

# st John's

*Dumfries*  
a church for everyone

June - August 2023

[www.stjohnsdumfries.org](http://www.stjohnsdumfries.org)



E  
N  
I  
Z  
A  
G  
A  
M

# st John's Dumfries

a church for everyone

The St John's Magazine is published quarterly and is available free of charge. **People occasionally ask if they can contribute to the cost. If you would like to do so, we would suggest £12 per year would be a suitable sum.** There is a facility for doing this on the St J's website, or the office can take card payments. The views expressed do not necessarily represent those of the editorial team or of the Vestry of St John's, but are intended as a sharing of the life of the people who make up the community there, and those elsewhere whom we invite to contribute.

The next edition of the Magazine is due out in **September, and the copy deadline is 20/08/2023.** Please send comments and/or contributions to [pastadmin@stjohnsdumfries.org](mailto:pastadmin@stjohnsdumfries.org).

If you have any ideas or suggestions for articles, please contact the Editorial Team. Copy should ideally be 300-700 words, with supporting illustrations or photographs (these available as separate files), if possible.

**Editorial team:** Janice Aiton (Rector), David Kerr, Margaret Morton

You can contact us at [pastadmin@stjohnsdumfries.org](mailto:pastadmin@stjohnsdumfries.org), or 07754 596140.

See [www.stjohnsdumfries.org](http://www.stjohnsdumfries.org) and weekly notices for more information.

## worship

As mentioned previously most of our worship services are back up and running pretty much as they did before the pandemic; however we are retaining some of the online provision that was set up during it. See the printed Diary and Notices week by week and also the St J's website ([www.stjohnsdumfries.org](http://www.stjohnsdumfries.org)) for what's going on. We are pleased to report that those previously referred to as Ukrainian 'guests' are increasingly feeling able to join in the day to day things we do and are very much becoming part of us. Their English is coming on apace; our Ukrainian still needs more effort. They are becoming increasingly valued members of the St John's family.

## rector

Revd Janice Aiton  
07487 653069

01387 254126

[rector@stjohnsdumfries.org](mailto:rector@stjohnsdumfries.org)

If you wish to contact any individual or group within St John's, please email [pastadmin@stjohnsdumfries.org](mailto:pastadmin@stjohnsdumfries.org), or call 07754 596140, stating your name and how we can contact you back. We will pass on your details to the correct person or people, and ask them to contact you.

All post should be addressed via the Rectory/  
Office, 8 Newall Terrace, Dumfries DG1 1LW.

## from the registers

Baptism:  
9 April, 2023  
(Easter Day):

Ralia Luna  
**Norris**  
Rosslyn Juliet  
**Norris**

Memorial Service:  
15 July, 2023:

Philip John  
**Appleby**

## getting in touch

The Office is currently staffed Mondays and Fridays, but you can also make contact on 07754 596140 or at [pastadmin@stjohnsdumfries.org](mailto:pastadmin@stjohnsdumfries.org)

### St John the Evangelist

Junction of Newall Terrace and Lovers' Walk, Dumfries DG1 1LW  
St John's is a Local Ecumenical Partnership between the Scottish Episcopal & Methodist Churches.

### Scottish Charity Number SC007742

St John's processes personal data for its own legitimate purposes: to keep in touch with its members, supporters and adherents, as well as for certain statutory purposes, including Safeguarding and HMRC requirements. This data is kept securely and will not be passed to third parties without the Data Subject's (i.e. your) consent, except as may be required by law. If you have any concerns about the data we hold, or would like to have it corrected or deleted, please contact us at [pastadmin@stjohnsdumfries.org](mailto:pastadmin@stjohnsdumfries.org), or call us on 07754 596140.

ISSN 2059-0261 (Print)  
ISSN 2059-027X (Online)

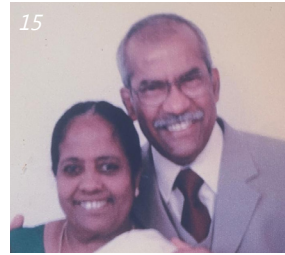
## contents

---

4. ***The Rector Writes***  
(Rev Janice Aiton)
6. ***Annan Town Band Concert***  
(Raymond Budd)
7. ***Bells***  
(Debbie Johnson)
9. ***Crask Inn***  
(Gill Swales)
10. ***DAGCAS***  
(Heather Barrington and Lucile Giriat)
12. ***Hospital Volunteering***  
(Ros Harradine, Melanie Landale  
and Grace McBain)
15. ***Life of Faith:***  
(Andrew Ratnam)
21. ***Music and Me***  
(John Turner)
22. ***Organ Recital***  
(Billy Dewar-Riddick)
24. ***Quartz***  
(Simon Lidwell)
26. ***Spring Fling 2023***  
(Tatyana Bondarenko, Anne Butler,  
Heather Gibbings & David Kerr)
29. ***Transformation***  
(Andy Brooke)
30. ***Ukrainians: How's it gaun'?***  
(Steven Ballard)



9



15



21



24



26



29

## editors' notes

---

In this edition, the Rector is refreshing herself, Raymond Budd reports on a concert, Debbie Johnson describes ringing for the Coronation, and has been entering a competition. Gill Swales has been fulfilling the Magazine's much sought after Pub Correspondent post, and Heather Barrington and Lucile Giriat describe their work with Citizens' Advice. Three hospital volunteers share their experiences, Billy Dewar-Riddick contributes an appreciation of the Organ Recital by John Turner and the Organist himself entertains with his own story, Music and Me. Andrew Ratnam tells us of his Life of Faith, Simon Lidwell provides a Quartz update and Tatyana Bondarenko has an article in both English and Ukrainian, describing her experience of this year's Spring Fling, with additional material from Heather Gibbings, Anne Butler and David Kerr. Andy Brooke tells the story of how the beautiful butterfly came to be created; Steven Ballard has been asking a few of our Ukrainian members how they've been getting on. Our cover photo shows that beautiful butterfly.

# The Pector writes...

## REFRESHMENT

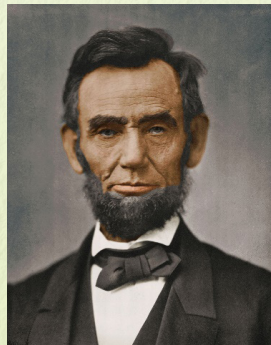


Do you ever feel just plain tired? Worn out? Like you are in a dry desert of life? In need of refreshment? Well, if that is your experience, then the good news is that refreshment is a recurring theme in Scripture. In Isaiah 40:31 we are told that "those who hope in the Lord will **renew** their strength." In Jeremiah 31:25 we are

reminded that God "will **refresh** the weary and satisfy the faint." In Psalm 23: 2 we are heartened to read that God takes us to "lush pastures" and he leads us "to **refreshing** water."

This refreshing water is a great gift that we all need at different times in our lives. In using the word refreshing, I don't just mean taking a rest from normal activities, although it can include that, but rather it is about being rekindled with a renewed zeal and purpose, and it is about restored vision and perspective. I remember reading about Abraham Lincoln and how he needed refreshment during the American Civil War.

This refreshment came in a surprising way. It came through newspaper clippings. These newspaper clippings were concerned about the great deeds of Abraham Lincoln. One clipping was a report by John Bright, a British statesman, saying that Abraham Lincoln was one of the greatest men of all time. These clippings were found in a small blue box, which came from the pocket of Abraham Lincoln when he was



assassinated on 14th April 1865. This box and its contents of: a handkerchief embroidered "A. Lincoln", a country boy's pen knife; a spectacle case repaired with string; a purse containing a \$5 bill- in Confederate money and some old and worn newspaper clippings are stored in a safe place at the Library of the Congress.

Today we would no doubt concur with John Bright's claim but in 1865 the jury was out. The nation was divided, and Lincoln had fierce critics on both sides as he made decisions that he hoped would restore the Union. There is something poignant and breathtaking as you picture this lonely figure in the Oval Office, reading and re-reading these clippings as a means of refreshment and encouragement. These clippings somehow gave him the strength and courage to go on. People, especially leaders, need refreshment and encouragement.



In Scripture we read that even Paul, an apostle, a formidable leader needed refreshment and encouragement. He needed others to kindle afresh his love for God. As Christians, we have the power to refresh others and also, we have the need to be refreshed by others. A Biblical character who demonstrated well this gift of refreshing others was Philemon.

Philemon was a breath of fresh air to people. He encouraged people. He built people up. When Philemon walked into a room, people liked having him around. I don't think that means he failed to confront sin, but he wasn't a critic. He didn't badmouth. He didn't nag and scold and complain. He didn't

tear people down. He refreshed, and he refreshed, specifically, the hearts of the saints. So, he didn't just put a smile on people's faces. His influence went far deeper. His presence renewed their hearts and kindled afresh their love for God. People loved the Lord, each other and the lost more, when they spent time with Philemon. Churches need people like Philemon. The apostle Paul showed his appreciation of Philemon with these words: "I take great joy and encouragement in your love,



because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the saints."

Paul was heartened and encouraged, by Philemon and also by the visits of Onesiphorus. Paul writes: "The Lord grant mercy to the house of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and

was not ashamed of my chains; but when he was in Rome, he eagerly searched for me and found me ...you know very well the services he rendered at Ephesus." Onesiphorus is referenced only in 2 Timothy, and in the short passage there, he is highly commended for his blessing to Paul and to others.

In his final letter from prison, Paul could have addressed many topics, yet he spent significant energy honouring Onesiphorus. The general view is that Onesiphorus was a businessman from Ephesus who travelled often to Rome. His quiet, personal ministry was so personal and powerful, it was extolled in the pages of scripture. Three characteristics stand out in Onesiphorus' life and witness.

There was firstly a proactive commitment to ministry. We know that Onesiphorus sought Paul out very zealously. When away from your normal routine, it is easy to be too busy to focus on ministry. Onesiphorus demonstrated an aggressive commitment to pursue ministry even, in the midst of travel and other necessary activity. Without any of the modern tools like mobile phones, internet, social media, Onesiphorus worked diligently to track down Paul in order to connect and serve him. Onesiphorus



was an authentic friend and servant.

Secondly there was a persevering heart for leaders. As Paul described Onesiphorus: "You know very well how he ministered to me at Ephesus." Onesiphorus had clearly a significant ministry to Paul much earlier, when the apostle was in Ephesus over a period of three years. Visiting Rome, Onesiphorus was unashamed and undaunted in his concern and commitment to serve Paul. His was a ministry of conviction. He was not a fickle fan of Paul but a faithful friend to the aged, imprisoned apostle. Onesiphorus ministered to Paul in spite of the time, distance, and convenience barriers and he did so to the very end.

Thirdly Onesiphorus had a practical expression of concern. When describing the actual nature of Onesiphorus' ministry, Paul writes "he often refreshed me." The word "often" here means many times or time after time. This was not a perfunctory one time-visit but a ministry that was fulfilled repeatedly. It was a ministry that showed Paul kindness and ministered to his needs, comforting, and reviving him like fresh air. Onesiphorus was, like Philemon, a breath of fresh air to the soul of a proven spiritual soldier at the end of his life and in time of great need. A precious gift!



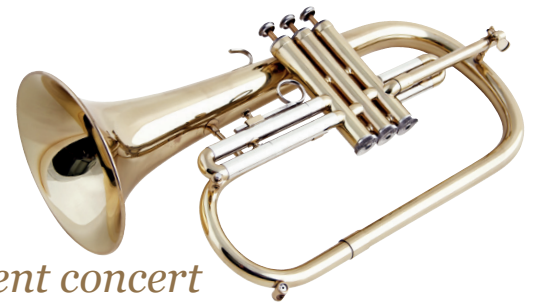
People like Philemon and Onesiphorus are rare. Their encouraging words, thoughtful gifts, and enduring expressions of grace and gratitude are indeed a breath of fresh air.

