hefted the heavy hold-all from her right to her left hand, I felt a sudden pang of shame

for my behaviour. And not before time.

“Let me carry that, Mammy”, I said, but she waved me on with a ‘It’s just around the next bend”.

My brother joined me as we broke into a run and passed the little sign that read Dunavil when the three white-washed huts, fronted by a tarmac carpark, came into view.

Dream cottages, hardly, but they were sturdy buildings with no fancy pretensions such as bathrooms or electricity, and as the smiling owner Mister McVeigh showed us round, he had called mother and Aunt Jean by their Christian names as if he’d last seen them only that morning, the two bedrooms and the family kitchen on offer, I knew we were going to be happy here.

I soon realised that walking was going to be one of our main pursuits for the month of July. We walked across the carpark, which my brother and I had decided would make a great football pitch, walked up to the lane that lead to the beach and right down to the back shore where a smack of jellyfish was basking in the sun like glass plates on a polished table.

The collective term for the marine animals came courtesy of a man who fished from the beach each morning. I can see him still, balancing a rod, a bait bag and a smoking pipe between long casts into the Irish Sea and still managing to smile and make time for an inquisitive boy.

The hunger of the world was on us as we walked, what else, back to town. The deal had been done, the month of July set aside to make memories that would last a lifetime. Tessie Clarke served braising steak and all the trimmings at her eating house in the square and just before the bus left to take us back to Belfast, I said sorry to my mother for the sulk. Recce successful.



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## "AT EVEN WHEN THE SUN HAD SET"

**Rev. Canon Henry Twells**

In the first chapter of St. Mark's Gospel we find a rather touching incident. "When evening had come and when the sun had set, they kept bringing to Him all those who were ill and demon-possessed. The whole city had crowded together to the door; and He healed many who were ill with various diseases and cast out many demons."

These then were the verses which inspired Canon Twells to write the once popular Evening Hymn:

At even when the sun had set  
The sick O Lord around Thee lay  
O with what divers pains they met!  
O with what joy they went away!

There we have it, the whole story with its sad beginning and "happy ever after" ending, all in the space of four short lines—but Twells doesn't stop there. He brings us into the picture and likens that needy gathering to the typical congregation gathered in any church on a Sunday evening.

Once more 'tis eventide and we  
Oppressed with various ills draw near;  
What if Thy form we cannot see!  
We know and feel that Thou art here.

This is the ideal, to walk into a church and feel the presence of Christ. It is easier to feel His presence when things are quiet. Here perhaps a bit of good advice from across the Atlantic would not be inappropriate:

Before the service talk to God  
During the service let God talk to you  
After the service talk to your neighbour

In the next three verses the divers needs of the congregation are listed - some are sick, some are sad, some loveless, some worldly, some friendless, some restless and none without sin.

O Saviour Christ, Thou too art Man;  
Thou hast been troubled, tempted, tried;  
Thy kind but searching glance can scan  
The very wounds that shame would hide.

I often wonder what are the thoughts of a Parson as he enters the pulpit and looks around the congregation. All such nice looking

people, sitting up in their seats, waiting for the text. But are we all as respectable as we appear?

You recall the incident in the O.T. when Jesse's sons were paraded before Samuel the Prophet and he was so sure that each strapping, up-right young fellow was the chosen one of God. But not so. They all passed by and no one was chosen. Then God told Samuel the cold truth. "You are making the big mistake that so many make, you are looking at the outside, at the respectable exterior, but I go much deeper, for I look right into the heart."

Thy kind but searching glance can scan  
The very wounds that shame would hide.

If the hymn stopped here it would be a pathetic bit of poetry, but it is the last verse which brings the comfort of the Eternal Christ, the same yesterday, today and for ever.

Thy touch has still its ancient power;  
No word from Thee can fruitless fall:  
Hear in this solemn evening hour,  
And in Thy mercy heal us all.

