

Groomspout Parish Church

# CONTACT

April / May 2019  
[groomspoutparishchurch.org](http://groomspoutparishchurch.org)



*As for  
God  
His way is  
perfect*

Psalm 18:30

# Church Officials



## Rev Duncan Pollock

Rector of Groomsport Parish Church  
028 9146 4476

---

### 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.



### The Rector's Warden

Helen Parkinson  
helen@groomsportparishchurch.org

---

### The People's Warden

Hester Kelly  
hester@groomsportparishchurch.org

---

### The Rector's Glebe Warden

Billy McAnnenev  
billy@groomsportparishchurch.org

---

### The People's Glebe Warden

Tony Anderson  
tony@groomsportparishchurch.org

---

### Treasurer

Wesley Quinn  
wesley@groomsportparishchurch.org

---

### Secretary to Select Vestry

Heather Pentland  
heather@groomsportparishchurch.org

---

### Church Hall Bookings

David McKnight  
david@groomsportparishchurch.org

### Gift Aid Secretary

Ian Sloan  
ian@groomsportparishchurch.org

---

### Parish Archivist

Barry Greenaway  
barry@groomsportparishchurch.org

---

### Varger / Caretaker

Susan Moore  
208 9127 1311

---

### Organist

Stuart Tanner  
stuart@groomsportparishchurch.org

---

### Parish Office

Elaine Lester  
elaine@groomsportparishchurch.org

---

### Hall Problems

Billy - billy@groomsportparishchurch.org  
Tony - tony@groomsportparishchurch.org

---

### Sunday School

Maggie Townsley  
maggie@groomsportparishchurch.org

# *From the Rector*

By the time this reaches you, the likelihood is that we will have had our Annual Vestry; new Church Wardens and other office bearers will be in place and there will be a new Select Vestry to continue where the outgoing Vestry has left off. So I begin by thanking those who are standing down from the Select Vestry this year.

Unless you happen to be on the Vestry, it is probable that the work or role of the Vestry rarely bothers you. I think that's understandable, and I mean no harm in making that observation. I very rarely stop to think how the water comes out of my taps; I just assume it will when I turn the tap on. Indeed, if you are like me, the only time you stop to consider how things work, is when they stop working. We take so much for granted. I think it is the same with the work of the Select Vestry and the others who work gently and quietly around the Church.

Think of the work of the Church Wardens: they always turn out when there are services, and that isn't always easy when they have other people to consider. Ash Wednesday morning there was Helen the Rector's Warden, making sure the Church was ready and welcoming for a half past seven in the morning act of worship. And in the evening the People's Warden, Hester, quietly meeting and greeting people as they came into Church. Their job isn't confined to Sunday services. The treasurer, Wesley, who works so diligently in keeping our financial accounts and ensuring that the Select Vestry is always up to date on our income and expenditure, no mean feat when you consider he has had to keep account of nearly £400k of building money this past year. Then there are Dorothy-Anne and Pearl who keep the Church

flowers so beautifully. William and David, Jim and Tony, who all give so much of themselves in ensuring the fabric of the Church and the Halls are properly maintained. Heather, the Vestry Secretary, who keeps me on my toes and keeps the minutes of our meetings, not just for present Vestry members, but as a means of keeping a proper historical and accurate record of Church life for future generations. There are so many more: do you ever stop to consider who keeps the Church linen clean, or who provides the bread and wine for Holy Communion; who produces the weekly pew/prayer leaflet; who arranges the various rotas, welcome teams, readers, assistants with the Chalice? I could go on!

And I'm often told, especially by visitors, how well kept our Church is. They assume that there is a huge army of volunteers keeping the place clean and tidy. They are surprised when I tell them, "No"! There is no army, just our caretaker, Susan, who vacuums, dusts, and polishes: Susan who unlocks in the morning and locks up in the evening; Susan, who ensures that there is always soap, towels and loo paper in the (clean) lavatory – both in the Church and in the Halls.

I would ask you to give thanks every day for our beautiful Parish Church. I would ask you, too, to pray for our Select Vestry and all the others who work to maintain our beautiful, sacred Parish Church. And I would ask you, too, to pray that none of us would ever take their work or their time or their love of the place for granted.

Duncan

# Services for April and May

**Sunday**  
**31**  
**March** Lent 4, Mothering Sunday  
Welcome Team - Ian & Carol Walters  
Reader - Charlotte Cully

8.30am Holy Communion

10.30am A Family Service for Mothering Sunday\* (note the change)

8.30am Compline

\*Coffee after 10.30am service in Church Hall. All welcome! Our hosts will be Jenny & Peter Osborough, Fiona Cox & Bert Smith

**Sunday**  
**07**  
**April** Lent 5, Passion Sunday  
Welcome Team - Ian and Zandra Sloan  
Reader - Barry Greenaway

8.30am Holy Communion

10.30am Service of the Word (with Holy Baptism)

6.00pm Evening Prayer (said)

There will be no mid-week services the week after Easter!

## Services for Holy Week & Easter

**Sunday**  
**14**  
**April** Palm Sunday  
Welcome Team - Ian and Zandra Sloan

8.30am Holy Communion

10.30am Worship for Palm Sunday a shared service at Groomspout Presbyterian Church

6.00pm Evening Service for Palm Sunday, (joined by our friends from Groomspout Presbyterian Church)

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.

**Monday**  
**15**  
**April** Holy Monday

7.30am Morning Prayer

7.30pm Evening Prayer (sung)

**Tuesday**  
**16**  
**April** Holy Tuesday

7.30am Holy Communion

7.30pm Compline

**Wed**  
**17**  
**April** Holy Wednesday

7.30am Morning Prayer

7.30pm Evening Prayer (said)

**Thur**  
**18**  
**April** Maundy Thursday

7.30am Morning Prayer

7.30pm Parish Communion - At this service we wash feet as a token of our Lord's command to "Love one another"

**Friday**  
**19**  
**April** Good Friday

2.00pm A Good Friday Vigil

Sunday  
**21**  
March

Easter Sunday  
Welcome Team - Peter & Jenny Osborough  
Reader - Peter Osborough

- 6.30am The first worship of Easter, on the beach followed by breakfast. Meet at the Halls.
- 8.30am Holy Communion
- 10.30am Parish Communion for Easter
- 6.00pm Evening Prayer

Sunday  
**28**  
March

Easter 2  
Welcome Team - Davina & Janet Dunbar  
Reader - Elaine Lester

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

Sunday  
**05**  
May

Easter 3  
Welcome Team - Davina & Janet Dunbar  
Reader - Wesley Quinn

- 8.30am Holy Communion
- 10.30am A Family Service\*
- 6.00pm Evening Prayer (sung)

\*Coffee after 10.30am service in Church Hall. All welcome! Our hosts are Elaine Lester, Marion Cinnamond, Ken & Valerie Boyd.

