

CONTACT

February / March 2019



And now these three remain: faith, hope and love.

But the greatest of these is love

Corinthians 13:13

www.groomsportparishchurch.org



Parish Officials

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

Administrative enquiries

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

Church Hall bookings

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

For Hall problems

Contact: Billy McAnnenev 07812 042833

Rector's Hour

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

Rector's Recess

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



From the Rector



Mid-winter. Dark, gloomy, dark and dank; as the Scots would say “dree”. It is hard at this time of year, in the aftermath of Christmas, to get excited about very much. I think it is especially difficult this year, given the wonderful celebrations we had from Advent Sunday right up to Christmas. And is it just me, or does Advent Sunday, with all the fanfare of our “Service of Thanksgiving”, seem like a lifetime away?

Christmas evening has always been something of an anti-climax, in my opinion. We’re all a little bit too full, may be a little too “relaxed” and always, always, the washing up. In days past there was the prospect of separating over-tired and fractious children and comforting those whose Christmas gifts were already broken or chewed by the dog; and so little to look forward to but telly, telly and yet more telly. Then New Year; never my favourite time of year. My father, being a scot, loved the annual “Hogmanay” celebrations with Jimmy Shand and the White Heather Club. Kenneth McKellar, Moira Anderson and Andy Stewart never did it for me, and yet we sat through it all waiting for the first footers to come bearing their gifts of coal and whiskey. Despite opening the back door (to let the old year out) and the front (to let the New Year in), those first footers never came!

The sense of anti-climax seems to be heightened in these secular days, as the word “Christmas” is replaced more and more by the word “festive” – The Festive Season, not the Christmas season. (I wonder whether Islam would be satisfied with us calling Ramadan “the month without” or some other such bland euphemism). And does anyone keep their Christmas decorations up until twelfth night? They may go up in November, but

they’re down the day after Boxing Day (do we call it Boxing Day any longer?). A real feeling of anti-climax, heightened by the miserable weather; yes, it has been surprisingly mild, but I miss the bright sunlit freezing days of years past. A constant blanket of low grey cloud and not a sight of the sun for weeks.

A few years ago at the start of Mission 2015, we adopted the prayer “Be still for the presence of the Lord is here....” as our Parish Prayer for the year. As we met for seven months in the Canon Tyney Hall for worship as our lovely building was being refurbished, we had another prayer, used daily, for those working on the building; that they would “treat that sacred space with the love respect and dignity it so richly deserves.” And now I think, before the depressing grey days of January completely overwhelm us, we should find another prayer to remind us of who we are and who it is we believe in. So I suggest this; not original, I admit, as it was written by St Paul, but as a prayer to begin the day with and to be repeated often throughout the day, not to be bettered.

“Whatever we do, whether in word or deed, let us do it in the name of and for the sake of our Lord Jesus”

I started using it on New Year’s Day, and I will be using it in Church throughout this year. I’m ashamed to say, even after nearly 36 years as an ordained minister, that I am discovering again the truth that prayer, this prayer really works. Anti-climax? What anti-climax!

Duncan



Church Services February 2019

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

Welcome Team: Brian and Jean McKillen

Reader: Marian Cinnamond

8.30am	Holy Communion
10.30am	A Family Service for Candlemas *
6.00pm	Evening Prayer (said)
* Coffee after 10.30am service in Church Hall. All welcome! Our hosts will be Pearl Dyer, Frances Irvine, Pat and Jim Love.	

Sunday 10 February – The fourth Sunday before Lent

Welcome Team: William and Florence McAnneny

Reader: Peter Osborough

8.30am	Holy Communion
10.30am	Parish Communion
6.00pm	Compline

Sunday 17 February – The Third Sunday before Lent

Welcome Team: William and Florence McAnneny

Reader: Colin Crozier

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

Sunday 24 February – The Second Sunday before Lent

Welcome Team: Betty McKinney and Heather Pentland

Reader: Jenny Osborough

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

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.

