

Groomspoint Parish Church

# CONTACT

June - Autumn 2020  
[groomspointparishchurch.org](http://groomspointparishchurch.org)



IF GOD IS ALL YOU HAVE,  
*You have all you need.*

John 14:8

# Church Officials



## Rev Duncan Pollock

Rector of Groomsport Parish Church  
028 9146 4476

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### 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.



### The Rector's Warden

Gary Keenan  
gary@groomsportparishchurch.org

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### The People's Warden

Ken Boyd  
ken@groomsportparishchurch.org

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### The Rector's Glebe Warden

Billy McAneney  
billy@groomsportparishchurch.org

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### The People's Glebe Warden

Tony Anderson  
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### Treasurer

Florence McAneney  
florence@groomsportparishchurch.org

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### Secretary to Select Vestry

Heather Pentland  
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### Church Hall Bookings

David McKnight  
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### Gift Aid Secretary

Ian Sloan  
ian@groomsportparishchurch.org

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### Parish Archivist

Barry Greenaway  
barry@groomsportparishchurch.org

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### Verger / Caretaker

Susan Moore  
028 9127 1311

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### Organist

Stuart Tanner  
stuart@groomsportparishchurch.org

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### Parish Office

Amanda McWhinney  
028 9127 1311

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### Hall Problems

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

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### Sunday School

Maggie Townsley  
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# *Worship in the Church Halls*

From August 2nd, we have been worshipping in the Church Halls, at 9.30, 11.30 and 6.00. The response has been wonderful, with an average attendance of 85 attending services each Sunday.

The guidelines laid down by the Diocese and Public Health Authorities place upon Churches a whole raft of new responsibilities. Most of these are to do with cleaning and sanitising furniture. If you have attended the Halls for worship, you will have seen some of these procedures being carried out. For example, after the congregation has left the Canon Tyney Hall after each service, the Wardens and other volunteers, steam spray the chairs and clean the floor with antiseptic wipes. The loos are cleaned, the handrails are wiped down. Given the nature of our Church furniture, pews,

cushions and carpets, as well as the nature of the woodwork, this would have been next to impossible in Church. If we did meet in Church for worship, we could only have one service and that, because of social distancing, would limit our numbers. After that service, we would then have to “quarantine” the church building for 72 hours, which in turn would mean that we wouldn’t be able to open the building for private prayer and reflection.

Please be assured that we are closely monitoring all that we do and keeping this new situation under review. No-one is keener than the Rector to get back into Church. But nothing will be done until it is properly thought through and we can assure ourselves that all is being done to maintain your health and safety. Thank you.

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## *Service Times*

For the foreseeable future, services will be held on Sundays in the Canon Tyney Hall as follows:

9.30am A Service of the Word

11.30am A Service of the Word

6.00pm Compline

The Sacrament of Holy Communion will not be celebrated for the time being. The singing of hymns is not possible for the foreseeable future.

Numbers at each service are limited. Most members of the congregation will have had a letter indicating which service they could attend. After a few weeks of the system operating, it has become clear that there are a few places spare at each service. If you haven’t been told which service to attend, or you would like to change service times, do please contact either Gary or Ken, our Church Wardens, and they will do their best to accommodate you.

# *From the Rector*

It is perhaps inevitable that I raise the dreaded spectre of Covid-19. These last few months have been a trial for all of us, particularly those who have had to self isolate or shield for so many weeks; worse still, it's been dreadful for those who have contracted Coronavirus or have had a loved one so affected. My problem is that the longer this situation drags on, the more difficult I find it to maintain my vigilance, which is not helpful for you, for me and those others I meet in the course of my ministry. How many times do I walk out of the house without my mask before going to the shops. And then, how many times do I stop and think, "Ah well, it doesn't really matter", before I bow to the inevitable and return home and collect the wretched thing? It's all part of what is being called the "new normal" and I am finding it very hard to adapt.

The new normal is touching every part of our lives: holidays cancelled, eating out severely restricted, shaking hands or embracing friends and family a complete no-no. Simply being with friends and family is proving so difficult. Visiting anyone is a trial, and visits to nursing and care homes are completely forbidden. As for Church itself and time together Sunday by Sunday, well that has had to be adapted to meet all the new restrictions. The "new normal". I miss the Sacrament of Holy Communion; I miss using our sacred space, our lovely little church building; I miss singing hymns; I miss standing by the Church door and greeting you all as you leave church; I miss those who are so rightly worried that they cannot attend our adapted "Church"; I miss the stillness and the serenity of an early Sunday morning. I miss ..... the old normal!

