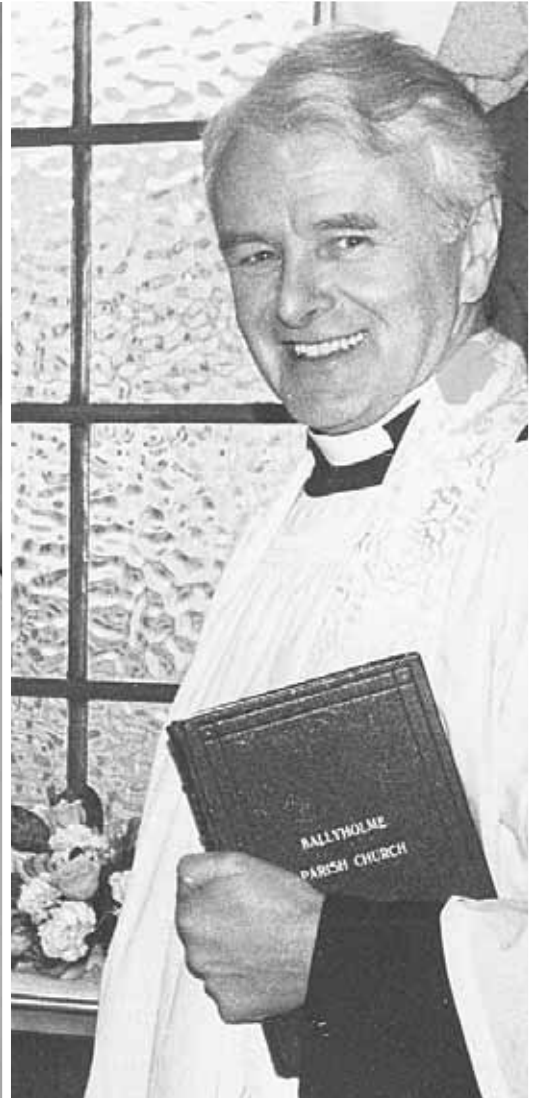
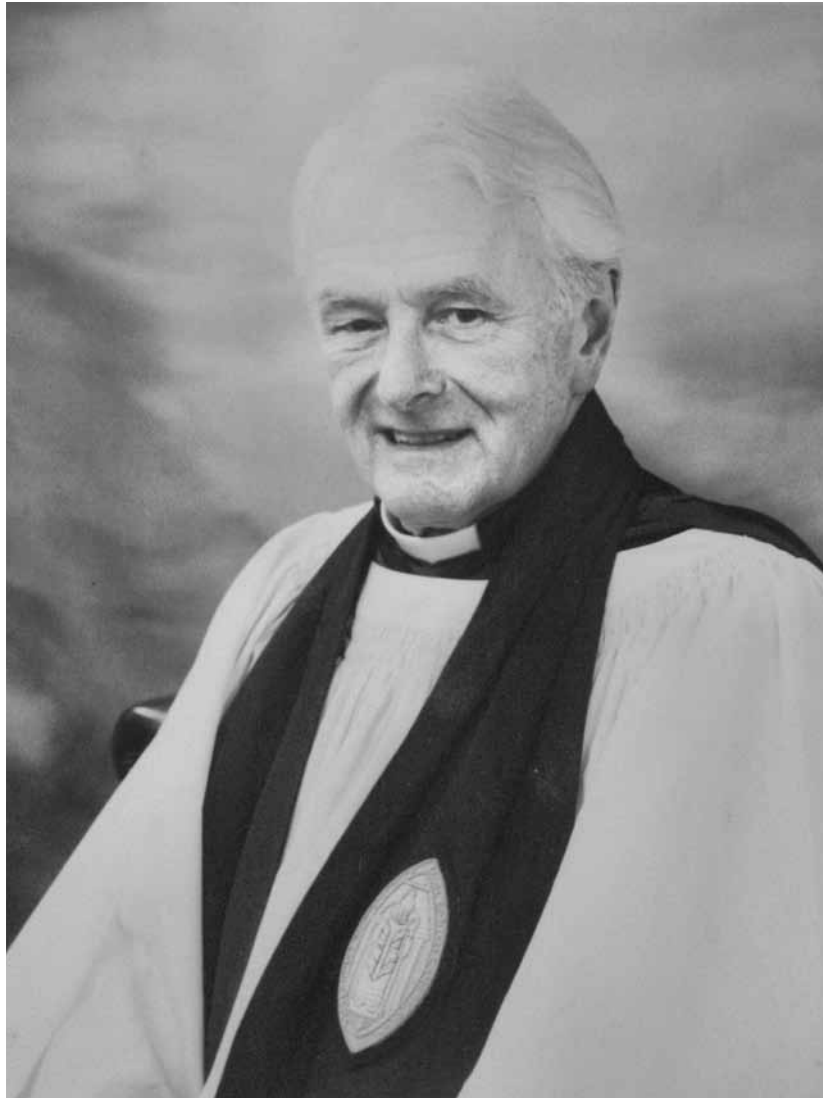


St Columbanus

Ballyholme



Canon Mercer Tribute Issue

..On the way together..

The Parishioner June 2015

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

The consensus seems to be that the Fixed Term Parliament Act made for a rather protracted election campaign. It feels an age since the backlash against the Church of England for its early remarks about wealth inequality. The poor C of E's mistake, it seems, was to presume to make any kind of intervention into the world of politics at all. Of course in Northern Ireland we've seen what can go wrong when boundaries get blurred. Yet behind that criticism of the Church may be an attitude we would still want to question. If politics is the exclusive domain of politicians, then where do we fit in? We're not a nation of individuals under the thumb of six hundred elected rulers. We're citizens. We have our own moral, spiritual and ethical choices to make. As Christians these choices are coloured by the life and teaching of Christ. But the bottom line is, we're the ones who govern – aren't we? We should absolutely feel empowered to scrutinize the people we have elected, not least to see that our choices are being carried out. God bless those recently returned to Westminster, but surely in the end it's not the politicians' government, it's ours.