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



Church Services March 2019

Sunday 3 March – The Sunday next before Lent

Welcome Team: Betty McKinney and Heather Pentland

Reader: Joan Haddick

8.30am	Holy Communion
10.30am	A Family Service *
6.00pm	Evening Prayer (said)
* Coffee after 10.30am service in Church Hall. All welcome! Our hosts will be Mae Burke and the Mothers Union	

6 March – Ash Wednesday

7.30am	A Service of Communion for the beginning of Lent
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Sunday 10 March – Lent 1

Welcome Team: Freddie and Susan McNair

Reader: Carol Walters

8.30am	Holy Communion
10.30am	Parish Communion
6.00pm	Compline

Sunday 17 March – Lent 2, St Patrick

Welcome Team: Freddie and Susan McNair

Reader: Ian Sloan

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

Sunday 24 March – Lent 3

Welcome Team: Ian and Carol Walters

Reader: Heather Pentland

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



Church Services March 2019

Sunday 31 March – Lent 4, Mothering Sunday

Welcome Team: Ian and Carol Walters

Reader: Barry Greenaway

8.30am	Holy Communion
10.30am	A Mothering Sunday Family Service *
6.00pm	Compline
* Coffee after 10.30am service in Church Hall. All welcome! Our hosts Jenny and Peter Osborough, Fiona Cox and Bert Smith.	

Sunday 7 April – Lent 5, Passion Sunday

Welcome Team: Ian and Zandra Sloan

Reader: TBC

8.30am	Holy Communion
10.30am	Morning Prayer (note the change of service)
6.00pm	Evening Prayer (said)

Births, Deaths, Baptisms Marriages & Announcements Holy Rest

Holy Baptism

Georgia Storm Hamilton - 25 November

Georgia's parents had attended our Church for a friend's wedding and were impressed by the warmth of welcome they received. It was our privilege to welcome them and their family, and especially little Georgia, into our Church

Freddie Milne – 23 December

Freddie is a second son for Charlotte and Kevin, a brother for Theo. Freddie would have been Norma Diffley's second great grandson.

May God bless these two little ones and grant overwhelming love to their parents and god-parents.

Holy Rest

Anthony Holmes – 5 December

Not known to many within the Parish, Anthony died in the Marie Curie Hospice at the beginning of Advent. He was an "old soldier", a one time member of the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers. It was good to see so many of his old comrades at his funeral service in Clarke's funeral parlour.

Catherine "Kathleen" Stockman – 12 December

Kathleen died unexpectedly before Christmas. An elegant gentlewoman, her death has come as a terrible shock to her husband, Alec, and their two sons Steven and Paul.

Betty was a much loved member of our congregation and parish family. A woman of great faith and a gentle love. Despite her great age, she was so full of life that her death came as a great shock to so very many.

"Well done thou good and faithful servant."

We pray that all those whose passing has been marked in some way by Groomspoint Parish Church, may, by God's grace, rest in peace and rise in glory. We pray, too, that their loved ones, who mourn their passing, may know that same loving grace.

Announcements

CHANGES ARE AFOOT!

Over the coming months you will notice some changes to your Parish magazine. Most significantly, we will be moving from a monthly to a bi-monthly and occasionally tri-monthly publication. This will enable us to make a number of innovative changes to the content. Standard information-based pieces will be handled differently; while other articles will reflect more broadly on our Parish life and the Christian Faith. We may seek more input from Parishioners. In all this, our objective will be to ensure your CONTACT remains interesting and informative and serves the needs of our Parish.

The Editors

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER Saturday 9 February

Groomspoint Presbyterian Church will host a coffee morning from 10 30 am to 12 noon, in aid of World Day of Prayer. Everyone is welcome.

This year the World Day of Prayer will be held in Ballycrochan Presbyterian Church on Friday 1 March at 11 am. Tea / coffee will be served from 10 am.



Walking for Softies

Our walk in January was to Belmont Park in East Belfast. This was a new location for our group and everyone enjoyed themselves. The walking was relaxed, the craic was great, and the surroundings beautiful. Afterwards, we repaired to SD Bell's on the Newtownards Road for coffee and their delicious scones. They also provided a piece of Chocolate cake with ice cream and a candle for Robert's birthday!

Our next walk will be on Saturday 23 February to the Botanic Gardens in Belfast near Queens. We will travel by train, departing Bangor Station at 9.57am. The following month, we go to Belvoir Forest Park on Saturday 23 March and there will be more information about that nearer the time.

