

CONTACT

December 2018 / January 2019



Keep Christ in Christmas

www.groomsportparishchurch.org



Parish Officials

The Rector	Revd Duncan Pollock	028 9146 4476
The Rector's Warden	Helen Parkinson	028 9147 9984
The People's Warden	Hester Kelly	028 9146 3541
R Glebe Warden	Billy McAnnenev	07812 042833
P Glebe Warden	Tony Anderson	07803 282200
Treasurer	Wesley Quinn	028 9145 6472
Secretary to SV	Heather Pentland	07834 771075
Gift Aid Secretary	Ian Sloan	028 9145 7092
Sunday School	Maggie Townsley & Helen Carter	07748 208649
Verger/Caretaker	Susan Moore	028 9185 7509
Organist	Stuart Tanner	07411 178230
Parish Office	Elaine Lester	028 9127 1311 07791 569432

Administrative enquiries

Contact: Elaine 028 9127 1311 or gpcoffice@btinternet.com

Church Hall bookings

Contact: David McKnight 028 9127 3130 or linden.lodge@btopenworld.com

For Hall problems

Contact: Billy McAnnenev 07812 042833

Rector's Hour

Please note that the Rector will be available in the Vestry office on Tuesdays from 6.00pm – 7.00pm, for short meetings to sign passports, driving licence documents etc., or to arrange a lengthier meeting for another time.

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

And so we arrive at Christmas! It's been a frenetic year. For most of us, it has been the most politically momentous year of our lives and as I write Lord alone knows what is going to happen next: stay, remain, deal, no deal, bad deal? Will the Prime Minister be ousted, toppled, replaced? Is there to be a general election, will Jeremy Corbyn be our next Prime Minister? Is the Assembly ever going to meet again and, in view of all the political turmoil, will the Union hold together?

As a Parish we have had our own challenges to face – the refurbishment project has happened much less painfully than I could have imagined, but it has taken up so much of our time. The big decisions were relatively easy; it was the small ones that took up the time and the energy!

And through it all the bread and butter work of the Parish went on, perhaps not as diligently as it might have done, but it went on nonetheless. And week by week, worship has been offered, prayers offered up and God's love confirmed. It has been a frenetic year!

And so we arrive at Christmas. We have been bombarded since mid-September by adverts for toys and scent. Mid-November the "Christmas" lights were switched on and we've been bedazzled by the allure of Black Friday, encouraging us to buy things we probably don't want and certainly don't need. I confess to having been to the Belfast Christmas Market and inspecting the tat on offer

and turning up my nose at the smell of burgers and onions. I won't be rushing back! And poor Belfast, a shadow of its former self with the burnt out remains of the Bank Building overshadowing all.

There is so much uncertainty at present, so much cynicism about, unease with our politicians and governing classes; uncertainty about world events and a genuine fear for the future. For the first time in my life, I worry about the world we are handing on to our children and grandchildren. Harold MacMillan famously observed that we have never had it so good – and as far as my generation is concerned, I think that really is true. I wonder if it will ever be as good again.

And so we arrive at Christmas. I thank God that some things never change; I thank God that we are able to celebrate the birth of the Christ child year in and year out, even if His arrival is drowned out by the clamour of the age. God presents us with Himself, in the guise of a baby boy. The God of all creation displays His power in the weakness and helplessness of a babe. I thank God that even if it doesn't make sense in human terms, the Christmas story continues to present us with an alternative to the muddle, greed and selfishness of our times.

I pray that we all might enjoy a blessed and peaceful Christmas and that 2019 will encourage us to renew our lives and His world

Duncan





Church Services for December 2018 and January 2019

Sunday 16 December – Advent 3

Welcome Team: Helen Kennedy and Elaine Lester

Reader: Elaine Lester

8.30am	Holy Communion
10.30am	Service of the Word
6.00pm	Compline

Sunday 23 December – Advent 4

Welcome Team: Helen Kennedy and Elaine Lester

Reader: Elaine Lester

8.30am	Holy Communion
10.30am	A Family Christingle Service with Holy Baptism
6.00pm	A Service of Carols and Lessons by Candlelight

Note:

The Office of Compline is said every Tuesday at 7.30pm

Holy Communion is celebrated every Thursday at 11.00am

Holy Communion is celebrated on the first Wednesday of the month at 10.30am in the Chapel at Mt Stewart House.

