

Church of

St Columbanus

Parish of Ballyholme

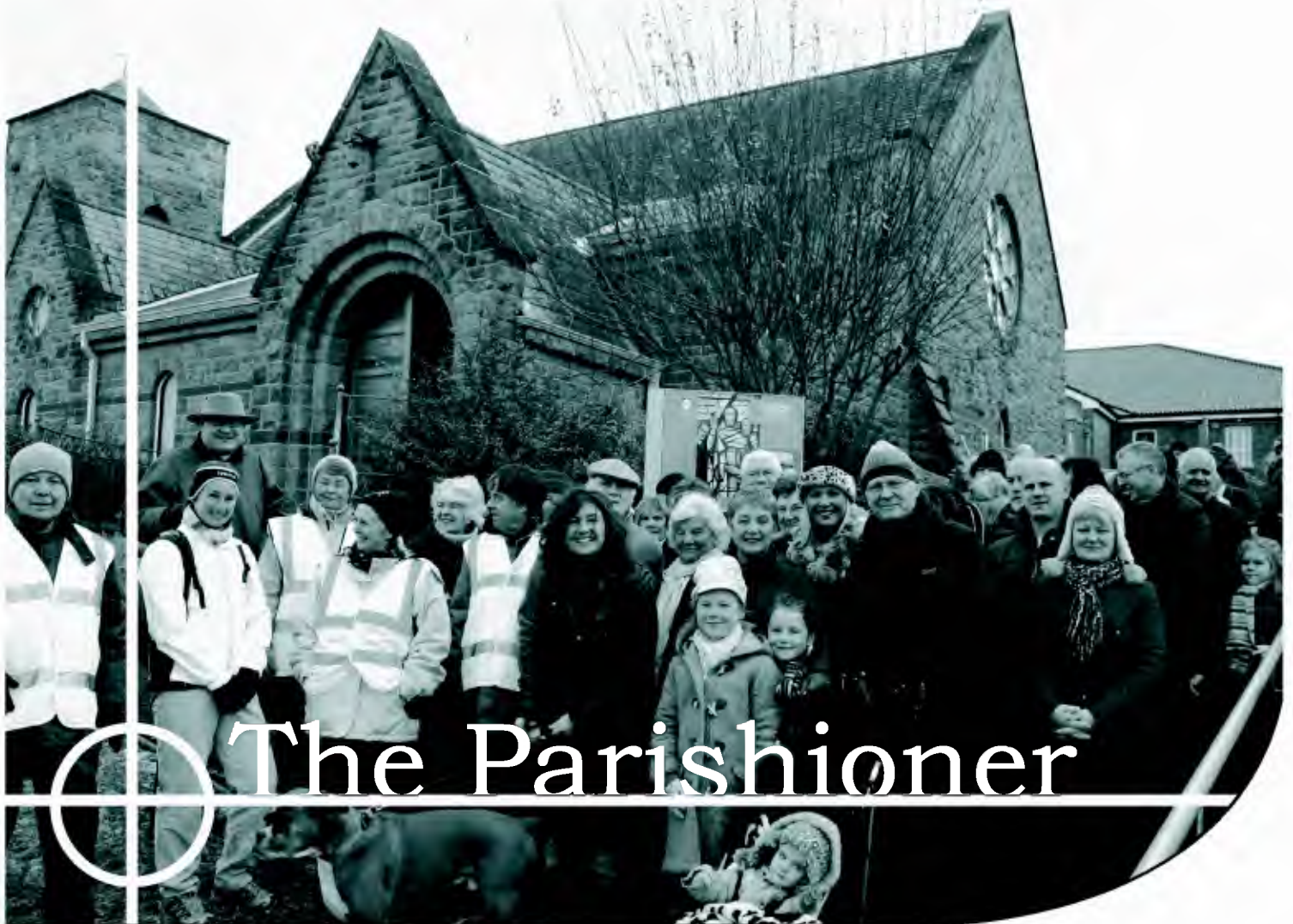


February 2010



Festive Photos

Catch up
on pages 4 & 5



The Parishioner

The Church is open every weekday morning for private prayer and meditation

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Photo by Don Todd.