Restoration 2016: your pledges

Every pledge counts as the months tick by and preparations for Restoration 2016 gather pace. People have been asking when to bring in their pledges and the answer is as soon you can.

By all means you can choose to start your monthly payments whenever you like. The crucial thing is that you lodge your commitment with the Parish Office now so we can get a picture of where we are in terms of financing the project – especially as we prepare to approach a bank about a loan. They will be asking for evidence of how every £1 we want to borrow will be repaid.



As many parishioners complete their standing

orders for Restoration 2016, some are deciding now is a good time to give their Free Will Offering electronically. This is an increasingly popular choice and has lots of advantages. As well as being more convenient and saving us the bother of finding money on a Saturday evening, it is also a great help to the parish. Not only does it spread income evenly for us throughout the year, it does away with the need and expense of envelopes and the time and effort of opening and counting them. Just a thought!

JUMPIN!

27th-31st July 2015

Jumpin registration is now OPEN! We are planning like crazy for the best week of the year, and now you can register your kids! Forms are available from the parish office! **Payment works in terms of days attended.** Due to the increasing cost of the resources required to run the week, the price for Y1 – Y4 for Jumpin 2015 will be £6 per day (£30 in total). The cost for Y5 – Y7 is £7 per day, due to the extra session (£35 in total). Please enclose either cash or a cheque (made payable to Ballyholme Parish Youth) along with your form – **places will be reserved only when both forms and payment are returned.**

The forms will be numbered and filed as they come in to the parish office – Laura, Jade & Kelly will be coordinating this. There will be no preferential treatment – it will simply operate on a **first come first served basis**. Registration closes on **Sunday 14th June at 12noon** for administration purposes.

Now bring on 27th July!

Laura

Mother-in-law

Young man asked to describe his mother-in-law: "Generally speaking, she's generally speaking."



Restoration Project - Update

Planning Application

The architect has now submitted a planning application to the Ards and North Down Borough Council on behalf of the Select Vestry for the proposed restoration of and annex to the church building and Parish Centre. Part of the planning process involves notifying adjacent neighbours about the proposed scheme. In anticipation of this we invited our neighbours to an informal information evening on 16 April 2015. Thirty invitations were hand delivered of which three attended.

Programme

As we wait for planning approval, which may take a number of months, the architect has been instructed to progress to the next stage which is the preparation of detailed working drawings. This means that the overall scheme, subject to any further on-site changes, has been settled. The architect is working to a programme which would see the project commence on site in early January 2016. We are also working behind the scenes to find a suitable alternative venue which could accommodate our three Sunday morning services (8:30 am, 10:00 am and 11:30 am) and also provide additional rooms to facilitate our ever growing Children's Church.

Good News and not so Good News

The Parish has received approval for its Project from the Representative Church Body (RCB) Plans Committee. The RCB are the custodians of all Church of Ireland property across Ireland and are signatories, along with the builder, to the Building Contract. On a less positive note, an application for grant assistance from the Listed Places of Worship Roof Repairs Grant Scheme has been unsuccessful. However, there will be another bite at the cherry as the last Government provided more funding for the scheme to be re-run in September 2015. In the meantime, please keep your pledges coming in.



WHERE IS YOURS?



11 - 18 OCTOBER 2015

SUMMER MADNESS

WHY? It is amazing fun & a great opportunity to grow in faith in a relevant and youth-focused environment.

WHO? For all young people ages 13+

WHEN? 3rd – 7th July 2015

WHERE? Glenarm Castle Estate

WANT MORE DETAILS?

Contact

jade@ballyholmeparish.co.uk

Golf report

Our last golf outing in April was to Donaghadee Golf Club, where we had bacon butties before we started – just to give us energy, you understand. A good day's golf was enjoyed by all, followed by a meal in the club house.

There were no ladies present this time, so all the prize winners were men.

First prize went to Gareth McCullough and prizes were also won by Dennis Neill and Norman Taylor. I will be touch when the next day out is arranged.

Harry





Just Older Youth

Psalm 91:4

He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge, his faithfulness will be your shield and support.

God's Wings

An article in National Geographic several years ago provided a penetrating picture. After a forest fire in Yellowstone Forest Park, forest rangers began their trek up a mountain to assess the inferno's damage. One ranger found a bird literally petrified in ashes, perched statuesquely on the ground at the base of a tree. Somewhat sickened by the eerie sight, he knocked over the bird with a stick. When he gently struck it, three tiny chicks scurried from under their dead mother's body. The loving mother keenly aware of impending disaster, had carried her offspring to the base of the tree and had gathered them under her wings, instinctively knowing that the toxic smoke would rise. She could have flown to safety but refused to abandon her babies. When the blaze had arrived, the heat had scorched her small body, but the mother had remained steadfast, because she had been willing to die so those under the cover of her wings would live.

HOLY



COMMUNION

Our next informal Communion service and lunch is again in the Parish Centre at 12.30pm on Tuesday 16th June. If you would like to come along, please give me a call at the Parish Office and a lift can be arranged.

God Bless
Karen

The Wednesday Club



Our last meeting of the year before our outing next month was well attended to hear our guest speaker Denis Nash. He, in his own words, talked about a little something, and a lot of nothing. He kept us entertained, with his magic tricks, funny stories and poems. The time passed very quickly, and before we knew where we were, it was time for our tea and cakes. The draw was won by Margaret McMeekin.