Sunday  
**12**  
May

Easter 4  
Welcome Team - Peter & Jenny Osborough  
Reader - Dorothy-Anne Crawford

- 8.30am Holy Communion
- 10.30am Parish Communion
- 6.00pm Compline

Sunday  
**19**  
May

Easter 5  
Welcome Team - Barry & Caroline Greenaway  
Reader - Bert Smith

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

Sunday  
**26**  
May

Easter 6  
Welcome Team - Barry & Caroline Greenaway  
Reader - Valerie Boyd

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

Thur  
**30**  
May

Ascension Day

- 11.00am Holy Communion

Sunday  
**02**  
June

The Sunday after Ascension  
Welcome Team - David & Dorothy McKnight  
Reader - Maureen Taggart

- 8.30am Holy Communion
- 10.30am A Family Service\*
- 6.00pm Evening Prayer

\*Coffee after 10.30am service in Church Hall. All welcome! Our hosts are Maureen & Noal Taggart, Ian & Zandra Sloan.

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

# *Births, Marriages, Deaths & Announcements*

## *Holy Rest*

*Alec Martin – 16 December*

Alec, and his father before him, had served on the Select Vestry and as a Trustee for many, many years. Indeed, between them Alec and his father had served Groomspoint Parish Church for more than half its lifetime. Alec's passing was a milestone in the life of our Parish community, and somehow it was fitting that his was the first funeral to take place with the newly refurbished Church. It was also a tribute to Alec, (though not surprising), that the congregation for his funeral service spilled over into our Church Halls

*Agnes Murray – 19 February*

Agnes was the mother of John Murray, and had spent the last years of her life in the Bangor Care home. She achieved the milestone celebrating her 100th birthday last year. Agnes was a busy family oriented person, who throughout her life, kept the faith.

*Vera Angus – 20 February*

Vera was a blow in, but once she opened her mouth you knew exactly where she had come from -Birmingham! But she had been so much part of the village community right from the moment she moved here to be with her beloved Bobby, so many years ago. Vera was secretary to the Groomspoint Evergreens for ten years, until age and poor health caught up with her. It was a privilege to have her funeral in Church.

*Maurice Boal – 1 March*

Maurice's funeral took place in Gray's funeral parlour. It was typical of Maurice that he had everything arranged long before his time, and it was typical, too, that he wanted the minimum of fuss. He had been a staunch member of Cockle Island Boat Club for many, many years.

*Loving Father grant to these eternal rest and to those who mourn, your love and peace.*

## *Announcements*

*Welcome to a changed-look CONTACT.*

You'll see some old favourites and some new contributors. We will have more photos in future, and articles covering a wider range of subjects. In this edition, look for the articles from Billy and Carol Hamilton in Spain, and from Helen Kennedy about her tennis. Our hope is that our Parish magazine will remain interesting to read, entertaining and informative.

From now on, CONTACT will be published five times a year instead of ten. The next magazine will be in June with a deadline of 17 May for receipt of articles for inclusion.

Best Wishes.

*Thanks*

The Parish recently received the following message from our friends in Groomspoint Presbyterian Church:

"Dear Friends,

Thank you for your kind support at our World Leprosy Day 2019: Heal Nepal Coffee Morning on Saturday 2nd March. We raised a total of £377.00 which will be matched by the UK government Aid UK scheme. Your support is very much appreciated.

Kind regards,

Stephanie McCreedy

Leprosy Mission Convenor"

*Groomspoint Parish MOJO Club*

For the last couple of years a growing band of individuals have been motivated by Ann Parker on Wednesday mornings in her classes "You can with Ann." It is with sadness that we say farewell to Ann as she and her fiancée Dee depart these shores to begin their new life together in Crete. We send best wishes to them both.

However, because Ann has volunteered to leave her weighing scales behind, and to keep in

# Announcements

touch through our What's app group, it has been agreed that the group will continue as a self help weight loss group.

The first Mojo Club will operate on Wednesday 3 April in the Canon Tyney Hall. Weigh in will take place 9.30am – 9.45am followed by a coffee and a food related discussion till 10.30. Cost is £2 weekly - £1 to the Church and £1 to a charity. Individuals can either just call in to get weighed or they can stay for discussion afterwards. New members are very welcome.

Any further queries can be directed to Elaine Lester in the Parish office.

## Storehouse



Storehouse will be moving to their new premises on 21st March so deliveries should be made to 6A Balloo Drive (behind Bangor Fuels).

At the moment they are very short of the following items so if you could possibly add a couple of things to your weekly shop and bring them to church, Storehouse would be very grateful:

tins of fruit, tins of vegetables, tins of custard, rice, cooking oil, snacks, tins of meat, bottles of juice, sauces for rice and pasta.

Many thanks

Elaine

## Walking For Softies (More Like Strolling Really)

GROOMSPORT PARISH CHURCH



Everyone had a great time at Botanic Gardens in February. We particularly enjoyed the Tropical Ravine House and its magical plants and trees. In March, we eased our way around the paths and glens of Belvoir Park Forest in South Belfast. On both occasions, we retired to a nearby cafe for our customary scones, all washed down with lashings of coffee and tea.

Our next walk will be on Saturday 27 April along

the North Down Coastal Path. After that, our final outing of the season will be on Saturday 25 May to the Queen's Island Heritage Trail in East Belfast.