I have in the past been heard to say that, "We don't have problems, only opportunities." Well, we are being presented with an enormous number of opportunities at the moment! But how do we identify what those opportunities are? How are we to adapt to the new normal? Is what we are doing now the shape of things to come? At the moment the answer to such questions has to be "Who knows?" And what of all the other things that we have been so used to, which will probably have to be put on hold – Harvest, Christmas, Remembrance, All Souls and the like – are these to be subject to the "new normal" and if so how will we adapt them to fit with all the restrictions and regulations that we are now having to deal with? Again the answer has to be "Who knows?"

But there will be answers, even if the answers aren't what we would wish for. I do believe that we are being presented with some challenges which will require all our ingenuity to meet. Indeed, we have already risen to two of the biggest potential problems Covid-19 has presented: As lockdown bit, Stuart and Amanda helped put together recorded services which have proved such a boon not just to us, but to so many others who have never darkened our doors: As we were encouraged to "get back into Church", the Church Wardens, the Glebe Wardens, the Select Vestry and so many others have come together to help us worship together, be together as safely as we can in our Church Halls. These things didn't happen overnight and when we first started thinking of them, they seemed insurmountable. Yet now we are taking them for granted – even the "new normal" isn't quite as new as it was!

Maybe this “new normal” is a good thing. Perhaps we have needed something of a shock like this to properly re-examine what we do and how we do it. Perhaps, we have all become a little too complacent, comfortable in what we have been doing in the past and now is the time reconsider our discipleship and our own personal pilgrimages?

The biggest challenge to my ministry now is having to understand that what I have been doing over the past 37 years has probably been superseded by events. Maybe, I am going to have to face up

to finding new ways of retelling the Gospel story for a post Covid world. Your challenge might be trying to find a way of worshipping that isn't Church dependent.

Whatever the “new normal” brings, we will adapt, and adjust, eventually; and if we begin these new endeavours with and in prayer, holding fast to the God in whom we believe and trust, these problems won't go away, but they will be faced and met with God's grace. After all you can't get to Easter without living through Good Friday.

Stay safe and God bless you.

Duncan

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## *Births, Marriages, Deaths & Announcements*

### *Holy Baptism*

*7 June - James Andrew Ian Henderson*

James is the son of Andrew and Leeanne and he was baptised in their back garden in the middle of lockdown. It was something of a surreal experience as his parents, grand-parents and god-parents all stood the requisite number of meters away from each other! But even with the limitations of lockdown, it was a joyous family occasion.

One of James grand-fathers is Derek Gilbert, a familiar figure around Groomsport Harbour and is a the leading light in the Maritime Volunteer force based in Bangor.

God bless little James and his family and may he grow in the fear and the knowledge of the Lord.

### *Holy Matrimony*

*7 August – Ross Moore and Jessica Beck*

Ross Moore and Jessica Beck

Ross and Jessica are teachers based at present in Dubai. Their wedding was a bitter sweet occasion as numbers were limited to just 10. However, maybe because there were so few attending, the service had a very intimate feel. Jessica is from Greater Manchester and Ross from Bangor. It was lovely to meet the family again after the sadness of Ross's grand-mother's funeral in Church last year.



# *Births, Marriages, Deaths & Announcements*

## *Holy Rest*

*24 June - "Ula" Dickson*

Ula had been, with her sister Iris, a firm and loyal member of our Parish choir for many a year. Over the past few years she had become increasingly frail, much to her surprise. However, she remained mentally sharp and acute to the very end. Ula could at times be a little spiky, but she had a compassionate and empathetic side to her born of great experience and wisdom. Our thoughts, prayers and love go to her son Paul

*3 July - Marjorie Williamson*

Marjorie died after a very short illness quite suddenly at the end of June. It came as a huge shock to all of us. Marjorie was one of those characters who was seemingly indestructible. She was very much a feature of village life, known to many, especially Groomsport dog walkers! She was a talented artist and art teacher, well known throughout Bangor and beyond. She made light of that talent. We will miss her presence with us in Groomsport Parish Church and also at Mount Stewart, where she was a staunch member of the congregation at the monthly service at Mt Stewart.

*10 July - Ruth Martin*

Ruth and her husband have lived in Groomsport for many years at the top of Springwell Drive in Ardvanagh

She and her loving husband Sam could often be seen walking around the village,

keeping fit. Alas, Ruth succumbed to dementia and for the last couple of years of her life was hospitalised. May the fog of her mind now be lifted.

Our prayers are with Sam and their daughter at this difficult time for them both.

*"Rest eternal grant them, Lord,  
and let light perpetual shine  
upon them."*

## *Announcements*

*Parish Office*

After being closed for visitors the last few months, the Church Office is now open:

### **Tuesday**

9:00 am - 10:00 am

(closed from 10:00 am for virtual services preparation)

### **Wednesday**

9:00 am - 12:30 pm

### **Thursday**

9:00 am - 12:30 pm

During these times you can drop off donations for Storehouse and browse the bookcases for your latest reading material.