Next month, as mentioned above, is our annual outing and Agnes will be in touch about lifts as usual. See you then. Sue



Denis Nash our speaker



Lorna, checking some puzzle solutions



Sue with Margaret, our prize winner

INDOOR BOWLING CLUB DINNER & PRIZE-GIVING FOR 2014/15 SEASON

The Rambling Rose Restaurant was once again the venue for the club's very enjoyable end of season event. The evening commenced with Derek Coates (club secretary) leading a moment's silence for our former members Mrs Emily Bleakley, Stanley Jackson and Rev Canon Jack Mercer who passed away during the season. After an excellent four course dinner Derek, assisted by the most senior club members – Margaret McMeekin and Bill Henry, presented the seven perpetual trophies.

The ladies singles was won for the third time since 2001 by the ever youthful May Henry. Runner up was Agnes Officer. A great achievement for a novice.

The men's singles again went to Martin Bleakley for the 11th time since 1991. An outstanding performance over the years. One of the few capable of beating Martin but again this year (and three times in five years!) Derek Coates had to settle for runner up.

For the sixth time in as many years the Walsh Cup handicap singles had a different winner. This year it went to the 'silverplated' Martin Bleakley. Time to up the handicap next year perhaps!!

The Pairs Cup always throws up interesting pairings which makes for close competition. Unfortunately for the opposition this year the top two players in the club were drawn together so it was no surprise the trophy went to Martin Bleakley and Roberta Munnis. To emphasise the strength of these two in this competition – Martin has won this event over the years with the following:- 1990 Elsie Foster, 1996 Eileen Butler, 2003 Pat Gordon, 2004 May Henry, 2010 May Henry, 2013 May Henry, 2014 Bill Officer. Roberta also won in 2006 with Bill Henry and in 2012 with husband Norman!

The Rinks competition for best scores collected throughout the season, and kept secret until presentation night, was again won by May Henry on 106, Bill Officer was a close runner up on 103 and the club's competition secretary Jenny Jenkins was 3rd on 101.

May's record is amazing for a competition that has so many variables. She has her name on the Trenier Cup for 2001, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2011, 2014. What a competitive lady she is!!

The evening ended with a reminder that the club's **Annual General Meeting will be held on Wednesday 2nd September 2015 in the church hall starting at 7.30**. All members are asked to support it. The opening night of the new season will commence immediately after the AGM and the club invites anyone interested in trying their hand at bowls to come along. Bowls are available from the club. For further information please contact club secretary Derek Coates on 02891455471

PRIZEWINNERS – SEASON 2014/15

LADIES SINGLES Winner: Berry Cup May Henry
Runner Up: Conn Cup Agnes Officer

MENS SINGLES: Winner: Nixon Cup Martin Bleakley
Runner Up: Wilson Cup Derek Coates

HANDICAP SINGLES: Winner: Walsh Cup Martin Bleakley

PAIRS: Winners: Pairs Cup: Martin Bleakley &
Roberta Munnis

RINKS: Winner: Trenier Cup: May Henry



Summer X-Cess: 20-24th July

Summer Jumpin': 27 – 31st July

Registration forms available from the Parish Office

Please return by 14th June

Limited places available, book early to avoid disappointment

JUMPIN'

X-CCESS

Mothers' UNION

By the time you read these notes we hopefully will have had a very enjoyable visit to the Flower Festival at Lurgan. No doubt, we will have met up with many other members from the branches in the Dioceses. Unfortunately, this event did clash with another similar event in Magherahamlet Parish Church where Joy Silcott, our Diocesan President is a member. We had already booked last June to attend the Lurgan Festival. Sorry Joy! The Indoor Members communion service and tea party at Newtownards' Parish Church will also have taken place. This year six or seven of our members will receive their 50 year and over certificates as membership of the Mothers' Union. More about this next month.

The Faith and Policy Unit held a "Prayer Walk" on 27th May around Hillsborough Parish Church Grounds. This was followed by a short Epilogue Service in the Church and supper afterwards in the Parish Hall.

Our annual Overseas Coffee Morning and Sale will be held this year on **Saturday 6th June from 10.00 to 12 noon**. Our Bric a Brac stall is the most eagerly anticipated at the sale so all donations will be greatly received. If you have items which need to be collected please do not hesitate to let me know and I know I can rely on Charles to do the needful. Other stalls include Cakes, Unwanted Gifts, Toiletries, Books, Toys, Bottles for Tombola, Handbags. Anything at all will be gratefully accepted.

We do appreciate the support we get from parishioners and look forward to seeing many of you supporting us on this occasion. Help on the various stalls would be very much appreciated whether you are a member of the Mothers' Union or not.

Ruth Ruttle (Branch Leader)



Park

A journey of a thousand miles begins with trying to find a place to park your car near the church.

Third Time Lucky The Walkers in Kilfeaghan



It was well worth waiting for. The sun shone on a warm day in the Kilfeaghan Valley just east of Rostrevor in the very far west of the Mournes.

We were delighted to welcome visitors from Holland – Els and Lei who Betty had met in Bangor Marina.

Kilfeaghan is marked on a 17th century map as an ecclesiastical site and is thought to mean 'Fiachan's church'. It is a beautiful valley with a narrow road leading north close to the Cassywater River, which ends in a small car park near a ford in the Watergap River. Near the main road is the Kilfeaghan Dolmen which dates between 2000 and 1000 BC with a 35 ton capstone. It is thought to be one of the biggest in Ireland.

We began the walk by crossing the ford and headed up a track on a gradual slope along the side of Slievanowen past the hilltop called The Rowans and into and through a forest leading out onto the side of Slievemartin. The valley was full of the song of larks and even a cuckoo, with wild flowers (and one frog) just peeping through the grass. The views were long – all the way south across Carlingford Lough and east to the High Mournes. Most of the group continued to contour at about 300m past Slievfadda and Knockshee, down to the road and back to the ford. Meanwhile Rob and Betty headed steeply down the side of Slievfadda back to the picnic place to light the barbecues! This was a first for the group and very successful it was.

The next walk is on June 6 - destination to be decided.



