

SAINT GEORGE'S CHURCH



PARISH MAGAZINE

an open door in the heart of the city
a place for prayer and peace

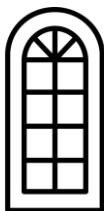


The Ascension of Christ (1636) by Rembrandt (c. 1606–1669)



MAY 2026





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NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

St George's Church Parish Magazine is published on the Sunday nearest the first day of the next month. Views expressed by contributors do not represent the views of the parish. Please send contributions (1000 words maximum) to the Editor, Martin Taggart, wmartintaggart@gmail.com.

THANKS & ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Selby Nesbitt, for music, calendar and additional content.

Tony Merrick, for folding and binding.

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LETTER FROM THE RECTOR

The Reverend Brian Stewart

Dear Friends in Christ

Our Patrol Festival Evensong for the Feast of Saint George was held on Sunday 19th April. The ladies SSA choir sang beautifully and we had an attendance of 105 people, including His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant, Dame Fionualla Jay-O'Boyle and our Bishop, the Rt Rev'd George Davison. The new anthem 'Sabra and the Dragon', set to music by Anita Mawhinney from a poem by Elizabeth McConnell, was an absolute joy. A new hymn celebrating St George and linked to our parish was especially written for us by a former parishioner, Michael McFarland Campbell. Both of these new musical pieces were a delight to listen to and we are very grateful to Anita, Elizabeth, and Michael for them.

There was also a wonderful reception in the Parish Hall afterwards arranged by Judith Fawcett, Lyn McGlade and a team of helpers, together with a magnificent cake to mark the occasion. Father Tom Layden SJ preached an excellent and very appropriate sermon which was greatly appreciated. Many thanks and well done to all involved.

As you may have noticed from the Sunday Service Sheets we are recommencing some of our weekday services. Matins (Morning Prayer) will be said Tuesday to Friday each week at 10:00AM. This is short 15 to 20 minutes daily office. A group of volunteers has agreed to assist me in maintaining this. If you would like to volunteer to read Matins at 10 AM on those days when I am not available, then do please speak to me. Appropriate training will be given, but it is really a very simple and straightforward office. We have also recommenced the 1:00 PM Eucharist on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. For the time being, these will be celebrated in the church rather than in the Holy Cross Chapel. If you are in town on those days at lunchtime, please do consider joining us for about 25 minutes as we celebrate the Holy Sacrifice. The importance of keeping the church open and maintaining these daily services is very much part of the

tradition of St George's and witness to the daily round of prayer and intercession for the Church, the world, the suffering and the Faithful Departed.

There will be a Choral Eucharist for Ascension Day on Thursday 14th May at 7:30PM. Please do let me know of anyone who is sick or needs a pastoral visit? My mobile number is 07902792080.

Yours Sincerely in Christ,

Brian Stewart

SUPPORT ST. GEORGE'S BY QR CODE

You can now donate to church funds using the QR code printed here. Simply open the camera on your mobile phone and point it at the QR code. A link will appear on your screen — tap this to open the secure donation page. You may choose a suggested amount or enter your own donation, and decide whether to make a one-off gift or set up a regular monthly contribution.



THE RECTOR'S REMARKS AT THE EASTER VESTRY

Firstly, the Rev'd Stewart informed those present of his intention to postpone his retirement from the parish until Easter 2027 at the earliest. He has informed the Bishop of this and is to meet with him to discuss various issues relating to matters concerning St Georges. The reason for the delay to retirement is that there were a number of matters he would like to see progressed before he leaves:

1. The refurbishment of the Church interior,
2. The repair of the organ.

He thanked the Select Vestry and particularly Dr K. McGlade for his fundraising work with regards to progressing an application for Heritage Lottery funding.

A further matter that the Rev'd Stewart would like to see progressed is that of supporting the Iranian members of our congregation. He is to speak with the Bishop about the use of Farsi in services, with Mr Meisam Khalili taking a lead role in this (as part of a possible vocation to ordained ministry); but also the provision of a more permanent home for them.

