

Groomsport Parish Church

CONTACT

September - October 2021
groomsportparishchurch.org

THEN SINGS MY SOUL

*How great
thou art*



Church Officials



Rev Duncan Pollock

Rector of Groomsport Parish Church

028 9146 4476

Rector's Hour

There is no Rector's hour at present due to social distancing rules. It will resume as soon as it is safe to do so.

Rector's Recess

Whilst our Rector is always available to his congregation at all hours of every day, it is hoped that, where possible, the period between lunchtime Friday and Sunday Services may be void of contact so as to allow him family time, quiet reflection and preparation for the week ahead; emergency requirements and visits excepted.



From the Rector

Not for the first time in my life, I am defying received wisdom. I am immersing myself in the world of Harry Potter, even though J K Rowling is now off-limits to the cognoscenti. According to social media, J K Rowling has been "cancelled". Her views on transgender issues are, apparently, beyond the pale, cruel, disrespectful to those people struggling with their gender identity and sexuality. J K Rowling's "crime" has been to suggest that men can never truly be women and that to suggest otherwise is to do a great disservice to half of the world's population.

Being a white, middle-aged, straight, Christian bloke, I, of course, would have no understanding of the pain that transgender people suffer when people don't take them and their issues seriously. Actually, my heart goes out to them, to anyone who is struggling with crises of identity. Indeed, I think it is one of the things the Church can bring to the discussion of personal identity. Individual Christians are still struggling with the reality of persecution, physical abuse and death simply for identifying as Christian. I remember vividly the abuse I received for

going to Church as a young man; “What?! You don’t really believe in all that rubbish, do you?” Holy Joe, Bible Basher, Padre £*&”% , a religious maniac, are some of the politer terms used against me, but as the old playground chant puts it so succinctly, “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but your words will never hurt me.” Of course, words do wound and they do hurt, but you learn to live with peoples’ ignorance and unkindness. It is not so easy to live with their physical abuse. Pray for the poor people of Afghanistan as the Taliban clamp down on free speech, female education, female rights of any sort really, freedom of faith, freedom full stop. Go into the centre of Kabul or Jellalabad and see how long you can proclaim Christ crucified and risen.

As I get older, I can’t help but feel that some in the west are more than a little self-indulgent in demanding their rights. They are very demanding of others to accept them and their beliefs. “We have our rights and we will trample over anyone who either ignores us or disagrees with us”. Well, that’s me told! Of course, what I cannot fathom is the lack of respect for others implied by their hostility. Is there no reciprocal responsibility to engage with others who might disagree with you? Like J K Rowling? Apparently not; we are to accept the new orthodoxy whether

we like it or nor not. Just as, I suppose, ordinary Afghans will have to accept the barbarous rule of the Taliban, whether they like it or not.

I do try to keep an open mind on those issues which are so difficult: human sexuality, gender identity, sexual freedoms, abortion, euthanasia, and on and on and on until my mind’s in a whirl. Life has never been a simple matter of black and white. Life is varying shades of grey and there is very little that is definitely right or definitely wrong. One of the few things that can be said to be definitely right is our Lord’s command to love one another as he has loved us. Or, St Paul’s injunction to be, “kind to one another”. But of course, those are Christian sentiments and must, therefore, by definition, be wrong!

In the meantime, the social media campaign against the likes of J K Rowling continues with no kindness, no love, just bitterness and bile. Being me, I will ignore such bigots and continue to indulge myself in the world of Harry Potter. J K Rowling’s views on gender identity may not be woke or politically correct, but she writes a cracking good tale!

Duncan

Your Magazine

Groomsport Parish Church must be the only church in Northern Ireland with a cat fan club! We received a fan letter from a cat called Merlin, and he lives in England with his human, Lesley. I am very grateful for the correspondence and although I am not always good at replying to letters, they are appreciated all the same. So to Merlin in England, Gordon (the Ginger cat) and his human, Amanda, say 'hello'!



You will be captivated by Maggie Smith's tales from Hong Kong, so interesting they were, I have decided to hold some back for the next issue too. Thanks to Trevor Smith, there are 'old' cars, and it's funny because I had no idea that Trevor was a car enthusiast until I received this article.

Thank you, to Zandra Sloan, who once again has helped to collate the articles and thanks also to Reverend Pollock for proofreading.

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The Rector's Warden

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Vestry Minutes

Barry Greenaway was thanked for managing to secure £1,500 from All Churches Trust to cover almost half of the cost of the new intruder alarm at the Church.

Work is ongoing in the two sub-committees led by Mae Burke and Dorothy McKnight – role management and the Rectory, respectively.

Zandra and Amanda have been working hard on the website for the OMA Foundation for Chris Dima in Uganda.

The Church silver has now been valued and Florence has been in touch with the insurance company.

East Down Construction hope to begin work on the Maxwell Hall towards the end of August.

William is hoping that the new storage shed behind the halls will be available by the end of August.

The architect is arranging quotes to address the flaking sandstone in the Church Halls.

Mae has successfully arranged for the creation of two new church hymn boards. The car washes did not take place due to a shortage of volunteers. Thanks were expressed to Tony Anderson for all his efforts with live streaming.

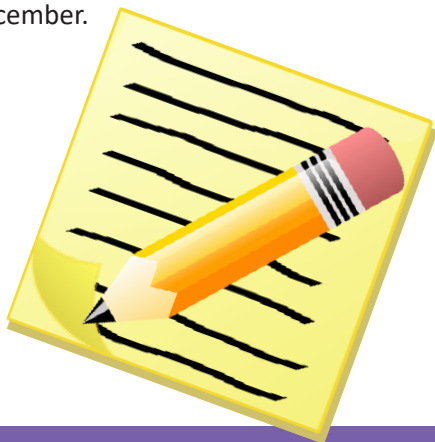
The Rector led a discussion on his plans to

return to Sunday services in Church from the beginning of September and on how to continue to keep people safe. Compline and Bible Study will remain at either end of the Canon Tyney Hall. Thursday Communion will be in Church.

In response to the Bishop's request to focus on children, the Rector has met with Maggie about children having 'Messy Church' for an hour on Sunday afternoons. It is hoped that the Bishop will lead a Confirmation Service in our Church in May 2022 for children and adults.