You don't need lots of refreshing people in your life, you just need someone like Philemon or Onesiphorus, whom you can count on to kindle your spiritual wellbeing, restore perspective and refresh you. Equally we are asked to be like Philemon and Onesiphorus and bring refreshment to others. Churches, schools, work- places and hospitals need more "refreshers." You and I can be "refreshers" and help people find that refreshing water that revives the soul. Maybe we are in need of that refreshing water today, then be open and ready to receive God's gift through others, for those who "hope in the Lord will renew their strength."

**Rev Janice H. Aiton**

# Annan Town Band Concert

*Raymond Budd was much impressed by a recent concert*



Saturday 27th May was the occasion of a concert in St John's Church by the Annan Town Band under the direction of Mr. Lewis Wilkinson and a special guest choir directed by our own Jamie Brand MBE.

I had often heard of the Annan Town Band but this was the first time I had actually seen and heard them play. At the end of the concert my immediate reaction was to say, 'That was sensational!' And, on reflection, that was no exaggeration.

The evening was entitled 'King's Coronation Concert', and such a name could not have been more appropriate.

The members of the band are all smartly and uniformly dressed; their playing is utterly professional and the programme they offered was full of variety; with some very emotional moments and some very uplifting pieces which transported the audience into another world. To name but a few, one work that moved me profoundly was the Benediction from The Armed Man by Karl Jenkins, arranged by Tony Small and two of the works that lifted our spirits into the stratosphere were William Walton's march Crown Imperial arranged by Frank Wright and the final work of the evening, Fire in the Blood by Paul Lovatt-Cooper.

Credit must also be paid to Lewis Wilkinson, the talented director of the band, whose remarks about each of the varied works played were full of wit and good humour.

In addition to the brass band music we were treated to a delightful selection of songs and anthems by the 12 highly talented members of the choir.

As well as three anthems celebrating the coronation, which included the much loved Zadok the Priest by Handel, we were treated, in the second-half of the concert, to a selection of lighter hearted pieces arranged by Bob Chilcott and Ken Johnston as well as the Banquet Fugue by John Rutter. As we could expect the choir was trained to perfection by Jamie Brand.

The choir was accompanied, at times on the organ, at times on the piano, by none other than John Turner, who also treated us to a beautiful performance of the Toccata from Léon Boellman's Suite Gothique.

To all the evening's participants I have no hesitation in saying, 'Haste ye back!'

At the end of the concert the audience rose to its feet to give a richly deserved standing ovation.

stj



Taken from Annan Town Band Facebook page

# *Bell Ringing for the Coronation of King Charles III – May 2023*

*Tower Captain Debbie Johnson describes a couple of special events*

On Saturday 6 May at 2.30 pm, the ringers of St John's started to ring the bells to celebrate the coronation of King Charles. We started off ringing rounds on eight (straight down the scale from the highest note down to the lowest). Then intermittently, we 'fired' the bells. Firing the bells means to ring all eight bells simultaneously rather than the usual way of sounding them one at a time in quick succession. We rang rounds, and then when the instruction is given, all the bells are held up, and all bells follow the ringer of the tenor (the heaviest bell), and aim to ring simultaneously with that bell. We did six pulls each at handstroke and backstroke, and then started ringing rounds again immediately afterwards. This process was repeated several times. The effect is to sound one loud 'crash' of the bells, and it is done to produce a joyful and celebratory sound, which is only done on special occasions, such as the coronation of a monarch. It is also occasionally done when ringing for weddings, or ringing in the New Year.

After this, we rang both Queens (where all the odd number bells are rung, and then the even numbers (1, 3, 5, 7, 2, 4, 6, 8).

After this we rang Kings, which is similar, but the odd numbers are reversed (7, 5, 3, 1, 2, 4, 6, 8). We also rang some call changes where the position of two bells is swapped each time a change is called, and they keep ringing like that until another two bells are swapped. In the middle of all this, we also rang some Grandsire Doubles (which is rung on just six bells rather than eight). This is a change ringing method rung all over the country. With method ringing, the same principle applies of swapping positions with other bells, but instead of waiting for the conductor to tell you to change position, all the ringers learn a set pattern which they follow, and each time the bells ring, the pattern of bells changes so that it sounds different from the previous time.

We did the above ringing for an hour on Saturday afternoon, with the various ringers swapping over so that everyone had a chance to ring.

On Sunday afternoon, we rang a quarter peal, also in honour of the King's Coronation. This was just eight ringers who



ring a non-stop succession of 1260 changes following a set pattern which they have all learnt beforehand. It takes around three quarters of an hour, and many ringers will ring quarter peals regularly partly for their own enjoyment, and partly as it encourages them to learn new methods, and develop their own ringing ability, and it gives them a goal to aim for. 45 minutes is also a convenient amount of time to ring before a service, which of course is the main aim of ringing the bells, ie to call people to church.

Bell ringing is an excellent hobby – it keeps you fit both mentally and physically, and it is a great mixer of ages in that ringers really are all ages from nine up to ninety plus. They are in general a friendly and sociable group of people whose love of ringing means that they often end up driving many miles in order to go and ring at other churches. While there are over 5000 churches with bells in England, meaning that in most places in England, there are probably at least a dozen churches with bells within a ten mile radius, the situation in Scotland is very different, where there are only 20 churches over the whole of Scotland with bells. This means that ringers travelling to another tower have long distances to travel between towers.

The fact that the Scottish Association of Change Ringers decided to hold their annual striking competition here on Saturday 20 May was an honour for St John's. Ringers travelled here from as far away as Inverness, most of them returning the same day. The ringing for the striking competition was not heard outside the church as it was done using our simulator, which is used for practice sometimes. However during the early part of the evening that day, there was also some ringing on open bells (ie it was heard outside the church) and people who enjoy the sound of the bells ringing were able to come and listen. Although we did not actually win the competition in either of the two categories that we entered, the results of all the entries were actually quite close, and we felt that we rang well, and could feel proud of ourselves for entering a striking competition for the first time since the band was formed when we got the bells, which will be ten years ago at the end of this year. It was also good that Revd Andrew MacKenzie was able to take a short service for the ringers straight after the competition, and Raymond Budd kindly played the organ for us (including the bell ringers' hymn). Both of these were amongst the original group of people who started learning to ring back in 2013/14, and it was good that they could each be involved in such an occasion.

Here is a link to the entry on Bellboard where the ringing we did to celebrate the coronation was listed.

<https://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/view.php?id=1621419>  
<https://bb.ringingworld.co.uk/view.php?id=1622078>

*In addition to this, I have some audio clips of the quarter peal that we rang on Sunday. Some of them have traffic noise, as it's very difficult to avoid this if you are recording outside the church. [Clips will be added to the St J's website...look out for them – Ed]*

stj

**MAY 6 2023**



**Church team ready to Ring for the King**

Tomorrow the ringers at St John's Episcopal Church in Dumfries will join in *chime* with hundreds of bellringers from across the UK and Commonwealth. As part of Ring For The King, starting at 2.30pm, they will ring the eight bells of St John's – the only set in the whole of southern Scotland – to celebrate the coronation. On Sunday afternoon they plan to ring a quarter peal to complete their tribute for the new King and Queen.

Both performances are expected to last about an hour and will use all eight bronze change-ringing bells. The bells were installed in the winter of 2013/14 in the belfry of St John's Tower, with the heaviest five bells coming from the redundant church at the Quarriers Village orphanage at Bridge of Weir. The three smallest bells were newly-cast at the Whitacheapell foundry in east London. The tenor, the heaviest bell, weighs nearly 11 cwt (554 kg).



**Ding Dong!**

In Dumfries, the church bells rang out on Saturday 6 May from 2.30pm for an hour. The bells rang in various patterns including 'Kings' (75312468), 'Queens' (13572468) and also rang a method called Grandsire Doubles. This was recorded on the Ringing World website [ringingworld.co.uk](http://ringingworld.co.uk)

On Sunday 7 May, the bells were rung for the morning service but in the afternoon, with the help of three experienced ringers from Glasgow, a quarter peal of Plain Bob Triples was rung lasting for 43 minutes. This consisted of the eight bells being rung continuously and the order of the bells changed in a set pattern 1260 times without repetition.

On Saturday 20 May, ringers from all over Scotland will be visiting St John's for a striking competition where bands will be ringing for set periods and where the accuracy of the ringing is judged. Rather than having open bells and upsetting the neighbours, the clappers will be tied so they don't make a noise. However, sensors on the bell wheels are linked up to a computer so loudspeakers can play them in the church and allow them to be judged.

Normally the bells ring from 10.15am to 11am on the Sunday before morning service but they also ring for practice night on Thursdays from 7.30pm to 9pm.



# Crask Inn

*Gill Swales discovered the Episcopal Church ‘pub sign’ on... well...a pub.*

## ABOUT THE CRASK

In May a couple of friends were driving to the north of Scotland to climb Ben Hope, the most northerly Munro (mountains over 3000 ft in Scotland), so I jumped at the chance to go with them and add this to my Munro “bag”. By the way, they said, we’re staying 2 nights at the Crask Inn. What’s that, I asked....

The Crask Inn is one of Scotland’s most isolated hostelries, some miles north of Lairg on a single track road - which was upgraded by Thomas Telford in 1819 - and standing in a wild and remote landscape. The original part of the building was constructed around 1815 by the Sutherland Estate and for many years since it has provided a welcome to travellers.

However, what intrigued me on arrival was that as well as The Crask Inn sign, the Scottish Episcopal Church “pub sign” was also on the wall by the Inn’s back door. We soon discovered that this hospitable Inn is also an Episcopal church serving both locals and visitors. The former owners of the Inn gifted it some years ago to Bishop Mark Strange, Primus of the



Photo: © Christian Behrens



Scottish Episcopal Church, and the Inn is currently managed by Dr Denise and Douglas Campbell on behalf of the Church. Douglas made us very welcome, and we were soon enjoying the bar after our long journey!

The Inn has its own generator and despite its remoteness, it provides comfortable bedrooms, home-cooked 3 course meals, a bar with wide choice of whiskies, and hot drinks and delicious home-baking throughout the day. It’s open during the day and evenings, and most of its clientele are walkers, cyclists and fishermen. Some stay, some just stop off for refreshments.

A service is held at least once a month, for which a priest travels to preside, with a fellowship lunch afterwards, and morning and evening prayer are offered each day for those wishing to join in. Douglas also offers a grace before each meal. A space is provided for crafts and creativity. We didn’t see this facility but did enjoy the garden they’ve created in this bleak wilderness.

I loved it – the atmosphere is friendly and relaxed, food excellent, and guests eat together round one sociable table. My friends play in a band and brought guitar and mandolin along to play music in the bar, round the peat stove. Very convivial.

St John’s members of a certain vintage may also remember Douglas – he used to be a vet in Thornhill, and he and Denise worshipped at St John’s whilst they lived in the area. They are soon moving on from the Crask, and so new folk will take over this unique place which offers peace and welcome in such an isolated place, in more ways than one.

We did get up Ben Hope...but I “hope” to return!



# DAGCAS



## *DAGCAS Immigration Specialist Lucile Giriat and Volunteer Generalist Adviser Heather Barrington tell us about their work*



If someone has a problem or query and doesn't know where to start with it, their local Citizens Advice Bureau will try to help.

One of the aims of Dumfries and Galloway Citizens Advice Service (DAGCAS) is to make sure that individuals in our community don't suffer through not knowing their rights and responsibilities, or the services available, or not being able to express their needs effectively. DAGCAS is a charity and the service is confidential, free, independent and impartial.