Our group is open to everyone regardless of ability. We don't do the arduous stuff. Our walking is gentle and relaxed and more social. Everyone's highlight is usually when we gather round afterwards, in a local cafe or restaurant, for our well-deserved coffee and scones.

So why not give it a thought and join us next time? You'll be very welcome and enjoy yourself.

Contact Zandra or Ian tel. 91 457092



Mothers' UNION

Christian care for families

Our Christmas Party in December was probably the highlight of the year for many members. We were entertained to an evening of inspiring music by a Bangor based duo called Maeshine. Inge writes the music herself and is accompanied by Anna. The combination is a unique and gentle blend of celtic and folk music and song. Together the girls play a wide selection of instruments and the songs speak of appreciating the blessings of each moment. However, because it was Christmas our members joined Inge and Anna in some of our best loved Christmas carols. We also had the opportunity of demonstrating our own

rhythm on some of their wide range of unusual percussion instruments from around the world. Maeshine have been performing at various venues in Northern Ireland and will be launching their first album called 'Gentle Peace' at Bangor Abbey on Saturday 30 March.

Tickets are available from
www.ticketsource.co.uk

Membership and Commissioning of Officers Service

The Service took place on 6 January, led by our member, Rev Faith Cully. The current committee members were commissioned and Andrea Johnston was enrolled as a new member. We look forward to more new members being enrolled next year.

February Branch Meeting – Monday

18 February at 8 pm, guest speaker is Howard Thornton, Chief Executive of Fermanagh and Omagh District Council. We look forward to an interesting, entertaining and informative evening.

Spring Concert

The MU fundraising event this year is a Concert of Celebration to be held in our newly restored beautiful Church. It will take place on Friday 15 March and will feature the Bangor Grammar School Choir and Concert Band. The Concert

will be followed by supper in the Hall. Tickets will be available at the end of February.

Annual Subscriptions.

Finally, a reminder that the MU year now runs from January to December, so annual subscriptions of £25 are overdue.

Mae
Branch Leader



Vestry Notes

December 2018 and January 2019

Both Dorothy Anne and Hester reported on the research they have done on the purchase of new candlesticks, to be purchased for the church with money donated to us by Groomspout Presbyterian Church. Vestry decided to go with Cyril Flanagan who will work with us on our preferred size, shape and metal gauge.

John will seek quotations for new hymn books and prayer books. Hymn boards have been sorted and the lock on the Church door has been sorted and keys distributed.

The Rector's new stipend was agreed and agreement was reached on Christmas gifts to Susan, Stuart, Elaine and Mark and Tara.

It was agreed that the following charities should each receive £400:

Down Cathedral, Mae Murray Foundation, Children's Hospice, Mission to Seafarers, McMillan Nurses, and the Lighthouse Trust. Following the meeting it was discovered the Lighthouse Trust no longer operates so the Vestry agreed instead to give the money to Alzheimer's Society. It was also agreed that Vestry should round the £1,132 raised from Smartie tubes to £1,300 for CMS. The Christmas Appeal, this year going to the Asia Hawariat School in Ethiopia, to date has raised a staggering £810 and will close on 31 January,

The glass plaque acknowledging the

contribution of HLF is now in place in the church and enables us to receive their final payment. A snagging list is being drawn up to be discussed with the architect. Ken will also be asked about the new systems in the Church – boiler etc. An app has to be found to provide a digital resource for the Church.

Sunday School numbers have risen from 3 – 16. Numbers attending church have risen by 12%.

It was agreed that the halls should be redecorated in the New Year. Painting will begin on 21 January.

A decision was made that our magazine will be reduced to 5 editions a year. These will be Dec/Jan Feb/Mar Apr/May Jun/Jul/ Aug and Sep/Oct/Nov. This will reduce the workload of Mark and Tara and will reduce the costs.

Kate was thanked for the beautiful banner made to mark the Rededication of the Church.

Plans are in motion for the new storage area and ramp behind the Church.

Kate was formally thanked for all the work she has done as Events Coordinator. The Vestry was informed that Maureen Taggart will be the new Coordinator.

Heather was thanked for her work on the Christmas Fair which raised £3,500. Zandra will organise another Craft Fair in August.