At next September's meeting we will discuss how we can gradually return to socialising and group activities in the Halls. Enquiries will be made about using buses for the Parish Pilgrimage to Saul on Advent Sunday.

Maureen, our Events Coordinator, advised the Vestry there will be two outdoor book sales on the last two Saturdays in August. This year's Christmas Fair will be an alternative Fair as last year on 17 December.



From The Registers

Holy Baptism

Theodore Boyd - 3rd July

Theodore is the son of Gillian Boyd, the grandson of Gordon and Michelle Boyd, long time residents of Groomsport and loyal members of our congregation. Little Theodore holds the record of being the heaviest infant the Rector has ever baptised!

Charlotte Morrow - 18th July

Charlotte is the daughter of Emma and Aaron Morrow. In turn, Emma is the daughter of Robert and Phyllis Navan, who live in Orlock. It was lovely to welcome Emma and Aaron back, (they having married in Groomsport Parish Church a couple or so years ago), for such a lovely family occasion.

Emily Ferguson - 25th July

Emily's baptism had been planned for a couple of years. Alas, Covid and family tragedy delayed her baptism for quite some time. Many of you will remember Emily's grandfather, Berry, who was such a loyal friend to Groomsport Parish. It was lovely to have June with us for Emily's baptism.

"The God of all grace, who has called these little ones into his eternal glory in Christ Jesus, establish, strengthen and settle them in the faith."

Holy Matrimony

Carl McClean and Brogan Kerr
26th June

After so many delays because of the pandemic, it was a joy to eventually solemnise the marriage of Carl and Brogan. Carl and Brogan are firm members of our six o'clock services. Carl is a local man and Brogan is from south Wales. It was a lovely afternoon and the weather was perfect! We pray God's blessing on them in their new life together.

Holy Rest

Christopher Thompson - 30th June

Poor Christopher. He was involved in the Kegworth air tragedy on 8 January 1989. He sustained brutal injuries and it is said he was the last survivor to be pulled from the wreckage. He was a successful local business man, but the memories of Kegworth were never far from him. Not surprisingly, Chris battled his demons and his memories. He passed away in his sleep. Our thoughts go out to Liz and her family.

Michael Wilson - 2nd August

Michael was a well known "character" around Groomsport. He and his wife Eve settled into the old Coastguard Station at Orlock some twenty years or so ago. Michael's wife Eve was a much loved member of our congregation until her death some ten years ago. Michael, a bright, talented and accomplished man, never fully recovered from the blow. We remember Gillian, Heather and David in our prayers.

Heather Little - 18th August

Although Heather had spent the last years of her life in Edgewater Nursing Home, she was a well known figure in Groomsport. She and her husband Wilson settled in the village, living on Springwell Crescent. It was a joy to see Heather at the wedding of her son Jonathan to Tanya, and a joy, too, to welcome her into our congregations. Alas, dementia took her into Edgewater where she quickly settled. Remember Jonathan, Tanya and the wider family in your prayers.

Dougie McOwat - 19th August

There was a large turnout of old soldiers for Dougie's funeral at Clarke's Newtownards Road. He had been a member of the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers and as so many

soldiers of a certain age, he had spent time in Northern Ireland. On one such posting he met the love of his life, Angela. He settled here on leaving the army, and for many years he was a ranger in Crawfordsburn Country Park. Our hearts go out to Angela and their daughter, Natalie.

William Page - 27th August

William was brother-in-law to Stanley and Maureen Walker, late of Andrew's Shorefield. He had his own gardening business, and judging by his garden in Windsor Park, his family home, he must have been born with the greenest of green fingers. We extend our sympathy to Lorraine, his widow, Jonathan Philip and Catherine, his children.

Services For September & October

Sunday

05

Sept

Trinity 14
Mothers' Union

8:30 am Holy Communion
10:30 am Service of the Word
6.00 pm Evening Prayer: Mothers' union
Annual Service

Sunday

12

Sept

Trinity 15

8:30 am Holy Communion
10:30 am Parish Communion
6.00 pm Compline

Sunday

19

Sept

Trinity 16

8:30 am Holy Communion
10:30 am Service of the Word
6.00 pm Holy Communion

Sunday

26

Sept

Trinity 17
Cockle Island Boat Club

8:30 am Holy Communion
10:30 am Morning Prayer
6.00 pm Service of the Word: Cockle
Island Boat Club end of Season
Service.

Sunday
03
Oct

Trinity 18 Harvest Thanksgiving

8:30 am Holy Communion
10:30 am A Service of thanksgiving
6.00 pm Evening Prayer for Harvest,
joined by our friends from
Groomsport Presbyterian

Sunday
17
Oct

Trinity 20 St Luke

8:30 am Holy Communion
10:30 am Service of the Word
6.00 pm Evening Prayer

Sunday
31
Oct

The Fourth Sunday before Advent

8:30 am Holy Communion
10:30 am A Service for All saints' Tide
6.00 pm Compline

Sunday
10
Oct

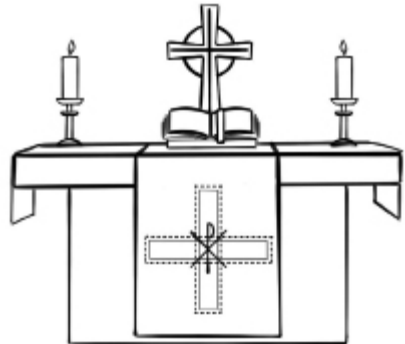
Trinity 19

8:30 am Holy Communion
10:30 am Parish Communion
6.00 pm Compline

Sunday
24
Oct

The Fifth Sunday Before Advent

8:30 am Holy Communion
10:30 am Morning Prayer
6.00 pm Holy Communion



Every Wednesday, Compline will be said in the
Canon Tyney Hall at 7:30 pm.

After Compline, Bible Study will be in
Canon Tyney Hall at 8:15 pm.

Every Thursday, Holy Communion will be celebrated in
Church at 11:00 am.