The Reverend Canon John James Glendinning Mercer The End of an Era

Service of Thanksgiving 4 April 2015: Easter Eve

In a service prepared by Canon Mercer himself, a packed St Columbanus sang the praises of God in three hymns: *Be still, my soul*, *How bright those glorious spirits shine!* and *Ye holy angels bright* – the same three chosen for Mrs Jo Mercer’s funeral in 2008. Jonathan Mercer read St Paul’s central statement of resurrection hope from 1 Corinthians 15.

Welcoming the large congregation, Rector Number Three, Canon Simon Doogan extended a special welcome to Rector Number Two, Bishop Alan Abernethy on the one and only occasion when all three of Ballyholme’s first rectors would ever be together in St Columbanus.

In his words of introduction the Rector said that before the phrases became fashionable Canon Mercer had been a Church Planter, the Leader of a Pioneer Ministry. St Columbanus Ballyholme wasn’t just holy ground for Canon Mercer, he continued, it was his life’s work.

To the Canon’s sons Jonathan and Simon, the Rector underlined the great esteem in which their father, their mother and their whole family was held by everyone in St Columbanus. Before introducing the first hymn the Rector said simply: “Your Dad loved this parish, and this parish loved your Dad.”

The service was led by the Rector and the Reverend Duncan Pollock, Rector of Groomsport where Canon Mercer lived and worshipped in retirement. One of Canon Mercer’s former bishops Dr Gordon McMullan offered the tribute (see below) and Bishop Alan led the Intercessions – from the Rector’s Prayer Desk. Bishop Harold led the Farewell in Christ acknowledging the wonderful and timely parallel of the Canon’s Maundy Thursday death and Easter Eve funeral – all in the faith and hope of the Resurrection to eternal life. Bishop Harold also mentioned the 24 years of retired ministry



Canon Mercer had given to the Diocese, especially to vacant parishes on the Ards Peninsula.

Robed and sitting with the choir for the service were four of Canon Mercer’s curate assistants: the Reverends Billy Marshall, Ivan Betts, Robert (AKA Keith) Townley and Ray Devenney. Canon David Humphries was present in the congregation and apologies were received from the Reverends Mervyn Dickson and Nigel Waugh, neither of whom could make it given the shortness of notice. In a moving conclusion to the service the Choir sang the *Nunc Dimittis* as the family carried Canon Mercer’s remains to the door. Our Parish Centre reception proved a warm and comforting end to a funeral conducted in obvious Church of Ireland style and fervent Christian hope. The private family interment at St Elizabeth’s Churchyard Dundonald was led by the Rector, the Reverend Duncan Pollock and Bishop Gordon McMullan.

Obituary from the Bangor Spectator : John James Glendinning Mercer

Canon Mercer, or Jack as he was universally known, who died last week at the age of 94, was a hugely popular figure and was the first Rector of St Columbanus Parish Church in Ballyholme. The church was filled to overflowing for his funeral on Saturday and as his son Simon said, “It was a good old-fashioned Church of Ireland funeral. He would have loved it.”

Canon Mercer was born in Belfast before the family moved to Dundonald. He left school at the age of 14 and went to work in the Post Office. During the war, he joined the NAFFI and it was there that he met his wife Jo and she encouraged him as he thought of the ministry. Dean Sammy Crooks, the ‘Black Santa’ also gave great encouragement.

Jack studied successfully and was admitted to the School of Divinity in Trinity College, Dublin. His first appointment was curate in St Mark’s, Newtownards. He then served as curate for Bangor Parish before being appointed the first Rector of St Columbanus in 1955.

He retired in 1990 but continued to help out, particularly in Portaferry, where he would often conduct the service as well as playing the organ - a sort of one-man band.

The funeral service was conducted by the Rector Simon Doogan, assisted by Rev Duncan Pollock (Groomsport Parish), Bishop Gordon McMullan, Bishop Alan Abernethy (who had been Rector of St Columbanus) and Bishop Harold Miller. Bishop Edward Darling also attended.

Canon Mercer was a keen sportsman all his life. He played cricket for CIYMS, Senior League hockey for North Down and golf at Clandeboye. The latter had started out with a few clerics inspired by the late Hammy Leckey. Jack found he loved the game and joined Clandeboye in 1980. He was a member of the Leprechauns' Society that played at the club on Wednesdays and went on outings. He played until last summer before health problems forced him to stop. He was alert to the very end and delighted in crosswords. His wife Jo died in 2008 and he is survived by his sons Jonathan and Simon. Another son, Colin, pre-deceased him.

Forward March

Our Parish of Ballyholme was born on the 1st January 1955 and its first Rector was Rev J J G Mercer. His institution took place on 5th March 1955 and, as the records show, in front of a capacity congregation.

I gleaned this information from a small book entitled 'A Short History of the Church of Ireland in Ballyholme.' Its author was the Rev Jack Mercer and firstly it covered the period from 1927 to 1940 noting a special service held on 20th November, 1927, to mark the opening of a new hall at a cost of £900! Many will recall with a certain degree of fondness, this wooden structure which, for some time, served as a primary school. Despite the onset of war, on 6th July 1939, the foundation stone for the church was laid.

A chapter, 'A Daughter Church from 1940 to 1954' dealt in detail with the building of our much loved church of Saint Columbanus and its consecration on 22nd June 1940 and the inevitable move to a separate Parish in January 1955.

Following his appointment in 1955, the Rev Jack Mercer oversaw the purchase of the Rectory at 3 Ward Avenue. With an expanding congregation it became necessary to increase accommodation for all the organisations resulting in a new Parochial Hall which was dedicated on 17th January 1965. I mention these milestones because there is no doubt that Canon Jack, as he became, was the right man in the right place and at the right time for this growing Parish. He had been literally the foundation stone upon which God's work has been built in Ballyholme. The title of his book 'Forward March' was truly apt.