Anyone who is looking for advice or information can contact DAGCAS by telephone, email or in person. There are bureaux at Annan, Dumfries and Stranraer and various outreach services across Dumfries and Galloway. Face-to-face or telephone appointments are made where appropriate.

Volunteers and paid staff, including specialists, provide the service and take a holistic approach. Advisers have access to a comprehensive online information system. Once the enquiry has been discussed, clarified and explored with the client, an

adviser will explain the options available. The client makes their own decision about what to do and is encouraged to take any action themselves if they can.

Advisers can speak or write to other agencies on a client's behalf when appropriate and with the signed agreement of the client. Clients may be signposted or referred, with their consent, to agencies outside of the bureau.

Using strict GDPR guidelines a record is kept of each client contact, for Quality Assurance purposes and in case a client returns for further help. The advice given is checked and audited to make sure that it is accurate, complete and effective.

When the bureau becomes aware of trends in the enquiries being received, this can be flagged at national level and combined with information from other bureaux in the network around Scotland.

This anonymised information can be used to provide objective, evidence-based approaches to policy makers, pro-actively helping to combat social problems at source. It fuels another aim of Citizens Advice Scotland: to exercise a responsible influence on the development of social policies and services, both locally and nationally. The aim is to prevent similar problems arising in the future for the client or for others.

People contact DAGCAS with all sorts of queries and advice, assistance and representation where appropriate is provided on a wide range of issues, such as:

- Benefits, Debt and Money Advice
- Employment, Housing
- Immigration
- Relationships
- Support for NHS patients on how to give feedback about their healthcare

Volunteer advisers come from all ages and backgrounds and are essential to our service. They take part in an initial training scheme and have ongoing training. This is to keep





them up-to-date and to make sure that they have the knowledge and confidence to provide good quality generalist advice and information, with supervision from senior staff and the bureau manager. Volunteers usually commit to two regular 4 hour sessions per week. Senior and specialist staff are readily available to help with complex enquiries and for some volunteers the experience can lead to finding paid employment or to a return to education.

Heather has been volunteering in Dumfries bureau since she retired: "As a volunteer generalist adviser, I enjoy meeting people from all walks of life with a wide variety of queries and I am constantly learning. The work is interesting, varied and very rewarding. It is particularly satisfying when a client gets the help they need, or at least leaves feeling better about their situation".

Lucile, who is now an adviser supporting displaced people resettling in Dumfries and Galloway, decided to volunteer in Dumfries CAB after receiving help as a client.

"As a client, I was really grateful for the free service provided by Citizens Advice Bureau when I arrived in the region and needed help to solve a housing issue. I was very impressed by the ethos

of the organisation so decided to volunteer with it. Shortly after qualifying as a volunteer adviser, some job opportunities appeared and I was recruited as an adviser. My area of expertise and interest are immigration and migrant communities. For four years, I assisted EU citizens with immigration procedures following Brexit, and since November 2022, I am now able to offer a specialist service to displaced people, mainly coming from Ukraine, Syria and Afghanistan. My role is to help people resettling in our region to understand the Scottish system, their rights and responsibilities, as it may be quite different from the system they were used to. Advice is provided on topics ranging from benefit entitlement and help with applications to housing issues, employment, driving, education... Where necessary, language support is provided to facilitate communication. We work in close collaboration with the local authorities and other third sector organisations to ensure that families and individuals receive a warm welcome and the necessary support to successfully settle and thrive in our region."

To get advice, Dumfries and Galloway Citizens Advice Service can be contacted at: Tel: 0300 303 4321; Website: [www.dagcas.org](http://www.dagcas.org). More information on volunteering can be found at <https://www.dagcas.org/volunteer-for-us/>. DAGCAS always welcome new volunteers and would be delighted to receive any enquiries about their volunteer led service.



## HOSPITAL VOLUNTEERING

# Previously on St Elsewhere...

*Hospital Volunteers and St J's members Ros Harradine and Melanie Landale and St George's member Grace McBain share their experiences*



**Ros:** When the Dumfries and Galloway Royal Infirmary (DGRI) then sited at what is now Mountainhall set up the Welcome Desk in 2000 I was one of the original volunteers. The idea of the Welcome Desk came about because of the number of patients and visitors who had difficulty finding their way round the hospital. Visiting a hospital is always stressful so a friendly face to put them at ease and someone to point them

the right direction, if necessary, taking them there, would help.

Those who had recently retired from working in the hospital were invited to consider volunteering and I and a number of others heard about the initiative and wanted to be involved. We went to a meeting with hospital staff to discuss how the Desk would run. We were asked did we want a uniform---NO, we didn't want to be mistaken for staff; did we want a computer—definitely NO! We worked the days that suited us and usually as a group of 3. I worked with 2 ladies I didn't know before, but we made a good team.

Obviously we were to be based in the Entrance Hall but over the years the layout changed. Initially we sat so that we were easily seen by anyone coming in who needed help. Later when the foyer was altered, we moved to the welcome desk so had to deal with queries from couriers and delivery people as well as being the first people seen by someone who wanted to make a complaint.

When the new DGRI opened Mountainhall changed character. It was so quiet! Initially there were only a few departments still based there so we had far fewer people to help, although that did include those who were in the wrong place. When the administrative staff from the Crichton moved in, their reception staff joined us in the Entrance Hall and that worked well.

Covid changed it all again. By that time many of us had reached a certain age and were regarded as too vulnerable to be allowed to continue during the pandemic.

Eventually we could resume—initially wearing masks which we needed to do for a longer time than most people as masks continued to be required in clinical settings until quite recently. We had to remind patients and visitors of that and have a stock of masks for them to use. Other departments had moved in to the building so more locations for us to learn.

Over the years there have been a multitude of things to deal with in addition to the general enquiries. I have listened to very frequent complaints about parking (difficulty of), people smoking outside the main doors, the vending machines not working and the gents' loo not flushing. I have also stood guard at the lifts when the fire alarm goes to stop people running a risk by using them – there are audible warnings not to use the lifts on such occasions but they must be inaudible. Some people paid no attention. On 2 occasions we had a hoax bomber come into the foyer. Fortunately we had a protocol to deal with that so I don't think any member of the public realized anything was amiss.

As many of us have stayed volunteers for a good number of years others must share my view that this is a worthwhile thing to do—made so by the people who say thank you for any help we can offer and by those who come to chat to us.

I have worked with the current receptionist for a while and probably look forward to my afternoon stint (now just me) more than ever. If it's a query that I do not deal with it's lovely to be able to smile, gesture to the left and say "If you just talk to..."





**Melanie:** Six years ago I went to the Dumfries and Galloway Royal Infirmary to see a consultant and found myself looking at the information board to try and find out where I was meant to be going. Beside me in a wheelchair was a man asking if I needed any help. He not only told me where to go but showed me the way in his wheelchair. I was surprised for to be honest I thought he was a patient. How wrong I

was because he had been a volunteer for many years and knew every corner of the old hospital and now the new hospital and could, I believe, answer any question.

Later that day I thought to myself, if he can do it, so can I. I wrote to the volunteer coordinator Margaret McGroggan who immediately invited me to meet her at their office at the Crichton. They interviewed me and age did not seem to be a problem and, after the filling in of forms and proving that I did not have a police record, I was accepted! I was given the choice of either helping in the wards or greeting people in either the main entrance or at the entrance of the paediatric section. I then had to attend a couple of initiation meetings where we were told about strict hygiene, how to handle wheelchairs etc. We also had a learning tour of the hospital. Initially it seemed very complicated as to where all the different wards were. After the tour it was up to oneself as well as help from the two volunteering friends to learn the map of the hospital. We had a photograph taken and were given a volunteers' identity to wear round our necks. We also have purple NHS shirts to wear and a dark skirt or trousers of our own. A warm NHS jacket is also provided.

Initially I worked with my friend in a wheelchair and another lady who was very helpful. We signed in on arrival and were given a locker for our bags etc. Then we stand by the big information board watching people coming through the door usually holding a letter and, if they look as though they need help, you offer it. We try and help ward off inquiries from the front desk because the girls there are very busy on their computers. However there are some questions such as which ward a relative or friend is in that we cannot answer and we then direct them to the reception. If people arrive within 10 minutes of their appointment we take them to the e-Kiosk and help them to find out which Bay they are in for outpatients and then direct or take them to the Bay. If they are more than 10 minutes early we suggest that they wait in the atrium for a while or have a refreshment in the canteen. If we are unable to help we refer them to the receptionists.

One is aware that people may be anxious when coming to hospital so it is important to be sensitive but a smile never goes amiss. Some want to talk but most people just want to be shown where to go. It is fairly obvious when someone needs a wheelchair and people, on the whole, are very grateful if you can wheel them to wherever they have to go. Visitors in particular are particularly appreciative to know that there is someone available to take them to the ward that their loved one is in. The distances in the new hospital are quite extensive. Apart from directing people we are able to help with requests like delivering letters or parcels for patients in the wards.

We ourselves are allowed a 15 minute break in the afternoon and have a free coffee or tea.

After my first couple of years as a volunteer the pandemic arrived and needless to say all visits to the hospital were stopped. However, when we were able to return in 2021, I certainly signed up again. This time it was a different story with briefings once more of strict hygiene, always using the sanitizers available in all parts of the hospital and the compulsory wearing of masks.

I changed my date to a Friday afternoon and my companions were two experienced ladies, one of whom had done many years in the old hospital. It was deemed that there was not enough to do in the maternity and children's wing, but we were needed to greet people in the orthopaedic department making sure of the wearing of masks and sanitising of hands and then showing them into the waiting room and checking them in at the desk. Only one of us is needed to do this and I certainly enjoyed it because it is a relatively small department and one had more contact with the patients, but only if they wanted it! Sadly, because masks and such restrictions have been lifted the volunteering as of June has now been stopped in orthopaedics.

This leaves three of us in the atrium. We are inclined to think only two of us are needed so we now await instructions from our volunteer coordinator Margaret McGroggan as to whether she needs us somewhere else. Those working on the wards have a different course to take at the beginning so we are not qualified should they need help.

I very much enjoy my Friday afternoons in the hospital and feel that maybe one has been able to be of help to a few people. I am quite happy to get home at the end of the four hours and make my own cup of tea at home but with a certain feeling of satisfaction. To those who have ever thought of volunteering at the hospital I would certainly recommend it. If anyone is interested, they should contact [dg.volunteering@nhs.scot](mailto:dg.volunteering@nhs.scot)



**Grace:**  
***Would you like some company?***

Once a week I, along with others, volunteer in a ward at Dumfries and Galloway Royal Infirmary. Our aim is to reduce the possible sense of isolation and anxiety of patients by providing a bit of company.

We also help staff by going round with the tea trolley and by helping with practical, non-medical tasks such as locating TV remote controls!

We might just spend a few minutes with a patient as we hand over a cup of tea, but usually stay longer if they would like us to do so. Sometimes we just sit quietly or watch part of a TV programme together.

Support for us is provided by being part of a team of volunteers. We are recognisable by our purple polo shirts! We work within a clear set of guidelines explained during initial training and consolidated by on-going training and mentoring facilitated by Margaret McGroggan, our Volunteer Co-ordinator. In the past year I have benefitted from training about supporting patients with dementia and about helping those with speech and language issues. Our ward teams are made up of people of a variety of ages and backgrounds: some have retired, others are still in regular employment and each year we have young people from senior school who may be considering working in the care sector.

Volunteers are encouraged to spend some time in a variety of wards and then, if possible, to link up regularly with one. The advantages of this are gradually feeling part of the ward team as staff and volunteers recognise each other as well as getting to know what to expect in that ward.

The team widens in that we can, for example, arrange for a patient to have a visit from a member of the Spiritual Care Team if they wish or help them connect with the Carers' Hub.

In the ward where I volunteer some patients may be there for several weeks. This means there's the chance to build up a rapport with them. It is encouraging when it's possible to see progress being made towards better health.