Tales From The Archives

September 2021

Developing an effective Archive depends greatly on the willingness and generosity of people in donating items and information or sending copies of documents etc. which they wish to keep. Providing a record generation by generation for those yet unborn can be described as a sacred duty, but an archivist is simply the current custodian: what he or she can acquire and collect of their own volition is limited. So much more depends on the people for whom the archive was created: in our case Groomsport Parish, Village and District. Please spend a little time during any one year seeking out anything that will add to our record of this special place. Nothing is unimportant and everything will be acknowledged.

Here is a random selection from the archival collections.

Select Vestry Minutes 1871 – 2021, 1923-29 missing, 1998-09 incomplete.

Marriage Registers 1869 – 2003, Register 2003 onwards still in use by the Parish.

Baptismal Registers 1876 – 2004, Register 2004 onwards still in use by the Parish.

Cradle Rolls: photographs available of all current entries.

Press Cuttings (Groomsport & District) 2014 – date.

There are records of earlier events which are catalogued separately.

Maxwell and Perceval Maxwell Family Papers (copies).

Digital Exhibition of Archive Artefacts 1625 – present.

Photographic Archive of Village and Parish Around 2000 photos and digital images including historic items: also 12 GB of photos from annual events since 2013.

The two Histories of Groomsport Parish by C.D. Patterson (1934) and R.M. Mowat (1992). These provide a wealth of information and images of the Parish since its foundation in 1842 and of the Village from long before.

The Visitor's Book in the Parish Church Porch. This has entries from every continent on Earth.

I am happy to carry out searches and make available items on request (subject to any legal restrictions and the Archivist's discretion).

My email address is barry@groomsportparishchurch.org, or messages can be left at the Parish Office during office hours. There is also a contact messaging service on our website.

Barry

Trevor Smith



Trevor Smith was born in County Armagh; he grew up in north Belfast with the Cavehill providing a natural environment for years of cubbing and scouting.

Please introduce yourself

Rosemary and I have been married forty-seven years and we have two sons, one daughter and three grandchildren. I spent my entire working life teaching in Newtownards, but I discovered retirement seventeen years ago and have never looked back.

Do you have any particular interests?

Visiting family in their respective homes, namely north of Aberdeen, York and Singapore. The latter has the advantage of a super climate and

a totally different outlook on life, whereas visiting the first two can often be combined with our love of camping, caravanning, and enjoying the great outdoors.

Playing golf on a regular weekly basis used to be important, but since covid related restrictions, I have become used to the idea of playing less frequently.

I started playing the violin as a child but quickly realised that I would never make the grade as a soloist, although I thoroughly enjoyed playing in orchestras. It was not until my more senior years that I realised there is a whole world outside classical music where people like to play tunes for want of a better description. For the last five or six years, I have had the great pleasure of playing with the Raving Micks, who have the ability to cope with any of my incidental notes or, should that be accidental.

I originally trained as a mathematics teacher; I also had an interest in engineering workshop theory and practice along with technical drawing, in an era when the Arts and Crafts Movement was still fighting the battle to perpetuate traditional skills, a battle

sadly now well and truly lost. The ability to make something properly still gives me immense pleasure, whether it be an oak dresser, a violin or rebuilding 1920s cars.

Your interest in rebuilding 1920s cars sounds fascinating. What sparked your interest in doing this?



enthusiasm when he bought his first post-war car, albeit second hand, a Hillman Minx with a horrendous column gear change, how could he? It was at that point our interests failed to coincide, he sought to move forward, but I dreamed of proper cars with leather upholstery, vertical radiators and more importantly, each make with its own distinctive engine note.

Although I began driving while still at primary school, I didn't get my first car until I was 12 years old, a well-worn 1933 Singer Le Mans. Fortunately, our house had a sufficiently long run from back to front to get into second gear, but there was no space to turn at the front, so I became quite good at reversing. My first road-legal car had to wait until student years when I built a fibreglass bodied Ford special, which was popular at the time. After three years and thousands of interesting miles, always with a full toolkit and often a hike tent, I became the proud owner of a ten-year-old Mark 1 Austin Healey Sprite.

Both sets of grandparents lived in south Armagh and my father always maintained that the only practical way for us to visit them as a family was by car. The truth is that my father loved cars and was particularly good at improving the condition of any of the pre-war cars he owned. I distinctly remember my disappointment at his

I then progressed through the various levels of sports cars, culminating in an MGB but eventually, the need to find the deposit for a house introduced me to the real world. A year prior to this I had bought my first proper vintage car, a very tired 1929 Austin 7 tourer sometimes referred to as a Chummy. I spent the next few years restoring



the A7, which I still drive frequently in competitive vintage car club events. I should explain that the term vintage refers to cars built before January 1931, which does not change. Competitive events range from pure speed such as hill climbs to timed autotests, timed navigational rallies, and finally, trials mostly held during the winter months.

What car are you rebuilding at present? Tell us about it.

During the latter part of the last century and early part of this one, I played my violin in Kilmood Parish Church Hall on a Monday evening. During the supper break, a member of the audience told me he had been offered a 1929 MG M type which had belonged to his friend who had died. His son wanted him to buy it or suggest a suitable buyer who



would be prepared to rebuild it and keep it rather than a dealer interested only in its monetary value. The car was in a terrible state (see the photo of the green car beside an earl Mini), but mechanically it was correct with chassis and engine numbers matching the original MG brass plate on the scuttle. The body was obviously wrong and well past its sell-by date, so not important.



MG cars of the 1930s are relatively easy to restore because many professional restorers mass-produce replica parts. Unfortunately, the pre-1930 cars were not produced in great numbers, so it is not economically viable to reproduce parts. Because the car did not fall into the category of being a "cheque book rebuild" I was able to buy it in 2001. I wonder if my schoolboy idol Yehudi Menuhin ever got a vintage car by playing his violin.



The years between have been filled with a mixture of rebuilds and competitions as well as organising an event for the Lea -Francis club who came here from England, Scotland and the USA. We all stayed in the Crawfordsburn Inn, which is still being praised for its hospitality.

Do you have a favourite car out of all the ones you have restored?

That is like asking if I have a favourite child, of course I don't; they are all so

different and loved for their individuality. In the case of cars, it has absolutely nothing to do with monetary value or aesthetics or even performance.



