

The Parish Church of Saint George



PARISH MAGAZINE

An open door in the heart of the City



MAY 2025

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ST GEORGE'S BANK DETAILS (ULSTER BANK, DONEGALL SQ EAST)

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

From the Rector's Desk



Dear Friends in Christ

First of all, may I wish you all a very happy Easter as we continue to celebrate the Resurrection of Christ during this holy season. Easter continues throughout these seven weeks until Pentecost Sunday, which this year falls on 8th June. This year we have had the best attendance on Good Friday, Easter Eve and Easter Day for at least 10 years. There were around 25 people present for the Stations of the Cross on Good Friday morning, about 120 present over the three hours from 12 noon until 3:00 PM and then on Easter Eve we had 90 people in church when our Bishop was present to celebrate the Easter Liturgy, baptise 6 adults and confirm 11 candidates. On Easter Day, we had 20 present at the 9:30 AM Eucharist, 150 at the 11:00 AM Choral Eucharist, and 46 at Choral Evensong. These attendances were all very encouraging and bode well for the future. Those sceptics and commentators who were confidently positing the decline in religious faith and practise a few years ago may have to reassess their views. It also seems that from recent studies by the Bible Society and some of the churches in Britain, that attendances at church services and public worship has started to raise again. There has certainly been a significant increase in adult baptisms at Easter, with one Orthodox parish in England baptising 140 people this Easter.

Easter Monday brought us the sad news that Pope Francis had died. It was characteristic of him that, despite his poor health, he insisted on appearing publicly to give his Greetings and Blessing to pilgrims less than 24 hours before he died and to reaffirm his joy and faith in the Resurrection one more time before he left us to go to 'the Father's house'. I believe history will judge him well as one of the great Christian leaders and one of the most significant and important Popes of the last century or more. The reforms and changes that he initiated in the Roman Catholic Church, will I hope and pray, bear much good fruit in the years ahead. I think above all else, it will be his humanity, humility and personal goodness that we will remember in the future. He was truly the '*Servus servorum Dei*', the servant of the servants of God. For me personally, he modelled clearly the ideal of a Christian leader and the very best type of Primate that the whole Church of God throughout the world could identify with and in God's good time, reunite around. It is my sincere hope and prayer that his successor will be someone like him and indeed I also pray that those responsible for selecting the next Archbishop of Canterbury would study closely the example of faith, humility and service that Pope Francis has left us with. May he rest in the peace of Christ and rejoice in the blessings of 'The Father's house.'

I am currently bringing Easter Holy Communion to housebound parishioners. If you or anyone you know would like to receive Holy Communion at home or in a residential care or nursing home or in hospital, then please telephone me on my mobile 07902792080 and we can arrange a visit.

With every blessing and good wish for this Eastertide.

Yours sincerely in Christ

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brian Stewart".

PARISH NOTICES

CHOIR CONCERT

There will be an **'ODD CROCS' CONCERT** on **2nd May 2025 at 7:30pm** when the members of the choir will perform on their musical instruments and 'do other silly things'. **Proceeds will be in aid of Choir Funds**

NI HOSPICE DONATION



We extend a very sincere thankyou to parishioners and friends of St George's for their magnificent response at the fundraising event in the Parish Hall on Wednesday, 5th February. We were able to hand over a cheque for £1000 to a member of the Hospice staff. Thank you.

Dot and Judith.

PARISHIONERS CHURCHYARD CARPARKING (2025-2026)

The Annual Donation is now due from Parishioners who have a key fob to allow parking within the Churchyard.

The donation (NOW £50.00) is a gift for the privilege of carparking on one half day per week and should be considered separate from your 'giving' to the Church (ie. Standing Order or F.W.O.).

To renew please either:

Place the donation in an envelope clearly marked **'CARPARK'** together with your **'NAME'** and **telephone number/e-mail address** (for communication purposes) and place it on the offering plate.