Our group is open to everyone, regardless of age or ability. Or if you'd prefer just to meet up with us afterwards for refreshments, you can do that too. So why not join us? You'll be very welcome and enjoy yourself.

Contact Zandra or Ian mob. 07968401387





We commenced the New Year on a high note with four new members. This brings the current membership of the Groomsport Branch up to 49. The theme of the January meeting was extremely timely after the usual rushing around during Christmas and New Year. Our speaker, Claire Stewart who is a retired experienced and professional Counsellor gave a most interesting talk on the topic of 'Reducing Stress'. No matter what age we are, stress comes to all of us, sometimes for no apparent reason. The presentation included advice on managing our time, the importance of regular exercise and the need for sufficient and restful sleep. One tip which resonates with many people in church life is 'learning when to say "NO"'. Too often we over-commit, and as Claire wisely states, it is only ourselves who know what is actually in our diary.

The February meeting took the form of an Interview. Our special guest was Howard Thornton, the Chairman of Fermanagh and Omagh District Council. Howard is known to a number of ladies in our group and is very closely related to one of the most active members of our Groomsport Parish congregation! No prizes for guessing! Howard has

had a wide-ranging, successful and extremely interesting career which he shared openly with the group. He spoke of his upbringing in the family business in Enniskillen, and of his significant career in the RUC where he experienced some of the most tragic aspects of the 'Troubles', having being stationed in the most dangerous border areas. He also spoke of the two years he spent as a consultant in Bulgaria, and then more recently of his current role as a Councillor in Fermanagh and the challenges of working with the other political parties. Long after the time speakers at MU meetings usually lose the concentration of members, Howard had the audience in the palm of his hand and you could have heard a pin drop in the room. Such was the interest in what he had to say, combined with his engaging manner. We ended the interview on a humorous note when I asked Howard who his ideal dinner party companion would be (apart from family of course) and he said 'Fiona Bruce'. He has excellent taste - don't you agree.

Mae  
Branch Leader



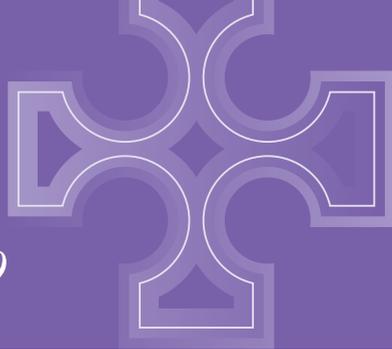
*Howard Thornton in interview with Mae*

### *The Colander Girls*

Formerly the Cookery Club meet on the 3rd Wednesday of each month. In February Helen (without Rigsby) made this delicious gooey chocolate cake for Debra's birthday. It was yummy! Everyone welcome to join us any month at 7.30pm.



## *Vestry Notes - February 2019 & March 2019*



The Select Vestry was delighted to be able to send a cheque for £1,000 to the Asia Hawariat School as a result of our Christmas Appeal.

At the February meeting the annual Accounts were approved so that they can be presented to the General Vestry for adoption.

The Building Sub Committee was stood down at the February meeting but Barry will continue to oversee the snagging list and the planning of the store and ramp, which have been agreed in principle. An application for planning permission has been submitted and Built Heritage will be informed. The Vestry has agreed further research of dimmer lighting switches for the Church. One of the floodlights at the entrance to the Church requires adjustment. On the other hand, the architect is to look at improving the brightness of the lighting in the chancel of the Church

The Select Vestry expressed their gratitude to Zandra for taking over the Church website and to Amanda McWhinney for giving her many hours of help to update it.

A Commemoration book of donors to the Building Fund will be produced in due course.

All social events have been successful financially and have been well attended –

“This is their Life,” Kildare Shopping Trip, the Ladies’ Breakfast and the Quiz.

219 consent forms have been received to help us become GDPR compliant. The Rector and Bert will follow up those still outstanding.

50 new hymn books have been purchased.

A pair of splendid bespoke silver candlesticks have been ordered from Cyril Flanagan of Belfast with money donated by Groomsport Presbyterian Church. Their minister, Paul Dalzell, will present them officially on Palm Sunday.

A shower will be fitted in the Rectory. The Rectory’s drainage problem seems to have been solved.

Colin Crozier has conducted his first tour of the Church and feedback has been very positive.

Following discussion of catering at the funerals of Mothers’ Union families or long-standing Church members, it was agreed that nothing should change – ie we will continue to provide refreshments when requested and a donation would be suggested.

The new Vestry will conduct a survey of the Parish along the lines of that done in Mission 2015

# Groomsport Parish Church Archives



"There is a neat Church at Groomsport."  
(Dr. Alexander Knox)

A librarian once said that the difference between a library and an archive is that archive items don't stand up by themselves on the shelf. Having been both librarian and archivist I know that many a library book is not self-supporting! The real difference, however, is that a librarian thinks in the present whereas an archivist plans for 100 years plus in the future. An archive of course serves the present and the immediate past but its main target is our descendants, generations as yet unborn. The guiding principle behind a successful archive is that everything counts – warts and all. When you and I are pushing up the daisies those who follow us will know from where they have come and to what they belong – if we have got it right. Do we know? Did our ancestors get it right?

Being an archivist is a licence to hoard. Every book, document, letter, photograph, picture, recording, piece of hardware, glassware, piece of paper, anecdote, Duncan's worn-out dog collars and Stuart Tanner's discarded waistcoats included, everything is important! That's where we come in – all of us: from the

youngest Sunday School member to the old git who runs the archives. If you have/produce anything pertaining to Groomsport Parish Church please give it to the Archives, or send a copy/photograph, or send a record: with as much detail as possible. Email me, text me (don't phone – I'm as deaf as a post), leave a message in the Church porch or Parish Halls post box, drop something off at my house: whatever . . . use your imagination! Please include your name and email/postal address. I will acknowledge. The Parish Archives are located in the Parish Halls.

Since my last report, a year ago, so much has happened in our Parish, not least the major refurbishment of our Parish Church. Throughout a comprehensive dossier (documentary, photographic and digital) of all that has taken place has been maintained and is now part of the Archival record.

To underline our heritage the photographs accompanying this report represent the life span of our Parish Church. The first is dated 1842. The second is dated February 2019.