What would you most like to do if you had the chance?

Finish rebuilding the M type and win a club event with it and continue to live life to the full for as long as possible.



Adapting To Life In Hong Kong

This article has been sent in by Maggie Smith. This very interesting account of life in Hong Kong is part one, you can read part two in the next issue of the Contact.

Our wedding was on the day that England won the World Cup, 30 July 1966, and believe it or not, it was eighteen months before we actually lived together due to Bert's operational posting to Aden and the lack of married quarters in Pirbright, where the battalion was stationed. When we finally co-habited in January 1968, Bert's variety of postings resulted in us having to move home five times by 1970. High on the list of necessary attributes for military wives is the need to be self-sufficient and have the ability to adapt to change smoothly; these requirements had already been tested and proved by October 1970 when we embarked upon our sixth move. This time, to Hong Kong for two years. Both of our children had been born in July within one year of each other; Julie was aged three years and three months and Paul was two years and three months at the time of our most exciting relocation. Direct flights to Hong Kong were not possible at that time, so it was a long twenty-nine-hour journey, stopping at Cyprus, Bahrain, the Indian Ocean island of Gan and Singapore.



Landing at each of these places increased my anticipation and excitement, but my night-time arrival in Hong Kong exceeded all of my expectations.

The flight path into the old Kai Tak International Airport was a vision. On the descent, the RAF VC10 seemed to skim the rooftops of the skyscrapers on Hong Kong Island, the array of colours from neon lighting was dazzling and all passengers on board were aroused to fever pitch cheering as we hit the tarmac. In addition, Bert and I were the proudest parents of two of the youngest and two best-behaved children on the flight. Of course, we were biased!

My initial impression whilst descending the gangway is still etched firmly on my mind. Firstly, I experienced that distinctive gush of night-time hot air enveloping my body together with unfamiliar scents of spices, food preparation and vegetation. Then again, I was entranced by the vibrant array of colours as a backdrop. Much of the clamour of noise was unrecognisable in its foreignness. Screeching and shouting of generally excitable voices, clattering of mah-jong tiles, metallic clanging from the woks of street food vendors, roaring van and motorbike engines, as well as put-put sounds from mopeds and tuk-tuks. It was truly amazing to me whilst both children just took it in their stride. All Bert wanted was a cup of fresh tea and to sleep in a fresh bed. On arrival at our new home, we satisfied both of these requirements.

The next morning, Bert had to report to

his place of work, leaving me to unpack, get settled into the house, become accustomed to our surroundings and attend to two pre-schoolers who turned out to be as self-sufficient as their mother in the absence of the Alpha Male. For myself, who had never been outside the British Isles, the quarter held many differences compared to UK housing. It was a single-story building with very spacious rooms. All floors had large ceramic tiling, ceiling fans and air-conditioning in every room, each bed was encased in mosquito netting, and there was a wide covered veranda at both the back and the front of the house.

We were one of only a handful of families blessed to be domiciled in Lei Yue Mun Barracks on Hong Kong Island, some distance from the main camp in Stanley Fort. Our house overlooked a village named Shau Kei Wan, with many shanties visible on the slopes of the surrounding hills. In valleys on both sides of the house, we could view Hong Kong Bay and the coastline, or mountains stretching into the distance and always at night, there was that spectacular neon lighting from every hotel, shop front and skyscraper. We were directly below the flight path to the airport, so I now had full understanding of just how close the travelling planes came to the island buildings. I loved all of it from day one!

I found many places of excitement and beauty in my explorations – Big Wave Bay, Shek-O, and Repulse Bay, which were long, almost deserted white sand beaches, frequently visited by myself and the children. We also visited the nearby markets in Shau Kei Wan, Stanley, Victoria and Central. We also explored the commercial areas on the mainland,

travelling across the bay on the Star Ferry to Kowloon and beyond. I learnt a small amount of Cantonese, such as how to give the taxi-driver directions to get home, how to ask for some foods in the markets and how to haggle. Truly, for me, every day was an adventure.



Some of the people who were significant in helping us to adapt to life in Hong Kong were: Charlie, who called daily to take our shopping order (an early form of Deliveroo). He came in the morning to take the list of requirements, then returned next morning with the supplies, took payment and took our next order. Mary made random calls at the door with her rug over her shoulder, inviting me to view her items for sale. She then began an almost ceremonial ritual of taking the very colourful, bulging rug from her shoulder and displaying the goods within its folds with many flourishes. It was considered rude not to buy something from her, thus creating us as her captive market! All completed sales were accompanied by Mary extending a small gift for Julie and Paul or the household. She was lovely, warm, gracious, with many smiles. There was also excitement provided by the welcome visits from The Popsie Man on his pedal-powered tricycle containing ice cream and iced lollies, very necessary on the hottest of days. I never took time to explore how he managed to keep his goods frozen as there was neither engine nor motor on his trike. Unless, of course, I've forgotten!



Then, my valued asset, Ah-King, my amah, primarily undertook the cleaning chores three times weekly and acted as instructor, informant, and occasional cook. Ah-King, however, was delightful, caring, seemed to enjoy her patient interaction with Julie and Paul and loved to give me useful information for my life in Hong Kong. I laugh now when I think back to her first day when I had tidied the house for her arrival, dusted, swept (we did not have a Hoover) and changed the bedding on all beds. I left the used bedding in the bathroom as we did not have a washing machine and I presumed that Ah-King would use the bath for the washing. Well, Ah-King entered the house like a whirlwind, put her bag down and without stopping, made a beeline for the bedrooms, stripping each of my freshly presented beds and dumped all the clean bedding into a bath full of hot water along with the used bedclothes from the bathroom floor. I never repeated this error. I was indebted to Ah-King for her hints on shopping in the wet market, illustrated as follows: In addition to shopping in the local area, I obtained familiar foodstuffs from the NAAFI. This included prepacked, frozen chicken, but she expressed disapproval by shaking her head when Ah-King saw the frozen chicken. She informed me that she would never buy that sort of chicken and that I should only buy a freshly killed chicken

from the wet market. I understood this because I had already observed the crates of live chickens in the market. Customers simply pointed to the chicken of their choice then waited patiently whilst the stallholder wrung its neck and prepared it for the cooking pot. I continued to buy frozen chicken from the NAAFI.