♣ **Magazine Contact email:**
office@ballyholmeparish.co.uk

The Rambling Rector



If you want to stop people eating chips, don't put salad on the menu. So say scientists at Duke University in North Carolina whose researchers are calling this phenomenon 'vicarious goal fulfilment': apparently just seeing salad on the menu makes people feel they've done their dietary duty, and that they can therefore now reward themselves with a tasty but unhealthy dish! It's left me wondering could the same apply where God and Church are concerned. Should we drape a tarpaulin over St Columbanus during the day and switch off the floodlights at night just in

case, for some people, driving past feels enough? Actually at a personal level, it raises a far more serious and searching question than that for me. My week is filled with what I hope is the work and service of God: the visits, the conversations, the meetings. But if my chief end or goal is 'to worship God and enjoy Him for ever' (the phrase most of us know well from the Westminster Confession), what may be distracting me from that goal in the menu of fluster and busyness that is my ministerial life? What's distracting you?

SED



Operation Christmas Child: Shoe-Box Appeal

On behalf of The Samaritan's Purse many thanks to everyone who filled a shoe-box for a needy child this Christmas. It gives these children great joy to receive their box filled with some useful things and some toys and sweets. They are amazed that someone thinks about them and takes the trouble to send these boxes with love. This year we collected 165 boxes and they are on their way to Belarus where they will be distributed.

If anyone would like to have some information on how to fill a shoe-box next Christmas please get in touch with me on 91460050
Once again many thanks.

Carole Caruth



Book Review

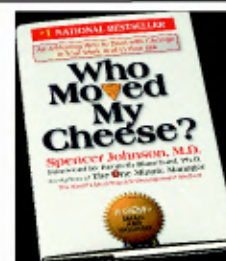
Who Moved my Cheese?
by Dr Spencer Johnson

Have you ever awakened to find that your 'Cheese' (a metaphor for what you want to have in life) has been moved? This book relates a simple parable, written for all ages, which takes less than an hour to read, but its unique insights can last a lifetime. The plot involves four imaginary characters - the mice Sniff and Scurry, and the little people Hem and Haw - they all live in a maze. As the story unfolds we learn how the

mice and the little people search for 'Cheese' and the diverse ways in which they deal with change.

If you are going through change in different areas of your life, this quote from A J Cronin is appropriate "but always, if we have faith, God will open a door for us, not perhaps one that we ourselves would ever have thought of, but one that will ultimately prove good for us". Lorna McClelland

Published by G.P Putnam's Sons at rrp £5.99 (paperback).



LE JEU AVANT TOUT

Boxing Day morning was cool, bright and sunny, and conditions were perfect for the football extravaganza of the annual match between the Youth Fellowship and the Slightly Older Fellowship. Both teams had been training, practising and dieting for the past year to have themselves in peak condition for the match. Those readers who think they detect a certain irony in the last sentence need to be disabused of that notion.

It is true that the Man.Utd fanatic, Bishop in waiting and player manager who instigated this match many years ago liked to surround himself with players even older than himself. But all has now changed. Simon, the new, strictly non playing manager and cricket aficionado, prefers to pick a younger and more athletic team of players who have recently moved up from the YF, while the remaining Peter Pan wannabes, Robbie, Alan, Julio and recent signings Brian, Michael H and Jim retain enough skill to produce a few oases of calm in the midst of the generally increased tempo of the game. This new selection policy, while robbing spectators of the perverse pleasure of watching ageing limbs trying to repeat the vaguely remembered skills and movements of their youth even though the message from the brain just fails to get through, at least provides a sport easily recognisable as football. Indeed, this year's match proved to be one of the most entertaining and skilful encounters of this long running series.