Further thanks were expressed to Mr Merrick, Mr Khalili and Mr McCormick for helping to move the contents of the library to the hall. Books will be made available (and visible) for loan to parishioners. Important reference books and some archived material will remain in the library, which is to be decorated and updated and used as a meeting room for up to 10 people.

The Rector informed us that the total number of households linked to St Georges has risen to 310 for the first time in 35 years. Attendance on Sundays, at all services, has grown slightly over the past year and the Sunday club membership has been running for 18 months and has up to

11/12 children attending. Thanks were expressed to Mr Simon and Mrs Harriet Fleming and Omelawa Akinyele.

The Rector also informed those present that the monthly church magazine has had a bit of a makeover by Mr Martin Taggart. He expressed gratitude to Mr Taggart for taking on this task and thanked Mr Selby Nesbitt for many years of preparing the magazine, service sheets, funeral service sheets and many other documents required by the Church. These are particularly welcomed by bereaved relatives at the time of a funeral service.

Whilst the Rector stated that he could not name every individual within St Georges who had assisted in various ways over the past year, he thanked:

The outgoing Select Vestry, The Church Wardens, The Glebe Wardens The Parochial Nominators (who have prepared a very comprehensive Church profile document), The Synod members, Secretary to the Select Vestry, Treasurer, Outgoing Treasurer, Assistant Clergy: Fathers William Odling-Smee, Keith Suckling, Graeme Pollock, Archdeacon Scott Harte, Ronnie Henderson, Terence Dunlop and our good friend Canon Tom Layden.

All musicians associated with St Georges: the Director of Music, the organists and choir members.

Volunteers for various tasks: flower arrangements, teas/coffees/Sunday Club, grounds care and Servers.

Special thanks were expressed towards our Sexton, Ms Louise McAnearney, for whom no task has been too much since her employment 18 months ago. She has frequently gone beyond the call of duty, willingly and with good grace.

The Rector concluded his Remarks by inviting the Treasurer, Mr Philip Black, to present his report for the year ending December 2025.



MUSIC & WORSHIP

SUNDAY 3RD MAY, EASTER 5

11:00AM CHORAL EUCHARIST, PARISH CHOIR

Processional Hymn	206
Setting	Darke in F
Psalm	31: 1-5, 15-16
Gradual Hymn	107
Offertory Hymn	364
Communion Hymn	302
Motet	Beati quorum via - Stanford
Hymn	205

5:00PM CHORAL EVENSONG, PARISH CHOIR

Responses	Rose
Psalm	147: 1-11
Setting	Moeran in D
Anthem	O taste and see - RVW
Hymns	104, 107

SUNDAY 10TH MAY, EASTER 6

11:00AM CHORAL EUCHARIST, PARISH CHOIR

Hymn	333
Setting	Canterbury Mass - Piccolo
Psalm	66: 7-18
Gradual Hymn	341
Offertory Hymn	485
Anthem	If ye love me - Tallis
Hymn	436

5:00PM CHORAL EVENSONG, CHORAL SCHOLARS

Responses	Rose ATB
Psalm	36: 5-10
Canticles	Dyson in C minor
Anthem	The Call - RVW
Hymns	115, 121

THURSDAY 14TH MAY, THE ASCENSION DAY

8PM CHORAL EUCHARIST, PARISH CHOIR

Hymn	332
Setting	Little organ mass - Haydn
Psalm	47
Gradual Hymn	373
Offertory Hymn	Christ triumphant (separate sheet)
Anthem	God is gone up - Finzi

Hymn 338

SUNDAY 17TH MAY, SUNDAY AFTER ASCENSION DAY

11:00AM CHORAL EUCHARIST, PARISH CHOIR

Processional Hymn	332
Psalm	68: 1-10, 32-35
Setting	Stanford in C
Gradual Hymn	349
Offertory Hymn	296
Motet	God is gone up - Finzi
Communion Hymn	302
Hymn	205

5:00PM CHORAL EVENSONG, IDAHOT, CHAMBER CHOIR

Responses	Ayleward
Psalm	47
Canticles	Murril in E
Motet	Ubi Caritas - Gjello
Hymns	115, 461