If you need to contact the office or anybody in the Church, the emails are checked daily.

*Please email*

[office@groomsportparishchurch.org](mailto:office@groomsportparishchurch.org),

*or you could ring & leave a message on  
028 9127 1311.*

# Announcements

GROOMSPORT  
PARISH CHURCH



## *Walking For Softies (More Like Strolling Really)*

We are hoping to resume walking group this month. Covid-19 had put a stop to our plans since March.

After taking peoples' views we've decided to walk on a weekday morning to begin the season, as there would be fewer people around, and it would be easier to keep socially distant. We would hope to revert to Saturday walks at some stage.

Our first walk will be at Castle Park in Bangor. The exact date has yet to be decided, but if you would be interested in joining us, please contact Ian or Zandra for more information.

Ian – [ian@groomsportparishchurch.org](mailto:ian@groomsportparishchurch.org)

Zandra – [zandra@groomsportparishchurch.org](mailto:zandra@groomsportparishchurch.org)

## *The Virtual Services Production*

Groomsport Parish Church has been hosting Virtual Services for the last few months. When lockdown began Duncan, Stuart and myself had to get busy and figure out what we were going to do to keep the congregation 'going to Church'. The answer may have sounded simple, but the reality was very different.

On the first week of the lockdown, the notion of a virtual service rattled around in Duncan's thoughts, dare he consider it a reality? I arrived into work one morning and Duncan said: "Let's do the services, we will do one, put it online and see what happens."

The first service was an unknown entity for all three of us. I had a new camera and hadn't had time to get used to it yet. Stuart didn't have time to rehearse and Duncan had not much time to prepare a sermon let alone organise a virtual service before.



My youngest son, Ellis, was also thrown in at the deep end and asked to help us with the editing. Ellis had been studying media at college for a few months before we locked down where he had covered the basics of video editing; we could not have got the first service up online without him.

Once we got the first service uploaded on to YouTube and linked onto the website, we were able to breathe a sigh of relief; it was well-received by all. The positive response enabled us to go back into

# Announcements

Church a couple of weeks later and film another service. Now there is a new service uploaded every Sunday.

Then after three weeks of using my son's editing skills, I decided it was time I learned how to produce the videos also. I knew that editing the church videos was a big job and it was becoming clear we were in for the long haul as COVID-19 was going nowhere. So, armed with tutorial videos and lots of cups of tea, I worked my way through everything and got myself up to speed with video editing terminology and what goes where on each video. From the fourth virtual service I have been responsible for both the filming the editing, it's a big job, time and patience are necessary to get through.

The last few months Duncan, Stuart and myself have been in the Church every week, through busy schedules, toothache, tiredness, come what may, we have been there. We have had a lot of good days, a few moments of frustration and plenty of

encouragement from the members of the Church. It has been brilliant to be able to produce the services and touch so many people from all over the world. In recent weeks with the relaxing of the 'coronavirus rules', there has been an opportunity for some members of the Church to come in and do scripture readings, we appreciate that and they have been a welcome addition to the services.

Our video services each have around 200 views and the website has achieved almost 18000 visits in the last few months. We are world wide too, visits from the UK, Canada, USA, Ireland, Australia, Spain, France, China, South Africa, New Zealand, India, Germany and even Nepal.

You can view all of the services on our YouTube Channel (search Groomsport Parish Church), Facebook and the most recent videos on our website

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

Amanda





During the last three months the Select Vestry has met (social distancing) in the Church Halls. The main areas for discussion and decisions have been implications of Covid 19 and Glebe Matters.

At the June meeting, following an announcement that Churches could reopen, Vestry decided our Church should not open until 2 August so that appropriate measures could be put in place to ensure the safety of those attending. Much thought was put into the planning and it is wonderful to report that those who have attended Services, have been very impressed with the organisation. It was with regret that the decision had to be made to hold Services in the Canon Tyney Hall, but this was essential so that we could leave the Church open for Private Prayer during the week. Gary Keenan (Rector's Warden ) and Ken Boyd (People's Warden) are to be commended for the huge amount of effort they have put into arranging the Hall and working with the Welcome Team and Stewards. It was felt that having three Sunday Services at 9.30am, 11.30am and 6.00pm would mean that all those wishing to attend, could be

accommodated. In addition to these Services, the Rector felt it was necessary to continue online Services for the foreseeable future. The situation will be kept under constant review. Unfortunately guidelines do not yet allow for organisations to meet in our halls.