There were goal scoring chances right from the start when Jaime shot just over the bar for the YF. In reply Michael H had an excellent shot well saved by Connor. Then despite calls for offside Stephen Jnr. resplendent in his bright red Santa Claus boots, was understandably allowed to play on by his refereeing father Stephen Snr, but again Connor saved. However, the seniors took the lead after fifteen minutes when Stephen's corner was headed in for an unfortunate own goal. The YF had a chance to hit back when Julio picked the ball up after confusing the line on the edge of the penalty box with the touchline! But Dave's free kick from the edge of the penalty box was safely charged down and then Graeme was unlucky to see a clever lob hit the top of the bar. The Older Fellowship

produced the best movement of the match passing the ball across the pitch via Stephen, Ryan and young Jonathan, only to see Kris' fine shot again superbly saved by Connor. Adam then saw his lob



just clear the bar before the player manager Dave scored a wonderful deserved equaliser for the YF by curling the ball into the top corner from the edge of the penalty box. The match remained even until the stroke of half time, when Ryan got his toe to the ball just ahead of the keeper to allow Kris to poke the ball over the line from two yards out to restore the lead for the Elderly Fellowship.

As the whistle blew for half time, team manager, Simon, showing his complete confidence in his selection made his appearance to see how things were going.

The start of the second half saw Connor continue to earn the man of the match award, with another excellent save, pushing Brian's fierce shot over the bar, but then the YF seemed to get their second wind. Sam made a strong run down the left and his cross was met with a text book downward header by Graeme for a fine equalising goal. They almost took the lead when Matty had a long range shot well saved but it was the senior team who eventually clinched the match when good work on the right by Jonathan saw the ball moved to Brian who finished sharply from ten yards out.

The YF had opportunities to save the match in the last ten minutes squandering two presentable chances from close range, leaving player manager Dave Benitez with a better understanding of his Uncle Rafa's problems in producing a winning team. However, he should not be too disappointed as the senior team had cunningly played with an extra man for the whole match!

This was a really enjoyable match for all present, with goal mouth incidents, moments of skill and a tempo with some real blood and thunder, replacing the thud and blunder of the early matches of this series.

Our thanks go to the players and spectators for a good morning's fun, Sue for washing the kit and to the referee Stephen Snr, whose affable and masterly performance justified Sepp Blatter's refusal to use camera technology in the World Cup.

WMB





Festive Photos

Carol Singing and Lights Switch-on
 Boxing Day Football Teams
 New Year's Day Walk
 Sit In & Carry Out
 Nativity Play



Chris is “in the pink” after retiring

After a teaching career which spanned 37 eventful years at Bangor Grammar School, Chris Harte finally hung up his gown and mortar board last year.

A former pupil of Belfast Royal Academy, where his own father taught for many years, Chris cheerfully admitted that when he completed his studies at the school he didn't have a “game plan” as to what he wanted to do next. However, he was sure that he wanted to attend Trinity College, Dublin, following in the footsteps of his father and older siblings. A suggestion from the school's then vice principal that he should think about studying Law struck a chord with him as his maternal grandfather had been a solicitor in Cavan. So, off he headed to Trinity where, halfway through his law degree, it dawned on him that he really wanted to teach. “It was in the blood” he commented.

As a child of seven Chris discovered what was to become a lifelong passion for cricket. Although he loved most sports he says he was “hooked” on cricket, first playing on the sands at Annalong on summer holidays. At Trinity College, he became known as a talented sportsman

and won a ‘pink’ - the Trinity equivalent of an Oxford blue and the nickname by which he has been affectionately known ever since. Chris played for the North Leinster hockey team and went on to win 20 caps playing for Ireland, a time he looks back on with great affection.