SUNDAY 24TH MAY, THE DAY OF PENTECOST

11:00AM CHORAL EUCHARIST, PARISH CHOIR

Hymn	138
Setting	Missa Princeps Pacis - Lloyd Webber
Psalm	104: 26-36, 37b
Gradual Hymn	137
Offertory Hymn	486
Communion hymn	307
Anthem	The Spirit of the Lord - Elgar
Hymn	336

5:00PM CHORAL EUCHARIST, PARISH MEN

Setting	Missa de Angelis
Hymns	139, 140, 362

SUNDAY 31ST MAY, TRINITY SUNDAY

11:00AM CHORAL EUCHARIST, PARISH CHOIR

Hymn	146
Setting	Jackson in G
Psalm	8
Gradual Hymn	358
Offertory Hymn	159
Communion hymn	307
Motet	Ave Verum - Mawby
Hymn	466

5:00PM COMPLINE

MAY CALENDAR

Sun May 3rd

9:30 am
11:00 am

5TH SUNDAY OF EASTER
Eucharist: The Rector
Choral Eucharist: Fr William Odling-Smee
Preacher: The Rector
Readings: Acts 7: 55-60; 1 Peter 2: 2-10; John 14: 1-14
Reader: Wardens
Intercessor: Canon Tom Layden SJ
Servers: Jonny Calder, Mark Claney, Tony Merrick
Tea and Coffee: Judith Fawcett, Joyce Cameron
5:00 pm Evensong: The Rector
Lessons: Zechariah 4: 1-10; Revelation 21: 1-14 (Geoffrey May)

Tues May 5th

10:00am
1:00pm

Matins
Eucharist

Wed May 6th

10:00am
10:30am

Matins
Eucharist

Thur May 7th

10:00am
1:00pm

Matins
Eucharist

Fri May 8th

10:00am
1:00pm

Matins
Eucharist

Sun May 10th

9:30 am
11:00 am

6TH SUNDAY OF EASTER - ROGATION SUNDAY
Eucharist: The Rector
Eucharist: The Rector
Preacher: The Rector
Readings: Acts 17: 22-31; 1 Peter 3: 13-22; John 14: 15-21
Reader: Mark Claney
Intercessor: Janet Sandikli
Servers: Steven McQuitty, Janet Sandikli, Mark Claney
Tea and Coffee: Julie, Issy Bannon
5:00 pm Choral Evensong: The Rector
Readings: Zechariah 8: 1-13; Revelation 21: 22 - 22:5 (Paddy Sloan)

Tues May 12th

10:00am
1:00pm

Matins
Eucharist

Wed May 13th

10:00am
10:30am

Matins
Eucharist

Thur May 14th

10:00am
1:00pm
7:30pm

ASCENSION DAY
Matins
Eucharist
Choral Eucharist: The Rector
Lessons: Acts 1: 1-11; Ephesians 1: 15-23; Luke 24: 44-53 (Janet Sandikli)