In 2017 we celebrated 175 years of service to God in this little corner of our island home and we are part of a Christian heritage going back more than 1500 years. Let us make it our business to ensure that the record of that service continues unbroken.

Barry Greenaway - Groomsport Parish Church Archivist  
12 Ballymacormick Road  
07515699389 - barryg144@btinternet.com

# Join Us

## Sunday

### *Sunday School*

Maggie Townsley  
maggie@groomsportparishchurch.org

## Monday

### *Mothers' Union*

Mae Burke - 07810 440492

### *Chattering Needles*

Jenny Craythorne – 07748580541

### *Select Vestry Meeting*

Heather Pentland  
heather@groomsportparishchurch.org

## Tuesday

### *Tai Chi For Health*

Janet Wilson - 07703360385

### *Groomsport & District Gardening Club*

Yvonne McIlmail - 028 9146 9420

## Wednesday

### *Scrabble*

Elaine Lester - 07791 569432  
elaine@groomsportparishchurch.org

### *MoJo Club*

Elaine Lester - 07791 569432  
elaine@groomsportparishchurch.org

### *Bible Study*

The Rector - 028 9146 4475

### *The Colander Girls*

Maggie Townsley  
maggie@groomsportparishchurch.org

## Thursday

### *Evergreens*

Valerie Boyd  
valerie@groomsportparishchurch.org

### *Groomsport Parish Art Class*

Stuart Tanner - 07411 178230  
Carole Barbosa - 07473 939499

### *Table Tennis*

John Hand - 07540 375785

### *Chess Club*

Mark Seidman - 028 91467950  
mark@patientendurance.co.uk

### *Masonic Lodge*

Secretary Graham Eve  
evega@talktalk.net

## Saturday

### *Walking For Softies*

Ian Sloan  
ian@groomsportparishchurch.org  
Zandra Sloan  
zandra@groomsportparishchurch.org

If you would like to get involved please contact the person in charge of the activity for more information. Alternatively visit...

[www.groomsportparishchurch.org](http://www.groomsportparishchurch.org)

# WHAT ABOUT THE BIBLE – SOME BASIC FACTS

Let's start with the name BIBLE. It comes from the Greek – ta biblia- meaning the Books. The Bible is a collection of different books or types of writing – history, poetry, legal codes, proverbs and sayings, apocalyptic visions, hymns and letters. Over the centuries these books were arranged in varying ways. The broad split now is between the Hebrew Scriptures (known to us as the Old Testament), the New Testament and the Apocrypha.

The Jewish name for their Scriptures is the TANAKH. This is an acronym derived from their three main sections : Torah (The Law), Nevim ( The Prophets), and Ketuvim (The Writings). The Christian term Old Testament, was first used in the 2nd Century AD.

The period of events covered by the Tanakh covers thousands of years. The oldest

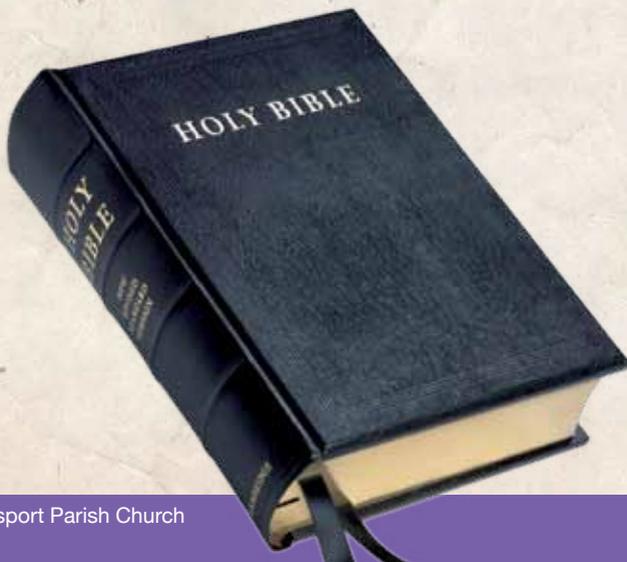
parts were probably written around 1100 BC and the youngest part (Daniel) from about 600 BC.

By comparison, most of the New Testament covers a much shorter timeframe of around 100 years, excluding Revelation which leads us way into the future. Its earliest Book is probably Galatians 50 AD, and the last one is Revelation written around 90 AD.

The Bible was written in Hebrew and Greek, with some Aramaic and Latin thrown in. The OT is almost all in Hebrew, or to give it its proper name “the language of Judah”. In contrast the New Testament was written in common Greek or “Koine”, the language of ordinary people. Greek was the universal language across the Roman Empire, which had been introduced earlier by Alexander the Great. It was this language which was used by Paul, Mark and Luke.

More about the Bible next time

Ian Sloan





## This is Their Life

Friday 25 January saw the first fundraising event of the year – the life stories of two very interesting men. First to the floor was ex drug addict Jackie Burke. Since becoming a Christian Jackie has been telling his extreme story to audiences including schoolchildren and prisoners for over twenty years. Such was the moving story Jackie had to tell, one could have heard a pin drop and many in the audience were moved to tears by the heart wrenching words he spoke. As a complete contrast, Raymond Crooks also told how he had come to faith but by singing his life changing story and entertaining the audience in a completely different way.

In response to a luxury draw to raise money for two charities of their choice, £370 was raised to support Jackie's choice – "Compassion" and Raymond's choice "Friends in Action." In addition £700 was raised for the Building Fund.

We are indebted to Pauline Harrison who single handedly provided a delicious meal

Heather Pentland

# Life in Nerja

In late 2016 I was planning to retire and Carol and I thought that we might take “the gap year we never had”. After some debate we planned to spend a year in Nerja in Spain, a place where we had many happy holidays.

Nerja is the last resort on the Costa del Sol travelling East from Malaga ie in the other direction to the more famous, and livelier, resorts of Torremolinos, Fuengirola and Marbella.

On Sunday 5th February 2017 we left Groomspoint Parish carrying the good wishes of the parishioners and the St. Bridget's Cross made by Colin Crozier during morning prayer. We travelled to Nerja the next day.