My family has been associated with St Columbanus from those early days and we were fortunate to know Jack and Jo and their children for all of those 34 years or so that he ministered to and with us.

My father, Reggie served as his Rector's Churchwarden and both he and my mother, Dorrie sang in the choir for many years.

As with many of our families in the Parish he was involved in all the highs and lows of family life and I have no doubt that his influence played a role in our formative years. My sister Angela and I were baptised, confirmed, and married under his guidance and my three children were baptised and confirmed in St Columbanus.

I had the privilege of serving as his warden in 1980 which happily coincided with the 25th Anniversary of his appointment as Rector. The occasion was celebrated in typical Ballyholme fashion with plenty of food and good craic. As a warden you realised that if anything was out of place in the church on a Sunday morning at 8.30am. you had to put it right, not next week, but immediately. I recall changing a light bulb high up in the ceiling between services using a very unsteady ladder.

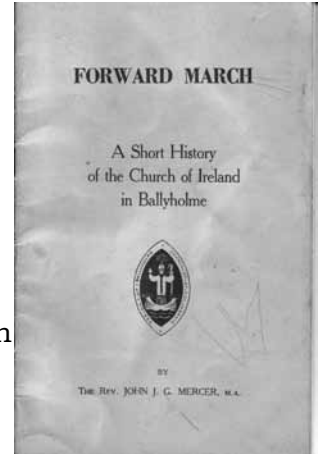
Canon Jack placed great emphasis on things being done efficiently and, as is said nowadays, he had all the necessary "skill set" of wise leadership and a vision for the future.

His renowned attention to detail also extended to the chair of the vestry and it's good to look back on those meetings and remember that he had the knack of mixing business with pleasure.

I will conclude with a quote from the end of his book which is just as relevant today as it was all those years ago.

He comments "we pray that we who have received such goodly heritage may guard it zealously and hand it on unsullied to generations yet unborn".

Geoffrey Johnston



Tribute Canon John (Jack) James Glendinning Mercer

The following is the address of Bishop Gordon McMullan at the funeral service of Canon Jack Mercer published in the Church of Ireland Gazette.

Today, we join in the church of St Columbanus to say our earthly farewell to, and give thanks for, a

man whose life impacted for good on many other lives as a friend and brother in Christ.

We also join in prayerful support for the family in their bereavement with the passing from this earthly life of a loving father, father-in-law and grandfather.

Trust and assurance undergird our prayers this day - Easter Eve - the day between the Cross, the Grave and the Resurrection to eternal life and the life-giving power of God manifested in Jesus Christ, our eternal Saviour.

It is entirely fitting that this church and house of prayer should be Canon Jack Mercer's last resting place before he is taken on his last earthly journey - to the place of his burial - because this church and the parish of Ballyholme were at the heart and centre of his ordained service for 35 of his 40 years of dedicated priesthood and pastoral ministry.

This dedication was honoured through the conferment of diocesan and central Church canonries, allied to the entrustment of important responsibilities and duties in diocesan, central and other bodies and in educational provisions. The fruit of that much blessed ministry was evidenced in the growth, strength and stability of his rectorship and in the strong foundations on which his successors have continued to build and minister in the parish of Ballyholme.

A number of qualities and characteristics contributed to Canon Mercer's effective ministry. One was his openness to people of varying backgrounds. Another was his deep love for, and loyalty to, the Church of Ireland as an important instrument of Christ's witness and service in this island and outwards into the wider world from which it had gained and to which it gave.

That receiving and giving are well represented in the saints whose lives and ministries are prayerfully honoured in stained-glass remembrance in the windows around us: St Columba, St Patrick, St Columbanus, St Comgall, St Gaul, St Brendan, St Finnian and St Brigid.

Canon Mercer approached life's opportunities and challenges with active, positive and constructive energy of mind, spirit and body. In his leisure activities, as well as in his parish and wider Church involvements, this was his pattern of life.

As a young man, he was a fine cricketer and hockey player, in addition to his academic progress and preparation for ordination.

In later years, he much enjoyed his golf and the companionship of the members of Clandeboye Golf Club's Leprechauns group of golfing friends, as well as his golfing rounds with fellowclergy friends.

His competitive energy was also seen on the mats of Ballyholme parish's indoor bowling club.

More relaxed were those evenings when the rector of Ballyholme, Canon Simon Doogan, and his wife invited some of us retired clergy into the rectory for supper and informal companionship.

In giving thanks for Canon Jack Mercer's life and ministry, it is essential to include his beloved wife, Jo, whose outgoing friendship-making, greatly respected personality and wholehearted support were essential elements in their united Ballyholme ministry years.

Jo's death must have been a very deep loss to all the family, but the Mercer spirit and commitment honoured Jo's memory by continuing the dedicated effort they had shared for many years.

Finally, may I express on our behalf to the family members - sons, daughters-in-law, grandchildren, those on earth and those in God's nearer presence - our appreciation of their love and support to Jack and Jo Mercer - parents and grandparents.

I recall those scriptural words from St John's Gospel: "I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

We now leave in God's eternal love our much loved and respected parent, friend, priest and pastor - John James Glendinning Mercer.

May he indeed rest in peace and rise in glory.



An extract from the last magazine before his retirement.....

Very soon now the board of Nomination will be meeting to appoint my successor. Please remember them in your prayers as they discharge their responsibility.

Finally, may I say what a joy it has been to have had the privilege of being the first Rector of Ballyholme Parish. Thirty five and a half years is a long time in one place and at a time like this the memories come flooding back. But above all is the happiness of having been involved as a servant of Christ and of His people in this parish. My wife joins me in thanking you all for your

forbearance, support and love, coupled with the prayer that God will richly bless you and the work and witness of Ballyholme Parish in the days ahead.