Christmas Eve

5.30pm	A Family Crib Service
11.30pm	The First Communion of Christmas

Christmas Day

8.30am	Holy Communion
10.30am	A Family Service for Christmas

Sunday 30 December – Christmas 1

Welcome Team: Ken and Valerie Boyd

Reader: Valerie Boyd

8.30am	Holy Communion
10.30am	Morning Prayer
6.00pm	Holy Communion

Please note the Church Hall is open every day for private prayer and meditation.



Sunday 6 January – The Feast of Epiphany

Welcome Team: Ken and Valerie Boyd

Reader: Maureen Taggart

8.30am	Holy Communion
10.30am	A Family Service for Epiphany *
6.00pm	The Opening and Enrolling Service for the Mother's Union
* Coffee after 10.30am service in Church Hall. All welcome! Hosts ???	

Sunday 13 January – Epiphany 1, The Baptism of our Lord

Welcome Team: Walter and Mae Burke

Reader: Dorothy-Anne Crawford

8.30am	Holy Communion
10.30am	Parish Communion
6.00pm	Compline

Sunday 20 January – Epiphany 2

Welcome Team: Walter and Mae Burke

Reader: Wesley Quinn

8.30am	Holy Communion
10.30am	Service of the Word
6.00pm	Evening Prayer (said)

Sunday 27 January – Epiphany 3

Welcome Team: Brian and Jean McKillen

Reader: Bert Smith

8.30am	Holy Communion
10.30am	Morning Prayer
6.00pm	Holy Communion

Sunday 3 February – The Presentation of Christ in the Temple, Candlemas

Welcome Team: Brian and Jean McKillen

Reader: TBC

8.30am	Holy Communion
10.30am	A Family Service for Candlemas *
6.00pm	Evening Prayer (said)
* Coffee after 10.30am service in Church Hall. All welcome! Hosts TBC.	

Births, Deaths, Baptisms Marriages & Announcements Holy Rest

Holy Baptism

Emer Moore - 4 November

Emer is the daughter of Sean and Helen Moore. It was a joy to Welcome Emer and her family back to Groomspport on the day when we moved back into our newly refurbsished Church!

Holy Rest

Jeff Wright – 2 November

Jeff Wright, at age 42 lost his battle with Motor Neurone Disease. Although the service had to take place at Christ Church Carrowdore, it was a privilege for us to conduct the service on behalf of Jeff's family.

Georgie Cole – 13 November

Georgie Cole died peacefully in hospital after a long and valiant fight against COPD. It seems hardly yesterday that her lovely daughter Helen passed away. Our thoughts are with her son Noel.

Alec Martin – 16 November

Alec Martin was buried in his family plot at Clandeboye, 48 years to the day that his first wife died. Alec was a loyal and faithful friend to Groomspport Parish Church, having served for nearly eighty years in various capacities, latterly as our senior trustee.

Ronnie Whiteside – 18 November

Ronnie Whiteside. Ronnie was a familiar sight around the village looking as he did between a cross between Uncle Albert and Captain Birdseye. He was a brave and loved man and respected member of our village community

We pray that Jeff, Ron, Georgie and Alec will rest in peace and rise in glory

Announcements

General Data Protection Regulations

As you are aware since May 2018 it is now a legal requirement that any organization holding personal information about any individual must obtain their written consent.

Groomspport Parish Church currently holds some personal details of all parishioners for the good and benefit of the smooth running of church business. To ensure that we do this under the new legal requirements, every individual parishioner is required to complete a permission-giving form which will be held in church records.

Your privacy is important to us and we want to communicate with church members in a way which has their consent and which is in line with European Law on Data Protection. We need your consent as to how we contact you.

You can grant consent to all of the purposes, one of the purposes or none of the purposes. Where you do not grant

consent we will not be able to use your personal data except in certain limited situations such as where required to do so by law or to protect members of the public from serious harm. Further information can be found in our Data Privacy Notice which is available in the Parish Office.

You can withdraw or change your consent at any time by contacting Bert Smith on the phone number below. Please note that all processing of your data will cease once you have withdrawn consent other than where this is required by law. Forms have already been distributed at church services during November. If, however, you have not received one of these forms or require further information, please contact Bert Smith on 02891463837 at your earliest convenience.