We had planned that this was not going to be just a lengthy holiday and so we quickly identified what activities we wished to undertake during our year away. Within days of arriving I was joining Coral Alminares de Nerja which is one of the best choirs in Malaga Province if not in the whole of the Andalusian Region. It was a bit of a change to be in a choir that had more tenors than Groomspoint Parish Choir had members. I have been all over Southern Spain with the choir and we even spent five days in Portugal last year when we sang at a concert in Faro Cathedral. We are currently practising Mozart's Requiem for a performance as a prelude to Nerja's Semana Santa (Holy Week) ceremonies. By the way we rehearse twice a week with rehearsals starting at 9 pm.

Carol started collecting activities and she too is performing but with her it is “treading the boards” with Nerja Players, the local English-speaking amateur dramatic group. In fact, as I

write this, she is at rehearsals for a performance tonight. She can be seen performing on the group's website and YouTube pages. In addition, she belongs to the Nerja Arts Society, does Yoga twice a week, helps out in the shop for Cudeca a local cancer charity and belongs to a book club.

In addition to the choir I belong to Nerja Rugby Club for whom I contribute articles for local English language newspapers and magazines. I am also a member of the Nerja History Group. We both regularly attend films and concerts in the 350-seat theatre of the municipal Cultural Centre (A & ND Council take note).

We have not forgotten our spiritual life and we belong to the Church of England Parish of Nerja and Almunecar, part of the Diocese of Europe. This holds weekly Eucharist services in the local Catholic church of San Miquel (St. Michael). I am on the rota of lesson readers at the church. Our attendance is a mixture of ex-pat locals and holidaymakers and is seasonal but on an average day we could have 60 communicants. Our annual Carol service attracts over 200 and we witness in the main square of the town on Christmas Eve and Good Friday. We could have up to 100 joining in the singing of seasonal carols and hymns on these occasions.

So how did the year go? In fact it went so well that 25 months later we are still here. We have not decided our long-term future but in the medium-term we intend to remain in Spain. We will be back in Donaghadee during this summer so look forward to seeing our Groomspoint friends again.

Billy Hamilton



## Kildare Shopping Trip 2019

On Saturday 2 February, with euros in their pockets, 43 ladies and two brave men set off to enjoy a day of shopping. It was a real mix of old faces from previous years and some new faces. Fortunately the cold spell of that week had come to an end and all present enjoyed a glorious day in the sun.

Following a coffee break at Applegreen, we reached Newbridge Silver Outlet in time for lunch and discovered that the Museum of Icons has decided not to charge again, so those who hadn't been before were able to view the clothes of some very famous people.

Kildare Outlet did not disappoint and many bags were carried onto the bus after a very successful four hours of shopping.

We are very grateful to Robin from McAvoy coaches who ensured we were safely driven there and back.

As a result of the day, over £500 was raised to buy some new equipment for the Church kitchen.

Heather Pentland



## Ladies Breakfast 2019

Greeted by superbly dressed men of the parish, around 60 of we 'ladies' arrived at the hall on a beautiful Saturday morning. Tables were laid with orange juice, pastries and toast. We were then given glass jars of yoghurt to which we could add granola and fruit compote as we wished. This was followed by the breakfast of our own choice – smoked salmon, bacon, scrambled egg, tomato, and mushrooms. Toast was replenished regularly and jams and marmalade were on the table. Followed by tea

and coffee. It was all marvellous. But we were then entertained by Mr Walker Ewart, who made us all smile (and belly laugh) with his renditions of poems and stories. He was very funny. This would have been enough but we were then entertained by a piper from Cleland Memorial Band. Right in front of the Rector too! Let the reader understand as he would say!

A huge thank you to the men who organised, cooked and served at this event. It was superb.

Elaine



# A Chance Encounter

Last September, either by accident or design, a very helpful lady came to speak with me at Mount Stewart. She admired Rigsby, my guide dog, and then went on to say that she was getting used to guide dogs, as she coached Visually Impaired tennis at a local tennis club. Never having heard of Visually Impaired tennis, I was curious and asked her all about it. One thing led to another, numbers were exchanged, and the following week Rigsby and I set off on a journey that would change our lives.

That was my very first day at VI Tennis. It had been 38 years since holding a tennis racquet and it was wonderful to play again. It turned out that I was not bad at the game and with practice, by Christmas I had been invited to play for a place on the All Ireland Team with prospects, if successful, to get on the squad and go to the world championships this summer.

It is wonderful to play again. Being able to run free and play matches competitively again is a little surreal.

On February 3rd I played against the best players from all over Ireland. I played 5 matches, won 5 only dropping 1 game. Ten days later I received a call from Tennis Ireland inviting me to represent Ireland at the world championships in June, in Spain.

So, a chance encounter has changed my life for the good. Of course, I could not get to and from training without my wonderful dog, and friends, who pick me up from time to time, because they know its very tiring for us both.

My lesson from this, is always embrace a new meeting with a new person. Be interested in them and what they do. If I had not listened to what this lady had to say to me, I might never have known about VI Tennis and had this wonderful opportunity.

*Helen Kennedy*



*Anyone for tennis?*





## *Raising The Roof - Concert Of Celebration*

Well, if we didn't exactly raise the roof, it certainly hovered. Under the expert and dedicated leadership of Paul O'Reilly and Claire Buchanan, the Jazz Band and Chamber Choir of Bangor Grammar School provided an evening of joyful vocal and instrumental music on Friday 18 March. The variety of the repertoire was just perfectly balanced between sacred and secular, modern and classical and the overall performances were just wonderful. It was a unique occasion for our small church - never have we had an evening like it. There were over one hundred and fifty in the audience and we had fifty boys taking part. The way in which Paul and Claire introduced the

pieces with little human interest stories about how some of them were chosen by the boys themselves, added to the atmosphere of the event. It demonstrated the great relationship and mutual respect which exists between staff and pupils. Stephen Gilmore, the Vice Principal of the school dropped in during the morning rehearsal to add support.