After graduating in Law, Chris went on to do his Dip Ed at Trinity and was fortunate to be appointed resident master at the prestigious Wesley College in Dublin. By coincidence, his eldest son Jonathan is now a teacher there. In 1972, Chris was appointed to BGS and, in the course of his career, has taught History, Latin, Law, Mathematics and the subject which was his greatest love, Geography. Paying tribute to Chris in this year's edition of the school magazine, headmaster Stephen Connolly wrote. “He proved to be a simply natural, instinctive teacher with an exuberant

enthusiasm for knowledge and an innate ability to share it”. And he added, “There were occasions, I daresay, when he actually managed to stick to the prescribed curriculum or the recommended schemes of work but, otherwise, he ranged far and wide across the *vasty fields* of knowledge taking with him his more or less willing disciples.”

In 1992, the opportunity of a lifetime came up to go to New Zealand on a teacher exchange which came about through contacts he made after an earlier cricket tour. “I had always wanted to go there and I loved my time there on tour. I just felt very comfortable out there,” he recalled. The whole family upped sticks and went, and as Chris explained, the two boys,

Jonathan and Michael and their sister Jennifer were luckily at stages in their schooling where they were not affected too much by the upheaval. His wife Ann also gave up her job in an estate agency.

It was the experience of a lifetime and since then they have been back to NZ several times and have also hosted visitors from there. Sport has taken him to many different parts of the world and given him many life enriching experiences and he has a fund of interesting

anecdotes about his travels and family background.

Ironically it was his great passion for cricket that also caused him tremendous pain when he ruptured his Achilles tendon last August while playing for Bangor. This led to a long period of recuperation and also some heart-searching.

“I'm now in a dilemma as to whether I dare try again to play cricket. It would be a big wrench to give it up. I only gave up hockey at the age of 37,” he added.

Also, frustratingly for Chris, the injury curtailed his visits to St Columbanus where he has been a member for many years. “I wouldn't say I was the most devout or religious person but I have always enjoyed going to church,” said Chris.

However, he is looking forward to being back in church and also to spending more time with his first grandchild Elijah, born last year.



Children's Church

Everyone who was there will agree that this year's 'Christmas Cameos' service on 20th December was a joy from start to finish. But not only did it represent several weeks of hard work by the young people and leaders of Children's Church, it also came after three and a half months of hard work behind the scenes to breathe new Spiritual life and new organisational shape into Children's Church. We thought we would take this opportunity to bring you up to date on some of the most important changes.



Leaders

Up until June 2008 Children's Church was led Sunday by Sunday by a dedicated team of junior youth leaders and we want to thank God for all that these wonderful young people continue to do so faithfully for our children, week by week. In September of that year some parents expressed an interest in getting involved but as the weeks progressed it became increasingly apparent that in order to reach its full potential more of our Children's Church mums and dads and many other adults with brilliant gifts to offer needed to be encouraged to step up to the plate, not only to help with supervision and 'crowd control' but with the delivering of the Sunday programme itself. Slowly but surely it seems to have dawned on us that since we are members of one Christian family in St Columbanus all of us have a part to play in teaching our children the love of Jesus. Arguably the single most basic change is that while the junior youth leaders continue to take a vital and central weekly role, in a new and very real sense our Children's Church is now adult led with many parents playing a fundamental role.



To date the clergy have been able to process more than 25 Access NI/Safeguarding Trust applications so that in their turn lots of adults can now lend a practical hand on Sunday mornings. This number will grow as Simon and Stephen are able to call at more and more homes but we hope to reach a position before long where every family with a child in Children's Church is taking its share of responsibility for Children's Church. Of course the more volunteers we have on board the less frequently we will need to call upon them, but what this system will really require to make it work is organisation. With that in mind we are pleased to present our new Ballyholme Children's Church 'Backroom Grannies'!

Backroom Grannies



The Rector is to blame for this title though both the ladies concerned are grannies and pleased to be known as such! Joan Dales and Heather Copelton have agreed to give us the organisational and administrative support which is so key to our new structure. They will manage the rotas, distribute the materials, remind the volunteers each week when it's their turn and order the *Scripture Union* resources as asked to do so. They will also oversee a central attendance roll and keep our Youth Co-ordinator and Clergy informed about dates and any practical needs or problems as they arise.