Fri May 15th

10:00am
1:00pm

Matins
Eucharist

Sun May 17th

9.30 am
11:00 am

SUNDAY AFTER ASCENSION DAY
Eucharist: The Rector
Choral Eucharist: The Rector

		Preacher: The Rector Readings: Acts 1: 6-14; 1 Peter 4: 12-14, 5: 6-11; John 17: 1-11 Reader: Anne McBride Intercessor: Archdeacon Scott Harte Servers: Banji Akinyele, Tony Merrick, Jonny Calder Tea and Coffee: Valerie Roberts, Helen Crowe, Holly Ferres Choral Evensong: The Rector Lessons: 2 Samuel 23: 1-5; Ephesians 1: 15-23 (JackMcCormick)
	5:00 pm	
Tues May 19th	10:00am	Matins
	1:00pm	Eucharist
Wed May 20th	10:00am	Matins
	10:30am	Eucharist
Thur May 21st	10:00am	Matins
	1:00pm	Eucharist
Fri May 22nd	10:00am	Matins
	1:00 pm	Eucharist
Sun May 24th		THE DAY OF PENTECOST
	9.30 am	Eucharist: The Rector
	11.00am	Choral Eucharist: The Rector
		Readings: Acts 2: 1-21; 1 Corinthians 12: 3b-13; John 20: 19-23
		Reader: Brenda Claney
		Intercessor: Anne McBride
		Servers: Omolewa Akinyele, Steven McQuitty, Mark Claney
		Tea and Coffee: Linda McConnell, Dot Lutton, Betty Flynn
		Choral Eucharist: The Rector
	5:00 pm	Lessons: Acts 2: 1-11; John 14: 15-31b (Canon Tom Layden SJ)
Tues May 26	10:00am	Matins
	1:00pm	Eucharist
Wed May 27	10:00am	Matins
	10:30am	Eucharist
Thur May 28	10:00am	Matins
	1:00 pm	Eucharist: The Rector & Fr Graeme Pollock – The Walsingham Group meets at this Eucharist – all welcome
Fri May 29	10:00am	Matins
	1:00 pm	Eucharist
Sun May 31st		TRINITY SUNDAY
	9.30 am	Eucharist: The Rector
	11.00am	Choral Eucharist: The Rector
		Readings: Genesis 1: 1 – 2: 4a; 2 Corinthians 13: 11-13;
		Matthew 28: 16-20
		Reader: Paul McLaughlin
		Intercessor: George Woodman
		Servers: Jonny Calder, Janet Sandikli, Tony Merrick
		Tea and Coffee: Steven McQuitty, Jack McCormick
		Compline: The Rector
	5:00 pm	Lessons: John 16: 5-15 (Janet Sandikli)



NEWS & NOTICES

~ FIRE DRILL SUNDAY 17TH 11.00AM ~

Please note that a fire drill will take place during the 11.00am Eucharist Service on Sunday 17th May. We ask everyone to remain calm and follow any directions communicated to you on the day.

~ BELFAST MARATHON – SUNDAY, 3RD MAY ~

There will be a Marathon on Sunday 3rd May (Next Sunday) which may cause parishioners difficulty in getting to St George's for the 9:30AM and the 11:00AM services. To get to St George's on 3rd May everyone, North, South, East and West, should get to the West Link. Then take the slip road to Clifton Street, continue on into Upper and Lower Donegal Street past the Cathedral, into Bridge Street and then High Street and finally to St George's.

~ PARISHIONERS CHURCHYARD CARPARKING (2026-2027) ~

The Annual Donation is now due from Parishioners who have a key fob to allow parking within the Churchyard. The donation of £50.00 is a gift for the privilege of carparking on one half day per week and should be considered separate from your 'giving' to the Church (i.e. Standing Order or F.W.O.). To renew please either

1) Place the donation in an envelope clearly marked '**CARPARK**' together with your '**NAME**' and **telephone number/e-mail address** (for communication purposes) and place it on the offering plate

~ OR ~

2) Send by Direct Bankers Order to: Sort Code: 98 00 10, Account No: 09028029
using Reference - '**CARPARK**' followed by your '**Surname**'.

Your donation will permit the extension of your admission fob which is due to expire on 30th April, and the issuing of a new parking badge for display on your vehicle. Any contracts which are not renewed will result in the fob being deactivated on 31st May. Any new member of the congregation wishing to avail of car parking within the Churchyard (to a maximum of one half day per week) should contact **Roland Bailie: Tel. 07813602122 or e-mail : rbailie6@gmail.com**

~ ST GEORGE'S CHURCHYARD GARDENING ~

Thank you to all those individuals/groups who have started to look after sections of our churchyard and keep it looking attractive and cared for.. The church and the churchyard are the first impressions that visitors get of St George's and are frequently the topic which starts a conversation from passers-by. This was particularly noticeable in the COVID months when so many doors were shut but our gates were open and people found solace in the church grounds at a disturbing time.

The occasional Saturday morning groups who have been tending the churchyard in recent years have done sterling emergency work keeping the churchyard tidy. However,

gardens need a more personal interest in order to flourish hence the recent change in the way we look after St George's 'gardens'.