PLEASE NOTE THAT A SEPARATE FORM IS REQUIRED FOR EACH INDIVIDUAL MEMBER OVER THE AGE OF EIGHTEEN.

and friends and seats are allocated on a first come first served basis. Please note seats are currently filling up at a considerable rate!

The trip will take place on Saturday 2 February 2019 and the bus has been booked with McAvoy's (toilet on board)

The bus will leave Groomspoint Parish Halls at 8.00am and will return at approximately 8.00pm. We will stop en route for a quick coffee break at Apple Green and will then stop at Newbridge Silver Outlet for lunch and some shopping. From there we shall spend the afternoon at Kildare Village Outlet.

Cost is £22 per person. To reserve a place, please put your money in a sealed envelope with your name and telephone number and give to myself or to the Church Wardens.

For further details or to arrange payment, contact me on 07834 771075.

Heather Pentland

Updated Parish Website



The Parish website – www.groomspointparishchurch.org – has been updated to make it more user-friendly and informative with updated News posts about coming Parish events. A Gallery has been added. So take a look and see who you know. It might even be yourself!

Annual Shopping Trip

Groomspoint Parish Church Community Annual Shopping Trip to Newbridge Silver Outlet and Kildare Village Outlet

Saturday 2 February 2019

This successful annual fundraiser is designed for parishioners, villagers, family



Walking for Softies

November Walk - On Saturday 24 November, the Softies met at Shaws Bridge car park. We walked along the Lagan Towpath enjoying the chat and then visited the Lockkeeper's Inn for coffee and scones. It was a pleasant November morning, so we were able to sit outside with our 3 dogs. The scones were voted as being very good : 9* out of 10!

Since there will be no walk in December, our Group's next trip will to Belmont Park in East Belfast (close to rear of Campbell College), on Saturday 26 January.

Everyone should gather in the car park off Belmont Road, at 10am. Or if you can't manage the walk, join us afterwards for refreshments at S.D Bells coffee house on the Newtownards Road at 11-ish. So come along and enjoy yourself! The craic

is good, the walking easy and the scones magnifique. You owe it to yourself.

**Any questions? Contact Ian or Zandra
91 457092 or mob. 07968401386**



The Evergreens

The Evergreens held the Christmas lunch in the Stables on 8th December which was enjoyed by all. Special thanks to the staff for all their hard work. Also many thanks to The Cottage Kitchen, The Spar, Neill's Wines and Picasso Hairdresser for their generous donations. The club will reopen on Thursday 10th January at 2pm when all over fifty year olds will be welcome

Jackalyn Vaughan



**Bangor Area Service – Guest Speaker
- Baroness May Blood MBE**

What an Inspirational Event this was! The Service on 19th November, was organised by the Groomsport Branch of MU and we hosted members from the churches in the Bangor Area, viz., St Gall's, Bangor Abbey, Bangor Parish and Ballyholme. We were also honoured with the attendance of June Butler, the newly elected All-Ireland President of MU, Hilda Arnold, Diocese Vice President, and Margaret Conn, Finance and Central Services Co-Ordinator. Overall we had seventy eight people in attendance. Our Rector, Duncan led a beautiful Service of Worship with Stuart as our Organist. Several people commented to me afterwards at the uplifting quality of the singing. Our guest speaker was Baroness May Blood, who using the word 'FAITH' took us on the journey of her life. Without a sincere and unwavering faith in God, she told us that she could not have lived such a life, coming from a large, working class family and growing up on the edge of the 'troubles'. She took many risks, and had extremely difficult experiences, being burned out of her home, to name but one. Some of her recollections were spine-chilling as we recalled those tragic times prior to the 'Good Friday Agreement'. May Blood was ahead of her time, bringing communities together, inspiring other women to become involved in peace-making and using all her many skills of

persistence and dedication to influence policy makers. She is now eighty years of age and is still pursuing her passions including Integrated Education and Sure-Start, travelling to London and overseas on a regular basis. Baroness Blood is a true inspiration to all Women everywhere.

2019 Programme

The Committee has drawn up a really varied and interesting programme for 2019. The MU Theme for the year is 'Listen, Observe, Act – in step with God'. In addition to faith based and inspirational talks we have some light hearted evenings. New members to join our healthy membership of approximately 40 ladies will be made most welcome. We are particularly calling out to younger members.

Opening Service - Sunday, January 6 2019 at 6 pm, led by our Rector, Duncan.