It is a joy to spend time with people. Depending on what the patient wants to share, connections may be made with interests they have, where they live or jobs they do or have done. As volunteers it is essential that we maintain confidentiality by not sharing information about who we meet or what we talk about.

We hope patients benefit from the company we provide and are encouraged by sensing this or even being told by them that we have made a positive difference to their day. So often I leave feeling enriched by the experience of meeting people and of helping out. Sometimes our support is for a visitor by having a brief chat with them.

I started volunteering when the new hospital opened. I saw an article in the Dumfries Courier and felt drawn to find out more. It has been a steep learning curve for me being way out of my comfort zone. I was a teacher and had very little experience of hospital life. I am grateful to the staff in our ward who welcomed us even when they were busy adjusting to the new hospital. I also greatly appreciated the support of the volunteer I worked with at that time.

Being an NHS volunteer has given me the opportunity to develop new skills. It is definitely challenging. The patients we meet are often at a difficult time in their lives. We need to show sensitivity, gauge quickly whether a patient might be able to chat, observe any instructions about fluids when offering drinks and know when to seek advice from staff. However, it is also rewarding, and I would wholeheartedly recommend it.

If you would like to find out more about the variety of opportunities available within the NHS, please contact [dg.volunteering2@nhs.scot](mailto:dg.volunteering2@nhs.scot)





# Life of Faith

*Andrew Ratnam was interviewed (at greater length) by David Kerr for the St J's archive.*

*Here are some of the highlights...*



I am Andrew Ratnam, and I am currently 77 years old. For the past number of years I have lived in Georgetown in Dumfries.

## **If you could have been, or could have done, anything, what would that have been?**

I think from my earliest days, I was such a brat! My dad himself thought I was badly behaved. I was the eldest of five siblings and he was so worried that the rest of the gang were going to follow in my footsteps....

## **That's quite hard to believe!**

Well, you might not believe it now, but he seriously wanted to put me in a Borstal-type school; he'd tried love, he'd tried punishment, he'd tried everything. We couldn't stay where we were because all the neighbours would come round and complain: 'Your son has broken this... your son has hit my son...' – so many complaints, he felt he couldn't face it any more and particularly, as I say, he was worried about the rest of the children. I remember clearly my mum and my gran pleading with him, when they thought I was asleep in the other room, telling him it was a shame and asking why he would consider doing such a thing. He said, 'this is the very reason I am doing this: but eventually he got to the stage, in the face of pleadings from his wife and his mother, where he didn't know where to turn, so he eventually said, 'well, when he ends up in the dock, don't look at me; I'm no longer responsible.' So my gran said that she would take on the responsibility. I think this hurt me a bit; for your own father to disown you: the following day he said to me, 'Don't call me Dad; I'm no longer going to call you my son...

## **You said that all kinds of accusations were being made; were they, on the whole, true?**

Oh yes, they were. I had grabbed the occasional teacher by the collar and this kind of thing...I think I'd got into the wrong crowd, and wanted to be one of them. At the age of 13 or 14, I was the same size I am now; so for an Asian at that stage, and in those days, I was big, and was mixing with boys of 18 and

upwards and I guess I just copied their aggressive behaviour, and tried to top it. So I think my dad had tried everything and was out of ideas. So he told me my mum and gran were going to 'put me right' The fact that he said I was no longer his son hurt me a lot and I think that that was what started me gradually thinking about changing my behaviour, going to church and so on. By about 16, or maybe 18, I had decided I wanted to become a Minister.

## **Were the rest of your family churchgoers anyway?**

Oh yes, my Dad was a local Methodist Preacher; but truly ecumenical; he had five different children baptised in five different denominations! If he was asked what denomination he was, he would simply answer that he was a Christian.

Anyway, at about 18, I was feeling some kind of change going on in me, but, at the same time, my mum fell ill; tuberculosis was as serious as cancer in India and other developing countries at the time. She lost so much weight; both of her lungs were full of cavities; so she was in a TB asylum. Only Dad went once a month. We children were not allowed to go and see her in case we caught it. Once when he went in, the Doctor said to him, Mr Ratnam, we're sorry to tell you that your wife won't last another two weeks. So my Dad laughed, and the Doctor got mad and said, 'I'm sorry, do you understand English?' My dad said, 'I understand you perfectly; she's in the care of the greatest physician who ever lived, or ever will live; and you don't have the right to preserve, or take, life. So, you do your job and we'll see what happens.' And he walked away. Next month, Dad went to visit her again. But during that month, in our church, there was so much fasting and prayer and pleading with God for her health. And the morning he went, it was clear that the chest physician was very surprised that my mum had not died. In those days, there weren't MRIs and the like; they did fluoroscopic screening...and they were unable to see the cavities which should have been in her lungs. So the Consultant called his juniors and said, 'Either I have gone blind, or there's a miracle going on here.' And they confirmed there were no

cavities. So, when my dad arrived, they called him to sit on a garden bench and said, 'Mr & Mrs Ratnam, if you're going to keep praying like this, we're all going to lose our jobs!'

And I think that really confirmed my belief and my desire to change. I can't say I was, even then, all that brilliant a student; I still loafed around quite a bit. But then I got acute nephritis (severe damage to the kidneys, meaning they don't clean the blood properly.) And the Doctors more or less washed their hands of me; they said they had done all they could; and, at that time and in that part of the world, they were probably right. My dad had a friend who was an Unani doctor (Persio-Arabic traditional medicine, frowned upon by the Indian Medical Association) and I was in hospital, under his care, for the best part of a year. And it's wonderful how God works these things, but, over that time, almost all my unsuitable gang of friends just melted away. And after that, we moved house and, in between mum's illness, and mine, and the house move, it all contributed to my becoming a different person.

### **Strange isn't it; these apparent misfortunes that have unexpected benefits?**

In the days when I used to take my school reports home – never good! – sometimes my dad would wallop me, but he began to think that that didn't help, and started to say things like, 'this just about qualifies you to be a shepherd, or to watch the cows...' and gradually I started to want to prove them all wrong. And, latterly, towards the end of his life, when he was himself really ill, I could see he was so proud that I was, by that time, a surgeon, had my Fellowship and so on.

### **Good that he lived to see it.**

And my mum lived another 40 years after that as well.

### **Although we already know the answer, can you say, for the purposes of the tape, as they say in crime dramas, what has been your main profession or vocation?**

I became an Orthopaedic Surgeon, because, initially when I came to this country, I said I was going to specialise in Obstetrics and Gynaecology, because, however many diseases are going to be eradicated, children are still going to be born; also it involved both medicine and surgery. I wasn't that good at mental jugglery, but I've always been good with my hands, so I thought that might be a good way to go. But when I arrived in the UK, some of the Sri Lankans who had been here for a long time warned me off, by saying it might be difficult for people in this country to accept me carrying out internal examinations of women.

### **So by this time, you'd come to the UK?**

Yes: And I knew also that purely medicine was not for me, but, as I said, I've always been good with my hands. Whenever my dad's motorbike used to break down, he would arrive in a taxi to pick me up, and take me back to fix his bike! I did this from quite an early age, so I knew I was good at it. And orthopaedics is pretty much the same, really, nuts and bolts and things like that!

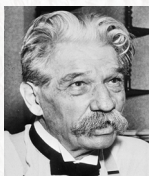
Before that happened, what happened was that, in Ceylon, there was a final exam, at about the stage of 'A' level in England, after which you did University Entrance exams. And that was the period in history when Sirimavo Bandaranaike became Prime Minister, and the whole place was beset with a communalism, rather like apartheid. In Sri Lanka, the Tamils are, and are viewed, somewhat as the Jews are, or have been, elsewhere: they're a hardworking, and successful, minority; and, for those reasons, often viewed with suspicion, or treated with hostility. And I also had the double disadvantage of being both Tamil and Christian. So I passed the exam three times...

### **You mean it took you three goes to pass it?**

No – I mean I took and passed it three times, but each time I was told to go and do agriculture, or dentistry or something else. But I was determined to do medicine. I said before that I wanted to be a Minister – and everyone laughed – and then I thought about becoming a medical missionary, and got more interested in the medical side. And the third time, when I was going for my interview, the Principal of the College seems to have said that if I didn't get in to do medicine that time, surely nobody would.

The country was set up for the Sinhalese and the Buddhists... and fair enough, really, because that's what 65% of the population of Sri Lanka was. Then the riots started and there was massive discrimination; schooling became very difficult; separated in to Sinhalese streams, Tamil streams and so on. The communalist mindset was rife; if you passed your exams, they just eliminated you at interview instead. So after three knockbacks like this, I got so dejected I went and joined the Central Bank of Ceylon (equivalent of the Bank of England) and did the International Banking Association exams. Then one of my brothers, who knew how keen I was to do medicine, suggested I go to India to study it there. But I'd wasted so many years already, I was worried that, starting again in India, my classmates would all be brats! And the Indian system of study is completely different. Their method was to list the [twenty five or whatever] causes of tuberculosis, one, two, three...and so on. We didn't do it like that; it was the British system that I was used to, and I didn't think I'd be able to adapt. The Indian government also discriminated against Sri Lankans, pretending





Albert Schweitzer

my qualifications were unsuitable; so my family had to pay almost double fees for me. But my dad, whose hero was Albert Schweitzer, reminded me that he (Schweitzer) was 40 when he started to study medicine. Mind you, by that time Schweitzer already had three other doctorates!

**Just to go back a bit, are you saying that the education system in Ceylon/Sri Lanka at the time was much more like the British one, than was the case in India? So India had perhaps changed more since British times?**

Yes; also Sri Lanka is such a small place, it was completely permeated by the British way of doing things, in a way that the much larger India, outside the cities, anyway, never was. Anyway, this was my last chance (another of them!), and I was definitely keen. So I went and started my pre-University course, which was like going back to 'O' level. And I had a really rough time. The Indian Government gave three places to Indians who were settled elsewhere, but Sri Lanka didn't quite count as 'elsewhere'; we were rather second class citizens, but I applied.

Meantime, my dad was working in the press, and one of his friends was appointed as the Sri Lankan High Commissioner to India. My dad got my brother to go and see this High Commissioner and tell him about all the promises that had been made to me, all the times I'd been let down, and so on. Then there was some kind of official reception to welcome the High Commissioner to India, and, at this function, the HC mentioned my case to some official, who immediately said, 'Oh no, that couldn't possibly happen...' but the next thing was that I was offered a so-called Central Government Territorial place, in one of the former French outposts, Pondicherry. So, more or less overnight, I was in a place, where I could start studying



medicine. But I still wanted to be a medical missionary. So I offered myself to Velore. I offered to go anywhere they wanted to place me. But their response was that the church I belonged to hadn't contributed to *their* church...so they wouldn't have me.

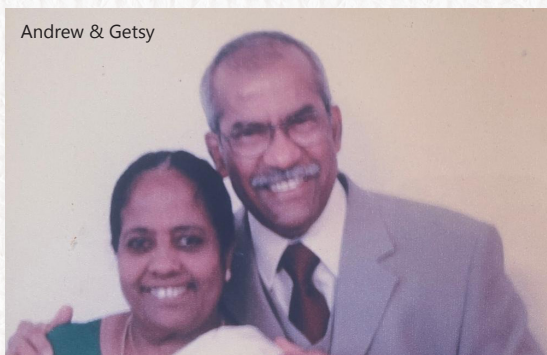
So I sat down and started to wonder, 'What does God want me to do?' I'd wanted to become a Minister and that flopped, then a missionary, and that flopped, then a medical missionary; now that was gone. But I still had my place to study medicine, thanks to my brother and the HC. When I talked to my dad about it, he said, 'You don't have to *go* anywhere, Andrew; a man with a mission is a missionary, and can do it wherever he happens to be, You can be a missionary right here.' So that's more or less how I have felt ever since.