Or:

Send by Direct Bankers Order to - Sort Code: 98 00 10; Account No.: 09028029; using Reference – **'CARPARK'** followed by your **'Surname'**.

Your donation will permit the extension of your admission fob which is due to expire on 30th April, and the issuing of a new parking badge for display on your vehicle.

Any contracts which are not renewed will result in the fob being deactivated on 31st May.

Any new member of the congregation wishing to avail of car parking within the Churchyard (*to a maximum of one half day per week*) should contact Roland Bailie: Tel. 07813 602122 or e-mail: rbailie6@gmail.com

A LIFELINE OF HOPE FOR AL AHLI CHRISTIAN HOSPITAL IN GAZA



Help Us Bring Care in Crisis



Your generosity helps hospitals and clinics continue their life saving mission by:

- Supplying essential medicines and medical equipment
- Providing emergency care for those injured in the conflict
- Offering maternal and paediatric care to families in need.
- Supporting staff who work tirelessly in overwhelming conditions.

Every donation you make sends a powerful message of hope, reminding communities that they are not forgotten.

“We’ve performed over 6,000 surgeries, seen more than 190,000 outpatients, and treated countless casualties. Our ICU operates at full capacity around the clock. We need your help to keep going.”

Dr Mehrad, Al Ahli’s Medical Director

Your support can make an immediate and lasting impact. By giving today, you will help sustain critical healthcare services and provide comfort to those enduring unimaginable hardship.

Your urgent action today saves lives tomorrow. Thank you for standing with us in this emergency.

“Every donation and act of solidarity not only sustains lives but affirms that compassion knows no borders. Al Ahli stands for everyone who has felt forgotten.”

Sawson Aranki-Batato, for the Diocese of Jerusalem

Our Lenten Appeal and Wednesday Collections have so far raised the magnificent total of £1850. Many thanks to all who have contributed

Brian Stewart

THE RAIN TREE

by Paul McLaughlin



Daniel's father died on a Friday. The announcement came in a stuttering telephone call, punctuated by throaty sobs, which cried out for a disconnection that didn't come. The conversation dragged on, one-sided – **his** – until the word “dead” made its inevitable appearance. I waited to make my move like a distance runner, a quiver of condolences ready to lighten the load, but the telephone went dead unexpectedly. My “sorry for your trouble” was left to wait for the wake, while my lunch of whiting fillets crowded uncomfortably on my plate like tiny tombstones. I pushed them away with disdain and rehearsed my anecdotes for the death house.

“Trust Daniel's dad to pop off just before the weekend”, I thought selfishly and then chided myself for my thoughtlessness. Poor Daniel. His dad was only in his forties for heaven's sake and fit as a fiddle. Well, maybe not so fit, come to think of it.

I skipped studies in the afternoon, feigning depression at the bereavement and promised my mother that I would get Mass cards for Mister McAuley.

“Don't go hanging about the town in that record shop,” she said, “And, Michael, stay away from the bookies. You're too young and too foolish to know better”.

I pocketed Mother's three pounds and sauntered off solemnly towards the town and the betting shop. The living must look after themselves after all. Especially the young and foolish.

Three quid and two losers later, I stopped off at the Waterworks Park for a smoke and a well-earned rest. The smoke was good and I remember it well. Those were the days before all the claptrap about cigarette smoking being the silent assassin. Not so silent when my dad's ‘wreck the house’ cough heralded another morning. Smoking was relaxing, suave, sexy even. Pity old Mr McAuley had been a forty-a-day man before the medical experts had broken the bad news.

“All the big film stars smoked like chimneys”, my own father had said through a haze of Senior Service fumes when he read the first of the “Smoking Kills” scare stories in the Sunday paper. “And nearly every one of them snuffed it young. It's not rocket science.”

Alder, birch and privet ringed the park lake like an autumn stockade of red, gold and green and along the pond shoreline their assortment of leaves gathered in their Sunday best. As welcome as confetti, but just as useless afterwards. The sun shone sickly and silvery away low to the south and toned in perfectly with a sky-high ceiling like

cloudy cement. A perfect early Spring day for doing absolutely nothing and getting away with it. It's funny, but I can remember it clearly more than forty years later.