People of old flocked to Jesus because they recognised in Him a man who could do things. Here was one who dealt not in words but in actions. And that was the tragedy - "You came not because of Me but to partake of the loaves and the fishes."

Crowds often come because they want something from Jesus, not because they love Him, but to use Him. Few pray when the sun is shining on life, many when the storm is raging.

So whatever our need, our prayer should be:

"Hear in this solemn evening hour  
And in Thy mercy heal us all."

*Billy Adair*

## THE TIME OF MY LIFE by James Hardy

Oscar Wilde described a cynic as a person who knew the price of everything and the value of nothing. The midweek doorstep clapping in the early pandemic reminded us of the value (and values) of our NHS. I spent a decade as a GP and a decade in old age psychiatry, plus other years in hospice care and geriatric rehabilitation.

The pace of life and the modern 'infodemic'-often drive us into the worldview of Oscar Wilde's cynic-studying prices but disregarding values. My life experience in NHS medicine involved exposure to darker sides of human life; broken homes, broken families, broken marriages, broken bodies, broken minds, broken laws, broken systems, broken communities and broken teams.

Team conflict and friction is a sad reality in our broken world. I stay in touch with an assortment of GP team colleagues and it has been a pleasure to show English-Welsh-Scottish visitors the beauty of Northern Ireland and the magically transformed city of Belfast. These reunions are special and always a pleasure.

But doctors, nurses, social workers and admin staff, often report frictions which occur, even in high powered hospital teams, where high-tech work success can come at a huge personal cost to team members. Interpersonal frictions can be a stain on recollections of employment, supposedly in an environment where 'healing' is said to be the name of the game. Tragedies abound in medical life: the suicides of NHS friends, medical errors, well managed cases where deaths result (while major errors, by the grace of God, often result in no harm).

Life's roulette wheel throws up ever so many illnesses and accidents or traumas. NHS career life is a bit like warfare and similarly corners people, so that the great questions of existence cannot be evaded, or blotted out with sex-alcohol-illicit drugs-consumerism. Arch-Duke Ferdinand and the First World War killed European religion, where Charles Darwin and The Origin of Species was barely a ripple.

Suffering and pain more commonly force a change of worldview and life philosophy than intellectual factors. And that's how a new chapter in my life began. Weary and wary of NHS life, as a GP in a grim Welsh town, a centre of deprivation and crime, I sought somewhere free of heroin and needles or syringes.

The CalMac ferry slid up the fjord like sea loch off the Mull of Kintyre, taking me to a new and unknown life experience. The Isle ofIslay was a place of regeneration for me, different but very similar to



my upbringing in Portstewart. The stamp of Ireland and Irishness is written into the Islay landscape: the Gaelic names, monastic sites, churches from the Celtic era.

The modern dialect of English spoken is a fusion of Donegal, Derry, Antrim and Argyll - all horizons visible from the island. Tourism, farming and fisheries are important to the island economy, but the great powerhouse is whisky distilling - the recipe thought to have been brought by the Irish missionary monks - who also carried their language and religion to the West of Scotland.

My long forgotten and deeply challenged faith in people, in life, in morals and in the NHS, was rapidly revitalised during a time providing relief cover to GP surgeries on Islay. The dignity and calm of the people, both my clients and the practice staff, were a balm or a healing ointment on wounds from earlier NHS work.

But one experience will always stick in mind from among the consultation and referral or treat-ment activities my role involved. A night call-out on led to me fixing up an air ambulance transfer to Glasgow. Calling the central am-bulance emergency line, to log a request for air evacuation, had become mundane and boring, so that the structure-organisation-effort-energy-synergy and goodwill of a massive NHS team was being taken for granted in my mind.

But driving back from the island hospital, this all changed when the airstrip lights were suddenly switched on, decorating the Hebridean bogland against a darkening sky devoid of other signs of human life. Then I saw a tiny speck of light on the horizon, almost star like, which began to draw ever closer and closer, an ambulance plane from the Glasgow airport based air evacuation service for the Highlands and Islands. That memory has stayed with me as a reminder of the myriad of voices and fingers and feet serving the UK public in the NHS, a light in the darkness and a rescue package at time of illness.