Glebe Matters – Storm glazing of Church windows has been completed, a new radiator and heat curtain has been installed in the Church. Unfortunately there have been ongoing problems with the Church flood lighting. The architect is exploring ways of how we can install the original date stone at the rear of the Church at the right-hand side. The Glebe Warden is still awaiting a reply from the Council about trimming the trees in the lane beside the Church. The old rotten bench outside the Church has been removed and will be replaced. Locks on the doors of the Vestry, the halls and the office have been replaced and new keys have been issued to those who require them. Finally a “state of the art” printer has been installed in the Church office. This will mean a lot more brochures etc will be able to be produced inhouse.

# Embracing The 2020 Lockdown – Gains & Losses

Bert's NHS Shielding Letter set the tone for the restrictions we faced in March 2020. From the beginning, however, we decided to embrace Lockdown 2020 with our usual resilience, enthusiasm and sense of humour. I must admit, though, that we also had a feeling of wariness and fear of contracting the virus.



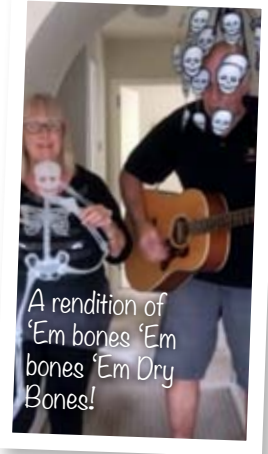
With all of our family members living in England except our eldest daughter, Julie, we felt blessed that she had returned to Bangor a few years ago. She

was on hand to give her support when needed and she organized our shopping needs, which worked well until I had asked her to make use of one of the "Shop Local" special offers. This was where packets of eight Club Orange and eight Penguin biscuits were selling at a cut-down price. I thought that I had described the details of the offer carefully to Julie, asking her to buy two packets of each of the eight pack varieties. It was a big surprise when Julie came back with eight packets of each, totalling one hundred and twenty-eight chocolate biscuits. Lesson to myself: improve my communication skills.

This summer we had planned to visit our children who are dispersed in Yorkshire

and Devon, and for them to make visits to us. Sadly, due to Bert's shielding, this could not happen. Instead, we began to use Skype more frequently and discovered Zoom, so it was a plus to increase our visual contact with them and learn a bit more about technology.

Technology really came into its own when, on the morning of Bert's seventy-fifth birthday, we were both taken by surprise. Julie arrived to share a total of seventy-five video birthday greetings recorded by well-wishers, past and present from all over the world. The joke in this was that Bert had not seen many of his old colleagues for nearly fifty years when they were all fit and healthy. Consequently, when each one appeared on screen they were greeted by Bert's puzzled, "Who's that?" until they introduced themselves. Then Bert's memories came thick and fast mixed with a wide range of emotions. I have no doubt that many of these old friends would not have recognized Bert either.



Courtesy of Julie, again, the birthday surprises continued when, in the early afternoon the doorbell rang and standing outside was a large figure dressed in

complete forensic protection suit including gas mask! Whilst this spectacle settled into our minds, he was joined by more friends, peeping out from behind walls and creeping up the driveway. My first thought went along the lines that my cupboards did not contain the usual stock of 'In case anyone calls' rations, so how was I going to feed these visitors. Then I remembered the Club Orange and the Penguins! I needn't have worried, however, as Julie began to unload her car with mobile party provisions, not only food and beverages (including ice!), but also balloons, table coverings, bunting, party plates and glassware, and large umbrellas to ensure protection from the July rain. To top it all off, Bert was presented with a home-made birthday cake beautifully decorated to depict his military connections. With social distancing and hygiene rules being observed, it was clearly the most memorable birthday ever experienced by all of us. A truly unique, once-in-a-lifetime event, thanks to Covid 19.

We have had many giggles during this period, including planning and performing a selection of videos for distribution to family and friendship groups, complete with a selection of costumes and settings. With myself as cameraperson, I learnt that one take is impossible, especially when outdoor neighbourhood noise interrupted filming eg barking dogs, tree and grass cutting and a passing motorbike. Other reasons for "Cut" included me failing to push the video button on my phone in time with the start of Bert's performance or when incoming ringtones happened at a significant moment. It was, as they say, good craic as well as patience building. In addition to these joint video-ventures, Bert embarked on a solo series of what he entitled, 'Music From The Bog' using the reverberation in the bathroom to enhance his singing!!