Yours in Him Jack Mercer

Tribute from the Bowling Club

When Jack Mercer retired as Rector of this parish, he joined the Indoor Bowling Club, where he quickly became a regular and much loved member. Jack attended on both Wednesday and Saturday nights, and enjoyed the craic with all the other members, always having a few amusing anecdotes up his sleeve. He did occasionally miss an odd night or two, mainly because his beloved Arsenal were playing an important match and Jack had to do his duty as a loyal supporter and watch them on the television.

He was a more than competent bowler winning eight cups, five of which came after his 90th birthday. He always said he was getting better with age! Over the years he served the club in various guises, as President during his years as Rector and later when he took a more active playing role, as Chairman, and Match Secretary, responsible for arranging club competitions and friendly matches with other local clubs.

He was a perfect gentleman, a true sportsman and he will be sadly missed by all of us. Sue Bleakley



April 2009: Jack Mercer, winner of two trophies, with other prize winners

The Mercer Family

3 Ward Avenue was bought to serve as Ballyholme Rectory and it proved not just a happy home for Canon and Mrs Mercer but a very convenient one for their three boys Colin, Jonathan and Simon who attended Bangor Grammar around the corner. As he began the Intercessions at the funeral Bishop Alan called for silence to remember those not present at the service: Mrs Jo Mercer, Jo and Jack's eldest son Colin who died in 2013 and Simon's late wife Lynn. Bishop Alan went on to pray for Jonathan, Peggy, Christopher and Jessica, for Simon, Ryan, Jack and Rory and for Colin's wife and family: Jacqui, Simon and William. Also mentioned were Jack's sister and brother-in-law Hazel and Alex.



Simon and Jonathan Mercer outside the Rectory



At Mrs Mercer's funeral in 2008, in a quiet, lighter moment, Simon Mercer mentioned to the Rector that during a re-rendering of the exterior of No 3 he had made his own contribution to the artwork on a not-so-obvious section of the wall behind a downspout near the garage. Sure enough, the evidence is still plain to see today. When Canon Mercer made his next visit for dinner to Ward Avenue, the Rector duly invited him to inspect the 'canvas' for himself. "Just so we're clear" said the Rector to Canon Mercer: "that wasn't me!"

Canon Mercer on Restoration 2016

Anxious that Canon Mercer should see the first draft set of plans before anyone else, Simon made a visit to Canon Mercer in Groomsport bearing folded paper gifts. When Simon asked if there was anything Canon Mercer would have done differently had they been building it all over again, his characteristically modest reply was "How long have you got?" The Canon not only showed great interest in the project, but as the man with a better working knowledge of St Columbanus than anyone, he was ready with a number of helpful suggestions.

Perhaps the most interesting point that emerged was that 'those in authority' had always been concerned about the lack of a second Church door. In offering his support and encouragement to Restoration 2016, Canon Mercer said graciously "I am the past, this is the future. I wish you every success with your endeavours."



Calling all ladies...as holiday season is fast approaching the need for a 'good read' is never more prevalent. (sorry gents!) As a self-proclaimed holiday reader myself, I find myself gravitating towards those chick-lit type novels. The Shopaholic series, written under the name of Sophie Kinsella, explores the character of financial analyst, Rebecca Bloomwood, whilst she experiences the trials and tribulations of life through various roles; wife, mother, friend and employee. The common theme dominates throughout the series (of which there are 7 books)...her love of shopping and her ability to spend more money than she has and her constant denial!

Throughout each of the novels, the author cleverly captures the pain and pleasures of everyday life through the character of Becky with a somewhat humorous wit. Her character, through her experiences, sees her evolve from the selfish, ditzy girl to an independent, selfless woman whom you cannot help admire!

If you're looking for an easy read that you 'just can't put down' which gives you a giggle, then these books are a definite must for you!

PR



the things I *love*

By
Emma Reading

Kate - 'my crazy little sister'
My Mummy & Daddy
All my cousins: Isaac, George, Rachel, Robyn & bump!!
My Nanny, Gaga, Granny & Grandad and all of my Aunties & Uncles - they are awesome!!
Daisies, flowers, rainbows & chocolate
Laughing, playing chasies with my friends at school
Going to school (I love my teacher), ballet & swimming
Going to Children's Church
Playing with my friends & riding my Flicker along the beach
All the Disney characters especially as I'm very lucky to have met them in real life

Lastly, I love big hugs with my family & friends!!

(When asked why Emma loves everything she has listed - her response... Everyone and everything is awesome!!)



Rector's XI
v
Curate's XI
at
Uprichard Park,
Bloomfield Road
on
Monday 22nd June 2015
at
7.00pm

Come along and support
all our players



With hindsight, the Sunday evening of a Bank Holiday weekend may not have been the best timing for the Kiwoko night at St Columbanus'. Rory, Gideon and I arrived, just as the Mission Committee had sat down for a well earned quick cup of tea. They had arranged chairs, tables and folded coloured napkins (reflecting the colours of the Ugandan flag – such attention to detail!). If no one else had turned up, their hard work preparing the hall would have meant a lot to encourage us. I stood at the front of the hall ready to give my brief account of the last year at

Kiwoko from my perspective. As I looked at the rows of seats *all* filled with friends, family and active supporters, I was all at once overwhelmed by my own unworthiness, and encouraged by the love and interest expressed in the expectant faces waiting to hear what I had to say.

The atmosphere was relaxed and homely. We talked about Kiwoko; Jade, Laura and Cameron led the very meaningful praise and worship; and we interviewed a couple of people from the META team heading to Kiwoko in August. Simon gave an encouraging message and CMSI representatives prayed for us along with family and friends. It was a very uplifting evening. Old and young, various denominations and walks of life were represented, with everyone united in their interest and support for Kiwoko, and of course us.