Looking at the ambulance plane in the Hebridean twilight, calls to mind humans set in the creation and the amazing universe. Just

specks of leaf or twig drifting in an autumn flood on the river, or are they something more? The writer of Psalm 8 asks a question along these lines: 'What are small humans that any greater force or person might know about them, set in the grandeur of stars and planets, the sun and the moon?'

That's how a different vista opened up in my life at a possibly belated New Year party in the Freemason's Hall in Port Ellen on Islay. Being placed at the top table with the local Presbyterian minister was not my idea of fun.

But the seafood and dinner were superb, the whisky flowed and the conversation was easy. The minister gave an amusing short interlude type talk, about the cohesion present even in the most broken parts of life. Nearing retirement, he considered the impact of World War One and Two on his Islay parishioners.

For him it had become obvious how children separated from a parent or parents, by death or accident or war, inevitably come to see their unknown parent in themselves, because there is a purpose and a plan, plus a thread of value (sometimes hidden or invisible), which nevertheless interconnects everyone.

The glory of creation on Islay also had a therapeutic value to me, including spectacular places like the Oa peninsula, Gruinart loch, Beinn Bheigeir, Loch Gorm. But most of all Claggain Bay was a place of sanctuary, a beautiful, wooded beach and stream area at the end of a ten mile, 'C' class road. It was a joy to light a fire, brew some tea, watch the night come down and be disturbed only by seals or deer, or the elusive sea trout avoiding my flies.

One place on Islay, though, had an even deeper impact; the old Celtic Cross at Kildalton Churchyard, erected by Irish missionary monks or their followers over a thousand years ago. Islay sowed seeds which later sprouted, drawing me to consider how 'One-Solitary-Life' fulfils the greatest messianic prophecy [Isaiah's Suffering Servant prophecy] and to seek fresh pastures outside of NHS employment, to pursue ordination as an evangelist.

Perhaps the pandemic (and post-pandemic time) is drawing all of us to a time of greater reflection and reverence for creation, to live more simply and to be thankful for the so-called 'bare bone basics.' And maybe to reflect on how: "Ideas have consequence". We are fundamentally spiritual creatures and the materialism paradigm is a self-deluding fallacy. C. S. Lewis commented on how we cannot trust any of our thoughts, even the all powerful materialism narrative or philosophy, if we are only thinking what the bouncing billiard ball electronic impulses in our neurones are deluding us to believe.

# MUSIC LIST August 2022

## **Sunday 7th August \_ Trinity 8**

### **11:00AM Sung Eucharist**

Setting Merbecke  
Psalm 50: 1-8, 23-24  
Hymn **271, 492**

## **Sunday 14th August \_ Trinity 9**

### **11:00AM Sung Eucharist**

Setting Merbecke  
Psalm 80: 1-2, 9-20  
Hymn **180, 185**

## **Sunday 21st August Trinity 10**

### **11:00AM Sung Eucharist**

Setting Merbecke  
Psalm 71: 1-6  
Hymn **336, 378**

## **Sunday 28th August Trinity 11**

### **11:00AM Sung Eucharist**

Setting Merbecke  
Psalm 81: 1, 10-16  
Hymn **342, 186**

## Afghanistan – St George’s Fundraising From Donor to Those in Need

Fundraising for the humanitarian work currently underway in Afghanistan and in Ukraine saw a massive response from our supportive congregation - and no – this is **not** an appeal for further funds. However, it is an account of what followed when Douglas, our Hon. Treasurer, closed the Afghanistan Appeal and began the process of transferring the funds to UNOCHA, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Aid. This particular UN agency had been chosen since former parishioner Angus Lambkin was at the time working for UNOCHA as a Civil Military Coordinator in Afghanistan.