The boys started to arrive just after 8.30am and they rehearsed extremely hard all day. They were given a break at around 10.30am and permitted to go down the street to the Spar. Imagine the faces of the staff when a swarm of boys in BGS uniform descended on the sweet



and crisp counters!! Lunch consisting of hot dogs, soft drinks, crisps and chocolate was served in the Hall by Freda and David Scott. The boys demonstrated their appreciation by scoffing it in minutes.

We always knew there would be challenges with the logistics as the church is so small and our Church Hall is several hundred yards down the street. But ingenuity prevailed and all we can say is thank goodness it did not rain and the system we created worked really well. We raised £1500 which will make a significant contribution to much-needed church funds, particularly after our recent restoration project.

You will see from the photos that there is not one face in the audience that is not happy and smiling.

The ladies of the Mothers' Union welcomed everyone to the Hall afterwards, where they served a delightful supper.

The concert was an overwhelming success and we are indebted to Elizabeth Huddleson, the Principal of Bangor Grammar School for her generous support in allowing this performance to take place in our church.



The Art exhibition will be held on Friday 24 May and Saturday 25 May from 10 am to 7 pm and on Sunday 26 May from 11.30 to 3pm. Preview will be on Thursday 23 May from 4pm to 7pm. Admission free.

**Anyone interested in exhibiting their art should contact Susan on 07867782395.**

## Planned Events 2019



APR  
14-17

Prayer Room

MAY  
18

Christian Aid Event

MAY  
23-26

Art Exhibition

JUNE  
01

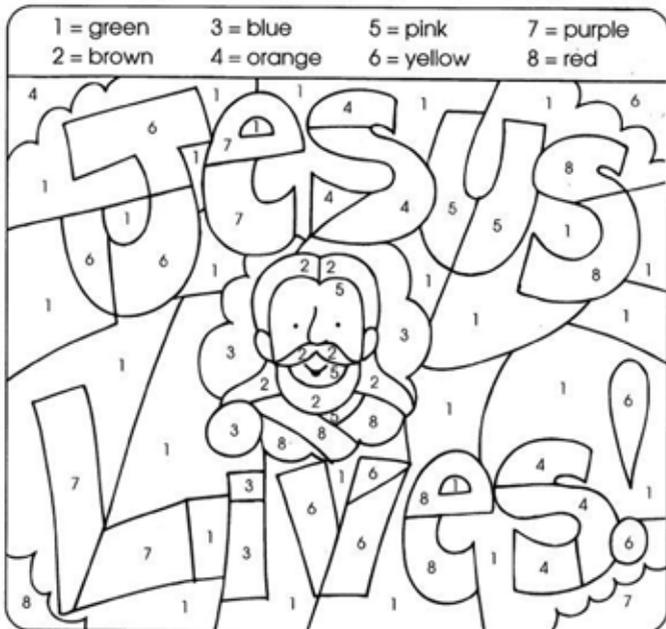
Family Picnic

AUG  
17

Craft Fair

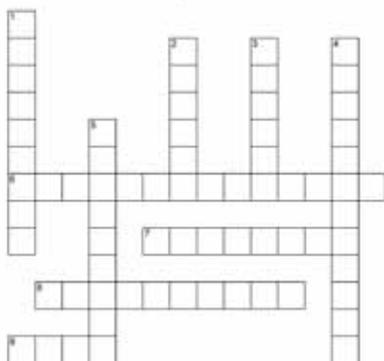
Northern Ireland Charity Number: 103258

# BibleBuds



ANGELS  
 APOSTLES  
 BETRAYAL  
 BLOOD  
 CALVARY  
 CROSS  
 CROWN OF THORNS  
 CRUCIFIXION  
 DARKNESS  
 DEATH  
 EARTHQUAKE  
 EASTER  
 GOLGOTHA  
 HIGH PRIEST  
 JESUS CHRIST  
 JOSEPH  
 JUDAS ISCARIOT  
 KING  
 LAMB

MARY  
 NAILS  
 PASSOVER  
 PIECES OF SILVER  
 PIERCED  
 PILATE  
 RESURRECTION  
 ROBE  
 ROMANS  
 SACRIFICE  
 SIMON OF CYRENE  
 SOLDIERS  
 SON OF GOD  
 SPEAR  
 STONE  
 TEMPLE  
 THIEVES  
 THREE DAYS  
 TOMB



## ACROSS

- Thursday before Easter; remembers the Last Supper
- Celebrates the magi's visit to see the newborn Christ
- Remembers the arrest, trial, and crucifixion of Jesus
- Forty day period of fasting and prayer before Easter

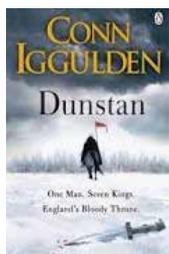
## DOWN

- Celebrates the birth of Jesus
- Four weeks before Christmas; time of preparing for the birth of Christ
- Celebrates the resurrection of Jesus from the dead
- The time between holidays
- Remembers the coming of the Holy Spirit; Fifty days after Easter

# Book Stall for April / May

I hope by now you have all seen our “new look” book shelves. I have taken the opportunity presented by the painting of the hall to bring in a number of changes. There is clearer labelling of the shelves, a larger selection of thriller and romance sections and a new collection tin for donations. I hope you like the changes and if you have any comments or suggestions about how it could be further improved I am open to all ideas, within reason! To begin with I am very grateful to Barry who has contributed the first review. I am always ready to welcome any contributions of reviews, as long as you can also provide the book for the shelves; variations on my opinions would be welcomed by the readers no doubt!

## Dunstan: Conn Iggulden.



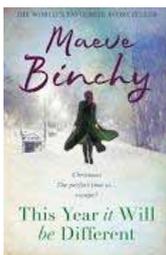
Ian Iggulden’s “Dunstan” is the story of a very human character whose life at the end of the 10th century has been recorded in many sources which seldom reveal the reality of his times. Iggulden, however has based his novel on Dunstan’s own autobiography and at the

same time used his own knowledge to enhance the tumultuous and often horrific details of a turbulent and chaotic period in English history from the reign of Athelstan (grandson of Alfred the Great) to that of Edward the “Unready” at the start of the 11th century. Far from being the rather staid and religious churchman of conventional accounts, Dunstan was a man of many talents: warrior, mathematician, inventor, abbot, architect, priest, politician, bishop, archbishop and confidante of no less than seven kings. Dunstan was no angel and as a novice rebelled frequently against the abuse doled out by his superiors and was no stranger to matters of the flesh ! For all that his faith seldom faltered and although not averse to using circumstances for his own ends, it was always for the greater good and his determination to see Athelstan’s dream of a united England fulfilled. The language of the day would have been Old English but Ian Iggulden’s clever use of modern English transports the reader to those distant

times without losing a sense of our linguistic heritage. One can almost hear the ancient words being spoken!