Pretty much everyone from India or Ceylon ended up coming to the UK to do their MRCP, MRCOG etc. So what happens is you go to the British Council and register yourself. And whenever a requirement for your particular specialism arose in Britain, they would offer you a place. So the first place I came to was Portsmouth. By that time I was married. But when I was offered the place in Portsmouth, my mum was not keen. I had been away for the past seven years in Pondicherry. This would have been in about 1970. So I stayed at home another year or two and thought I'd then go to the UK, loaf around a bit, and come back.

Initially I came to the UK by myself. And when I first came to Britain, that was quite difficult: in both Oxford and Cambridge, B&Bs were still displaying signs, 'No dogs, no coloureds...'

My father-in-law was unwell with a lung problem and I'd suggested to his surgeon that, given the seriousness of the illness, I didn't want to take Getsy away from Sri Lanka at that time. The surgeon said it was just an abscess, but, actually, it turned out later to be cancer. In the meantime, though, I





borrowed money, brought her here...and within three months he passed away. So that was pretty tough; she'd fairly newly arrived, I was at work all the time and she knew no-one. The Consultant I was working for at the time asked if I was going to take her to the airport, but I had to tell him I had borrowed the money to get her here, and couldn't afford to send her back to Sri Lanka and bring her back again. So it was very tough. In those days, about 80% of the junior NHS staff were Indians, Sri Lankans and other Asians, but at the top it was only about 3%. It's changed a lot now, but, at that stage, it was very difficult [for senior staff to grasp the difficulties we were faced with.

Starting in Portsmouth, we then went to a number of other places: Hull, various parts of Scotland and so on. When I got the job in Dumfries (my 13th), I was working in Hull. They kept pulling my leg and asking me if I had any skis. I arrived in Dumfries in June...and it was snowing!

When you first start a new job of that sort, they keep you in Bed & Breakfast for a month or so, and you work all the hours in the hospital. Then, because I'd applied for Obs & Gynae, I was placed under an Obs & Gynae consultant. The first day, he sent me along to see a patient in, say, Room 70, but with no other information. I went along there, and there was a nurse standing there with folded arms, and no patient. I was a bit surprised and asked the nurse where the patient was. 'Oh,' she said, 'she's gone to spend a penny.' Not an expression I'd heard before, so I couldn't think why you'd come to hospital and then go out again to spend a penny, and what could you buy for a penny, anyway? But I soon learned.

**That's a bit like those stories of new apprentices who are sent somewhere for a long stand, or for a tin of elbow grease.**

Yes; I had a bit of trouble once, looking for a fly I had been told was in the ointment. With my Indian & Sri Lankan background, I was used to people being able to write like Shakespeare, but their spoken English was often very poor; mostly, people would

speak in their own dialect; particularly amongst themselves.

So I did a few jobs of that sort, but then they said that unless I did my Primary, I would not get another job. Obviously I had Getsy to consider. Kalpana was about 4 years old; Kavittia about 4 months. Anyway, I couldn't move on to surgery without doing my Primary. I managed, in the end, to pass that, in both Edinburgh and Glasgow. But I thought I couldn't then do the Fellowship exams as well, but everyone told me I should. And by the time I'd done that (remember I'd only come to 'loaf around' for a few years and go back to Sri Lanka!), I'd got used to being here and, in any case, the children wouldn't have fitted in to the system back there. Everything would be different, including the fact that they were used to English and, back home, they'd have started again in the vernacular. And the political situation would have been difficult; a lot of harassment and so on. For about three months I didn't know if my parents were dead or alive; they just disappeared. And then, through a Sinhalese friend, I managed to find out that they were all in a refugee camp in the eastern province of Sri Lanka, where my dad became very depressed, because he had lost all his friends and their house had been burnt to the ground; just the frame of the sewing machine was left; everything else was ashes. So I asked my dad if I should come back. He said, 'Don't be silly, I'm sitting here more or less in my underwear; what do you think you'd be able to do? There are no jobs. At least if you stay where you are, you might be able to help your brothers and sisters.'

So I just stayed on and did my Fellowship. Up until I came to Dumfries, I was still finding it difficult to progress my career. Even though I had my full Royal College of Surgeons Fellowship, I couldn't find a Registrar's job. In those days, you were on call one day in two, so I was pretty much living in the hospital. One day you were on call; the other, you had to try to catch up with all your own patients again, and so it went on. So I saw little of my children growing up; but I'm getting the chance, now, to do it through my grandchildren. Dumfries, however, was a bit better: they seemed to understand a little better the pressures I was under and that I was sincerely dedicated to the job.

By that time I was an Associate Specialist, one step below Consultant. I had arrived in Dumfries in 1985, as a Registrar, which I was for two or three years, then Associate. And then this locum came and messed everything up. We were dealing with a major accident and he was doing everything wrong. I was following along behind him, trying to rectify his mistakes and offering advice, but he wouldn't listen; the anaesthetist was shouting at him; the patient had already bled out so much he had to have a splenectomy, and halfway through everything, this locum just walked out of the theatre and then next morning he had vanished completely. So I had to patch everything up

and perform further operations and eventually the patient, quite a young man, was able to walk again. But the consultants in Dumfries all met together and decided to make me a locum consultant to begin with; partly because they knew I knew all of them and that I would not fail to involve them if I needed help or advice. So that gave me the opportunity to become a Consultant, which I was for about 10 years, and to prove myself. And, though I didn't know that people noticed it, when I retired, one of the theatre nurses said, 'Andrew prays.' I asked how she knew. We would deal with major incidents. I have severe sleep apnoea, but God's grace got me through all of them. While I was scrubbing in, I would pray...and the nurses had noticed it. So I did that...and now I am 11 years retired!

### **You arrived in Dumfries because of the job. What brought you, specifically, to St J's?**

Before we came to Dumfries, we were living in Norwich. We had been going to church there. I've always been Anglican, and that was an Anglican church, though wherever we've been, we've gone to the local church – Anglican, Catholic, Methodist, Brethren, whatever. Anyway, when I told the priest we were moving to Dumfries, he told me that the nearest thing to C of E was the Scottish Episcopal Church. Turned out he had also written to Canon Taylor to warn him of our arrival. One Sunday, we more or less sneaked in to St J's, sat in that pew on the left hand side about half way back...and we've been there for the past 35 years and more! And, on that first day, Canon Taylor specifically welcomed us, from the pulpit, as newcomers. At an early stage, I asked him to come and bless our house; the one we're still in. I warned him I didn't have so much as a single stool, because we'd mostly stayed in doctors' quarters up to then. The children, however, had acquired various things not usually provided, like a piano and so on, and they were all packed up in boxes. The hospital quarters, in Dumfries at least, weren't big enough for all of us and all of our stuff. A friend told me I might just as well pay a mortgage as rent for hospital quarters. So this



was the first house we ever bought. I told Canon Taylor he'd have to bring his own chair! One of the other first things we bought was a microwave. In the Tamil tradition, if you have a new house, you boil milk and, as the milk boils over, that is symbolic of the blessing of God overflowing, so we did that when Canon Taylor came on his first visit. And, of course, he left the chair, and it became Kalpana's chair for a number of years.

### **What things have you been involved in at St J's over the years?**

Acolyte, Server, Deacon, Speaker (David Bayne once invited me to come and speak about Talents at St Ninian's, CD, so I did, and he asked me where I had been hiding all that knowledge...I just said I'd never had the opportunity to share it before), Vestry... but now, because of my balance problems, I don't do so much.

### **What might surprise us?**

When I was at Medical College, the Hindu students had a lot of temples; there were a few Mosques here and there, so the Muslims were ok. The hospital was a Central Government one, and it had no provision for spiritual spaces. And the Christians had nowhere to go for anything. I was the Chairperson of the Student Christian Movement. We put on a few shows, raised quite a lot of money, and eventually I built a small chapel. We called it St Luke's.



### **You mean, you 'just built it in your spare time...?'**

Pretty much. Kalpana was the first child to be baptised in that chapel. It wasn't much bigger than an office. But the last time I went to Pondicherry, I thought I'd go and look for it, to see how it was doing. There were lots of new buildings everywhere and, to begin with, I couldn't find it. But, when I eventually found it, it had grown to the size, more or less, of a cathedral. It was huge! I was a bit hesitant, but the caretaker appeared and asked me if I wanted to go in. I was thinking about it, when one of the caretaker's cousins appeared, pointed at me, and said, 'That's the man who built this place!' dragged me in, and told the Minister all about it. [Getsy: If Kalpana had been born a boy, we'd have called her Luke.]

### Two stars and a wish?

First and foremost, St J's became our second family, right from the very beginning. We never felt that we were anything else than part of the church. That's been amazingly good. And I think that tradition continues to this day. The welcome, the hospitality and all that are always there. And I like the liturgy; services in other churches don't quite 'do' it for me in the same way. Of course, I've been an Anglican all my life, so it's in my blood, makes me feel at home. A 'Wish' is more difficult; I think there are always more things we can do, but nothing I'd particularly criticise.

### Can you say something about your interests outside of church or St J's?

I've said already that my hands were my main blessing. So I did a lot of woodwork. I made a number of things, including a sewing table for Getsy. Then, when I retired, I thought I'd try wood turning. You stand still, and the wood turns! Getsy's the gardener: I used to give a hand with the hard, manual jobs: I'm not much of a gardener, but I love gardens.

### Who has been the most influential person in your life, would you say?

Difficult to pinpoint just one person –

### You're allowed to choose more than one

Well, I'd start with my dad. He was a voracious reader. He could have held his own against the Archbishop of Canterbury! He was well read in all fields. People used to ask him which university he'd been to, and he would pull their legs and say,



'I'm from Penguin University,' 'Where's that?' they would ask. 'Penguin books!' he'd reply. And he had such a memory. If I had a particular topic to find out about, I would ask him. There were rooms in his house where there were wall to wall bookshelves. He would take me into a particular room, and say, 'That shelf, there; third row from the left, sixteenth book along, page 196... and that would be it. So he hadn't just tread the books, he'd completely digested them.

### You described him as a Lay Preacher. Was that his job, or did he do something else?

He had umpteen jobs, because he wouldn't really allow himself to be bossed around. Latterly he was an Advertising Manager in one of the Tamil newspapers. He went to Japan to learn about advertising, use of colour, and so on. He found, not knowing any Japanese, that it was pretty difficult; you needed an interpreter for absolutely anything and everything. But he was there for about six months, and, by the time he came back home, he was able to give a full interview in Japanese on TV; very capably.

### Do you have a favourite hymn?

O Jesus I Have Promised, that's a favourite; also When I Survey the Wondrous Cross. The year after we came here was the Octocentenary of Dumfries, so they were looking for non-local Christians to appear on Songs of Praise, and came to us. The hospital was mad at me; they felt they'd been there for much longer, why was I getting the attention! The Songs of Praise came from the Crichton Church, but they came here and interviewed me (in one take!) first.

### Do you have a favourite Bible passage?

I have several. One is 'I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me' (Philippians 4, 13); 'Who can be against me, when God is for me?' (Romans 8, 31).

### Do you have a favourite saying, maybe apart from Biblical quotes?

[There then follows a description of a Tamil proverb, probably equivalent to the Scots, 'the mair you step on a skitter, the braider it gets...']!

### Anything you always wanted to do at St J's and never had the chance [Sing, be on the Vestry, arrange flowers, fix the drains...]?

Not physically able to do so much these days, but I think I've had a go at most things.