In one cooking lesson, Ah-King showed me her method of preparing fried rice. Her first instruction was to wash the rice nine times. This was one of those astonishing moments in my life, being in Hong Kong, many miles from Northern Ireland, where my own mother had already taught me always to wash rice for savoury dishes nine times. My mother had completed a catering course at Strabane Agricultural College and I was well aware of her cooking knowledge but, I certainly marvelled at her sharing a cooking tip with the indigenous experts in Hong Kong.

In addition to this support, we were extremely lucky to have the contact details of a Chinese family known to my cousin through her husband's attendance at Leeds University. This added to my education and adaptation to life in Hong Kong as our two families shared social events and expeditions into the wider Kowloon area. It was interesting to notice cultural trends and differences between this family and us Westerners. One of which was that I employed Ah-King for only a couple of hours per week, whereas my friend had three full-time live-in amahs. One to care for the children, one to clean and one to cook. What amused me was my friend's exacting standards for her cook. Whilst living in Leeds, she and her husband had developed a love of Yorkshire Puddings and the cook's expertise in perfecting these was a prerequisite to her remaining in employment.

The Battle Of Britain - 15th September

Spitfire

The heavens ring with Merlin's roar
We gaze in wonder from the ground
To see a great old aircraft soar
And marvel at the engine's sound.

The Spitfire loops and rolls and dives
We smile and gasp and clap and cheer;
The pilot shows his skill and strives
To make us think he has no fear!

No fear – but eighty years ago
Young men of barely adult age
Sat in those planes, true courage shown
They flew into the battle's rage.

They too would loop and roll and dive
Not to impress a watching crowd
But so that Britain might survive –
And hist'ry shows they did us proud!

So many died within those planes
The watchers would with horror see
A blazing trail of smoke and flames
As brave men died to keep us free.

Yes – watch the Spitfire, and rejoice
Rejoice to see the pilot's skill.
Remember those who had no choice
But met the foe with iron will.

By Nigel Beeton

Walking For Softies - June 2021

Strangford Dyke, Newtownards

On Wednesday, 30 June, Walking For Softies met for the first time since Lockdown ended.

We decided to change from our usual Saturday slot to a Wednesday afternoon to avoid crowds at the coffee shops during summer.

We parked at the Flood Gates car park in Newtownards and walked along the dyke for our outing. It was a pleasant afternoon and everyone enjoyed the company and the craic. It is an easy walk with a flat path. We paused several times to watch the pilots practising landing and taking off at the nearby airstrip. But as always, the highlight was the coffee and scone at Cloud Nine afterwards. To comply with social distancing, we had two tables in the teepee, which was a change from an indoor cafe.



The next walk was agreed for Rowallane Gardens on Wednesday 28 July at 2:00 pm.

Walking For Softies - July 2021

Rowallane Garden, Saintfield



Wednesday 28 July was the date of our second summer walk. We met in the car park of the National Trust property, Rowallane Garden. Shortly before the start of the walk, there were several very heavy thunderstorms. There was some discussion if we should go ahead with the walk, but we decided if the weather was too bad, we would simply go for coffee.



Eight intrepid adventurers turned up, dressed in waterproof coats, trousers, boots and umbrellas. However, as soon as we stepped out of our cars, the rain stopped and we enjoyed a walk with no rain and even a few blinks of sunshine.



Rowallane has beautiful gardens, hydrangeas were in full bloom and the colours were wonderful. We walked through the Walled Garden, admiring the plants, then ventured along to the Rock garden and past the plant hospital. Finally, we ended up at the cafe (surprise!) for our coffee and scone. Very few people were around, so we had our choice of tables. We sat outside, but when a dark cloud came ever closer, we made our way indoors to finish up. The day was made more enjoyable as we had been in doubt of it taking place.



If you would like to join us any time for a walk, please contact Zandra 07968501386. or Ian 07968401487.

Everyone is welcome.

Cockle Island Home - Arctic Terns

Article sent in from Anthony McGeehan

When warm southerly breezes blow up along the Irish coast in May, Arctic Terns arrive to breed on Cockle Island in Groomsport's harbour. The birds settle on small islands where they hope they can avoid predators. The species is the long-distance champion of bird migration. It nests as far north as Inuit peoples live, while in (our) winter, it patrols the shores of Antarctica. It sees more hours of daylight and of sunlight than any other creature on Earth. Fittingly, its scientific name – *Sterna paradisaea* – translates to mean 'tern of paradise'.



Two small eggs, slightly smaller than a Ferrero Rocher chocolate egg, are laid on bare ground. No nest is made; the clutch is designed to blend against a patch of terra firma. Incubation, mainly by the female, takes a little over three weeks. Although each egg is laid on a different day, growing chicks call to each other from inside the egg. Cheeping serves to synchronise hatching because both babies emerge within 24 hours.

To begin with, the infant stays where it hatched but once imprinted on it hides

and then runs to receive fish when a calling adult arrives. Flight feathers are grown first; the rookie has to become airborne as quickly as possible. Young can fly at around 21-24 days. Until it learns how to catch fish, it is accompanied by a parent whose behaviour it copies. This 'copy mum' apprenticeship lasts only about a fortnight, however. Then it is off – alone or joining a group of its peers.

Remarkably, although its destination is the far end of the Earth – in the seas around Antarctica – all the information it needs to find the way already exists in its brain. Its journey falls under genetic control. As it heads further and further south, each new location is remembered from a single reference point – the place it hatched. This way builds up a frame of reference that amounts to a personal Global Positioning System (GPS). Science is only slowly discovering how birds do this.



Most of the new generation stay south until their second birthday, after which they revisit breeding colonies and attempt to find a mate. Experienced breeders tend to be aged four and older – some live long enough to have an annual tryst with 150

pairs of Arctic Terns bred successfully on Cockle Island during June 2021. Where are they now? These days researchers use tiny, lightweight tracking devices to plot bird movements. Arctic Terns that breed in Holland follow the same route as those from Co. Down. Both populations head out into the Atlantic during August, then swing

south and spend about three weeks off the coast of Namibia. From there, they cross the bottom of the Indian Ocean, passing southwest Australia and South Island New Zealand in November. By December, they are diving and catching krill in sunny Antarctic waters. Then, in March, it is time to head home to Groomsport.