Bert reported that only about 60 people have to be chased up to complete our consent forms to make us GDPR compliant.

The list of Vestry Men will be available for inspection by parishioners for a month. It will be kept in the Vestry and will not include addresses. Forms are available from Church Wardens for those wishing to join the church. The

General Vestry will be on 7 April after Church.

A letter is to be sent to David McKnight to thank him for the tremendous amount of work he did while Church was in the Halls.

The final building sub committee meeting will be on 4 February.

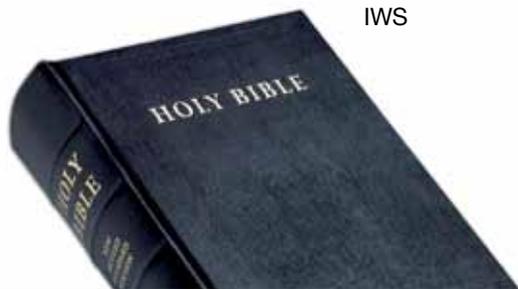
WHAT ABOUT THE BIBLE!

How much do you know about your Bible? We can recite our favourite passages of scripture, and yes we love all those familiar stories. But what do you know about the history, events and people that shaped the book you now hold in your hands?

Why over the centuries, have people argued about it, studied it, edited it, corrected it, lived for it and been persecuted for it by those seeking to use it for their own ends? Because it is not like any other book. It changes people. It is the most widely read book in the world, yet millions today are denied it under threat of death. Some of these and other questions we hope to answer over the coming months in CONTACT.

For the present though, ponder this. The actual contents of what we now call the Old Testament (more accurately the Hebrew Scriptures), were not finalised until some fifteen hundred years after Moses went up the mountain; and it was not until some four hundred years after the death of Christ, that the Christian Church finally agreed upon its official list of contents. Even today, the Protestant, Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches use differing versions of the Bible.

IWS



Thanksgiving, Re-dedication & Renewal at Groomsport Parish Church

A very special Service of Thanksgiving and Re-dedication took place in Groomsport Parish Church on Sunday 2 December, Advent Sunday 2018. The service was led by our Rector, Rev Duncan Pollock and the special guest was The Right Reverend Harold Millar, Bishop of Down and Dromore. Other guests included Lady Hermon, our MP, Councillor Eddy Thompson, Deputy Mayor, local clergy, councillors, and other dignitaries. Bishop Harold in his address, commented on the full church, and gave thanks to the Rector, the Select Vestry and everyone involved in bringing Groomsport Parish to such an encouraging place. The Bishop recognised the number of ways in which our church has grown in recent years.

The Service was a celebration of our return to worship in the beautiful village church after six months of extensive building work which included a new roof, major structural stone work, rewiring, and installing a new heating system. A much needed new Three Manual organ was also installed. It was a fundamental requirement of the Project Team that the Church, which had been

originally designed by Sir Charles Lanyon, should retain its traditional village ethos and sanctity whilst being secured and restored as a building fit for future generations. Some of the greatest compliments paid by members of the congregation and visitors on entering the church when it re-opened, were to the effect that the 'gracious and spiritual atmosphere of the church had been retained'. Much credit for this work is due to the Conservation Architect, Ken Best, East Down Construction, and Barry Greenaway, a member of our Church who worked so hard as Project Manager. Sincere appreciation also goes to the Heritage Lottery Fund for providing significant funding of over £140,000, which supplemented the £200,000 raised by the parishioners.

A new banner was presented as a symbol of thanks for the ministry of Groomsport Church and Parish over a period of one hundred and seventy five years. The beautiful banner had been hand-made by one of our Vestry members Kate Murray, along with Susan McNair and Eppie Bates.



Bishop Harold Millar and Sheila McClelland, from the Heritage Lottery Fund



Rev Duncan Pollock and Eddie Thompson, Deputy Mayor



Hester Kelly, Church Warden, Rev Faith Cully, Bishop Harold Millar, Rev Duncan Pollock and Helen Parkinson, Church Warden



Rev Duncan Pollock and Lady Hermon MP

Bishop Harold, in his re-dedication address noted that whilst many churches are shrinking, Groomspoint is one which is growing. Indeed, in observing that like Willowfield Parish, we are one of the few churches in the Diocese that is not named after a Saint, the Bishop suggested that it might be something which we as a Parish should consider for the future.