The most enjoyable of all of our film producing antics occurred when we had the brilliant idea of holding a family 'Ring of Fire Off' in honour of one of our favourite recording artists. This entailed each family group submitting a video of their rendition of the song. This was triggered by our twenty-five year-old grandson, Sam, who had just begun learning guitar and submitted the first version, accompanied by his fiancée, Emily, on self-



Trevor Smith looking for a spitfire on VE Day

styled maracas. Paul, our son, is an accomplished guitarist, whose playing is offset with one of those 'easy listening' voices such as Ronnie Drew or Lee Marvin! He performed with passion, supported by his wife, Emma, with her tambourine and eccentric dance moves. Bert, dressed

up in country music hat and wig with myself as a Spanish senorita took it more literally by standing inside a ring of brightly burning tea lights – again the filming was fraught with time consuming blunders – you can just imagine!

The funniest of these contributions to performing arts was, however, from our youngest daughter, Emma, husband Richard and seven year-old daughter, Aoife, none of whom can sing with confidence or play an instrument. Despite these handicaps, their performance will be legendary in the Smith Family chronicles. Picture this – the three of them in cowboy dress, posing in front of the backdrop white sheet, painted with large cactii,

Aoife trotting around on a hobby-horse head, Emma astride a very large rainbow coloured unicorn and Richard flapping red fabric flames behind them in time with the chorus. This tableau was accompanied by the Johnny Cash sound-track, mechanical sounds of neighing from the hobby-horse and three enthusiastic characters playing vuvuzelas pretending to be tuneful. Never to be forgotten. Ironically our



How to dress when visiting someone who is shielding.

daughter, Sarah, her husband Gordon and four children, each of whom play the piano and some other instruments wimpishly chose to ignore the musical element of this challenge but decided to perform a poem of their own composition which will be equally treasured.

Our big highlight of the whole period was that we were privileged to participate in Aoife's home schooling by Skype. We like to think that we provided a variety of information to her. Bert undertook all things mathematics, times-tables, fractions, decimals and telling the time. He combatted any sense of her being bored by introducing a daily random fact and a joke of the day plus a weekly 'Show and Tell'. I took on subjects such as comprehension, grammar and punctuation, sentence construction and spellings. Aoife is an avid reader so she loved to read to us as well as her enjoying us reading to her. Hopefully the shared pleasure of School Granny and Grandad will be a treasured memory for teachers and pupil alike.

We participated in two other events unique to Lockdown 2020, the Thursday handclapping for the NHS and our socially distancing street celebration for VE day, each of which helped to maintain our sense of national pride and unity with neighbours. Once Lockdown restrictions were eased slightly, Bert kept his musical needs alive by organizing socially distanced U3A guitar group sessions as well as Raving Micks rehearsals outside the garage – the neighbours have not complained yet!

Like many people, we feel that we have adjusted well to our changing way of life. Whilst Bert felt that it was a loss in his church year to have missed out on the Easter Sunrise Service, he has enjoyed making regular telephone contact with other church members as requested by Duncan. In addition, we have both felt inspired by Groomsport Parish on-line services and give sincere thanks to Duncan and his team for organizing them.

I did not intend for this account of the last six months to compete with "War and Peace" but once I got going, I realized that every one of our experiences was meaningful to us. I feel that the gains have outweighed the losses, we have been forced to slow down and have had more time to do fun things together, and despite my occasional desire to break free and dream of escape, we have had time to learn from our disagreements and consider each other's points of view. We both know for certainty that we have not lost our resilience, enthusiasm or sense of humour.

As for the chocolate biscuits, they have been in the cupboard since May and they are hard to shift!

Maggie Smith

# BibleBuds



Just for **KIDS**

## Bugs in the Bible



Whether at a picnic, on the beach or playing outdoors, it seems like we're always joined by uninvited guests – bugs!

Bugs and other little creatures are mentioned in the Bible.



*Fill in the blanks with the little creatures mentioned in each verse.  
Circle them in the puzzle below.*

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Proverbs 6:6 _____     | Exodus 16:20 _____    |
| Psalms 78:45 _____     | 1 Sam. 24:14 _____    |
| Matt. 23:24 _____      | Isaiah 50:9 _____     |
| Judges 14:8 _____      | Isaiah 59:5 _____     |
| Acts 12:23 _____       | Leviticus 11:22 _____ |
| Leviticus 11:22 _____  | Leviticus 11:22 _____ |
| Leviticus 11:22 _____  |                       |
| Deuteronomy 7:20 _____ |                       |



M	O	T	H	S	G	N	A	T	B	H
A	N	T	A	L	L	C	H	P	E	O
G	R	A	S	S	H	O	P	P	E	R
G	F	C	R	I	C	K	E	T	S	N
O	L	S	P	I	D	E	R	S	B	E
T	E	C	L	O	C	U	S	T	D	T
S	A	E	F	K	A	T	Y	D	I	D
G	F	L	I	E	S	W	O	R	M	S



## *Celebrating 400th anniversary of the voyage of the Mayflower*



If we find it difficult to cross the Atlantic just now, it was even worse 400 years this month. On 6th September 1620, 102 determined Puritans climbed on board the Mayflower and set sail from Plymouth. They had 30 crew to steer them across 3000 miles of open, perilous ocean.