January Branch Meeting – Monday 21 January at 8 pm, guest speaker is Clare Stewart, Action and Outreach Co-ordinator of MU in the Diocese. Her topic is 'Beating the Winter Blues' – just the antidote we need to start off the New Year!

Annual Subscriptions.

Finally, a reminder that the MU year now runs from January to December, so annual subscriptions will be collected in January 2019.

With every blessing for Christmas and the New Year

Mae
Branch Leader

Remembrance Sunday 2018

Each Remembrance Sunday a member of the congregation, usually with direct experience of service in the security or armed forces, lays a wreath on our behalf at our Memorial Doors.

This year Peter Osborough accepted that invitation. He writes:

“After the Service on Remembrance Sunday when I laid the wreath in memory of members of Groomsport Church who died during the two wars, 1914-1918 and 1939-1945, I was asked about the two medals I was wearing. They are the service medals awarded to those who fought in the Great War 1914-1918. My father, William Thomas Osborough enlisted in the Royal Irish Fusiliers in 1915 and underwent training in Ballykinlar. He proved to be a very good shot and was appointed Musketry Instructor which kept him at Ballykinlar for longer than most of the other soldiers. He was one of the 1000 soldiers rushed down to Dublin due to the 1916 Easter Rising.

As an acting Sergeant in the 8th Battalion of the Royal Irish Fusiliers, a part of the 16th Irish Division, he arrived on the Somme in August 1916 and went into battle in early September. He was wounded and spent the best part of a year in the Somme Hospital in Belfast

During the 1939-45 war, he served in the Home Guard. He died in 1972 when Canon George Mitchell conducted his funeral service.”

It was moving to have such a direct link to the Great War to lay our Remembrance Wreath in Church on the Centenary of the signing of the Armistice.

Duncan



Vestry Notes November 2018

The Rector began the meeting by congratulating and thanking Dorothy Anne for her tremendous work over the Harvest period.

Wesley informed the Vestry that our Fire and Safety Service file is up to date.

Wesley also explained the benefits of fund raising to our Parish. Wesley was thanked by the Vestry for the incredible work he has done with church finances.

Barry has begun the very detailed Practical Completion Report for HLF

in order to receive our final payment. Apart from a few odds and ends, East Down Construction has completed its obligations. The Rector, Barry and William will discuss snagging issues with the architect on Friday. The family area has worked out very well. The organ will be “voiced” on Thursday. The Rector has begun work on the Order of Service for the Rededication Service, during which there will be a procession and things will be put back in place symbolically.

Permission was given for a new fridge for the kitchen, a new vacuum cleaner for the church and for more hymn books.

Mae and Carol were congratulated on the success of the “Mr and Mrs” evening and the Book Fair.

Bert Smith has been asked to be Data Controller pro tem for GDPR. Letters will be sent out to all Parishioners. Details will be included in the Contact. All personal data must be retained in a secure system and only those who need appropriate details will receive it.

Freddie informed the Vestry about a BT Open Reach scam.

The Vestry agreed Sunday School should be given £100 towards their Christmas party.

Events Update

November’s Book Fair

On November 3rd we held our Book Fair and it was as joyous, warm and friendly as ever. The food was varied and delicious, the ambience cheerful and lively, the tea and coffee flowed and everyone seemed to have a thoroughly good time.

This year we had the usual stalls of children’s, non-fiction, romance, crime and popular authors and realised

quickly that crime pays - as indeed does Romance! Make of this what you will. A new, albeit small table was tried, this held Classic Literature for the reader looking for a more challenging volume. Some of these went too.

For the first time the cake quiz remained a mystery, even to our Rector and Lee, both of whom usually guess the title in seconds. The book, for those of you who missed the answer, was ‘The Moonstone’ by Wilkie Collins, a friend



November's Book Fair Continued



of Dickens. It is commonly believed to be the first ever detective story and was my set book for "O" level in the 1960s. I shall have to come up with something a little less obscure for next year! The cake itself was won by Helen Hall.