In his closing remarks our Rector extended thanks to the many members of the congregation and local community who have faithfully supported the work of the Parish over the recent restorative period.

At the end of the Service, Heather Pentland, Secretary of the Select Vestry paid tribute, on behalf of the Select Vestry, to the Rector, and to the way in which he has reinvigorated the Church, its congregation and its place in the Community. Quoting from comments made by members of the congregation, she related how our Church, as a united family, has never been closer. People are drawn to the Church by the humanity, the deep pastoral care and the approachability

which Duncan demonstrates. He relates as easily to the very young as to the elderly. The Sunday school is growing and the congregation have been empowered to participate and share in the development and outreach of the church. Something special is taking place in Groomspoint Parish when people travel many miles to worship because of the quality of fellowship which they experience. On behalf of the Select Vestry, Heather and Helen, the Rector's Warden, presented the Rector with a specially commissioned painting of the refurbished building by local artist Adrain Margey.

Each member of the congregation, on moving out of the Church, towards the Church Hall for lunch, was provided with a lovingly prepared bag of 'goodies' including a beautiful Calendar depicting aspects of the Restored Church, a book mark, key ring, and prayer card all as gentle reminders of a very significant day in the life of Groomspoint Parish.



New Banner presented as a symbol of Re-dedication



The Church Wardens and Vestry Secretary presenting the painting of the Church by Adrain Margey to the Rector.



Select Vestry of Groomspoint Parish Church with the painting presented to the Rector, Left to Right, front row

Jenny Craythorne, Dorothy Anne Crawford, Helen Parkinson, Rev Duncan Pollock, Hester Kelly, Heather Pentland and Zandra Sloan
back row

Freddie McNair, Barry Greenaway, John Hand, William McAneny, Andy Craig, Tony Anderson, Wesley Quinn and Bert Smith.

(Missing from the picture are Kate Murray and Shaun Townsley).



Some of the Sunday School Children with their Special Goodie Bags

Events Update

Christmas Fair 2018

Following the very moving Rededication Service and successful Lunch just six days earlier, the question was could the parishioners of Groomspout muster the energy for another huge Parish event so soon. Unbelievably 60 of you valiant supporters donned your “Helper” badges and worked tirelessly for two hours, raising another staggering £3,500. Yet again it was so rewarding to see our halls so full and to witness so much interaction amongst parishioners, villagers, friends and families. Thank you to everyone who donated so generously and who came to support the event. A particular thanks to all you Crafters who beaver away throughout the year to produce such a high standard of beautiful items.

A review meeting took place on 14 January and after discussion of every aspect of the Fair,

I was asked to pass on a few points at this stage.

- The 2019 Fair will take place on Saturday 30 November but will take place from 10.00 – 12.00pm, not in the afternoon.
- Due to popular demand, handbags will be included on the Accessory stall again.
- If you have any unused gifts following the Christmas period, please hold on to them.
- Since “Find a friend” was so successful, we shall be looking to gather another 100 furry creatures and would appreciate donations.
- After three years of a very successful silver and white stall, the decision has been taken to change to a red and gold stall so please keep an eye out for any suitable donations.





Hall Usage - February / March

Sunday		
Every Sunday	10.30am	Sunday School Contact: Maggie Townsley & Helen Carter Mob. 07748 208649
Monday		
1st Monday of the month	7.30pm	Select Vestry Meeting Contact: Heather Pentland Mob. 07834 771075
2nd & 4th Mondays of the month	7.30pm	Chattering Needles Chattering Needles is a craft group whose interests include knitting, crochet, cross stitch card making etc. If you want to learn come along. £2 includes supper. For more info please contact me. Jenny 07748580541
3rd Monday of the month	8.00pm	Mothers Union (Maxwell Hall) Contact: Mae Burke Mob. 07810 440492
Tuesday		
2nd Tuesday of the month	8.00pm	Groomsport & District Gardening Club Contact: Yvonne McIlmail Tel: 02891 469420 E. y.mcilmail@sky.com
Every Tuesday	10.15am	Tai Chi for Health 10.15am - 11.15am Contact: Janet Wilson Tel: 028 91077948 Mob: 07703360385
Wednesday		
Every Wednesday	9.30am	You can with Ann Motivation & Exercise class Contact: Ann Parker Mob. 07854 787121
Every Wednesday	10.30am	Keep Fit Exercise Class Contact: Ann Parker Mob. 07854 787121
Every Wednesday	2.00pm	Scrabble Contact: Elaine Lester Mob. 07791 569432 E. elliewag57@yahoo.com
Every Wednesday	5.30pm	You can with Ann Motivation & Exercise class Contact: Ann Parker Mob. 07854 787121