Despite much investigation, the transfer became problematic for St George’s, in part because the UNOCHA Head Office is in New York. Fortunately, UNHCR, the United Nations Commissioner for Refugees, also known as the UN Refugee Agency, has an office in London. UNHCR is the leading global agency for the protection of people fleeing from conflict and persecution and is promoting the UN Appeal for humanitarian aid to Afghanistan. At that point in time, part of Afghanistan had just suffered from a devastating earthquake which presented additional problems for those already suffering extreme hardship. Communication between St George’s and UNHCR was fairly straightforward, and the transfer of funds was completed at a very opportune time. We replied to a request to describe our church fundraising effort and asked for some more detailed information on how UNHCR is dealing with this crisis. The following is the account we received from Shazia Hassam of UNHCR Community Fundraising.

Thank you for kindly reaching out and for sharing more about St George's Church, Belfast's recent fundraising and reasons for supporting. We are truly moved by your support and for thinking of those who have been displaced by the crisis in Afghanistan. Afghanistan remains one of the most complex humanitarian situations in the world. Having been through more than 40 years of conflict, natural disasters, chronic poverty, food insecurity and, most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic, the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan has reached unprecedented levels and your support means so much, now more than ever.

The **widespread destruction** caused by the earthquake hit many already vulnerable districts in Khost and Paktika provinces, causing loss of life and homes, as well as the destruction of critical

infrastructure life health facilities and water networks. Findings of UNHCR's recent missions also confirm the extensive damage to basic services such as water, electricity, access roads in remote areas and health. Sadly, the **collateral impact** of such destruction is not only short-term – it leaves thousands vulnerable to further harm.

A multisectoral earthquake appeal was released by OCHA (including the needs of UNHCR), which is targeting **362,000 earthquake-affected people across south-eastern Afghanistan** with essential aid like emergency shelter support, food assistance, health support and protection.

UNHCR's role under this appeal is supporting the provision of emergency shelter and non-food items, with activities including support such as emergency shelter kits, shelter repairs, and core relief items. So far, UNHCR has already completed the distribution of **1,600 shelter tents and core relief items, benefitting 11,200** people in Khost and Paktika, as well as a further **1,500 dignity kits supporting 10,500** vulnerable women and girls in the two provinces.

It may be helpful to give some context and background to the operation's work so far this year prior to the earthquake of 22nd June. It highlights a number of key figures as of end of May including:

- **977,100 assisted by UNHCR** so far in 2022, including:
- **46,242** people provided with shelter support including emergency shelter kits, cash for shelter and cash for rent/shelter repair
- **56,000** people supported in **40 communities** with improved access to WASH (*water, sanitation and hygiene*) and infrastructure
- **179,000** people provided with cash assistance, including cash for reintegration into their communities as well as cash/vouchers for entrepreneurship and business support
- **14,000** people supported with clean energy including the distribution of solar equipment

Even prior to the earthquake, there remained a **43% funding gap** for UNHCR's operation inside Afghanistan as of early June, meaning that your ongoing support to raise awareness and funds for our response are continuously needed and appreciated!

Thank you again for your support, it means so much.

## GOD'S GOOD EARTH by Jo Calder

I was really delighted to read in both the April and May Editions of the Parish Magazine regarding climate change and the concerns of those of us here in St George's. Certainly, some of the suggestions regarding how to cut down on energy costs were very useful. I happen to be one of those who remember the days before central heating! My late mum used to tell my brothers and myself to go and put on a jumper. Thankfully I have the enjoyment of central heating, especially now I am older, but I am glad to say I concur with what was said in the April article about turning off radiators etc, and I do try not to have my heating on longer than necessary, or at too high a temperature.