I am not a dedicated fan of Iggulden – he can be very long-winded at times – but this work is compulsive reading. Unless one is familiar with the period, I would recommend the reader has a history of Anglo Saxon England to hand, or at least a list of 10th century events/dates.

## This Year it Will be Different by Maeve Binchy



Books by this much loved author seldom come into the shelves these days. It is easy to dismiss her books as light-weight, but she never aspired to great literature, acknowledging that she just liked to tell a good story. Couple that skill with an acute observation of human nature and you have a undemanding

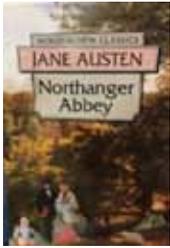
but rewarding read. Just the things for bed-time reading, as some of the short stories in this collection are less than a dozen pages long. They are all about people, families or singletons who find Christmas challenging for various reasons and who, as the title suggest, determine that this year they will change things. Her depiction of lonely women, exasperated husbands, nervous young people and particularly challenging relatives is spot on. Here is a brief description of two difficult grannies:-

Granny Dunne.....had a lip that curled all on its own without being given any instructions:.....  
Granny Byrne had a line in tinkling laughs that would freeze the blood.

There is humour, pathos, sentimentality and optimism in these twenty-two tales aplenty. I hope you find some to divert you.

## Northanger Abbey by Jane Austen

I have long been a great enthusiast for Jane Austen so was delighted when Northanger Abbey appeared amongst the most recent contributions. It is a novel, shorter than most of her other books, poking gentle fun at the fashionable enthusiasm during her lifetime for the Gothic novel. These were and are books

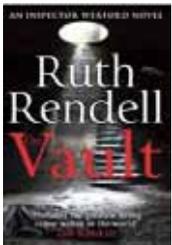


which set out to terrify and perturb the reader. Amongst well-known examples to us today include Dracula and Frankenstein. Catherine Morland, the heroine, has very modest social opportunities, but is given the chance to accompany the wife of a well to do local

landowner on a six week trip to Bath – a great hub of fashionable society in those days. Whilst there she receives a further opportunity to stay with a new friend who has a very attractive brother, Henry. The brother and sister live with their parents in Northanger Abbey. Filled with excited imaginings provoked by her love of the Gothic novel, Catherine misconstrues many of the characteristics of both the home and its occupants. The story is a delight; as well as romance and humour, there are misunderstandings and revelations aplenty. The humour is delicious, I think. Having teased his sister about her lack of understanding, Henry explains himself to Catherine:-

Miss Morland, no-one can think more highly of the understanding of women than I do. In my opinion, nature has given them so much, that they never find it necessary to use more than half.

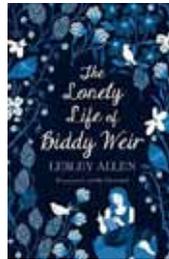
### *Vault by Ruth Rendell*



Vault by Ruth Rendell. Ruth Rendell writes wonderful crime novels and is another favourite of mine and this late novel of hers doesn't disappoint. Chief Inspector Wexford is fretting in retirement so when a younger colleague phones asking if he would be interested in being

an "Expert Advisor" on a particularly nasty and tricky case he jumps at the choice. The main story, as is always the case with her Wexford novels, is balanced with sections of Wexford's family life, which itself becomes profoundly distressing for a time. A. N. Wilson describes it as "A total page turner – and one of Rendell's very, very best novels". I fully agree.

### *The Lonely Life of Biddy Weir by Lesley Allen*



Lesley Allen is a Bangor writer and this is her first novel. I found it utterly compelling and as the story progressed, simply could not put it down. It deals with the difficult topic of bullying. Biddy is lonely simply because she was teased and bullied at school and brought up by her father

who loves her dearly but does not know how to show it or prepare her for what life will throw at her. Consequently she grows into womanhood knowing, because she was told so by her school mates, that she is "weird". As a result she chooses to avoid human contact to an extreme degree. Her one joy in life is watching and drawing birds, a skill for which she has enormous talent. This is to be her rescue. Deeply moving, highly perceptive, never over sentimental and ultimately life affirming, I cannot recommend this book too strongly. I hope many of you will buy it when the one I put on the shelves goes as I would love to see this author succeed.

### *The Gathering Dark by James Oswald*



I have reviewed books by this crime writer before; he is often described as the new Ian Rankin.

D. C. Tony McLean witnesses a terrible road traffic accident in Edinburgh. A lorry has jack-knifed and crashed into a crowded bus stop, killing fifteen people and injuring

many more. It is quickly discovered that the lorry was carrying lethal chemicals, for which it was not licensed; that the lorry was not on its planned route and that the contents were highly questionable. What started off as a dreadful accident quickly turns into a complex and shocking crime investigation. It is an excellent story, with the extra twist of which Oswald is so fond - a touch of the supernatural in the story.

Carol



# Thoughts of a Blow In...

Well, being a blow-in here seems fairly literal after such a spate of storms. Although the winter hasn't been particularly cold, it certainly has been stormy. I think we've almost been blown away altogether! It really makes us appreciate the signs of spring (in between the roaring winds!)

Recently, I've noticed so many birds, appearing either from far afield or from their winter hiding places while walking through the park. It's so good to see them twirling through the air, singing their hearts out and busily gathering twigs for their nests. And by the seaside, ignoring the noisy gulls, the herons are elegantly perched on the rocks, leisurely doing a bit of fishing.

The daffodils and wild garlic are out with a splash of colour from one and aroma from the other and the stretch of light in the mornings (and particular the evenings) is making such a difference to everyone. All we need now is some sunshine. But maybe that's too much to hope for!