# Music & Me *John Turner reflects on a life in music*



My grade 5 piano examiner asked for a word with my Mother and extolled the benefits of choir schools. Lichfield wasn't that far from Halifax, though 90 miles alone on a coach and the lah-di-dah accents on arrival made it seem like a foreign land. At my choir audition, aged 10, it was embarrassingly obvious that, although small for my age I had a deep speaking voice and couldn't sing at all! My three years there

brought no remedy. My admission and survival depended wholly on what I reckoned to do at the piano (even when I was 12 I was too small to reach the organ pedals). So I was a wee fraud but still took inordinate and ridiculous pride in being Treble Decani 9, Corner-Boy and Book-Boy, in charge of the copies of music. In any case I could never have got remotely near the high notes, as the organ was a semitone sharp and still is. Strangely the Organist, Ambrose P. Porter, never adopted a lower key, not even in the hymns; but that may have reflected the power and status of the College of Vicars Choral, whose members had freehold for life, so that the choir of that day, which was frequently on the radio, had a non-singer in both its treble and its tenor ranks, the difference being that the latter was audible. Oh dear!

Even at 10, I was overwhelmed by the beauty and majesty of the Cathedral - well worth a visit - and got to know every stone. The Dean, whom we ranked second only to God [we only saw the Bishop about three times a term] was F.A. Iremonger, the biographer of William Temple and a former Head of Religious Broadcasting. The average age of our clergy was over 70; and it is not only this which makes me query the wisdom of compulsory retirement at 70. How often do we see people take up high office at 62 or 63, at the height of their abilities, and feel pressured to achieve much in a short time and then have to hand over to a (temporary) successor. It isn't healthy. In my Cambridge undergraduate days, they appointed a new Dean of Ely at 65! 7 years later he embarked upon a contented retirement.

The Cathedral was neither 'high' nor 'low' but the ceremonial was superb. There was an expectation and tradition that everything, simply everything, should be done properly. It could have saved some friction, years later, if I had seen that

the Lichfield approach doesn't always minister to the needs of people of different backgrounds. Nevertheless, it helps me to do a little better even today than I would if left to my own instincts. One of my few regrets is that the sublime words which we sang daily (yes, even on Boxing Day and Easter Monday) could at times wash over us: I might have learnt more if I hadn't been in the choir! Yet I was fascinated by the 'take' that different composers had on various texts, e.g. the individual and ingenious ways they had of dealing with the (incongruous?) penitential ending to the Te Deum: should "Let me never be confounded" be a plea or a statement of trust and confidence? And while music can indeed illuminate a text and even be revelational. I have long been ruefully aware of a prominent theological school which insists that music of itself is not likely to make us better people.

I left Lichfield assuming that every Cathedral Organist was as brilliant as Ambrose P., and then found that about 5 were. An exceedingly diffident nature held him back from fame. His interpretations were his own and I remember them in great detail. A strong sense of the dramatic showed itself in organ colour and the timing of pauses. His organ accompaniments were simply wonderful in all respects. Only recently I re-played a recording of his accompaniment to 'The Trumpet Shall Sound' (Messiah). The trumpet and obligato part, the agile pedal line and a full improvised harmonic and rhythmic filling (or 'continuo') are immaculate, not just the thoughtless and redundant plinky-plonky main-beat to which we are so accustomed. His improvised 'playing-in' and 'playing-out' of the choir and clergy became legendary in inspiration and craft. I could go on endlessly, but it will suffice that whenever, in my long tenure at Glasgow's medieval Cathedral, I came across a serious technical problem, I said to myself 'do an Ambrose'. It still works today. I owe him more than I can ever express, and the late Richard Lloyd, Organist successively of Hereford and Durham Cathedrals, said the same.

From the very start I knew I had to be a musician. Ambrose unwittingly convinced me, from the age of 10, that it had to be sacred music. Half a century later Susan and I realised that the 'fair ground' into which our 'lot had fallen' (as the Psalms have it) owed much to those distant days in Lichfield. Today the opportunity to have a small part in the well-respected and long-established musical and spiritual heritage of St. John's is a true privilege, and we express warm thanks to Janice and Jamie and everyone else who has made us welcome.



# Organ Recital by John R Turner

*Billy Dewar-Riddick reports on the pairing of a beautiful instrument and a gifted musician*

The organ is often to be found in our churches and cathedrals. For this simple, yet obviously practical reason, it therefore accompanies us in a multitude of life's events and the full spectrum of human emotion. Joy, pain and reflective prayer were all brought to us by John R. Turner at the latest edition of "The Organ at St John's" recital series on Friday 26th of May 2023.

In student days John R. Turner won 3 RCO prizes and 2 at Cambridge University, where he was organ scholar at Jesus College. From 1965 to 2010 he was on the staff of the RSAMD (now the Royal Conservatoire) and was also the 5th Organist (the 4th Yorkshireman forsooth!) of Glasgow Cathedral (Church of Scotland) since the installation of an organ there in 1879, overseeing the music for several occasions of state, notably the 2nd Gulf War Memorial Service, held against all precedent outside London. He specialises in making organ adaptations of music for other instruments and in attempting a rescue of dull or incongruous hymnody.

John's carefully selected programme took us, not only on this emotional journey, but on a journey through the ages of exquisite composition by a perfectly chosen selection of composers and a journey on the canvas of sound that the Harrison and Harrison organ, that we are lucky enough to have in our care here at St John's, can produce. John also entertained with some of his own re-works of hymn tunes, again exploring the numerous colours of the organ throughout. We are truly grateful to John for his continued support to music making in St John's and record our thanks to him, in particular, for this outstanding recital.

The organ in St John's was installed in 1938, with a generous donation from the Misses MacRae in memory of their late mother. In 1969 the organ was extended with the addition of a Positive division. In 2008 Harrison and Harrison's of Durham completed the latest upgrade. This involved removing the Positive division of 1969, rotating it 90 degrees and recycling the soundboard to create the Nave division, complete with new casing and pipe work and extensive revoicing to bring the sound more in line with the timbre of the rest of the instrument.

## PROGRAMME FOR THE RECITAL

**Introduction and Coronation March  
(from Poppea)  
Claudio Monteverdi (1567 - 1643),  
arr. John R. Turner**

**Ode to Freedom and Joy  
(from 1st Symphony)  
Johannes Brahms (1833 - 1897),  
arr. John R Turner**

**Suite Gothique  
Leon Boellmann (1862 - 1897)  
Introduction / Menuet Gothique /  
Priere a Notre Dame / Toccata**

**Five old Scottish tunes  
arr. John R Turner  
Bunessan / The Rowantree / Glasgow /  
Kelvingrove / Highland Cathedral**

**Allegretto  
(from the 4th, 'Italian', Symphony)  
Felix Mendelssohn (1809 - 1847),  
arr. W. T. Best**

**Prelude & Fugue in D minor  
Mendelssohn**

**Orb and Sceptre  
(Coronation March 1953)  
William Walton (1902 - 1983),  
arr. Robert Gower**

## ST JOHN'S CHURCH, DUMFRIES

The organ was built by Harrison & Harrison in 1938, incorporating some material from the old instrument. It occupies a chamber on the south side of the chancel.



In 1969 a Positive division was added at the head of the nave, and alterations were made to the Swell and Pedal Organs.

In 2008 the organ was restored and the Positive re-designed as a Nave division, with a new case in the south aisle.

### PEDAL ORGAN

*1.	Harmonic Bass	(from 21)	32
2.	Open Wood		16
3.	Sub Bass	(from 21)	16
4.	Octave Wood	(from 2)	8
5.	Flute	(from 21)	8
6.	Octave Quint	(from 21)	5 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>3</sub>
7.	Nachthorn	(from 21)	4
8.	Recorder	(from 21)	2
* 9.	Trombone		16

*I* Choir to Pedal    *II* Great to Pedal  
*III* Swell to Pedal    *IV* Swell Octave to Pedal

### CHOIR ORGAN

(enclosed)

10.	Open Diapason		8
11.	Viole d'Orchestre		8
12.	Claribel Flute		8
13.	Harmonic Flute		4
14.	Clarinet		8

*V* Swell to Choir    *VI* Octave  
*VII* Sub Octave

### NAVE ORGAN (2008)

(on Choir keyboard)

*15.	Open Diapason	(bass from 23)	8
16.	Stopped Diapason		8
17.	Principal		4
*18.	Fifteenth		2
*19.	Mixture		III
*20.	Trumpet		8

*VIII* Nave on Great

### GREAT ORGAN

21.	Bourdon	16
22.	Large Open Diapason	8
23.	Small Open Diapason	8
24.	Hohl Flute	8
25.	Octave	4
26.	Wald Flute	4
27.	Octave Quint	2 <sup>2</sup> / <sub>3</sub>
28.	Super Octave	2

*IX* Choir to Great    *X* Swell to Great

### SWELL ORGAN

29.	Lieblich Gedeckt	8
30.	Salicional	8
31.	Voix Célestes	(tenor c) 8
32.	Gemshorn	4
33.	Fifteenth	2
34.	Mixture	III
35.	Double Trumpet	16
36.	Trumpet	8
*37.	Oboe	8

*XI* Tremulant  
*XII* Octave    *XIII* Sub Octave  
*XIV* Unison Off

\* 2008

### ACCESSORIES

Eight general pistons and general cancel  
Six foot pistons to the Pedal Organ  
Six pistons to the Choir and Nave Organs  
Six pistons to the Great Organ  
Six pistons to the Swell Organ  
Reversible pistons: *I-III, V, X, 1*  
Reversible foot pistons: *II, VIII, X*  
Eight piston memory levels  
Combination couplers: *Pedal to Swell pistons*  
*Great and Pedal combinations coupled*  
Balanced expression pedals to the Choir and Swell Organs

The actions are electro-pneumatic  
The manual compass is 58 notes; the pedal 30 notes

## HARRISON & HARRISON

1938, 2008

# Quartz update

## Simon Lidwell reports on Easter with Quartz



The Prayerful creation of the chrysalis and butterfly throughout Lent have been described online (<https://www.wordsmithcrafts.co.uk/Quartz/category/arts/transformation-2023/>). That's not all Quartz has been up to though! What follows is an account of our Easter weekend activities. For a more detailed description please visit the Quartz website and search or find it on the blog at the above link.

### Whithorn Pilgrimage

This year we took advantage of the space between Good Friday and Easter Sunday to go on a journey of discovery. After meeting by the cocoon [see elsewhere in this edition – Ed] in St John's we drove west, collecting other travellers on the way. We were welcomed at the Whithorn Trust centre for a break and a much appreciated coffee!

It was here that we were introduced to the historical setting for the story of St Ninian as well as the current activities of the trust. Continuing the ancient tradition that shaped the very walls of the town they welcome tourists and pilgrims on the St Ninian's way. They also run projects to develop skills in local young people to keep the crafts alive that are required to maintain the traditional buildings in the area. We were also able to look

round their exhibition which tells the "Whithorn Story" using archaeological finds and cutting-edge interpretation techniques to make the evidence easier to appreciate – like a reconstructed sculpture of the face of one of the medieval bishops based on the bones they found.

Then leaving our cars parked, we continued on foot through the woods. The path leads through a wood, sometimes filled with bluebells although we were there too early for a full carpet. The walk through the woodland gives time to slow down, to notice the details of growing things, and to prepare. We used the moving through space to change one's mindset. Practising opening our minds to experience sensations both physical and spiritual that we can become less aware of in the grind of daily life. There is a short rise just before the path reaches the beach, and the beach itself is made from stones banked up by the waves. This means that when you walk the final few steps, the path lifts you up as you reach the beach. There the horizon opens up to give you a view of where the Solway meets the Irish sea.

The beach is a very different environment to the forest. There is a changed quality in ambient light too. Just standing and experiencing the refreshment of the place without the need to exercise intellect is refreshing for the soul.

The surface of St Ninian's cave and cliff face is covered with crosses and names carved by visitors. This tradition spans well over a thousand years. What is it about being in the same physical place as a legend that is so special?