In 1608 they had moved to Holland, where they could worship freely. But life was very hard there, and so the New World beckoned to them.

They had originally intended to use two ships, but the Speedwell sprang a leak shortly after sailing, and so they crowded as many as possible into the Mayflower. After a long and difficult 10 weeks at sea, they reached America, but could not reach their intended destination, Virginia, because of heavy seas. They finally landed in Provincetown Harbour, Cape Cod, Massachusetts on 11th November.

That presented the next great challenge: the bitter, harsh winter of Massachusetts. Half

of the Pilgrims perished that first winter, of hunger and cold. Without the help of the local Indigenous peoples to teach them food-gathering and other survival skills, all of the colony would probably have perished.

After months of hard work, by the 'Fall' of 1621 the tiny colony had its first harvest. They celebrated this great achievement with their new Indigenous friends. It became Thanksgiving. The Pilgrims had been convinced that God wanted them to go to the New World. They wrote: "We verily believe and trust the Lord is with us, and that He will graciously prosper our endeavours according to the simplicity of our hearts therein."

The Mayflower was one of the earliest pilgrim vessels, and so became a cultural icon in the history of the United States. This year, until coronavirus put a stop to things, many celebrations in the USA, England and the Netherlands had been planned.

## Tales from The Archives September 2020

Everybody knows about the RNLI Bangor and Donaghadee Lifeboats and the selfless devotion of their crews. Somewhat forgotten in the mists of time however there was an RNLI Station at Groomsport from 1858 to 1920. In fact there was an "unofficial" lifeboat in Groomsport well before 1858. The Groomsport vessels were all oar propelled and the crews were mostly drawn from the village fishing community and a lifeboat house was built in 1884 at the pier head. That boathouse is still in use as a community centre. When a motorised vessel was supplied to the Donaghadee Station in 1920 the Groomsport Station was closed. There were four lifeboats during the 62 years of

the Groomsport Station of which we know the names of three: the Florence, the George Poaley (?) and the Chapman. The name of the first boat is unknown but it had already been awarded a Silver Medal (1829). During a rescue mission in 1866 it capsized without loss of life. Of the photos herewith one speaks for itself while the other shows the Groomsport lifeboat exercising off the Long Hole in Bangor around the turn of the century. The Parish Archive holds a document detailing the names, dates, costs and donors for the RNLI Groomsport Lifeboat Service.

Barry



Groomsport Lifeboat Crew pictured in 1900. - Included are William Orr, Bob Watson, Tom Watson, "Janity" Watson, Robert Watson, Dancy Orr, John Watson, Seelot, Henry Watson, James Towh, Seelot.



Barry Greenaway - Groomsport Parish Church Archivist  
12 Ballymacormick Road - 07515699389 - [baryg144@btinternet.com](mailto:baryg144@btinternet.com)

## *Bookstall - September, October & November*

I must apologise for the lack of book reviews in the last Contact. I was caught unawares by the arrival of the magazine, having been, like many, rather thrown out of kilter by the lockdown. I hope what follows will compensate a little.

I have just returned from a long-overdue overhaul of the shelves, having been taken by surprise at the large gaps in the shelves. However, there was no shortage of new books to replace those taken, as several bags have been left both in front of the shelves and in the storeroom. It may be some time before I can sort through them all! In the meantime and for the foreseeable future could I ask people not to leave any more non-fiction volumes as there are a great many in the store cupboard. As you will know by now, we have no space to display them on the shelves so they only go when we have a Book Fair, an event which could not be envisaged at the moment.

### *A Week In December By Sebastian Faulkes.*



I can only describe this as a very significant novel, reflecting as it does many of today's serious concerns, the radicalism of minority ethnic groups, mental health, the overweening greed and apparent inhumanity of some in the financial service industry and drug-taking. In the week before Christmas, we follow the lives of seven disparate characters in London linked only by the Circle line whose train is driven by a lonely young woman who spends her free time on fantasy on-line games. The characters, some of whom are truly awful, some sad and some comical are brilliantly depicted, I found I had a clear image of each of them in my head as I read the book and the stories,

though they build slowly to the climax, are gripping. It is far from a light read but well worth any effort involved.