We are dividing areas of the churchyard into a number of small sections or plots which we hope will be 'gardened' by parishioners. It is important to keep them small since most of us have our own gardens which necessitate our time. The idea is that the gardening volunteers can tend their St George's plot in their own time and simply when need arises. Many of us have fobs for entry at the barrier; if not access will be arranged. We will bring our own tools and take away whatever has had to be removed/pruned etc. We can come when it suits us and the weather is kind.

To date I think we are at least half-way to achieving our objective which means that we need just a little more help from anyone who can spare the time. Please get in touch with me, Judith, or the Rector, to get more information.

St George's is open for services and for visitors most days of the week and often acts as host for events including concerts so it would be good to see the grounds well-tended at any time.

~ Judith

~ KARLSRUHE KONZERT DUO RECITAL, 3RD JUNE ~

St Georges hopes to host a lunchtime recital by the Karlsruhe Konzert Duo, playing cello and piano, on Wednesday 3rd June. Details to be confirmed. This is a professional duo from Southern Germany and we would encourage all to come and enjoy a wonderful recital.

~ ST GEORGE'S SINGERS SUMMER CONCERT, 10TH JUNE ~

The St Georges Singers will host their summer concert on 10th June. More details to follow.

~ ODD CROCS CONCERT, 12TH JUNE ~

The 'Odd Crocs' concert will take place on the 12th June, an event performed by choir members but on instruments and devices not usually heard or seen on a Sunday. There are no tickets, this is a fund raising event.

~ PARISH CHOIR NEWS ~

The Choir will be travelling to Winchester in early July and will sing Evensong in Winchester Cathedral on July 1st, Salisbury Cathedral on July 2nd and a joint concert with the Winchester Quiristers on July 3rd. This is an exciting trip for the choir, especially for those who have never been on a choir tour before. We will stay in the Premier Inn not far from the Cathedral and look forward to working with Donal McCann who is the Director of the Winchester Quiristers. If anyone feels like sponsoring an ice cream or a treat for the choir, do let David or Maeve know and we can put your funds to good use!

The 'Odd Crocs' concert will take place on the 12th June, an event performed by choir members but on instruments and devices not usually heard or seen on a Sunday. This is a choir fund raising concert, there are no tickets, but you are encouraged to use the yellow envelopes to show your appreciation!

The Choir is looking ahead to a busy Holy Week, to some wonderful music over Easter and into the summer months. Thank you, as always, for the huge support that the Parish gives to the choir.

~ David, Maeve, Mark and Daniel



LEAD ON MACDUFF by Paul McLaughlin

Wordsmith Mark Twain showed the kind of insight that warms my heart when he wrote 'Heaven is by favour. If it were by merit, your dog would go in and you would stay out'. Wise words that popped up on social media recently and flooded my head and my heart with memories of our own four-legged companion who died in my arms twelve years ago.

The wee bundle of canine candyfloss that greeted us after the long drive to visit my wife's brother, Billy, in the hilltop town of Rathfriland in Co Down appealed immediately, despite our reservations. "We're both working, Billy, and we really don't have the time or patience to look after a puppy. It was very thoughtful of you to buy him with us in mind, but it's a definite no". We were still protesting when the black, white and bronze terrier was installed in a shoe box and set on the back seat of our car for the trip home.

"He's the runt of the litter," said Billy and that was that. Sympathy for this little doe-eyed stranger with the razor baby teeth, the high bushy tail and beautiful multi-coloured face turned to love within seconds and we drove off to the city with our new best friend sleeping soundly.

Our suburban semi became his home overnight – a night spent in our bed. Well, we couldn't leave that 'wee mite' downstairs in the cold. His stainless-steel bowls were bought, his high quality blankets, as well of course, and a grand bed that would grace his soon-to-be bedroom. "His name will be Hennessy", said my wife, staring at him intently. He stared back with the sweetest expression I had ever seen. "What about Macduff?", said I. "You're right", sez she, "he even looks like a Macduff." And he did!