I thought of Lorraine and her smooth black hair that fell like curtains about her gentle face. The fringe of freckles across the bridge of her nose, the manicured fingernails that scratched the back of my hand when we played fights on the beach at Bangor. Her legs were a little too much on the skinny side to let me introduce her to any of my friends, a sarcastic lot who would have made mincemeat of her but, just thinking about her Sherbert kisses brought a zing to my tongue.

Meeting her that Sunday was out of the question, now that Mister McAuley had died. I didn't know anyone who had died and I suppose that's why I took it all so flippantly.

I felt sorry for Daniel. I know I did, but I also envied him the Rover car that would surely now be his. It was only two years old with a two-litre engine and a walnut dash. So, what if it was called after a dog!

"We'll have some craic in that wagon," I thought, "It'll be Mike and Dan on the road. Like Jack Kerouac in white tee shirts and jeans, but having as many laughs as Bing and Bob."

Anyway, time is a great healer and Dan would get over losing his dad. Everybody did eventually. Everybody said so. I didn't relate the death in any way to my own parents. They were young for heaven's sake. Well not young, but they came from parents who had lived well into their seventies. They had a good thirty years or more.

Mister McAuley was just one of the unlucky ones. Unlucky and unfortunate to kick off just before one of my Bangor Sundays. I felt the wind picking up as I buttoned the duffle coat up to my neck and ran for shelter. The rain was coming down like stair-rods by the time I reached the Rain Tree. Never trust a cement sky, it's always likely to fall in on you, heavily.

Strange that I should remember it so vividly. Or maybe not. I had been playing in this park for nearly ten years and, given the climate in Belfast, I'd had cause to take refuge under that old evergreen more times than enough.

It sprouted from the side of the incline, giving the hill the look of a bent old man with his hat at a jaunty angle. Well jaunty, certainly, for a conifer. A bit like a Christmas tree that the children had knocked over in the festive rush for presents. Its canopy of leaves hanging out over most of the pathway. I huddled against its bough, sliding down onto my backside and making myself comfortable.

It smelled like the disinfectant mother used on the tiled floors of the hall and scullery. Fresh and clean and, I suppose, natural. Just the sort of smell the advertising men would latch greedily onto in years to

come.

I smoked again and thought how I could get out of visiting Daniel on Sunday. I'd go on Saturday and.....and nothing. My mother would make me go again after Sunday Mass. She had no fear of the dead or dying or the aftermath, as she kept telling me. She'd already said that she would be with me through this and I realised now what that meant. She would be with me at Daniel's house for the duration. Mass cards, memories and the complete medley of melancholia before and after the funeral and, possibly, for a few days more besides.

I dropped my head and rubbed my eyes until they burned. Lorraine would have to miss out this week. There was nothing else for it.

I sat there through three separate showers. Like a visit to the cinema in those days, and left where I had come in.....with the rain dancing on the tarmac, but the old Rain Tree never let me down. I had remained dry under its fragrant cover.

Daniel's house was like a two-day pilgrimage at Lough Derg. Miserable and near silent with forced conversation, faked humour, stiff upper lips and an arsenal of sandwiches and Battenburg Cake on offer for those poor creatures in the frontline.

Father O'Malley set the tone for the entire weekend; "Endurance of suffering is the way to heaven; only through sacrifice can rewards be attained". Even Mrs McAuley looked browned-off with him after the first three or four visits. Although the poor woman kept her own counsel.

Eventually, Mister McAuley was dispatched on Monday morning after 10 o'clock Mass with a dignity deserved by a lifelong member of the Confraternity. Fine words were spoken between hymns and the fond farewells followed the cortege to the cemetery in wafting clouds of Woodbine and Gallaher's cigarettes.