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

Forthcoming Events



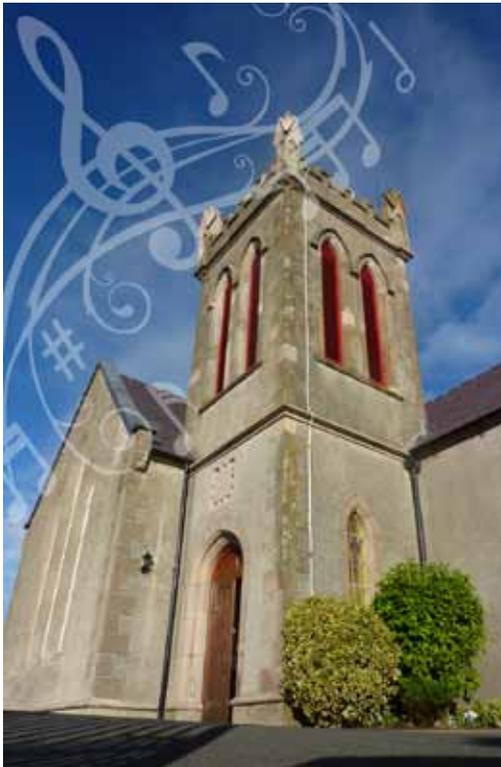
QUIZ!

Friday 22 February at 7.30pm

Yes, we are here again! Did you think we had forgotten you? Well, our next quiz will be on Friday 22 February, starting at 7.30pm in our Halls. The fun format will be as before. Spot prizes for children, a raffle, light refreshments at the interval. And of course, all those daft, tantalizing, quirky questions you're just bursting to answer if only

you could just remember.....! So bring yourself and friends or come solo. You won't be on your own for long. Note the date on your calendar NOW, and we will see you there.

**YOU HAVE BEEN
WARNED!**



Concert of Celebration

Taking place in our newly restored Church, with the Choir and Concert Band from Bangor Grammar School,

SAVE THE DATE!

15th March at 7.30 pm.

Tickets available end of February

Planned Events 2019

Save the Date!

FEB 16 Ladies Breakfast

FEB 22 Quiz Night

MAR 05 Pancake Party

MAR 15 Bangor Grammar Choir and Concert Band

APR 14-16 Prayer Room

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



Supported by
The National Lottery[®]
through the Heritage Lottery Fund



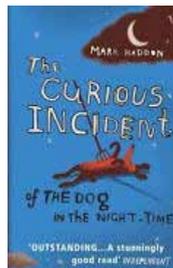
Northern Ireland Charity Number: 103258

Book Stall for February / March

Happy New Year! I hope the festivities and family get-togethers allowed you some time to read. Don't forget that if you received any presents of books which you think it unlikely you will read again, a home could be found for them, if not immediately, then in time for the next book fair. There will be a small hiatus in the book stall as we are expecting the painters in towards the end of January and all the books will have to be stored while they are working and realistically it will take some time to replace them all. In the meantime, here are some reviews for when the books are returned.

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time by Mark Haddon.

I read this book some years ago, and found it fascinating. It is essentially a murder mystery, but told from the perspective of a fifteen year old, Christopher, who has Asperger's Syndrome. Having taught children living with this condition I could relate to his

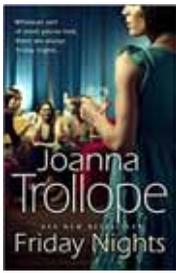


quirks and dislikes. Christopher likes order and lists and routine, but when a neighbour's dog is murdered, Christopher, as a fan of Sherlock Holmes, sets out on what for him is an epic adventure to discover the truth. Mark

Haddon's depiction of Christopher is a tremendous achievement, there is humour and humanity in this story, but, I should warn potential readers who may not like the language that it is frequently pretty strong.