The half Cairn, half wire-haired Jack Russell with his soft, curly coat wagged his magnificent tail in agreement and became a member of our family. Carpet was bought to be fitted in the eight feet by four feet cubby hole that would be his bedroom, sometimes. The carpet salesman looked at me with astonishment when I gave him the measurements of the 'room', but with the understanding of a dog lover when I explained its purpose. From then on, every day was an adventure. An odyssey that would last eighteen

and a half golden years of many ups and the odd down. The time he ate the plastic flower pot was a real downer. The three-day disappearance after a bitch in heat a heart-breaking time for us that had the local police on his tail before he returned, covered in snow, in the middle of the night.

Cross words, however, were never on the agenda. He was cuddled and warmed in a blanket before a roaring coal fire with words of love whispering in his big floppy ears as he slipped off into the land of nod. But a visit to the vet was arranged to curtail his future love life.

The ups were the joy of his gentle and loving personality. He simply loved everyone. Humans, all dogs, especially puppies that he licked affectionately, even most cats, although the thrill of the chase was never far from his thoughts. And everyone loved him.

His feats of walking became legendary, as would ours. He was a blend of a long-distance athlete, a sprinter, a Sherpa who laughed at mountains and a comedian-companion who smiled on demand, knew the names of all his 'relatives' and was fiercely protective of my brother who had had a stroke. At the words 'lead on MacDuff' he would race for the front door while at 'bath', which Jools and I would drop casually into our conversation, he would slink silently, like a cartoon character on his tip-toes, behind the sofa.

He played football every day, watched television sitting on my knee and devoted his whole life to making us happy. Holidays were spent in Donegal or the Glens of Antrim – we could not possibly leave our 'wee man' in kennels – and were all the better for it.

He celebrated his eighteenth birthday with a doggy cake and a special 'I'm 18' hat and continued his daily exercise right up until his final day when the pain left as he opened his little eyes for the final time to say thank you.

I once asked the late Father Des Wilson, whose Sunday Masses MacDuff attended without fail if the 'wee man' would go to heaven. Wise man that he was, Des said, "Well, Paul, would you expect to be perfectly happy when you go to heaven?" I said "yes". "And would you be perfectly happy if MacDuff was not there as well?" I said "no". I had my answer. Our best pal Macduff would be there on merit. Lead on MacDuff.



A CONNEMARA GOOSE GOES TO CLAPHAM by Francis FitzGibbon

My father, had an uncle Dr J E (Eddie) O'Loughlen. He qualified L.R.C.P & S.I in Dublin in 1912. During the first world war, he was gazetted lieutenant in the Royal Army Medical Corps (R.A.M.C) on 20 February 1915 and subsequently served as Captain. At the end of the first world war he stayed on in Berlin for two more years until 1920, marrying a nurse Nora. It is possible that he was also based for a time at the Red Cross Hospital in Netley. He then carried out seven years postgraduate study with Professors Alfred Adler and Oskar Frankl in Vienna he also worked in Budapest and Winnepeg in Canada. On his return, he set up in General Practice at 100 South Side, Clapham Common, South West London. He pioneered treatment for burns and pain relief using ethyl chloride. He died on 8 March 1956.



Captain J.E. O'Loughlen R.A.M.C, 1918

During the second world war, my father attended Stowe School, Buckingham. On one occasion in 1944, my grandmother whose family owned the Zetland Hotel in Cashel, Connemara asked my father to deliver an oven ready goose on his return to Stowe after the half term holiday, to her brother Eddie, a GP with a practice in Clapham Common.

My grandmother's sister May looked after all the hens and geese at the Zetland Hotel. She selected a suitable plump specimen, despatched it humanly and then plucked it in the yard of the hotel and removed its fuzz using a candle. My father took the goose wrapped in a brown paper in a hessian bag on the mail boat from Dun Laoghaire to Holyhead.

After having disembarked at Holyhead my father was stopped by two rather officious customs men who immediately saw the rear end of the plump Goose poking out of the Hessian bag. One of the Customs men, asked my father “what is that in your bag sonny”? It’s a Goose for my uncle, a doctor in Clapham Common my father replied. “Oh a Goose for your uncle,” the customs man said, so he asked his senior colleague to come and view the plump bird, which during the Second World War was practically unobtainable in England due to rationing restrictions, except on the black market.