Daniel looked like a young Alain Delon that morning. Dressed in a black suit, white shirt and tie, he looked brave and almost continental. Even his black spectacles looked trendy.

Lorraine didn't write after that missed weekend. She took her skinny legs and heavily-freckled face - the memory does play tricks - her lank, greasy hair and dour Presbyterian personality elsewhere. And good riddance to her.

Daniel and I talked about his father's death eventually, but not until nearly twenty years later when we sat under the Rain Tree with our sons tucked under our arms like sodden newspapers.

He thought he had looked like Alain Delon as well that day and, somehow, in memories, long-peppered with guilt, that made me feel a little better.

“A HYMN WITH A PURPOSE” FROM THE LATE BILLY ADAIR

Quietly thinking the other day, it came to me that strangely, some of the deepest and most profound hymns were originally written for children.

For example, the wonderful creation hymn “I sing the almighty power of God” by Isaac Watts, was intended as a children’s hymn, and Mrs Alexander wrote two of her most profound hymns, “Once in Royal David’s City” and “There is a green hill” especially for her Sunday School children. Also, Bishop William Walsham How, who was known as “the children’s Bishop”, wrote his moving hymn “It is a thing most wonderful” for children.

“God is working His purpose out” is a hymn I have always respected, - a hymn with a purpose, the conversion of the world - and it too was written for children. The writer was Arthur Campbell Ainger (1841-1919), son of the Rectory, who was educated at Eton, and after graduating at Cambridge he returned to Eton, and taught Classics for the next thirty-seven years. He was a popular master, wrote many hymns and poems, and compiled a collection of Eton songs. His fine hymn “God is working His purpose out” was written in 1894 specially for Eton College, was dedicated to the then Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr R.W. Benson, who was a former teacher at Rugby School and Headmaster of Wellington College.

The hymn has been dubbed “Victorian”, but it has a strong purpose, a prophetic message, which we get in the refrain: “That the earth may be filled with the glory of God, as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11: v9 and Habakkuk 2: v14).

This is a positive, confident hymn, reminding us that this is God’s world, and He is in control, working and calling on one and all throughout the whole world to listen and act.

And this is precisely where we come in.

3. "What can we do to work God's work, to prosper and increase
The brotherhood of all mankind, the reign of the Prince of Peace?
What can we do to hasten the time, the time that shall surely be,
When the earth shall be filled with the glory of God as the waters cover the sea?"

4. “March we forth in the strength of God with the banner of Christ unfurled,
That the light of the glorious gospel of truth may shine throughout the world,
Fight we the fight with sorrow and sin to set their captives free,
That the earth may be filled with the glory of God as the waters cover the sea.”

But before we go much further comes the timely warning in the final verse.

5. “All we can do is nothing worth unless God blesses the deed;
Vainly we hope for the harvest-tide till God gives life to the seed;
Yet nearer and nearer draws the time,
the time that shall surely be,
when the earth shall be filled with the glory of God as the waters cover the sea”.

Some may consider this hymn as rather outdated for the 21st century, but the message is clear, positively clear, which is that this crazy materialistic generation needs God, and His glory in their lives, and as Christians, it is our job to co-operate with God to achieve this goal.

So, make this hymn a prayer - Your special prayer, working hand in hand with God, “Till the earth shall be filled with the glory of God, as the waters cover the sea”. Amen.

POETS CORNER

'CHRIST'S VICTORY AND TRIUMPH' - Giles Fletcher

IT was but now their sounding clamours sung,
"Blessed is He that comes from the most High!"
And all the mountains with " Hosanna!" rung;
And now, " Away with Him—away!" they cry,
And nothing can be heard, but " Crucify!"
It was but now, the crown itself they save,
And golden name of King unto Him gave ;
And now, no king but only Casar they will have.

IT was but now they gathered blooming may,
And of his arms disrobed the branching tree,
To strew with boughs and blossoms all Thy way;
And now the branchless trunk a cross for Thee,
And may,? dismayed, the coronet must be :
It was but now they were so kind, to throw
Their own best garments where Thy feet should go,
And now Thyself they strip, and bleeding wounds
they show.