As we stood there and people encouraged us, inside I felt a bit guilty. Often people say they admire our faith to take risks and our ability to leave the 'life' we had or could have had in Ireland behind. That word 'life' is synonymous with comfort/higher wages/convenience/health care etc. Perhaps for us that might have been true the first time that we headed for Africa, but actually now we are heading to a place where we do feel comfortable, we don't need high wages and we have access to most things that we need. Above all we love the life that we are so privileged to live in Uganda – a life that is only made possible by the support of many – for the Hospital at large and for us personally. Many of those supporters were there. Yes there are challenges to overcome, yes there are frustrations, yes we miss not being down the road from family BUT as I looked around the hall on Sunday night, I thought about some of the circumstances that some of these people are in: challenges in the work place; despite being in the same country as family not actually seeing them very often; the responsibilities of raising a young family; loneliness; health concerns..... I felt a bit guilty that no one was cheering them on and praising them for being courageous and hanging onto their faith despite their circumstances. Inasmuch as we are being cheered on in our Kiwoko journey, we also commend you our dear friends and family for your courageous faith in a (spiritually) cooler climate here in Ireland. Well done or 'Mujebale' as they say in Uganda.

1 Timothy 6:11-12 'But you man (or woman) of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. *Fight the good fight of the faith.* Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.'

See you next year (or sooner if you come out on one of the Parish teams) – God willing! Denise

Columbanus Bells Exchanged

We were among several folk from the parish lucky enough to be present, along with a large number of former mayors of the borough, at a moving ceremony at St Comgall's Church, Brunswick Road, on 26 April. A beautiful bell arrived from Bobbio, final resting place of Columbanus, bell, rope and clapper travelling by different modes of transport.



The bell itself was brought by sea to Cork and then wended its way to Bangor via many historical religious sites. It was reunited with the other parts and presented to the people of Bangor, along with other gifts. In return, the Italians were presented with a bell with a particularly beautiful tone which was cast here. By the time you read this it will have been taken along the Columban Way, passing through and sounding in places like Luxeuil and Bregenz, en route to its destination in Bobbio, Italy.

Tony Carver





The Mothers' Union Christmas Competition!

The Mothers' Union Christmas competition - don't worry if you had hadn't heard about this and think you might missed out - as it was held amongst the members of St John's, Kiwoko late in 2014.

St Columbanus MU and friends donated knitting needles to the ladies of St John's. Some ladies have now produced their first jumpers. Dr Corrie holds a knitting and crochet group at her house one evening a week, otherwise the usual MU meetings became knitting classes. The local shop that supplies wool originally only had one colour - yellow. Now due to requests he stocks 10 colours so the knitters have created a local demand and increased his business.

The Christmas Competition! During the latter part of 2014 Mothers' Union members were encouraged to learn about hygiene and disease prevention around their homes. They learned how to separate in the compounds (the areas around their houses) the latrine and cooking areas. Aren't you glad we have kitchens - as I write this the rain is lashing down and the wind is howling and I am so glad that I can

cook indoors this evening!! However in Kiwoko people cook outside over charcoal fires. *Denise helped the judging of the compounds - all have to be swept everyday to prevent the build up of leaves which harbour insects carrying diseases.

The winner was so thrilled with her prize of sand and bricks! She will build a permanent structure for storing her kitchen utensils away from animals, insects and small children. Hopefully everyone has benefitted from this learning and will have healthier homes and families because of the leadership of the Mothers' Union.

* Denise has the luxury of a small kitchen with a gas stove and oven and intermittent electricity for the kettle and toaster. But there is still a fire outside for heating water for washing clothes, boiling water to purify it for drinking and making the local speciality Matoke, a cooked banana dish.



On a Wisden Promise

To lovers of the game, the Wisden Cricketers' Almanac will need no introduction. An instantly recognisable, yellow bound annual containing scores and reports from the previous twelve months of national and international cricket, Wisden is a sporting institution. Wisden always concludes with a selection of odd and quirky cricketing stories sent in by members of the public. To feature in Wisden at all and 'The Chronicle' in particular is to become part of cricketing history. Perhaps you can guess what's coming!

To tie a match in cricket is a surprisingly rare thing. There are professional cricketers who have never played in a match that was tied. But you may remember that our Rector's XI versus Curate's XI matches in 2013 and 2014 both ended in ties. When it happened the second time, Simon and Alistair didn't hesitate to contact Wisden directly. Needless to say, Wisden receive a deluge of stories for 'The Chronicle' every year. However, you can imagine our delight to receive the following email in response to our getting in touch:

"Dear Canon Doogan

I am writing on behalf of Wisden as editor of the Chronicle section which includes all kind of strange cricketing events. I'll certainly consider your two ties as a possible for Wisden 2015. I'm afraid its inclusion will depend on the space available - but if you do it a third time, then I'll make a firm promise that it will go in (provided there is no hint of collusion, which would of course be unthinkable). Very best wishes for the continuation of what is obviously a very enjoyable contest. Sincerely - Matthew Engel"

So there is even more than usual riding on proceedings at Uprichard Park this year. As the man said about that other game, it's not just a matter of life and death - it's more important than that!



Rector's XI

v

Curate's XI

at

Uprichard Park,
Bloomfield Road

on

Monday 22nd June

2015

at

7.00pm

Come along and
support all our
players

YOUTH-NEWS

POST-EXAM TO DO LIST

ANNND BREATHE!

Relaxation & Self Care

- Sleep for 15 hours straight
- Have a massage/spa treatment
- Lie in a dark room listening to your favourite music playlist
- Watch the sun rise/set
- Swim/sail in the open sea
- Drink a luxury hot chocolate
- Eat a meal that isn't a pot noodle

Laugh

- Dance around the house in your PJ's
- Spend time with your bezzies
- Play an air drum kit
- Cook a homemade pizza involving pepperoni & strawberry laces
- Burn the evidence (aka revision notes)

Adventure

- Go to your favourite place
- Go somewhere you have never been before
- Create something
- Try/learn something new
- Be spontaneous
- Climb the Mournes
- Do something that scares you



Add your own ideas :)

Or just doodle :)



A Question of Faith

Can you believe it's that time of year again? Will I go for that promotion? What shall we have for dinner tonight? Will we stay in or go out?