Well after some further questions, the customs officers, having no regulation covering “properly prepared Connemara goose for a doctor,” allowed him to proceed to make his train connection to Clapham junction. From there he walked just over half an hour to his uncle Eddie’s General Practice, 100 Southside, Clapham, where he delivered the goose as instructed. Uncle Eddie was delighted with the gift and his wife Nora cooked it beautifully. After months of wartime rationing, the Connemara goose was a rare and welcome feast.

The following day 21st June 1944, a Fieseler Fi 103 V1 Vergeltungswaffe (“Doodlebug” flying bomb) fell on Clapham Common, blowing a huge crater in the ground and shattering all the windows in the surrounding houses, remarkably though no one was killed or injured.



Crashed V-1 “Doodlebug” Flying Bomb, Clapham Common 1944

Royal Engineer bomb-disposal sappers soon arrived and secured the area, and removed the remaining innards of the Doodlebug on a lorry, which eventually found their way to the Imperial War Museum, where they can still be seen today.



Meanwhile, Aunt May's Connemara goose had already been cooked, a small but complete victory for family logistics over Customs officials, U-boats and the Luftwaffe during wartime disruption.

Acknowledgements:

I wish to thank Jack McCormick for kindly assisting with creating and formatting the illustrations.



KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

by Terence Mayne

Did you play tiddlywinks as a youngster or fish for sticklebacks? Did you have a go at yoyo, kick a ball about, climb trees, play hopscotch? Well I did, not brilliantly. With age I went on to feature at hockey, cricket and rugby again, not very well, or could have done better, if only beautifuls had not got in the way, on dance floors, not on the fields of play. The sports mentioned are just some of the many that should occupy the formative self. For indoor intellectual funlovers monopoly, draughts, scrabble, and chess are suggested.

It is fortunate now, time moving on, children (and their parents), ignoring old fashioned ways of growing up, have technology on their side. With no trouble at all the wee ones sit in the house playing games (often violent) on expensive handsets. On the other hand it is tempting to believe that some of the aforesaid would learn about Katmandu or Mongolia. They do not, for most mothers and fathers are delighted with their dedication.

"Succumb to what the kids say, the worlds changing, is it not?" That solves that problem. It gets worse, as adults with smug opinions on children's education, addicted to smart phones at the same time, most advocate banning them by law to the under sixteens. Much better it would be if the devices were forbidden to ALL in company, whether it be bus, bar room or coffee house .

There is a good side to all this, if you approach a strange person, or a stranger, not having a mobile in the hand, you might learn something out of the ordinary. I met Mavis this way; she keeps 6 hens, all with names, and George, a huge rooster, in her yard. Unfortunately George was eating the eggs, so Mavis comes to the rescue, cures the habit by filling one egg with strong English mustard. Another time I encountered Fortesque Smith who said he invented the hovercraft (very useful for shooting duck in wetlands). There are many more. The lady silkworm farmer from Banbridge, Silver King Ed from Glemgormley with half a ton of the stuff safe in a cave in Canada, a poteen distiller from the Glens of Antrim, a snuff maker from Ballyculragh and a whiskey distiller from Skibbereen. My most interesting

meeting by far was on a train, his nickname was Gambling Jack (Jake Johnstone). In his public house upcountry, he has a stable of thoroughbred rats and every night he has races for them up tubes on which bets are placed. I have ben up a few times for the greatest fun. I suspect it's not legal, nevertheless, I think myself priveledged to have met Gambling Jack. It is suggested one goes out naked so to speak (without ones smartphone), for knowledge. Anyone for hopscotch?



A REFLECTION ON G.K. CHESTERTON by James Hardy

G.K. Chesterton famously said: 'It is absurd for the Evolutionist to complain that it is unthinkable for an admittedly unthinkable God to make everything out of nothing, and then pretend that it is more thinkable that nothing should turn itself into everything.' Modern society, en masse, thinks The Milky Way galaxy probably had no designer, but believes The Milky Way chocolate Bar does have a creator, Mars UK.