SEE, where the Author of all life is dying :
O fearful day! He dead, what hope of living ?
See where the hopes of all our lives are buying :
O cheerful day! they bought, what fear of grieving?
Love, love for hate, and death for life, is giving.
Lo, how his arms are stretched abroad to grace thee,
And, as they open stand, call to embrace thee!
Why stayest thou then, my soul? O fly, fly, thither
haste thee!

HIS rarious head with shameful thorns they tear,
His tender back with bloody whips they rent,
His side and heart they furrow with a spear,
His hands and feet with riving nails they tent ;
And, as to disenthral His soul they meant,
They jolly at His grief, and make their game,
His naked body to expose to shame,
That all might come to see, and all might see that came.

*From a poem by Giles Fletcher
Submitted by Jack McCormick*

POETS CORNER

SONG ON MAY MORNING

John Milton 1608 - 1674

Now the bright morning Star, Dayes harbinger,
Comes dancing from the East, and leads with her
The Flowry May, who from her green lap throws
The yellow Cowslip, and the pale Primrose.

Hail bounteous May that dost inspire
Mirth and youth, and warm desire,
Woods and Groves, are of thy dressing,
Hill and Dale, doth boast thy blessing.
Thus we salute thee with our early Song,
And welcom thee, and wish thee long.



Submitted by Geoffrey May

MUSIC LIST May 2025

Sunday 4th May

Easter 3

11:00am Choral Eucharist

Parish Choir

Processional Hymn	463	
Setting		Mass of the quiet hour - <i>Oldroyd</i>
Psalm	30	
Gradual Hymn	119	
Offertory Hymn	457	
Communion Hymn	295	
Anthem		The Lord is my shepherd - <i>Goodall</i>
Recessional Hymn	466	

5:00pm Choral Evensong

Parish Choir

Responses		Ayleward
Psalm	86	
Canticles		Collegium Regale - <i>Howells</i>
Anthem		Greater love - <i>Ireland</i>
Hymns	113,118	

Sunday 11th May

Easter 4

11:00am Eucharist

Parish Choir

Processional hymn	332	
Setting		Stanford in C
Psalm	23	
Gradual Hymn	106	
Offertory Hymn	476	
Communion Hymn	272	
Motet		Ave verum - <i>Mawby</i>
Recessional Hymn	364	

5:00pm Choral Evensong

Choral Scholars

Responses		Rose
Psalm	113	
Canticles		Sumsion in G
Anthem		If ye love me - <i>Tallis</i>
Hymns	408, 480, 239	

MUSIC LIST May 2025

Sunday 18th May

11:00am Choral Eucharist

Easter 5
Parish Choir

Processional Hymn	401	(tune 311)
Setting		Missa Princeps pacis - <i>Lloyd-Webber</i>
Psalm	148	
Gradual Hymn	102	
Offertory Hymn	353	
Communion Hymn	374	
Anthem		A Gaelic blessing - <i>Ritter</i>
Hymn	485	

5:00pm Choral Evensong

Chamber Choir

Responses		Sanders
Setting		Murril in E
Psalm	98	
Anthem		O thou the central orb <i>Wood</i>
Hymns	345, 296	

Sunday 25th May

11:00am Choral Eucharist

Easter 6
Parish Choir

Processional Hymn	332	
Setting		Missa in Simplicitate - <i>Langlais</i>
Psalm	67	
Gradual Hymn	123	
Offertory Hymn		Christ triumphant
Communion Hymn	294	
Motet		Locus iste - <i>Bruckner</i>
Hymn	361	

5:00pm Choral Eucharist

Mens' voices

Setting		Merbecke
Hymns	118, 431, 399	

Thursday 29th May

7:30pm Choral Eucharist

Ascension day
Parish Choir

Processional Hymn	271	
Setting		Little organ mass - <i>Haydn</i>
Psalm	47	
Gradual Hymn	128	
Offertory Hymn	130	
Communion Hymn	295	
Anthem		God is gone up - <i>Finzi</i>
Hymn	443	