### *The Ex-Wives By Deborah Moggach*



As you may guess, this is a very different book from the previous one. It is comical, poignant and rather different from anything I have read before. Buffy has been married three times, his career in the theatre and

broadcasting is failing and he has entered his sixties with something less than enthusiasm. Then he meets Celeste a kindly, old-fashioned and beautiful girl and he is completely bewitched by her. She seems to take a charitable interest in him, his ex-wives and their lives together and over the weeks he tells his stories. Unbeknown to him, she is systematically researching and unearthing secrets which will change their lives. Deborah Moggach is wonderful at depicting the minor frustrations of life.....

“One didn’t exactly grow old.....One just felt a growing irritation with a whole lot of things which nowadays seemed designed to baffle and frustrate, like the impossibly-sealed plastic around a Marks and Spencer sandwich. The way that books seemed to be published with smaller and smaller print”.

I can recommend this as a very enjoyable read.

### *The Heart Goes Last By Margaret Atwood.*

Those who enjoyed the recent screening of “The Handmaid’s Tale” by the same author will enjoy this story. It deals similarly with one group of people coming up with an answer, as they see it, to the increasing lawlessness of society. Charmaine and Eddy are married





and happy together, but their relationship is under growing strain as they lose their jobs, then their home and are reduced to living in their car and relying on the small wage Charmaine receives from bar work. Then

she sees an advertisement for a project called Positron that promises both work and accommodation. They apply at once, but the catch is once you are in you can't get out...

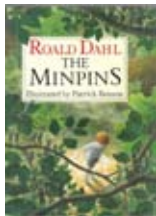
*The Visit By Adrian Plass.*



I read this book in less than an hour, but it is not for the faint-hearted! Adrian Plass is a very well established Christian writer and in *The Visit* challenges people to reflect on how they would respond if Jesus turned up

at their church. Deceptively simple this book is haunting, challenging and thought-provoking. It is beautifully illustrated and I suspect will leave a lasting impression on all who read it.

*The Minpins By Roald Dahl*



A rather less well-known story from the author of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* and *Fantastic Mr Fox*. The Minpins tell the story of little Billy who lives in a small cottage on the edge of a wood with

his mother. He is tired of being good and wants to explore the world beyond the garden gate. He could see a wood, what his mother called "The Forest of Sin" which she said was inhabited by Whangdoodles, Hornswogglers, Snozzwangers and Vermicious Knids. Inevitably he is tempted to enter when his mother is preoccupied. He finds himself chased by something breathing

hot breath. He climbs a nearby tree and as he reaches safety discovers a tiny human face looking at him through a tiny window... The illustrations in this large storybook are wonderful and children will be scared as most children love to be and delighted by the story and the Minpins themselves, who get about by using birds as taxis!

*Katie & The Starry Night By James Mayhew*



I think this is a very special children's book, depicting as it does five of Van Gogh's masterpieces through a lovely storyline. Katie is

taken to the Art Gallery on a visit with her granny. When granny falls asleep, Katie is so entranced by the stars in *The Starry Night* that she reaches out to take one, starting a magical journey through several other paintings. This is a lovely introduction to works of art.

Now that things are beginning to assume some kind of normality I hope many of you will feel able to choose books from the shelves. I have only reviewed a very small fraction of what is new. Amongst the recent donations were no fewer than ten Clive Cussler thrillers, several by Stuart McBride who writes detective fiction set in Aberdeen, Andy McNabb who writes action thrillers and several other thriller and detective writers. There are new novels from a number of different genres and many children's books in addition.

Don't forget the donations tin, I'm afraid its contents didn't equate with the volume of books that had gone and now that I have emptied it there is plenty of room for contributions! I do hope you are all well and adjusting to our new way of living; perhaps we will have a book fair next spring, let's hope!

Carol

# Prayer Room

In the absence of any new contributions through our Prayer Room I will use this article to remind us all of the prayers offered in past years in the Prayer Room. I will augment these with other prayers I have found to be helpful.

*From 2014:-*

*Thank you God for loving us despite our earthly failings. May the peace we feel in this holy place remain in our hearts.*



*The Spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. Jesus said “Could you not watch with me one hour?” A peaceful place where an hour passed in the blink of an eye.*



*“Grant us thy peace throughout our earthly life, our balm in sorrow and our stay in strife. Then when thy voice shall bid our conflict cease, call us, O Lord, to thine eternal peace.”*

*Hymn number 71*

**Be not afraid to pray—to pray is right**

**By Hartley Coleridge (1796–1849)**

*BE not afraid to pray—to pray is right.  
Pray, if thou canst, with hope; but ever pray,  
Though hope be weak, or sick with long delay;  
Pray in the darkness if there be no light.  
Far is the time, remote from human sight,  
When war and discord on the earth shall cease;  
Yet every prayer for universal peace  
Avals the blessed time to expedite.  
What'er is good to wish, ask that of Heaven,  
Though it be what thou can'st not hope to see;  
Pray to be perfect, though material leaven  
Forbid the Spirit so on earth to be;  
But if for any wish thou darest not pray,  
Then pray to God to cast that wish away.*

## Amen

Carol

# Thoughts of a Blow In...

I do hope you and your loved ones are keeping safe and well in this strange summer as we are all adapting to the 'new' normal, which doesn't feel very normal at all. However, as lockdown eases, it is such a blessing that church services are allowed to start up again, even if not in the church itself, at least as yet. Let's hope that can happen as soon as is possible.