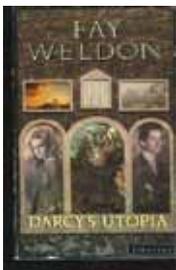
Friday Nights by Joanna Trollope

Friday Night's meetings were originally instigated by Eleanor, an independently minded, newly retired, professional woman who has never married. Friday nights became an important highlight in the week of other single women. Eleanor, out of altruism or self-interest



– she is deliberately vague about her motives, encourages two young local mothers to visit for a chat and a drink on a Friday night. As the group slowly expands we are presented with the back story of each of the characters, the widowed Lindsey with baby Noah and her wild younger sister, Jules; Paula with her young son Toby, the result of a lengthy and painful affair with a married man. Later they are joined by Blaise and her business partner Karen. Each woman has a different story but Friday nights become important to them all. The challenge to this mutually comforting occasion is when Paula, having fully recovered from her failed relationship wants to introduce her new man. I first read this book several years ago and remembered enjoying it thoroughly. Glancing through the copy left in the hall I have found myself immersed in the story once more and will no doubt finish it again before I leave it in the book shelves. So I need hardly say that I would recommend this book as a good read, Joanna Trollope's human observations are spot on.

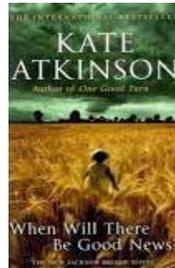
Darcy's Utopia by Fay Weldon



It is many years since I read Fay Weldon and my eyes were caught by this book. It describes the philosophy of Eleanor Darcy, the highly unconventional wife of a world famous economist. Her thoughts are conveyed through the words of two journalists,

Hugo Vansitart writing a serious piece about the Darcys for a broadsheet and Valerie Jones writing a “human interest” story for a journal. Both journalists are caught up in her story and become involved with each other. I can find little to recommend this book, despite it having been described by one reviewer as “a crash course in philosophy, religion, politics, idealism...” All these elements figure largely in the story to be fair, but for me they fail to redeem the overall experience.

When Will There Be Good News? By Kate Atkinson.



When Will There Be Good News? By Kate Atkinson. I have yet to be disappointed in this author. Kate Atkinson demonstrates a wonderful combination of a great story teller, marvellous humour, brilliant characterisation and sparkling intelligence. This particular story begins with a horrible crime, then swiftly moves to thirty years later when the six year old sole survivor is now a successful doctor. Meanwhile young Reggie is looking for work and Atkinson's appealing detective, Jackson Brodie is searching for his small, estranged son. Inevitably the three threads become interwoven in a gripping, thrilling and glorious story told with Atkinson's usual skill. What I particularly enjoy about her writing is her delightful ability to get inside the head of each character, making them really come to life.

The Lake House by Kate Morton.

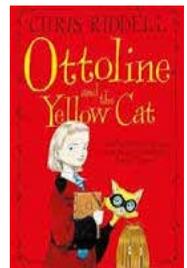
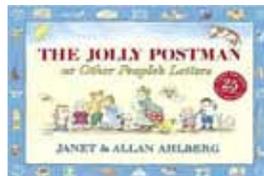
This is another of Kate Norton's entertaining, page turning long novels.



Just the thing for long evenings but not to dismiss it as trivial I have to say that it is a really good story. Kate Norton grew up in Queensland and was inspired to write this story by a famous missing child case in Australia. She has always been fascinated by abandoned old houses as many people are and enjoys detective fiction. In this book she manages to combine all three of those elements very successfully. Starting in Cornwall in 1933 we are plunged into nocturnal activities which to say the least are highly suggestive of something seriously amiss. We are then given some context by a chapter covering the two months prior to the night time opening page. Chapter three takes us seventy years later when Sadie Sparrow is taking an extended break from her job with the Met, to spend time with her grandfather in Cornwall after blotting her copybook at work. Thereafter the story switches back and forth between the years as Sadie, bored by her enforced leave, discovers a grand, abandoned house in the woods during one of her runs. Asking locals about the story reveals a mystery which she cannot but investigate..... A local elderly crime novelist who has more than a passing link to the mystery simply adds to the mix. A warning, once you start this 595 page story, I predict you will find it hard to put down!