Children's Church currently breaks down into three groups: 'Bubbles' for pre-school & P1, 'Splash' for P2, P3 & P4 and 'Ice' for P5, P6 & P7. Each group has 2 key leaders, one upfront assisted by at least one adult helper (depending on the size of the group) and obviously it is preferable if parents aren't involved with groups containing their own children. While the assistant helpers are drawn from the long list of volunteers, in order to give the children continuity the key leader role is taken on by two people for the full September-June season.

However - and crucially - this is for one year only. These two people alternate as it suits them (Sunday on, Sunday off or month on, month off) but, allowing for Christmas, Easter and other holidays and on the basis that they share out the Sundays more or less equally, it works out at roughly 20 Sundays in the year. By any standard this is not an onerous commitment and we hope that adults and parents will be glad to take their turn as key leaders for the year when the opportunity comes knocking!



Festival Task Force!

As of July 2009 we have been greatly blessed by a team of ten Primary School teachers working in four groups to prepare the children for visual/musical presentations in Church on the Sunday mornings leading up to Harvest, Christmas, Easter and the end of the year. On these Sundays the *Scripture Union* materials are not used and no lesson is prepared or led by the regular Sunday leaders' team. So far we have all enjoyed seeing and hearing from the children in Church at Harvest and Christmas and the arrangement seems to be working well for all concerned.

Sunday Crèche

As new arrangements for Children's Church were being put in place it was brought to our attention by some of the mums that Sunday Crèche also needed some re-organisation. First and foremost Mrs Violet Davidson (Tilly & Frank Tweedie's Granny!) offered her services as our new guardian of the rota. Rather like the Children's Church Backroom Grannies, Violet will be the one who organises the list of helpers for Sunday mornings and gets in touch to remind people that it is their turn that week. Like Heather and Joan, as well as being a mum and a grandmother Violet is also a natural administrator and we are extremely glad to have her co-ordinating things for us.



Venue

There was also a basic concern about the suitability of the Choir Room as our venue. Since the Thursday morning Mothers and Toddlers Group already meets in the Columbanus Room and since this room already has a well-stocked toy cupboard, there seemed to be an obvious solution. A few emails later the Children's Church 'Ice' group which had been using the Columbanus Room were happy to relocate to the Kajiado Room and the folks on the coffee rota were happy to set up for refreshments in front of the glass doors rather than behind them - in the foyer itself in other words. Our thanks to both very gracious groups of people for being so willing to work around us.

Just like with Children's Church, from now on our plan will be to incorporate as many mums and dads into the Sunday Crèche rota as possible. All the parents bringing children for baptism are now being asked by the clergy to add their name to the Crèche list and to undergo the Access

NI/Safeguarding Trust child protection procedure so that as the Ballyholme baby boom continues so we hope the list of Crèche volunteers will also grow. While the noise of children in Church is always a welcome addition to worship at 10 o'clock we all know how self-conscious some parents feel on a Sunday morning when their little ones get restless. Obviously the ideal would be to create some provision within the Church building itself so that no one feels the need to leave the main worship space. For now the new-improved floor-space of the Columbanus Room will have to do!



Vision & Prayer

As with all aspects of Church life, the success and growth of Children's Church and Crèche in Ballyholme depend on the vision and prayer behind them.

In terms of the vision, and in no particular order, we want both Children's Church and Crèche to be safe, to be fun, to be a loving, learning environment and to be fully connected to the wider life of the parish family. We want our children to discover something real about God and His call on our lives and in an atmosphere where it's okay to think and ask questions. We want Children's Church specifically to build on the best of the classic Sunday School model but we want it to be vibrant and growing, something our children enjoy and remember fondly through adulthood. We also want our leaders - Mums, Dads, adult and junior Leaders - to be people who care about our children finding their place in God's world.