As most things cautiously start to open up again, some people are just out of sheltering and staying very close to home, while others can get back to many activities again, especially outdoors, if in a slightly different way than they are used to. Adhering to strict social distancing, we are all being encouraged to shop and eat out to support local businesses. Some folk are thoroughly getting into the swing of things and enjoying this, while others feel more cautious. It just goes to show that we all have our own concerns and limitations.

In terms of what we are permitted to do, at least most of us have managed to visit the hairdressers or barbers by now, which is a relief. There were plenty of stories (and photos)

circulating about disastrous home hair cuts, particularly wives armed with electric clippers which resulted in strips on their spouses' heads that resembled over-mown lawns!

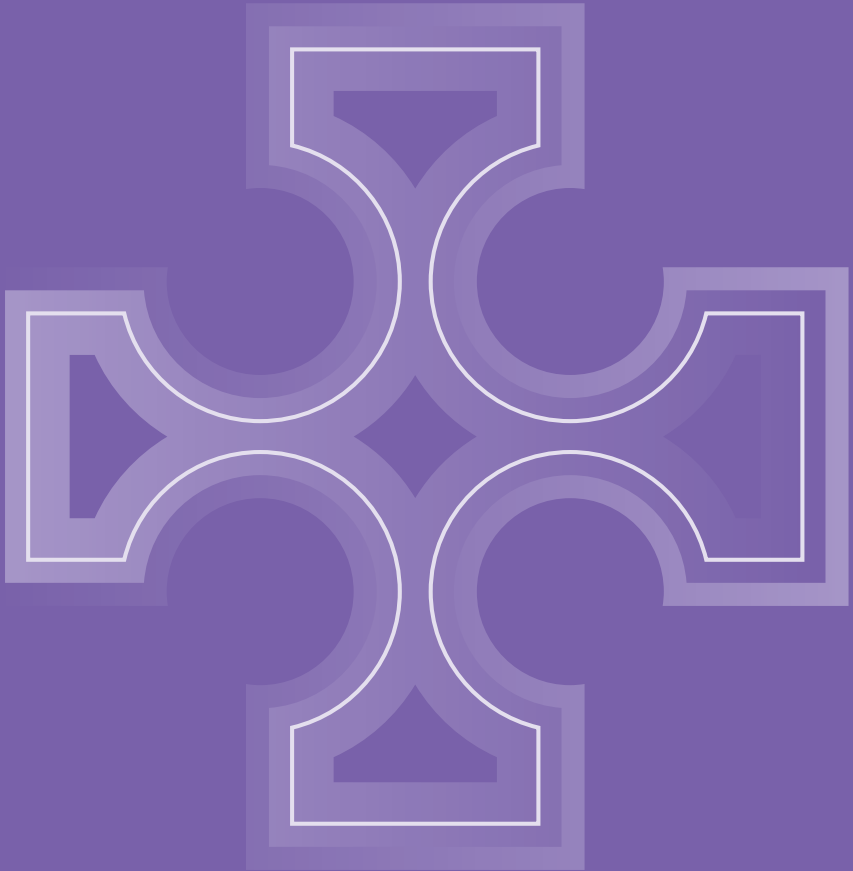
Socially distanced outdoor meetups have been a relief for us all, especially those living alone or able to visit loved ones for some time. Even greeting neighbours when getting out for a walk has been a help.

It was lovely to see the delayed yacht club races out on the sea over the glorious sunshine of last weekend. Next door's children spent most of those days out on a boat with their parents. They were almost quivering with excitement at the prospect of the weekend, bless them. Their mum told me afterwards that they had a wonderful time.

While looking for some suitable words for this late summertime, I couldn't resist this stanza of August's Crown by Michelle L. Thieme. Wishing you all a safe autumn and hope we will be allowed to get out and about a little more.

Cynthia

*“Whilst August yet wears her golden crown,  
Ripening fields lush-bright with promise;  
Summer waxes long, then wanes, quietly passing  
Her fading green glory on to riotous Autumn.”*



*Groomsport Parish Church*

**CONTACT**

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