Of course, none of this would have happened without a small army of helpers. Despite the clash with moving all the items from church out of the hall and back into church, nevertheless there were plenty of willing hands to help. My grateful thanks go to the stalwarts who helped set up on Friday afternoon, clearing all the stored books and displaying them invitingly on the tables. A huge round of applause for the small but talented kitchen crew, who once again, willingly helped in the

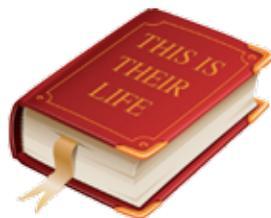
background, keeping the plates loaded and the cups full and gratitude to the gracious servers and to all those who contributed the results of their baking skills to fill so many plates. There are too many of you to mention but you know who you are and I hope you know how much you are appreciated.

We estimated that there were over 70 attendees at the fair and that approximately 40% were not members of the parish but from the local community, which is very gratifying. And a bonus which just adds the icing to the cake was that £566.00 was raised to add to our building fund. Thanks to all who came, browsed and contributed.

Carol



Forthcoming Events



THIS IS “THEIR” LIFE!
FRIDAY 25 JANUARY 7.30pm

You, the parishioners of Groomspoint Parish, have been very loyal in your support of our fundraising ventures to date and we on the Events committee, are always trying to think of novel ideas for you, your friends and families.

Consequently on Friday 25 January 2019 at 7.30pm you will have the opportunity to attend an evening with a difference.

You will be treated to a delicious 3 course meal and you will hear the very

different life stories of two incredible men – Jackie Burke and Raymond Crookes. I defy any of you not to be moved by their incredible stories.

TICKETS (£10)

AVAILABLE FROM 29 DECEMBER.

FROM HEATHER (07834 771075)

OR THE WARDENS

DON'T MISS IT!

Planned Events 2019



JAN 25 This is “Their” Life!

FEB 02 Kildare Shopping Trip

FEB 16 Ladies Breakfast

FEB 22 Quiz Night

MAR 05 Pancake Party

MAR 15 Bangor Grammar Orchestra

APR 14-16 Prayer Room

ALL proceeds from the above events will contribute to the Renovation Project.



Northern Ireland Charity Number: 103258

Hall Usage - December / January

Sunday		
Every Sunday	10.30am	Sunday School Contact: Maggie Townsley & Helen Carter Mob. 07748 208649
Monday		
1st Monday of the month	7.30pm	Select Vestry Meeting Contact: Heather Pentland Mob. 07834 771075
2nd & 4th Mondays of the month	7.30pm	Chattering Needles Chattering Needles is a craft group whose interests include knitting, crochet, cross stitch card making etc. If you want to learn come along. £2 includes supper. For more info please contact me. Jenny 07748580541
3rd Monday of the month	8.00pm	Mothers Union (Maxwell Hall) Contact: Mae Burke Mob. 07810 440492
Tuesday		
2nd Tuesday of the month	8.00pm	Groomsport & District Gardening Club Contact: Yvonne McIlmail Tel: 02891 469420 E. y.mcilmail@sky.com
Every Tuesday	10.15am	Tai Chi for Health 10.15am - 11.15am Contact: Janet Wilson Tel: 028 91077948 Mob: 07703360385 Beginners
Wednesday		
Every Wednesday	9.30am	You can with Ann Motivation & Exercise class Contact: Ann Parker Mob. 07854 787121
Every Wednesday	10.30am	Keep Fit Exercise Class Contact: Ann Parker Mob. 07854 787121
Every Wednesday	2.00pm	Scrabble Contact: Elaine Lester Mob. 07791 569432 E. elliewag57@yahoo.com
Every Wednesday	3pm-4pm	Tai Chi For Health Contact: Janet Wilson Tel: 028 91077948 Mob: 07703360385 Improvers

Every Wednesday	5.30pm	You can with Ann Motivation & Exercise class Contact: Ann Parker Mob. 07854 787121
Every Wednesday	6.30pm	Keep Fit Exercise Class Contact: Ann Parker Mob. 07854 787121
Every Wednesday	7.30pm	Bible Study (Avril Morley Room)
3rd Wednesday of the month	7.30pm	Cookery Club Contact: Heather Magill E. mag16ill@hotmail.co.uk
Thursday		
Every Thursday	2.00pm	Evergreens Open to all over fifty year olds and new members always welcome. Contact: Jackalyn Vaughan Mob. 07803 081064
Every Thursday	2pm- 5pm	Groomspport Parish Art Class Continues to meet on Thursday afternoons. All welcome. Further information Stuart Tanner: 07411178230 or Carol Barbosa: 02891456971
Every Thursday except 1st of the month	7.30pm	Table Tennis Club This is a game for everyone whatever your age so please join us. Contact: John Hand Tel. 028 9146 8061 Mob. 07540 375785
Every Thursday	7.30pm	Chess Club Further information Mark Seidman: 028 91467950 mark@patientendurance.co.uk
Saturday		
4th Saturday of the month	10.00am	Walking for Softies Venues vary. Meeting at 10.00am at chosen location. Contact: Ian and Zandra Sloan Tel. 028 91457092