We stopped at the cave for lunch. Some took time to wander and think while others enjoyed chatting, or looking at the view. After a while we took the opportunity to cast a pewter pilgrim badge as a record of our journey. The badge is based on one found near Holywood near Dumfries, and was probably carried there by a pilgrim. At one time there was an industry producing







badges like these. I compare them to the way in which people will buy a still from their favourite film, frame it, and hang it on their wall. We are physical creatures and there is a connection between the things we can touch and see and those we cannot. For some this may simply be a reminder of a memory, for others there is a deeper significance.

And then it was time to return. Walking back through the woodland and letting the experience settle. For some this was not the first time they had visited the cave, and for many it won't be the last. Each journey is different though and perhaps some of those who travelled will post about their experiences in the comments!

### *Easter Sunday*

This Forest Church experience was set up to provide participants with the opportunity to immerse themselves in the gospel stories. In particular we drew on the stories where the disciples meet with Jesus at the water's edge, and share fish roasted over coals with him. Meeting at St John's again most people walked along the river, journeying towards the encounter.

It is a short walk from town, but the scrub woodland and ruined Abbey provide a boundary to create a sanctuary of wild space hidden right next to the A75. Fire and fish were ready at a popular spot for people to gather and enjoy swimming in the river. Easter was early enough in the year for us to be sharing the beach with only one other group of teenagers though – and occasional dog walkers.

As well as being welcomed by fish roasting on coals those who came brought food with them. We shared the fire and enjoyed discovering what everyone had brought. As we sat and cooked,

we took it in turns to tell sections of the story of Easter and our experiences of it. Starting in the upper room where Jesus gathered with his disciples to break bread and drink wine. The stories were interlaced with reflections and songs. The story wove its way through time until we met it again in a shared experience of sitting by water and enjoying the sharing of food and drink in the presence of Jesus.

As a mark of the day some people chose to cast a cross in a simple soapstone mould. The simple act of melting the metal, purifying it with fire and then watching it take the shape prepared for it, can be a heartfelt and symbolic action. The cross which someone casts can be carried as a reminder and connection to the experience throughout the year.

### *Forest Church*

We continue to meet at Quartz Forest Church on the third Sunday in the Month. However, in June we will be making the weekend of the 24/25th special because it is close to midsummer. On Saturday we will be preparing a labyrinth at Caerlaverock Castle to help people encounter the early inhabitants of the place. These were the monks of Holm Cultram Abbey in 1160 at which time both sides of the Solway were part of the kingdom of Scotland. On the Sunday we plan to meet on Wardlaw hill and enjoy the views over the Solway and the company of the trees in the iron age ring fort. More information is available on the website either to help you prepare, or read about how the weekend went!

# Spring Fling 2023 *Tatyana Bondarenko*

## Стаття про СпрінгФлінг

Про те, що наближається арт-фестиваль СпрінгФлінг, Дамфріз знав уже давно, у повітрі витало передчуття свята. Дивовижно довга і ніжна весна, з такими ранніми пролісками і нарцисами не могла не розлитися в безлічі студій і творчих майстерень, ну ось таке це дивовижне чарівне місто. Його краса і тиша дуже спонукають до творчості. Чи знають місцеві жителі, як їм пощастило з місцем розташування, кліматом і духом міста, чи це саме вони, багато поколінь городян, створили для себе таке місто мрії? Думаю, і те, і інше. Я навіть не могла мріяти стати колись частиною настільки майстерно витканого арт-простору, ось де по-справжньому відчувається, що в сімі народів вільного світу Україна, з її наново відродженою історією, тихими музичними, мальовничими й поетичними талантами, зрозуміла й потрібна.

СпрінгФлінг буклети в прекрасному дизайні можна було знайти скрізь, де бувають люди, які цікавляться мистецтвом. Про це багато говорили за сніданками та вечереми, на карті з форзацу буклету малювали маршрути, жонгливали іменами друзів, учасників фестивалю, показували вже придбані в них роботи, збиралися групами за інтересами обговорити учасників, приймали вдома гостей з інших куточків світу, які спеціально приїхали відвідати фестиваль. Ми знали, що студія Andy Brook буде відкрита для відвідування в ці дні. Це так особливо збиратися на арт-бал!

У церкві святого Джонса теж було багато інформації. Мені було цікаво, як так вийшло, що саме цю церкву обрали талановиті художники й музиканти, що саме тут виявилось затишно жовто-блакитному метелику, що саме тут працює найталановитіший музикант Джимі Брант і що тут найособливіша, завжди різна музика. Думаю, що Бог тут у всіх проявах прекрасного, у любові, дружбі та мирі. А я тут опинилася тому, що церква носить ім'я мого батька.

Маргарет Ньюленд розповіла всім українцям на розмовному клубі, куди саме вона рекомендує на фестивалі піти обов'язково. Наша ідея організувати автобус не встигла навіть перетворитися на задачу, як її вже реалізував Давид... і його компанія для відвідування різних маршрутів фестивалю і студій, що знаходяться на відстані. Безумовно, дуже комфортно, якщо хтось підкаже тобі, куди саме піти, подбає, організує гнучкий таймінг, нагодує, тоді по-справжньому можна розслабитися, відчути себе в безпеці, отримати задоволення, і на якийсь час уявити, що вдома теж усе добре.

Українці вирішили, що погода спонукає відвідати незвіданий мальовничий регіон...

Приголомшливі нескінченні ландшафти, високий ступінь свободи, достатньо особистого простору і навіть самотності, щасливі люди, які знайшли себе, які займаються улюбленою справою, відкриті, талановиті, щедри на пояснення і підтримку, багатогранні, легкі, запрошували переїхати до них і дочекатися дня, коли сніг засипле дороги, і самотність буде абсолютною і лікувальною.

Ботанік арт для мене має вигляд, як картинки з книжки з ботаніки, мої улюблені. Відповідаючи на запитання щодо структури рослини, я отримала високу оцінку і щасливий квиток у медичний інститут і своє професійне життя. У Глорія Ньюлан я купила собі будяк.

Казковий світ Кеті Ван Гоуп виглядає як елемент психодрами. Є така гра "Чарівний ліс", у якому ти можеш бути будь-яким персонажем реальним або чарівним. Можна обрати собі персонажа і пограти в його життя, намалювати сцену з такого життя. Це дуже серйозний і дієвий психотерапевтичний прийом, яким лікується і посттравматичний синдром, і різні неврози, і біль, що не купірується. А ще це цікава гра для вечірнього дозвілля.

Усі студії були прекрасні, і я не очікувала, що мені сподобаються меблі, книжкові полиці у вигляді орлиних крил у студії Даніела Лацея.

Наступного дня ми були в студії Енді Брукка, який, як ви знаєте, займається склом і вітражами. Там усі мали змогу працювати зі склом, у деякого дуже гарно виходило зробити собі свої українські символи. Там же бачили нашого метелика. Яка проста, прекрасна і глибока була ідея його створення групою Quartz: плетений і паперовий кокон, що поступово створюється впродовж шести тижнів Великого посту і перетворюється на лялечку, з якої в день Великодня з'являється вітражний метелик. Ідея проєкту була вкрита таємницею, викликала багато запитань, так і мало бути, бо багато змін усередині нас відбувається непомітно, згідно з Божим промислом, і займає якийсь час.

Усі українські біженці, які відвідували церкву, були залучені до проєкту значущим чином, і дизайн метелика безпосередньо посилається на жовто-блакитний колір українського прапора.

Всередину кокона було вкладено слова і фрази, написані членами громади, що представляють елементи їхнього життя, які вони хотіли б залишити в минулому, а також надії і мрії на майбутнє. Поступово ці слова були покриті папером ручної роботи, щоб приховати їх у структурі, що нагадує гробницю. Усім парафіянам пропонувалося записати слова і фрази або намалювати малюнок на смужках цигаркового паперу. Українці писали своєю мовою свої надії, страхи та мрії про майбутнє.

У період, що передує Великодню, кокон виставили в передній частині церкви, навколо нього багато таємниці, творчості та надії. Метелик випурхнув у день Святого Воскресіння.

У польоті метелика, а також у грі світла на різних скляних поверхнях і крізь них відбивається безліч бажань і молитов. Мистецтво здатне переступити через повсякденні аспекти життя і наповнити їх новим несподіваним змістом.

Метелик прожив у церкві шість тижнів до свята П'ятидесятниці і, може, прилетить до нас іще, наша церква була з нею абсолютно особливою, ніжною, доброю, мудрою і нескінченно незбагненою.

Залучайте українців до своїх проєктів, навчіть нас, приходьте підтримати наші проєкти, і ми станемо пристойними городянами, і будемо разом плакати від радості в день перемоги України у війні, бо це буде наша спільна перемога...

Залучайте українців до своїх проєктів, навчіть нас, приходьте підтримати наші проєкти, і ми станемо пристойними городянами, і будемо разом плакати від радості в день перемоги України у війні, бо це буде наша спільна перемога краси над руйнуваннями, добра над злом, правди над брехнею, любові над ненавистю, свободи над рабством, життя над смертю.

Dumfries had known for some time that the Spring Fling Art Festival was coming, the anticipation of the festivities was in the air. A surprisingly long and gentle spring, with such early snowdrops and daffodils couldn't help but spill over into the many studios and creative workshops, well that's the kind of wonderful magical town it is. Its beauty and tranquillity are a great encouragement to create. Do the locals know how lucky they are with the location, climate and spirit of the town, or have they, the many generations of residents, created such a dream town? I think it's both. I couldn't even dream of ever being part of such a skilfully woven art space, this is where it truly feels like the family of the free world, Ukraine, with its rediscovered history and quiet musical, pictorial and poetic talents, is understood and needed.

Spring Fling booklets in beautiful design could be found wherever people with an interest in the arts go. There was a lot of talking about it at breakfast and dinner, drawing routes on a map from the front of the booklet, juggling the names of friends, festival participants, showing works already purchased from them, gathering in interest groups to discuss the participants, hosting guests from other parts of the world who came especially to visit the festival at home. We knew that Andy Brooke's studio would be open to the public on these days. It's so special to get together for an art ball!

There was a lot of information at St. John's too. I wondered how it was that this particular church was chosen by talented artists and musicians, that this was where the yellow and blue butterfly

settled; that this is where the most talented musician Jamie Brand works and this is where the most special, always different, music is made. I think God is here in all expressions of beauty, love, friendship and peace. And I ended up here because the church bears my father's name.

Margaret Newlands told all the Ukrainians at the club where we all meet and recommended we should definitely go to the festival. We hadn't even thought about a bus before Thornhill Community Transport were there, offering tours to studios near and far. Of course, it's very comforting if someone tells you exactly where to go, takes care of you, arranges flexible timing, feeds you, then you can really relax, feel safe, enjoy yourself and imagine for a while that everything is fine at home too.

The Ukrainians felt that the beautiful weather made exploration of the region an attractive idea.

Stunning endless landscapes, a high degree of freedom, enough personal space and even solitude, happy people finding themselves, doing what they love, open, talented, generous with explanation and support, multifaceted, light.

The botanical art looks to me like pictures from a botany book, my favourite. Answering a question on plant structure gave me high marks and a lucky ticket to medical school and my professional life. At Gloria Newlan's I bought myself a thistle.

Kathy Van Hoppe's fairytale world looks like an element of psychodrama. There's a game called The Magic Forest where you can be any character, real or magical. You can choose a character and play their life, paint a scene from that life. This is a very serious and effective psychotherapeutic technique for treating post-traumatic syndrome and various neuroses. It is also an interesting game for evening entertainment.

All the studios were beautiful, and I didn't expect to like the furniture. But then I saw Daniel Lacy's eagle winged bookshelves!