CALENDAR May 2025

May 4

THE THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

9:30 am

Eucharist: The Rector

11.00 am

Choral Eucharist: The Rector

Preacher: The Rector

Readings: Acts 9: 1-6; Revelation 5: 11-14; John 21: 1-19

Reader: *Wardens*

Intercessor: *Fr Tom Layden*

Servers: *Omolewa Akinyele, Agape Laoye, Tony Merrick*

Tea and Coffee: *Eleanor Maynard, Catherine Hunter*

5.00 pm

Choral Evensong: The Rector

Lessons: Isaiah 38: 9-20; John 11: 27-44 (Paddy Sloan)

May 7

ST MATTHIAS

10:30am

Eucharist: The Rector

May 11

THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

9:30 am

Eucharist: The Rector

11.00 am

Choral Eucharist: The Rector

Preacher: The Rector

Readings: Acts 9: 36-43; Revelation 7: 9-17; John 10: 22-30

Reader: *George Woodman*

Intercessor: *Janet Sandikli*

Servers: *Steven McQuitty, Mark Claney, Jonny Calder*

Tea and Coffee: *Linda McConnell, Yvonne Doherty*

5.00 pm

Choral Evensong: The Rector

Lessons: Isaiah 63: 7-14; Luke 24: 36-49

(Fr Graeme Pollock)

May 14

10:30am

Eucharist: The Rector

May 18

THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

9:30 am

Eucharist: The Rector

11.00 am

Choral Eucharist: The Rector

Preacher: The Rector

Readings: Acts 11: 1-18; Revelation 21: 1-6; John 13: 31-35

Reader: *Karen Brett*

Intercessor: *Janice Carruthers*

Servers: *Banji Akinyele, Janet Sandikli, Mark Claney*

Tea and Coffee: *Steven McQuitty, Keith Suckling*

CALENDAR May 2025

May 18

5.00 pm

Choral Evensong: The Rector

Lessons: Daniel 6: 6-23; Mark 15: 46 – 16: 8

(Fr Tom Layden)

May 21

10:30am

Eucharist: The Rector

May 25

9:30 am

Eucharist: The Rector

11.00 am

Choral Eucharist: The Rector

Preacher: The Rector

Readings: Acts 16: 9-15; Revelation 21: 10, 22 – 22: 5;
John 14: 23-29

Reader: *Mark Claney*

Intercessor: *Fr William Odling-Smee*

Servers: *Banji Akinyele, Tony Merrick, Jonny Calder*

Tea and Coffee: *Betty Flynn, Dot Lutton, Foruzan*

5.00 pm

Choral Eucharist: The Rector

Lessons: James 1: 22-27; John 16: 23-33

(Janet Sandikli)

May 28

10:30am

Eucharist: The Rector

May 29

1:00pm

Eucharist: The Rector & Fr Graeme Pollock

The Walsingham Group meets at this Eucharist – all welcome

7:30pm

Choral Eucharist: The Rector

Lessons: Acts 1: 1-11; Mark 16: 14-20

ASCENSION DAY

ENDPIECE by Jeffrey Johnston

GLADYS AYLWARD, PARLOUR MAID, MISSIONARY IN CHINA, WAR HERO.

In 1937 the Japanese army invaded China from the north. It was expected that they would capture Yangjeng in a few weeks. The Mandarin and his staff retreated to a village in the mountains where it was safer and Gladys did the same. The Japanese army occupied towns and valleys; they did not venture into the mountains where they were vulnerable to attacks by bandits or Chinese nationalists.

However, it soon became clear that the enemy would take the town in the next week. That raised an issue: what about the prisoners?