Book Stall for December

It's hard to believe that this is the last article for 2018. It's been an eventful year for us all and time has flown. One of the incidental advantages of being in the hall for over half of the year has been a significant increase in the turnover of books, as you saw the bookstall every time you attended a service. Thank you for your contributions and let us hope the habit sticks. The hall is in use a good deal of the week and is often open.

"Mice" by Gordon Reece

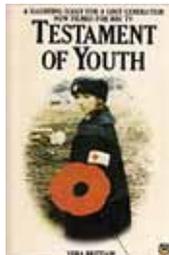


"Mice" by Gordon Reece. The "mice" of the title are teenage Shelley and her mother, Elizabeth. Recovering from an abusive marriage and a prolonged unpleasant divorce, Shelley and her mother escape

to a remote cottage in the country where they may no longer feel afraid. Shelley feels that they are like mice, timid and defenceless. She had been bullied at school and now she is able to have tuition at home and, along with her mother, feel safe. One night, all that changes when they have a break-in and the result of that evening changes their lives forever. Told through Shelley's voice, this is a gripping and atmospheric novel which will surprise and challenge the reader.

Testament of Youth by Vera Brittain

Testament of Youth by Vera Brittain. As the commemorations of the end of the First World War come to an end it



is very fitting to have this book to add to our shelves. Testament of Youth is the first volume of a biographical trilogy written by the mother of veteran MP, Shirley Williams.

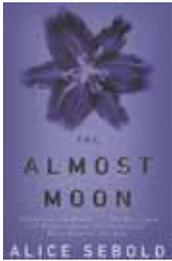
In 1914 Vera Brittain was eighteen and about to go up to Oxford. Four years later her life, along with that of her entire generation had changed in a way that was unimaginable before the war. This volume takes the reader from the early years of the twentieth century to 1925 and is her account of how she survived the war, despite losing many whom she loved, and devoting herself, instead of academia, to nursing the wounded. Of necessity it is a moving account and over 660 pages long, so not to be undertaken lightly, but the style draws the reader in. It begins:-

When the Great War broke out, it came to me not as a superlative tragedy, but as an interruption of the most exasperating kind to my personal plans.

This is, I believe, a supremely important book. Despite her sheltered and privileged upbringing Vera Brittain's courage and selflessness shine through it as she weathers tragedy upon tragedy. If you can, do try to read it.

The Almost Moon by Alice Sebold

The Almost Moon by Alice Sebold. I confess that I did not enjoy 'The Lovely Bones' Alice Sebold's first novel. Having now read her second I have decided to read no more that she writes! The

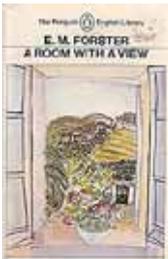


opening sentence is clearly designed to capture the reader's attention:-

When all is said and done, killing my mother came easily.

I was certainly hooked! But throughout the story, Helen behaves in an increasingly challenging way and this is paralleled by the revealing of events in her past which have helped to shape her. I gradually felt overloaded with the relentless shock tactics employed by the author and whilst I had an initial sympathy for a woman who had devoted years to a mother who had seldom shown her the remotest affection, this sympathy was eroded with each passing chapter. If there are any amongst you who read this and disagree, I would love to hear from you!

A Room with a View by E. M. Forster



A Room with a View by E. M. Forster. This classic novel has been made into a gorgeous Merchant Ivory film, which many of you will have seen. Forster is examining the English abroad, with

a wry smile. It is Edwardian England and young ladies are being allowed to be a little more adventurous than had been the case in previous years. Despite being accompanied by a fussy chaperone in a journey to Italy, Lucy Honeychurch manages to get into no end of adventures. Unlike most English people in possession of what Forster refers to as “the undeveloped heart”,

Lucy is romantic and spontaneous, with her stuffy chaperone acting as an amusing foil for her “excesses”. This is a lovely story, sympathetic to young Lucy but, with an ironic eye, deeply critical of many other English people. I should perhaps warn prospective readers that the volume on the shelves has obviously been a set book for someone, although it is in good condition. It is quite heavily annotated and highlighted, which may irritate some. For me it adds a degree of charm!