Yes, our lives tend to be filled with questions.

In fact this quiet corner begins with a question. Almost a year ago Laura asked me, "Gareth, would you consider helping out at Children's Church?" I said "of course". Laura thanked me and went on her way but I almost immediately began to question my decision. What had I let myself in for? What age group would I get? Would I be any good at it? What was Children's Church even about?

Well at least I knew the answer to this latter question. Clearly it would be about me conveying my superior knowledge of the Christian faith to the young people of our Church – I was arrogant enough to believe that a year ago.

The truth is the young folk of Splash have taught me more about faith than anything that I could have taught them.

We are genetically designed to question everything – and a good thing too. Without questioning we would still think the world was as flat as a pancake and at the centre of the universe. Without questioning we would have made no advances in medicine or science. Without questioning how could we consider the morality of war, slavery or injustice? Questioning has forged our past and present and it will continue to shape our future. But when it comes to a question of faith perhaps we should turn to our children. I feel blessed to have been with the young people of Splash and witnessed their simple, wondrous and yes unquestioning faith.

They simply believe in that baby in swaddling clothes lying in a manger; they simply believe in the man who could make the blind see and the lame walk; they simply believe He died on the cross for our sins; they simply believe He rose from the dead and reigns in Heaven forever and ever amen. They simply believe in the Son of God.

When asked by the disciples, 'Who is the greatest in Heaven?' it was a child that Christ turned to and said, 'I tell you the truth, unless you become like the little children, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven.' I was never really sure what Christ meant by that but I think I have a better idea now.

I hope I will always be someone who continues to question the world, the universe and everything in it but I also pray to have that wondrously uncomplicated faith that our children have.

God bless the children of our Church and God bless our new team of Children Church leaders.

Remember you can learn an awful lot from them – from the children that is.

Gareth Boal



Parish Defibrillator

At the beginning of last month we took delivery of a piece of equipment now found in most buildings open to the public but which we hope we shall never have to use.

Originally, it was one of our young people who had felt moved to make a special gift to parish funds as a thank offering to God. When the need for a defibrillator was identified by our Health and Safety Sub-Committee, the family of the young person decided to match the young person's sum and the purchase was made possible.

Then it became clear that a little extra was required to cover 'kit and training'. Within 24 hours of mentioning the shortfall we had two offers to make up the difference. We want to acknowledge the generosity of these anonymous donors and what it means for the peace of mind of our whole church family that we now have what we need should the worst happen.

The next stage for us is to train staff and parishioners in the all-important task of responding to a First Aid emergency and we expect to be in a position soon to ensure representatives from all our organizations are given the opportunity to acquire the necessary skills. Should there be any suspicion of a heart attack, the defibrillator we have bought diagnoses the problem itself and, crucially, cannot be deployed unless the vital signs compel it to do so.

We are also keen, to ensure we can provide the best possible care, to hear from qualified parishioners who would be willing to assist should an emergency arise. If you would be prepared to help and hold a current certificate in Emergency First Aid or Automated External Defibrillator (AED) and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) please leave your name with Kelly in the Parish Office following which we will get in touch to discuss how you could help.



OUR WORSHIP

Wednesday 3rd June

10.30 Holy Communion - Kajiado Room

Sunday 7th June Trinity 1

8.30 Holy Communion

10.00 All Age Service

11.30 Morning Prayer

6.30 Holy Communion

Wednesday 10th June

10.30 Holy Communion - Kajiado Room

Sunday 14th June Trinity 2

8.30 Holy Communion

10.00 Morning Worship &
Children's Church Prize Day

11.30 Parish Communion

6.30 Six-Eight - Kajiado Room

Wednesday 17th June

10.30 Holy Communion - Kajiado Room

Sunday 21st June Trinity 3

8.30 Holy Communion

10.00 Morning Worship

11.30 Morning Prayer

6.30 Ballyholme Churches Together

Wednesday 24th June

10.30 Holy Communion - Kajiado Room





Sunday 28th June Trinity 4

8.30 Holy Communion

10.00 Parish Communion

11.30 Morning Prayer

6.30 Evening Prayer

<p><i>Parish Office:</i> 91274912 <i>Rector:</i> Canon Simon Doogan <i>Rectory:</i> 91274901 <i>Curate:</i> Rev Alistair Morrison <i>Curatage:</i> 91271922 <i>Prayer Line:</i> 07531806167 <i>Transport:</i> 07599794968 <i>Church Readers</i> <i>Rota:</i> John 91467243 or Freda 91467624</p> 	<p>June: 7th: No crèche 14th: Heather Glasgow, Paula Mc Ilwaine, Catherine Darragh 21st: Katherine Newman, Violet Davidson, Emma Sutherland 28th: No crèche</p> 	<p>June 7th: Michael & Sharon Hatch, Fiona Jackson 14th: Maureen & Lorraine Colgan, Ann Shaw 21st: Karen Baker, Ann Browne, Kelly McCullough 28th: Susan Stockton, Ann Reynolds, Patrick Crothers</p> 
BAPTISM		FUNERAL
<p>10th May ADAM JOHN BRIAN CAULFIELD, son of John & Julie</p>	<p>June: 7th: Janice Hewitt 14th: Olwyn Aiken 21st: Marion Milligan 28th: Flower Fund</p>	<p>18th April Norman Fogarty, late of Ballyholme Court 2nd May Daphne Mansley, late of Richmond Crescent</p>

Have you pledged yet?

Restoration 2016

Please return your pledges in the box on Sundays
or through the week to the Parish Office.

Extra leaflets and forms are available
at the back of Church.

Thank you to everyone who has committed so far.

£5 per week