The brutality of the Japanese army was well known so they would be at risk if they stayed in the prison. The Mandarin therefore sent an edict to all the villages which said: if family or friends were willing to sponsor a prisoner, he would release him for a time into their keeping. Soon all the prisoners except two had found sponsors. These two had no friends or family willing to receive them, so Gladys agreed to sponsor these two last prisoners. They joined a number of children in her household that she had adopted.

Days later the Japanese airplanes bombed Yangcheng, as a prelude to capturing the town. When they did take it, they did not stay but moved on to attack another town. It was now possible for those who had fled the bombing to return to Yangcheng and it soon became a gathering point for refugees fleeing conflicts in other areas.

Among these some 200 child refugees had arrived over recent months. Gladys learned that there was a safe haven for these children if they could reach Sian. Madam Chiang Kai Shek, the President's wife, had set up a Refuge there for children, run by her "New Life" movement. One of Gladys' converts, Tsin Pen Kuang, volunteered to lead a group of 100 children south to Sian. The trek would take about two weeks and would be over the mountains, avoiding main paths and crossing the Yellow River before a train journey to Sian. He planned to return and lead a second group of a hundred. Five weeks later word came that Tsin Pen Kuang's party had arrived safely in Sian. However after some weeks passed he had not returned. Only months later they learned that on the return journey the Japanese had captured and presumably killed him.

With the Japanese troops infiltrating more and more of Shansi province, the window for escaping from Yangcheng was closing. Then an important message was sent to Gladys from the Intelligence unit of the nationalist army. It took the form of a poster, to be pinned the next day to the gate of Yangcheng. It read:

ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS REWARD

"One hundred dollars reward will be paid by the Japanese army for information leading to the capture, alive, of any of these three people: (1) the Mandarin of Tsehchow, (2) the name of a well-known businessman, (3) the Small Woman, known as Ai-weh-deh."

During the past months Gladys had got to know well an officer in the intelligence unit of the Nationalist army called Linnan. On her regular travels through the mountain passes, she had taken note of the numbers and disposition of the Japanese patrols. These she had passed on to him and his unit and he had found her reports valuable. Someone had betrayed her.

Reluctant as she was to leave a town which had so many memories for her, Gladys now knew it was 'now or never.' She decided to lead the second group of 100 children south over the mountains to Sian. She saw the Mandarin that day and he promised a supply of millet for four days of the journey and two coolies to carry it.

When they were told of the long journey ahead, the children were very excited. At sun-up the next day they were ready for what they saw as an adventure. The group had twenty older girls aged 13-15, seven older boys aged 11-15, the rest were 4-8 year olds. As they left the Inn of the Eight Happinesses, many of the children raced ahead, full of anticipation and following in the rear came the two coolies with their shoulder poles and the millet.

At the end of their first day they came to a village that Gladys knew and they met a Buddhist priest in his saffron robes. When he heard where they were going, he offered his Temple as a shelter for the night. This offered the children plenty of interest in statues of the Buddha and coloured pictures before they fell asleep.

The second night they slept in a semi-circle of rock on the mountain. On the third afternoon they met a man on a donkey, going the same way and he invited them to stay in his courtyard which they were glad to do. On day four the two coolies had to leave them to return to Yangcheng. Happily the man whose courtyard they stayed in, provided a coolie who would carry what was left of the millet for a day further. The next two nights were spent on the mountain.

Day seven found Gladys and the children in an area unknown to her and spirits were low. From the younger children there was a constant chorus of: "Ai-weh-deh, I'm hungry." "Ai-weh-deh, I'm tired." "Ai-weh-deh, will you carry me?" "Ai-weh-deh, how far is it to the Yellow River?"

They reached the village of Kuan Ku but there was an eerie silence there. The village was deserted. An old man told them it was three miles to the Yellow River but everyone had fled across it to safety from the Japanese army. He said all the boats were gone.

The next day they reached the Yellow River. They spent three days there in a hollow near the river bank and the old man was right: there were no boats. They had no place to go and it seemed no hope.

(To be continued.)