In terms of prayer, please add yours to ours:

Father, we pray for all the children of our Parish.
 Help them to know You as their heavenly Father.
 Show them the reality of Your love in the person of Jesus.
 Help them to learn to serve You and to share You by Your Spirit.
 Give them courage to be true to You and to themselves,
 with other people and at school.
 Bless them, that they may be joyful members of our Church family
 and grow into the fullness of life for ever with You. Amen

Sunday Practicalities: Registration & Pick-Up!

There are certain essential elements to children's ministry these days which require us to be better prepared and organised for our young people than ever before. Registration forms are key: before any child can be left in our care we need to hold written permission from parents along with full contact details and any essential medical information. While setting this up at the beginning can take time it makes keeping track of attendance much easier for everybody. Also, while the drop-off is important, the collection of children afterwards is equally so. Officially, Children's Church and Crèche end when Church ends. This means that parents must pick up their children on their way to coffee rather than leave them to run around the parish centre unsupervised. Thank you for your co-operation with this!



Most of what we have outlined above first emerged from our discussion night with parents about youth and children's ministry back in September. The full feedback from that meeting is now available to view on the Parish website: www.ballyholmeparish.co.uk

ST COLUMBANUS WALKERS



CHRISTMAS OUTING AND DINNER

Nineteen walkers gathered on a beautiful December morning for our train ride to Helen's Bay and walk back via the coastal path to Bangor. After all the cold weather the day was surprisingly mild but with the beaches and rivers showing evidence of the heavy rain the night before. The first part of our day finished in late morning with coffee and scones in the Heritage Centre. We were delighted to welcome new members Colin and Joy Honeyford. Everyone then slipped home, changed out of walking gear, and reconvened in Coyles Bistro in the early evening. Our numbers rose to twenty seven at this stage as we were joined for a superb meal by members of the group who had been unable to make it to Helen's Bay.

Snow at Scrabo and Killynether

The Walkers' first outing of the New Year was scheduled for the Sperrins but due to the extremely chilly weather conditions we decided to stay nearer home and instead headed for Newtownards and Scrabo Hill.

Eleven intrepid souls gathered at 08.30 in the Church Car Park and made their way without difficulty to Newtownards. From the base of Scrabo however the roads became noticeably icy resulting in one of our cars refusing to climb the steep hill to Scrabo Golf Club. Seeing this the others parked at the bottom rather than make the attempt and fortunately with de-icing salt and willing shovellers the stranded car was able to manoeuvre to the car park.

Soon the walk was underway taking us first through the great sandstone quarries which in times gone had boasted their own mini railway and sent stone for the construction of public buildings all over the UK. Then on to the Tower itself with its magnificent views as far as the H&W cranes, Scotland and Strangford Lough, obscured only briefly by a passing snow shower from the North East. From the hilltop the last leg of our journey took us through the ancient woodlands of Killynether taking extra care not to slide or slither on snowy paths compacted by the feet of other passing walkers.

Safe and sound we made it to our traditional coffee stop enjoying, among other things, chocolate orange scones and exchanging New Year greetings as we parted looking forward to our next walk on Saturday 6 February to the Fairy Glen near Rostrevor.

Why not join us on the 6th. Meet in the Church Car Park at 08.45 and bring a packed lunch. More Information from Betty 91465372 or Leslie 91466689.



House Group Quiz Night

It was an evening of hilarity and questionable knowledge (for some teams!) when the house groups got together in early December for

wine and cheese and quiz. Question master Roy Darragh ran a tight ship and 'phone a friend' was banned, all contributing to a great evening.

WANTED MONDAY COFFEE MORNING HELPERS

Many hands make light work! If you fancy a great start to the week, Karen could do with some help for the Monday coffee mornings. The more the merrier on her rota would mean you would be needed less often. Please ring Sue in the office if you feel you could lend an occasional hand.