Date For Your Diary

Following the success of last year's event, we are once again going to run our 'Alternative Christmas Fair' and the 'Twelve Days Of Christmas' Luxury Ballot on Friday 17th December 2021.

Our jam, marmalade and chutney makers can start collecting their jars and planning their cooking schedule. Later in the year, we will be in touch with our bakers and those who can help us deliver on the day.

Look out for more information, including how to place an order, in the November issue of the Contact.



God In The Arts

The Lord is in this place

In the 3rd century, a Chinese philosopher, Chang Tsu, had a very vivid dream. He dreamed he was a butterfly, happily flying here and there. When he awoke, he thought to himself, 'Did Chang Tsu dream that he was a butterfly, or did the butterfly dream that it was Chang Tsu?' Dreams are often like that: crucial experiences that cause us to ponder and wonder about their meaning. The prophet Joel suggested that it was old men who dream dreams while young people see visions. But dreams invade and colour our sleeping hours, whatever age we are.

In the Bible, dreams are vital events. Think of Joseph in the Old Testament dreaming of his superiority among his brothers,

the dreams of the cupbearer and baker at Pharaoh's court, Daniel interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's dreams, and Joseph's dreams in the Gospels that were so crucial for the safety of the Holy Family. This month in our paintings, we focus on 'Jacob's Dream' by Ribera.

Jusepe de Ribera was a Spanish artist who spent his most productive years in Naples, where he died in 1652. This painting from 1639 is based on Genesis 28. After depriving his brother Esau of his birthright, Jacob is sent to Laban. At Bethel, he rested and, in his sleep, received the vision of God's angels on the ladder to heaven with God's reassuring words of promise and blessing. When he awoke, Jacob set up an altar at Bethel, which he declared was the house of God and the gate of heaven.

Jacob's Dream

To baroque artists, this scene in Genesis was seen as a prefiguration of the coming of Jesus, and in John's Gospel Jesus Himself told Nathanael that he would see the angels ascending and descending upon the Son of Man. For Ribera, the subject of Jacob's dream is treated with great tenderness as Jacob sleeps beneath the luminous expanse of sky, which occupies a



major part of the canvas. Not for him the depiction of winged messengers; no, the light of heaven falls down upon the sleeping figure, casting shadows on the ground. The angels, ethereal and insubstantial, are contained in the glory of light. The tree at the other side looks like a fallen cross, and Jacob is almost like a sleeping disciple in Gethsemane. But here, he is in deep repose as his face is lit up with the golden glow of the heavenly messengers.

For Jacob, the dream is the golden assurance of God's blessing. As his saga continues in Genesis, he marries Laban's daughters, wrestles with the divine stranger, is given the name Israel, and his 12 sons become the ancestors of the 12

tribes of God's people. So, the blessing of the dream is worked out in his life and the life of Israel.

Dreams can come to give visions of the way life should be, like Jacob, or perhaps like Martin Luther King and his prophetic words in 1963. In August many of us will have enjoyed rest and recreation. As we end the days with sleep, we pray that, like the Psalmist, we will lie down in perfect peace and safety and know the refreshment Jacob found at Bethel: a repose which will restore our souls and bodies to bring life and vision wherever we may be.

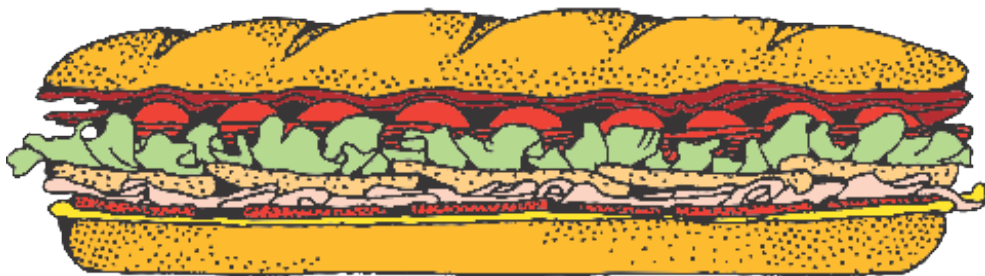
The Rev Michael Burgess

Remember To laugh ...

**How does bread remember things?
It uses Toast- It notes.**

**How do you say hello to German bread?
Gluten tag.**

**Bread is a lot like the sun.
It rises in the yeast and sets in the waist!**



Thoughts of a Blow In...

It has been such a relief for everyone to have increasing freedom as the summer months have gone on. Although life is still far from normal; with masks, Dettol wipes and hand gel amongst essential items to carry when leaving the house, things are more relaxed now that most of the population have had both vaccines. Even though many people are uncomfortable with travelling far, it has been wonderful to see families being able to visit and reunite after far too long apart.

Local friendships have also benefited in this way. On the same day, during that sunny period in July, when fifteen people from any household were allowed to meet in a garden, we had our first real-life book group meeting in an age. Seeing people face to face was wonderful and a jolly good catch up was had by all. We even managed to discuss the book!

During that spell of Mediterranean weather, I was sitting outside with a book one late afternoon when Emma and Leo emerged from next door. They were

heavily laden with backpacks (Leo's was almost bigger than him!) When I asked them where they were going, they both excitedly explained the whole family was spending the night on their boat. Such an adventure!

Now we're in late summer (with not so clement weather) its exam results time again. It seems all the more stressful for young people with so much schooling missed during lockdowns. I was delighted to get an email from my godson in England to tell me about his GCSE exam success. His mum had already said how determined he had been to work hard for his assessments, so I couldn't have been more pleased for him. He also told me he even managed his Grade 8 flute exam, playing a not-quite-mended flute!

When looking for some words to describe the essence of late summer, I came across this seasonal poem by William Allingham that I thought I'd share.