Spring is such a lovely, hopeful season of

the year, with everyone getting a little brighter and a bit more active. It's also the start of the birthday season. For my friends' younger son in England, (now having reached the grand old age of thirteen!) there was a request of a book in the Maze Runner series and, of course, I couldn't resist slipping in a voucher as well, just to help with the Lego collection – which is now probably taking over their entire house, garden and garage!

Young Leo next door celebrated his sixth birthday last week. I saw him with his sisters and mum and dad in the garden, but given that he was entirely preoccupied with a new, shiny radio controlled car, it's entirely understandable that my birthday greeting was responded to with monosyllables! I am sure I will hear all about it when he's less busy with his new toys.

With Easter being so late this year, it feels almost a leisurely build up to a time of family and friends meeting up again. I am looking forward to catching up with everyone news of their busy lives since Christmas.

I came across these lines from 'Spring'

Cynthia

*“The air is like a butterfly  
With frail blue wings.  
The happy earth looks at the sky  
And sings.”*

# Prayer Room

As I write this it is just four short weeks until the Prayer Room is open once more. There is very little left that can be garnered from the comments and prayers left, so we look forward to more inspiring contributions in our 2019 room.

*Thank you for creating this beautiful space, perfectly designed for prayer, contemplation and meditation. It is such a privilege to be part of this prayer vigil and is such an enriching experience always.*

*We need to take time every day to talk and pray for each other and resolve to love not find fault.*

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

*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*

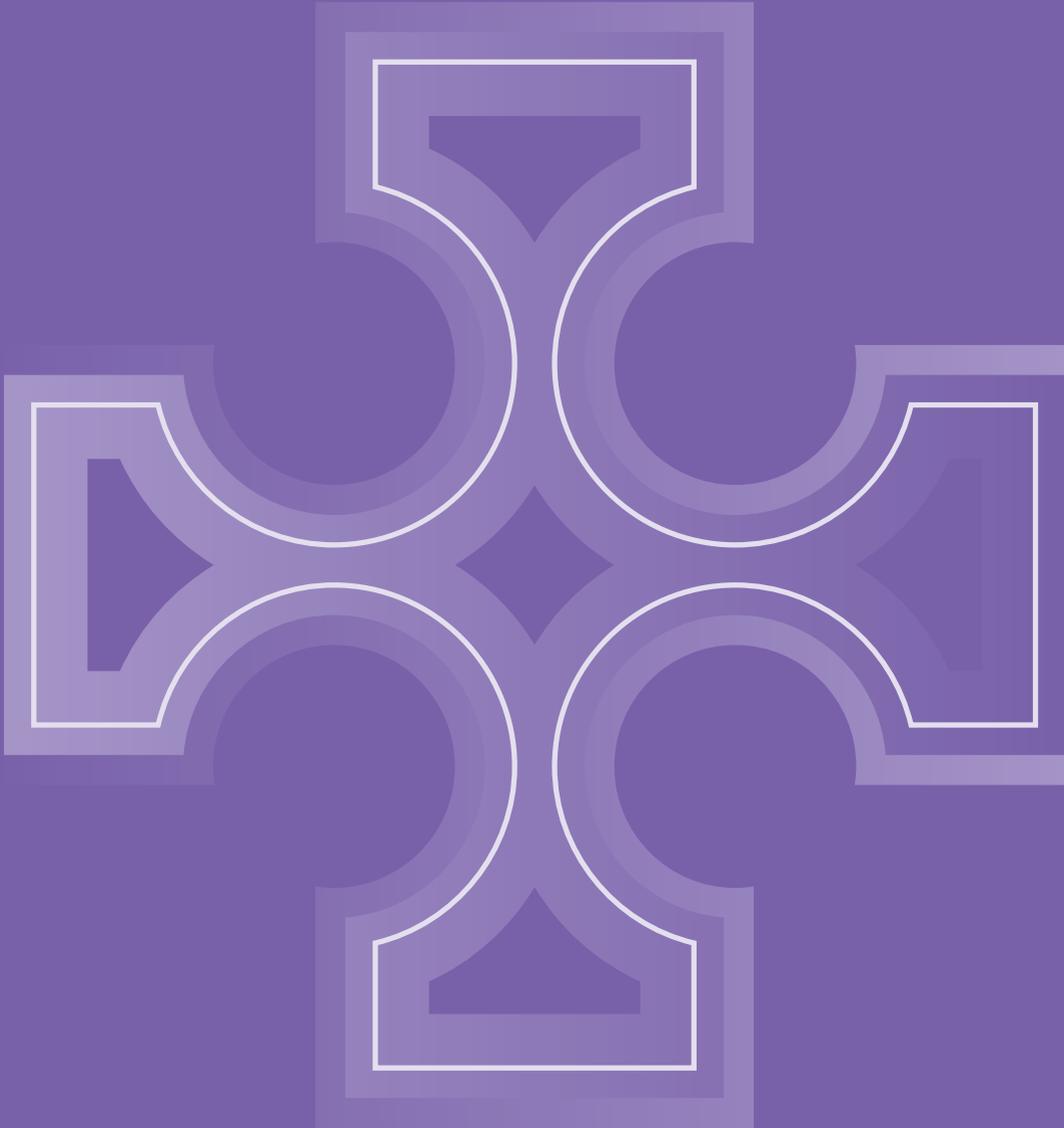
*There let it for thy glory burn  
With inextinguishable blaze  
And trembling to its source return  
In humble prayer and fervent praise.*

Lord, as the time approaches for our Prayer Room, guide the thoughts of those who plan and prepare it to make it a small reflection of Your wonder, love and goodness. Let it be made ready so that we are enabled to open our hearts, minds and souls to You as we spend time there.

The Prayer Room will take place this year from 7 30pm on Palm Sunday 14 April and run continuously until 7 30pm on Wednesday 17 April. This has always been appreciated in the past, so please sign the Rota in the Church Porch if you would like to spend a quiet hour or two.

Carol

*Amen*



*Groomsport Parish Church*

# CONTACT

[groomsportparishchurch.org](http://groomsportparishchurch.org)