I also enjoyed the article in the May edition about Jubilee Farm written by Geoff Newell, and hearing about the "Wildlife and Wellbeing" project. I so hope everyone enjoyed their visit that was planned for June. Of course, being a total animal freak, I had to contact Geoff, asking him to reassure me the pigs and goats were indeed being cared for to a very high standard. The UK has, generally an excellent standard of care regarding animals, compared to other countries, and has in place a very good Animal Welfare Bill, though there are areas which also need urgent attention. There are still farms in the UK where animal welfare is of poor standard, or is being completely ignored. Recently a Panorama programme dealt with what I regard as animal torture on a dairy farm in Wales. The programme could not show the whole video (recorded by an undercover investigator from one of "my" UK Animal charities) as the content was much too distressing to air before the 9:00pm 'watershed'. The same charity also filmed the dreadful cruelty to pigs and piglets on a farm in Scotland. This video was posted on Facebook, and is indeed both shocking and disturbing. So, I hope Geoff will understand and excuse me asking him about the animals on Jubilee Farm!

I give small monthly contributions to several animal Charities, both domestic and wild animals, and they would email me their newsletters and reports on the work they do. One big concern is animals of all varieties are losing their natural habitats due to human involvement, such as moving in on what used to be their land to build houses and for farming. Certainly, I appreciate people need to live somewhere (and I am concerned that homelessness still seems to be increasing), and we also need to eat (being a vegan, farms catering for production of all meat is, of course, less of a concern to me!).

During Covid lockdown all over the world animals were spotted wandering freely around cities and towns - no cars, buses, trucks or humans to annoy them! Foxes, sheep, herds of deer, to mention a few just in the UK; I remember seeing a picture of a fox walking past 10 Downing Street! I recall a news item where a herd of goats took over a small town in Wales. According to some experts, all sorts of animals

have become more “bold” now, even after lockdown ended. Sadly, a lot of companion animals such as dogs and cats who were bought during lockdown have now been discarded on streets, many literally dumped like rubbish in bins, and some animal charities are overwhelmed. I recently watched a very distressing documentary about abandoned dogs in Los Angeles; it focused on one of the animal charities who rescues them. Sadly, they had so many they ran out of spaces and healthy dogs had to be euthanized.

One of the charities I contribute to is World Wildlife Fund, who deal with many different animal species. I recently read their latest update, and, while some of the news was encouraging regarding endangered species such as Mountain Gorillas and African Elephants, thanks in part because the charity is able to employ Rangers to ensure poachers are not able to kill the animals, there is of course a great deal of concern regarding the on-going drought in large parts of Africa - the worst affected such as Kenya and Ethiopia, where there has been no "rainy season" for four years. Not only is this impacting on the vast species of wildlife; as of February 1.5 million livestock have died, and it was estimated that up to 20 million people could be facing starvation.

Very recently we have all seen and experienced the extremely hot weather - Northern Ireland recorded the hottest temperature ever, and southern England the same with the thermometer reading 40 degrees centigrade, again a temperature never experienced in the UK. I think it would be fair to say that there is something going on with the climate throughout the world. Bad fires in parts of the UK, with both vegetation and wildlife destroyed, and which we certainly do not see as a rule. Part of the problem is because the UK has never dealt with such extreme weather, the country as a whole is not equipped to cope. As a general rule, our homes do not have air conditioning, and we seem to be less able to deal properly with the general situation because it has never happened before. Even in other countries, used to hot weather, and have the facilities to cope, such as air conditioning, this summer so far also has proved trying for them. They too have had to try to combat wild fires which were worse than usual, and have also seen the dreadful results from lost homes to lost lives. Then, there is the horrendous situation of drought - I have already mentioned Africa, but other countries are now in a dire position because of lack of rainfall, whereas other countries have had to try to cope with floods that they have never had to deal with until now.

I know there are those who remain sceptical with regard to climate change, including ex (thankfully!) world leaders and current world leaders. Not being a scientist, ecologist or an expert in weather patterns, I still have to admit I have never seen such extreme weather before, and it does concern me on several levels. I worry so much about the loss of wildlife, animals, people....but it upsets me most to think that God's Good Earth may be destroyed, and it could be us humans who do it.