Finally, over Christmas my nine year old granddaughter Amy, has passed on a large box of books that she has grown out of and once the painters have left I will add them to the children's shelves. They will be a welcome addition, I am always looking for children's books and

many were sold at the last fair. There is a lovely mother and daughter craft book, a children's cook book, a couple of new editions of Secret Seven stories. I find it incredible that books that I loved as a young child are once again popular, despite the fact that Enid Blyton is frequently referred to in rather patronising tones. The ever popular Roald Dahl is represented by Fantastic Mr Fox and two rather special volumes, **The Jolly Postman**, by the talented pair, Janet and Allan Ahlberg, and Christ Riddell's **Ottoline and the Yellow Cat**. There are other stories, not mentioned here, so do bring your children or grandchildren along and browse the children's shelves – I am sorry that they are so low! Just a small contribution is suggested for children's books of course, not the usual contribution.



When the bookshelves are restored I will once again put all the books on the shelves in alphabetical order according to author's name. The exception I make to this are those on the top of the shelves, which will in future be crime fiction and thrillers on the left, newly reviewed volumes and faith books in the centre and romance on the right of the top of the shelves. I would ask that all contributions are not placed in the shelves but left in front of the shelves so I can look through them and place them accordingly.

Carol

Thoughts of a Blow In...

I do hope you all had a lovely Christmas and New Year and hopefully evaded the nasty flu bug that was doing the rounds. For those who kept in good health, we were so lucky with the weather between Christmas and New Year. It was so good to see so many families out enjoying the dry days walking and small children wobbling about on their brand new bikes. Being so dry and calm, it really was the perfect weather for getting out and about and enjoying the fresh air after any Christmas feasting.

As always, it was so lovely to be able to spend quality time with friends over Christmas. It was especially lovely to chat with their grown-up children who are away at university or for work and I might only meet up with once or twice a year now. It was a pleasure to catch up with what's happening in their busy lives. Then, of course, there are the annual parties where I see and enjoy the news of friends of friends, who I may not encounter for another year.

In the run-up to Christmas, I had some small token gifts for the children next door but just hadn't got a chance

to see them. I spotted their mum and dad coming in from shopping one afternoon and they kindly said they would send them round after school. A little later, the children's arrival was announced by a clatter of feet on the path and an insistent ring of the door bell and some very excited faces.

There was a great deal of squabbling over who's present was who's (reading the labels always helps!) and then they ran back home clutching their gifts. I called to them that I hope they liked the little presents and got a shout back from them in unison, "We'll love them!"

But now January is well underway and snow is forecast and it is suddenly biting cold. Finally, we can no longer escape the fact that winter is well and truly here! Christmas with its bright lights and leisurely days out of routine and socializing seems a very long way away now. Given the current icy weather, this lovely verse from Edgar Fawcett really caught my imagination.

Cynthia

*“January is here, with eyes that keenly glow,
A frost-mailed warrior
striding a shadowy steed of snow.”*

Prayer Room

As a full year approaches since the Prayer Room was opened last, there are not many offerings left to share with you, but here are a few. First “fish” from the net:-

May all who use this Prayer Room be blessed. May they find inner peace and renewal of faith. May they leave feeling refreshed and strengthened.



Remember those debilitated by chronic sickness and weakness.



I pray for all the fighting in the world to cease, and I pray for all the innocent children affected by war.



Dear Lord, bring peace to my friend. Age is not on her side and she is feeling a little stressed at the present.



Thank you God for a time to sit, relax and think only of Your loving goodness. Please be with me as I leave this peaceful, holy place and face the everyday tasks of living. Forgive me all my sins and walk with me day by day.



Father, be with all those people who are in pain, either physically or mentally. Give them your peace and comfort.

I hope these short prayers, written in a time of quiet reflection, will inspire each of us when we pray. It is not always easy to clear our minds of clutter in our everyday life but reading these words may help us all.

Amen

Carol



CONTACT

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