Cynthia

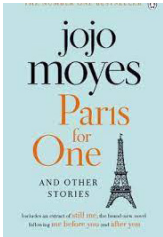
**"O Spirit of the Summertime!
Bring back the roses to the dells;
The swallow from her distant clime,
The honey- bee from drowsy cells.**

**Bring back the friendship of the sun;
The gilded evenings, calm and late,
When merry children homeward run,
And peeping stars bid lovers wait.**

**Bring back the singing; and the scent
Of meadowlands at dewy prime;—
Oh, bring again my heart's content,
Thou Spirit of the Summertime!"**

Bookstall - July & August

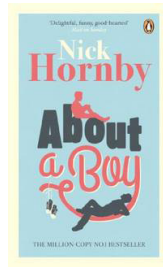
Paris For One Jo Jo Moyes



I have previously really enjoyed this author's writing, but until I started reading this volume, I hadn't known that she had penned any short stories. This is a delightful collection of tales, varied, witty and compassionate,

they deal with a range of situations about relationships. The first, the one that gives the book its title, is almost long enough to be deemed a novella, at over a hundred pages. It tells the story of a naturally cautious, reflective girl who, in a moment of madness, books a romantic trip to Paris for her and her boyfriend. Her friends' disapproval of him turns out to be valid as she finds herself let down and alone in a strange city where she cannot speak the language. The potentially alarming experience has a salutary effect on her. Another lovely story tells of two honeymoons, separated by more than a century but both of which put the newly married couple under serious strain. The two stories are linked by a painting of an apparently aggrieved wife, but does the painting reveal more than that? Not all the stories in this collection are classic romances; the frustrations of a demanding mother in law over a ten-day Christmas stay form the basis of the final story, along with the challenge of appreciating the superiority of a Waitrose Christmas pudding over a Marks and Spencer one (personally, I prefer homemade!) Some of the stories in this volume are less than ten pages long but still intriguing and fun. A thoroughly diverting read.

About A Boy Nick Hornby

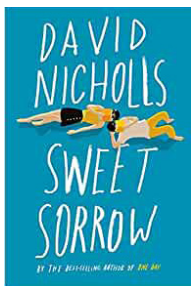


Will is in his thirties, voluntarily redundant and cheerfully living idly off the royalties of a Christmas song written by his father many years before. He resolutely refuses to entertain any form of responsibility for anyone but himself, though still managing to be rather an

engaging character as demonstrated in the film adaptation of this book, starring Hugh Grant. Will wrestled with his conscience, grappled it to the ground and sat on it until he couldn't hear a squeak out of it. Why should he care...

Marcus is a slightly strange twelve-year-old boy living with his suicidal mother and rather isolated from other children by his interests and idiosyncrasies which are cultivated by his slightly hippy mother. The lives of the two become intertwined as a consequence of Will's constant search for a casual relationship. Will invents a son called Ned to join a single parent group so that he can meet lots of lonely women in need of male company, as he assumes. The story is told in alternate chapters by Will and Marcus and we are party to the salutary influence each has on the other, perhaps surprisingly. Effectively each teaches the other how to become more balanced. Marcus has grown up too fast and needs to learn how to be a child, Will has never grown up and really needs to! The story is amusing, touching and well told. This is a small, hard-backed book, smaller than most paperbacks.

Sweet Sorrow
David Nicholls

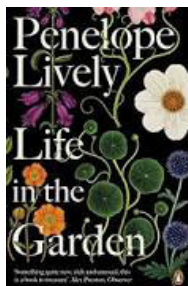


I am sure you can recall the dreadful anxieties, embarrassments and the joys of your teenage years? We probably all remember highlights - or indeed troughs!- but not so much an overall picture. This rich and

humorous novel will help you fill in some of the gaps. Variouslly described as “moving and hilarious”; “poignant, clever and hilarious”; and “piercingly observant” this invoked an enormous sense of nostalgia when I read it. The story is of sixteen-year-old Charlie Lewis, the least aberrant one of a rather notorious gang at the local comprehensive school and his growing obsession with Fran, who attends the local academic school; between these schools is an on-going feud and an apparently unbridgeable divide. Until that is Fran and Charlie fall hopelessly in love with all the passion of first proper love. Alongside this is Charlie’s background story. Mum has walked away from the family home taking Charlie’s sister; Dad is bankrupt, unemployed and increasingly depressed and Charlie stops working for his exams. He gets drawn in, much against his natural inclinations, to a summer drama school in which Fran is a leading light. They are producing Romeo and Juliet and he finds himself amongst a group of very different people from those he is normally accustomed to. The initial alienation, the mistrust, the sense of insecurity with which he faces this is

acutely drawn, but so too is his gradual acclimatisation, understanding and slow acceptance of a very different way of life. The entire events of that summer are recalled by Charlie, twenty years later as he prepare to marry A story which becomes increasingly engaging. David Nicholls obviously is still very much in touch with teenage rich emotions, often wryly funny, sometimes poignant, and always perfectly depicted.

Life In The Garden
Penelope Lively

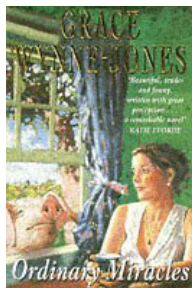


I have by no means read all the extensive output of this multi award winning author, but what I have read I have very much enjoyed. As a consequence, being a keen gardener, I was drawn immediately to

this little non fiction volume. The author herself was a keen gardener, now in her late eighties, she is restricted to a small, paved back garden, which is nevertheless packed with some of her favourite things. This is quite a serious book, with chapters like “Reality and Metaphor” dealing largely with the way painters like Monet have gardened and reproduced gardens as paintings; “The Written Garden” which relates gardens in literature and their role and influence, for example the dark and dominant rhododendrons at the beginning of Daphne du Maurier’s Rebecca, presaging the threatening nature of life at Mandalay and “The Fashionable Garden” which

traces influencers in the garden world like John Tradescant, Gertrude Jekyll and Vita Sackville-West. Nevertheless, I found it a really enjoyable and informative read.