Astronomy-geology-biology do infer the presence of a designer. I am reminded of Irish summer nights fishing for trout. The beauty of the gravelly stream, the glorious starry night sky and the magnificent trout are etched in my memory. It was always a pleasure to walk back to my late grandfather's farm, and see his pleasure at the sight of half a dozen kipper sized trout in my bag.

The relationship of humans to the cosmos is poetically pitched to us in a psalm 8 question. We rightly marvel at the cohesion, and unimaginable complexity, of the universe. But the universe can never even partially understand us, or at all penetrate the human mind-brain. 'The Body' by Bill Bryson has an opening paragraph of Chapter 8 of 'The Body' which looks at the brain.

Bryson describes the human brain as a 3 lb organ of water (70%) plus protein and fat. In material terms it resembles my bag of six kipper sized trout. Yet the 86 billion neurons within the human brain have trillions of potential dendritic association or connection patterns. The human Mind-Brain is majestic beyond words, far beyond the cleverest human created AI technology.

'Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards'. Forty years ago, while a QUB undergraduate student, an anatomy tutor taught my class how the preserved human brain tissue we were studying bore minimal resemblance to the real thing. Living human brain tissue has been described as having the consistency of set custard. Yet this tissue is central to human consciousness-thought-personhood.

We marvel, quite rightly, at evidence of creation seen in front of our noses, and also in distant space vistas. But does the organ between our ears, and behind our eyes, the majestic human brain, arguably display the strongest imaginable evidence of designer's fingerprint? Is the human Mind-Brain an ace card, in debates about the evidence of a creator's existence?

~ SOLUTIONS TO THE APRIL DRAGON'S CHALLENGE ~

ACROSS

1. ADVENTUROUS, 7. OASIS, 8. AS NEW, 9. ANYTIME, 14. EPSILON, 19. OSTIA, 20. AGORA, 21. ENCOURAGING

DOWN

1. ABODE, 2. VESTA, 3. NOSEY, 4. UMAMI, 5. OUNCE, 6. SOWED, 10. NAP, 11. TRI, 12. MAO, 13. ABOVE, 14. ESTOC, 15. SNAFU, 16. LLAMA, 17. NAOMI, 18. CLANG

~ THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT ~

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who contributes to our parish magazine. Your articles, news, reflections and updates help keep our parish community informed, encouraged and connected.

We would also warmly welcome other kinds of writing, including reviews of books, films, events, or local activities, as well as pieces about parish life, past and present. **If you would like to contribute, please keep submissions to a maximum of 1000 words.** If you have any questions, please feel free to speak me or via email, wmartintaggart@gmail.com.

~ Martin

AN EASTER REQUIEM

by Paul McLaughlin

She passed away on Easter Day
After months of suffering had slipped away like unwanted mourners.
I had had no idea.
We had lost touch over the years you see.
Isn't that the polite way of explaining it?
That break that becomes a void.
That day or two that stretches to years as work and family and a profusion
of unnamed and unwanted paraphernalia
Cram every hour and minute.
I was shocked to read her death notice in the local paper.
So shocked that I went to the wrong church for her requiem.
The kind cleaner with the mop and bucket put me straight and sent me with
directions to walk a mile in the driving rain.
It was the wages of a penance earned.
I felt like a stranger at a family get together
As I listened to the young priest tell a story of faith, humility and loyalty
that reminded me of why we had been friends in the first place.
Shamed, I resorted to tears when he repeated her final words,
"Father, you have brought me the risen Lord".



THE DRAGON'S CHALLENGE

set by Martagon

		2	4		3		7	
5		4		6			8	3
1		7		9	5	4		2
		6	5	3				
2	4	5		8		3		
8	7					9		5
	5		3			6		1
	6	1		5			3	
		9	6	7			5	4

~ QUICK QUIZZ ~

1. What is the square root of 144?
2. What does DNA stand for?
3. In Greek mythology, who was the god of the sea?
4. What year did the Berlin Wall fall?
5. Who painted *The Persistence of Memory*?

Solutions in next month's issue