Finally may I point out some changes which I have instigated as a result of my observations at the Book Fair. I have taken the first section of the top shelf exclusively for Thrillers, Detective Fiction and Crime novels as they were very popular at the fair and, I gather from a programme on Radio 4, are now the most popular genre bought today. Similarly I noted that the table containing romantic novels was depleted in record time so I have cleared a section on top of the shelves at the far end for Romance. I hope this helps you find that wanted book. The rest of the shelves are as always in alphabetical order according to author from Ahern to Zusak!

It only remains for me to wish you a very Happy Christmas, do enjoy those long dark nights by catching up with a few volumes from our shelves.

Carol

Thoughts of a Blow In...

November is always a bit of a grey and bleak month, enlivened by the thoughts of upcoming Christmas celebrations and festivities. However, this year, Halloween was barely over, before all the shops had their Halloween costumes and sweets quickly reduced for sale. Then, in a blink of an eye, Christmas wares were in store en masse and on the shelves for the big push to sell them to an unsuspecting public

It really is unrelenting. As I was walking out of Asda today, I saw a sign saying, "44 sleeps till Christmas!" If that doesn't get most of us (the grown-ups anyway) in a state of anxiety over how much we have to do in so short a time, I don't know what will!

The period leading up to Advent in church is such a wonderful contrast to this merchandising mayhem around in our daily lives. The need for patience, stillness and waiting for the sense of expectation that the Advent season brings is greatly calming, especially now we are back in our beautifully renovated church building.

No doubt, I will be hearing soon what the little one's next door

are asking Santa for (behaviour permitting!) But in the meantime, birthdays go on. Jack, my friends' son in England is now fourteen and going on six feet tall! I got a lovely card from him, thanking me for the Jurassic Park DVD's he requested for his birthday and saying how much he enjoyed a family day out at his choice of venue, Woburn Safari Park. Apparently, the black bears really took his fancy. I don't think he tried to take any of them home though!

In these winter months, when out and about, quite often there doesn't seem to be a soul around let alone someone you know. Then you get those days, like for me, today, when you bump into everyone! It's so nice to see friends briefly and just catch up with news of them and their families. Even if just to admire the Lego set which is being bought for Christmas for a lucky five-year-old.

This lovely verse by the famous novelist Sir Walter Scott really caught my imagination for the contrast it conveys of dull November skies and the odd flash of colour still on our trees.

Cynthia

*"November's sky is chill and drear,
November's leaf is red and sear."*

Prayer Room

Here are a few of the prayers, quotations, comments and hymn verses written in our visitors' book:-

*Thank you for this quiet space for us to reflect...
We need to take time every day to talk and pray for each other and resolve to love not find fault.
Never more aware that peace is love so freely given*



*O Thou who camest from above
The pure celestial fire to impart
Kindle a flame of sacred love
On the mean altar of my heart.*



*There let it for Thy glory burn
With inextinguishable blaze
And trembling to its source return
In humble prayer and fervent praise.*

Charles Wesley

Sitting in the peace and quiet of this delightful room, listening to King's College Cambridge chanting psalms, at this special time of the year – feeling the love of God surrounding us – what joy is ours!

What a blessing to have this time of peace in a troubled world. Time to reflect and trust in God.

In the busy season that is almost upon us, let us try, through these comments, to find space for peace, quiet and tranquil reflection on God's goodness to us.

Amen

Happy Christmas, Carol



C is for the Christ Child who was born on Christmas Day.
H is for the heaven above from whence and where he came.
R is for the Royal David's City and that lowly cattle shed.
I is for in a manger where He slept in heavenly peace
S is for the shepherds who watched as glory shone around.
T is for the three kings who followed that wondrous star.
M is for Mary the mother of that infant so tender and mild.
A is for the angels who proclaimed the baby's birth.
S is for the Saviour of you and me and all of those on earth.

So as you rush about on this Christmas week,
To buy the last minute present and get the larder filled.
To welcome friends and family, which of course is very nice,
Take time to still remember that first Christmas night
And the special baby boy who was born so far away.
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Pat Moffett



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