The next day we were in the studio of Andy Brooke, who, as you know, works in glass and stained glass. There everybody had an opportunity to work with glass. Some people were very good at making their own Ukrainian symbols. There you also saw our butterfly. What a simple, beautiful and profound idea the Quartz group had for its creation: a woven and paper cocoon which



is gradually created during the six weeks of Lent and transforms into a chrysalis from which a stained glass butterfly emerges on

Easter Day. The idea of the project was shrouded in mystery and aroused many questions; it had to be that way, because many changes inside us happen unnoticed, according to God's providence, and take a while to happen.

All the Ukrainian refugees who attended the church were involved in the project in a meaningful way, and the design of the butterfly directly alludes to the yellow and blue colour of the Ukrainian flag.

Inside the cocoon were words and phrases written by members of the community, representing elements of their lives that they wished to leave behind, as well as hopes and dreams for the future. Gradually, these words were covered with handmade paper to conceal them in a tomb-like structure. All parishioners were invited to write down the words and phrases or draw a drawing on strips of tissue paper. Ukrainians wrote their hopes, fears and dreams for the future in their own language.

In the period leading up to Easter, the cocoon was displayed at the front of the church, surrounded by mystery, creativity and hope. A butterfly flies out on Holy Resurrection Day.

In the flight of the butterfly, and in the play of light on and through the various glass surfaces, many wishes and prayers are reflected. Art can transcend the everyday aspects of life and fill them with new and unexpected meaning.

The butterfly lived in the church for six weeks before Pentecost and may come to us again; our church was very special with her, gentle, kind, wise and infinitely inscrutable.

Involve Ukrainians in your projects, teach us, come and support our projects and we will become decent citizens and we will cry with joy together on the day Ukraine wins the war, because it will be our common victory of beauty over destruction, good over evil, truth over lie, love over hate, freedom over slavery, life over death.



### **Anne Butler – Exhibitor**

This year's Spring Fling was a huge success partly due to the amazing weather we had. My garden resembled a festival site on Sunday afternoon!

I am lucky enough to live in the beautiful village of Durisdeer and have a studio in my garden which is very much my workspace.

After studying at Leith School of Art, Spring Fling was my

first ever exhibition. That was over ten years ago and I have exhibited in Spring Fling every year since. I now exhibit in lots of galleries in the UK and am grateful to Spring Fling for giving me the initial confidence I needed to approach galleries.

Spring Fling is more special than exhibiting in galleries because it gives artists like me the opportunity to invite visitors into our studios and share what we do. I have had so many interesting conversations with people about why they buy art, from new extensions to anniversaries and even to celebrate recovering from illness. It is always a great weekend and this year I had people in my studio from Bristol to the Black Isle!

---

### **Heather Gibbings – on the Green Tour**

Another lovely Spring Fling day out.

Drove from Dumfries to Thornhill for lunch via stops in Auldgirth, Moniaive and Penpont and back by way of Sanquhar and Durisdeer. Viewed drawings and paintings, pottery, weaving and textile work. Sat in lovely studios and gardens eating home made biscuits and buns, drinking tea and coffee and chatting to friends old and new.

Highlight was Nate the blacksmith in Thornhill, who forged a tiny house complete with roof, windows and door from a piece of metal while we watched him at work.

Left Dumfries at 10 o'clock back by 5.30.

---

### **David Kerr – Thornhill Community Transport**



I have written, at length, before about driving for the SF tours, and the pleasure it is to do, and to witness the wonder, perhaps especially of local people, in discovering parts of D&G they've never visited, and the wealth of talent resident here. People so often remark on the joy of having the tour planned out for them, the lack of need for any map reading, the roads they might not have been bold

enough to tackle themselves, the view out from the elevated position the minibus offers and the enormous variety and quality of the works on display, as well as the enthusiasm and talent of their creators. We're expecting to run tours again next year...do consider joining us!

## TRANSFORMATION: ANDY BROOKE

# Transformation

## *a church community project*

Working with a different community over the Lent period leading to Easter, I was part of a project to bring symbolism and mystery into the worship setting at St John's church, Dumfries. Working with other members of the Quartz creative group attached to the church, my job was to create a fitting conclusion to the six-week congregational project.

The church community also includes a number of Ukrainian refugees who have been attending for the past year or so. One of the aims was to include them in a meaningful way.

The concept was simple - a wicker and paper cocoon which is gradually built up over the six weeks of Lent to become a chrysalis, from which a stained glass butterfly emerges for Easter Day. The design of the butterfly made direct reference to the yellow and blue of the Ukrainian flag.

Within the cocoon are embedded words and phrases written by members of the community to represent elements of their life they would like to leave in the past, as well as hopes and dreams for the future. Gradually these words were covered over with hand-made paper to conceal them within a tomb-like structure.

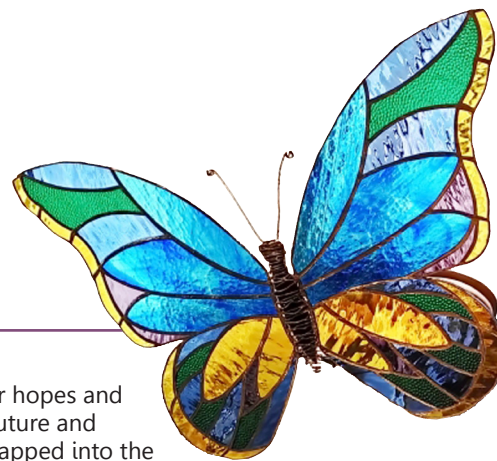
Folk were invited to write down words and phrases or draw a picture on strips of tissue paper. Ukrainians wrote in their own

language their hopes and fears for the future and these were wrapped into the fabric of the shell.

During the period leading up to Easter the cocoon was displayed at the front of the church and many questions were asked about its purpose. Indeed, its very existence was queried more than once by bemused individuals! This sense of mystery and unknown purpose was a key part of the concept to involve people's hearts and minds in a transforming process. Often in life we are unaware of transformation happening in and around us.

A sense of expectation was generated in the lead up to Easter Sunday when the butterfly was revealed. There are many longings and prayers represented by the flight of the butterfly, as well as the play of light on and through the different glass surfaces. Art has a way of transcending the everyday aspects of life and re-loading them with new and genuine meaning.

The butterfly had a further six weeks of life in the church as it flew there until the feast of Pentecost.



### *A visual timeline of events*



Simon and Alison help create the wicker armature for the cocoon.



Alison explains to our Ukrainian friends how to apply the strips of paper to the wicker frame with plenty of pva glue!



Anna creates a personal drawn response to the project.



Many different people contributed words and images to the cocoon. More layers of hopes and fears are added...



The unfinished cocoon is displayed in the nave of the church as a visible sign of transformation...

*Continued over...*



The second stage of transformation was to make paper to cover the words on the cocoon, creating a tomb-like structure ...a chrysalis.



Yellow paper is added to the blue as part of the colour theme.



The chrysalis is ready...



Simon reaches the tomb and finds it has been opened...



The butterfly has emerged from the chrysalis/tomb. It flies high above the congregation with bright welcoming wings, expressing the joy of Easter.

### ***Kabod kabod - Hebrew for "glorious in abundance and splendour"***

A modern Celtic prayer - God of glory, God of springtime, shine within me with your glorious Light. Let your gloriousness reflect from me out into the whole world, so that as the physical world is glorious, so my inner world will be glorious, and so together we can make the world a place of your Divine kabod kabod.

**Amen.\***

The Celtic Year, David Cole 2020

# *Ukrainians – in Scotland: How's it gaun'?*

*Steven Ballard has been finding out*

Thursday February 24, 2022 - a day not seen since The Second World War on which a sovereign country was invaded by its European neighbour. Western intelligence had been warning about this for months, and as ever with Vladimir Putin, where falsehood counts for truth, he denied his intention to invade. Many people thought that, given the size of Russia, and the formidability of its army, the war would take a few weeks at most, and then Kyiv would fall. This was not to be, and many Ukrainians who had never engaged in military service before, left their professions and courageously rose up in the defence of their nation.

It is the same spirit that we find in the Ukrainians who have come to settle here in Dumfries, and it's a joy that a good number have found fellowship in our church.

I was tasked, in this article, to ask our Ukrainian friends to reflect on their life in Scotland so far, to express their immediate hopes for the future and what more we might offer as a church. Also, on a sadder note, we felt it was important to get their views on the state of the war currently.

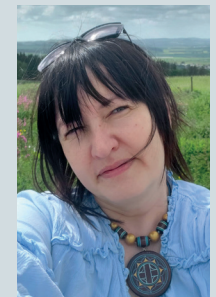
I met, initially, with Inna, the mother of Daniela, one of the youngest members of our congregation, and also Ludmilla and Tatyana, all three of whom are faithful worshippers.



Inna and Daniela



Ludmilla



Tatyana

What came out strongly was the gratitude they had for the friendliness they have found on the part of the people of Scotland, and their willingness to help. They are also very thankful to us as a church for our welcome, and for making our services available in their own language. When I asked what more we could offer they didn't manage to come up with anything. Inna did, though, mention how fortunate she feels that despite all their unforeseen circumstances, Daniela can grow up in a happy childhood, making friends at her nursery.

There are still many Ukrainians living in hotel accommodation, and they shared with me the stresses this places upon them, where there is little opportunity for private living. Some have been fortunate in finding host families, or other rented accommodation, but many still hope that a host family will offer a home.

Tatyana, who was formerly a doctor in Ukraine, painted a vivid picture of how dreadful the situation was when she left, and still is today, perhaps even more so, given the progression of the war. It is a situation where so many buildings including factories, schools, hospitals, and private homes, have been destroyed, and now lie in heaps of rubble. The more fortunate occupants manage to escape, but many more are still being killed. It has been estimated that around 150 Ukrainian people a day are now dying in Bakhmut. There are so many stories left untold, but Tatyana offered a very moving one of a desperate race through Ukraine to get her father, in his early nineties, the medical care he needed when the social infrastructure was falling apart, and medications were in short supply.

Here, in Dumfries and Galloway, the Ukrainians support a battalion of the army and raise funds to help these soldiers. They have photos of them on their mobile phones, and the local Ukrainians grieve constantly over the death of those who have fallen in battle. Ludmilla showed me a photo of one young man who had died, and of the woman who is now his widow.

Artur, formerly a senior chef in the army, who has recently come to the UK to rejoin his wife after spending at least three months on the front line near Kherson, told me his story also. As a young man he had experience of military service, but he was then occupied in the carpentry trade. Later, he gained the skills of a chef, which the army put to good use. When the call to volunteer came, Artur bravely stepped up to do his duty for his country.

There is so much that Artur spoke about which I wish we had the space to include, but briefly he referred to his early days in the army when he laid obstacles to prevent Russian tank movements. Then later, near the front line, when he and his



Artur

fellows constantly had to move their position for their own safety to escape the Russian shelling. Artur spoke very highly of his commanding officers and how they did their utmost to protect their men. I shared with Artur, as he is a chef, the English saying that "an army fights on its stomach", and this met with his broad smile.

Even in a war zone it's important to mark national holidays and Artur showed me some of the photos of the wonderful buffets that he, as a chef responsible for training eight others, had prepared. Artur has now received a compassionate discharge from the army because of his wife's medical condition, but they were very sorry to see him go.

Artur showed me his commendations for service, of which naturally, he is extremely proud. One expressed, "Gratitude for conscientious performance of official duties, exemplary military discipline, significant personal contribution to strengthening the defence capabilities of Ukraine, courage and heroism, demonstrated during the defence of the integrity of Ukraine. It ends with a thank you to Junior Sergeant, Artur Ivanaovych Gandaburyak. Artur has every reason to be proud of his achievements and of all his people who with such determination and courage are defending their freedom.