Ordinary Miracles Grace Wynn-Jones



Grace Wynn-Jones is an Irish journalist and writer. At first glance, this book looked to me rather like a Mills and Boon story, but the reviews on the back encouraged me to have a look at it. It

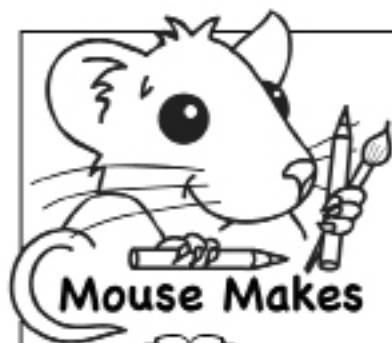
is indeed much too explicit, I suspect, to enter the Mills and Boon canon, and deals with Jasmine Smith, approaching her fortieth birthday and feeling restless and diminished by the banality of her life. Married to Bruce, who she feels very much takes her for granted, she is looking for adventure. The catalyst comes when she discovers Bruce is having an affair. She moves in with Charlie, an animal rights activist who she has supported in the past and with whom she has a casual, platonic relationship. Bruce is stirred into action. Initially I disliked this book, but came to enjoy the humour. She frequently buys self-help books to help her deal with her problems. "Crisis seems so much nicer between covers". The deep breathing she learnt at her yoga class is "surprisingly helpful when you feel like attacking someone with a chain saw." She daydreams a perfect life where, living in a gorgeous villa in the Mediterranean, she "can even make cheese soufflé and hold

a conversation about water irrigation." Ultimately she learns a lesson which is valuable for us all; "...lately I've realised that wanting things to be different all the time has stopped me from seeing, appreciating, things as they are" So, whilst enjoyable in the end to read, I cannot say that I really relished this book, despite the thoughtfulness of parts of it, despite the humour and the painful reality of some of the situations Jasmine finds herself in, I found it unsatisfying ultimately and somewhat superficial. Many will not agree with me as reflected in the reviews, but that is how I feel. I should also warn that in some parts it is quite explicit about intimate scenes.

By the time you read this we will have had two simple outdoor book sales, a far cry from our usual splendid Book Fairs, but times impose these restrictions and the time is not yet right for a proper book fair. However, having these sales will 'clear the decks' for a thorough overhaul of the shelves so do go and look, I hope to include many new titles once we have had a clear out.

Enjoy your reading, I do!





Read this story in
1 Kings 17:7-16

The bowl of flour and the jar of oil

It had not rained for months and months, there was a drought in the land. God sent His prophet **Elijah** to the town of Zarephath. At the town gate he saw a widow gathering firewood.

"Please bring me a drink of water and some bread," he asked her.

She answered "All I have is a handful of flour and a drop of oil in a jar, it is our last meal."

"Do not worry," Elijah said, "Make the meal and make a small loaf for me."

The woman did what Elijah had asked and God blessed her ...

... The bowl never ran out of flour and the jar never ran out of oil until it rained again!



Find these words from the story in the word search:

WORD • LORD • GOD • ELIJAH • SENT • ZAREPHATH • GATE • CITY • WIDOW
STICKS • WATER • DRINK • BREAD • FEED • HANDFUL • FLOUR • LITTLE
OIL • SON • EAT • DIE • FULL • WENT • MAKE • BAKED • ATE • JAR • JUG • MANY
DAYS • LIVE • NEVER • EMPTY

The tale of the Two Sons



JESUS OFTEN TOLD
STORIES WITH
HIDDEN MEANINGS



HE ONCE TOLD A STORY ABOUT A
FATHER WHO HAD TWO SONS.

THE FATHER WENT TO HIS
OLDER SON AND ASKED HIM
TO WORK IN THE VINEYARD



'NO I WON'T' SAID THE
OLDER SON...



...BUT THEN HE CHANGED HIS
MIND AND WENT AND HELPED.

THE FATHER THEN WENT TO HIS
YOUNGER SON AND ASKED HIM TO
HELP IN THE VINEYARD TOO.



'OF COURSE I WILL' SAID THE YOUNGER SON. BUT
HE PROMPTLY FORGOT ALL ABOUT IT...

...AND DIDN'T DO A STROKE OF WORK!



'WHICH ONE DID WHAT HIS FATHER
WANTED?' ASKED JESUS...



'WHICH DO YOU THINK IT WAS?

Ugandan Chapati

This issue's recipe has been sent in by
Chris Dima

Ingredients

400g plain flour
5g or one teaspoon salt
240ml warm water
10ml or two teaspoons oil, additional oil
for brushing on dough

Method

- Add the salt into the water.
- Sift flour into a bowl, make a well in the flour, pour in the water and the salt.
- Mix well, then knead until the dough is soft, adding 10 ml of oil at this point.
- Transfer the dough to a floured board and continue to knead until smooth.
- Place in the bowl and cover for 15 minutes.

- Transfer the soft dough to a board and roll it out, brush with some vegetable oil.
- Roll the dough into a sausage shape, divide into eight and brush with oil. Fold the cut sides under and once again leave covered for 10 minutes.
- Roll into balls, then flattened into circles, 17cm to 20cm.
- Brush a little oil on a warmed frying pan and cook one at a time, on a low heat.
- Keep flipping the chapati and brushing with oil each until cooked.
- When cooked, cover with kitchen paper and wrap in a clean tea towel to keep moist.
- Wipe the pan between each chapati with some kitchen paper.

Serve with egg, beans and a cup of tea.



"Cooking demands attention, patience, and above all, a respect for the gifts of the earth. It is a form of worship, a way of giving thanks." - Judith B Jones

Prayer Room

Eternal God,
you crown the year with your goodness
and you give us the fruits of the earth in their season:
grant that we may use them to your glory,
for the relief of those in need
and for our own well being;
through Jesus Christ our Lord



Father, as we celebrate this season of thanksgiving
We give thanks for the blessings of food,
provision and nourishment.
Please grow in us a harvest for the world.
Come sow a seed of hope within our souls Lord,
that we might yield goodness,
patience and kindness in abundance.
Sow a seed of peace in our lives Lord,
that we might bear the fruits of forgiveness,
compassion and righteousness.
Come sow a seed of love in our hearts Lord,
that others would reap the blessings of family,
friendship and community.
May each seed of hope,
peace and love grow within us
into a harvest that can be feasted on by all.

Amen



Jesus said:

I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE

Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty...

Everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day.

John 6:35,40

Groomsport Parish Church

CONTACT

groomsportparishchurch.org