

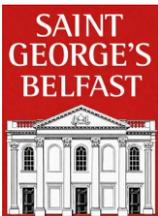
# SAINT GEORGE'S CHURCH

## PARISH MAGAZINE

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

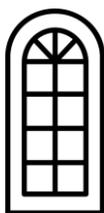


*The Women at the Tomb* by Fra Angelico (c. 1395–1455)



APRIL 2026





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## NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

St George's Church Parish Magazine is published on the Sunday nearest the first day of the next month. Views expressed by contributors do not represent the views of the parish.

## THANKS & ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Selby Nesbitt, for music, calendar and additional content.  
Tony Merrick, for folding and binding.  
This magazine uses icons downloaded from [www.flaticon.com](http://www.flaticon.com).



## LETTER FROM THE RECTOR

The Reverend Brian Stewart

DEAR FRIENDS IN CHRIST,

Christ has risen! Alleluia! A very happy and joyous Easter to you all. In the midst of so much suffering, war and destruction in our world we need to hear again the good news that the Lord is risen and that death does not have the final word.

As we continue to pray in our liturgies for a lasting and just peace in the war-torn regions of the world, I would ask you to remember the ancient Christian churches and communities throughout the Middle East who have suffered so much and are still very vulnerable. If you want to know more about these long established churches, some dating back nearly 2,000 years, then just Google 'Christian churches in the Middle East'. That will bring up a wealth of information about a wide variety of churches in Israel, Palestine, Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Iran, Armenia and many other places.

Please also continue to pray for the work and mission of the Anglican church in the region, 'The Church of Jerusalem and the Middle East' whose Al-Ahli Christian Arab Hospital in Gaza we support by our donations.

St. George's Day this year falls on Thursday 23rd April. We will celebrate our parish patron saint in two ways. Firstly, we will have a Choral Festival Evensong on Sunday 19th April at 5.00pm. The preacher will be the Rev'd Canon Tom Layden S.J., who is well known to us all in St. George's. The St. George's Ladies' S.S.A Choir will sing, and premiere, a new anthem *Sabra and the Dragon* specially written for them by Anita Mawhinney, from a poem by a choir member, Elizabeth McConnell, and commissioned by Jacqui Dickinson and Gillian Adair. There will be a reception in the hall afterwards. Then on Thursday 23rd April there will be a celebration of the Eucharist at 1.00pm.

The preacher on Sunday 19th April at 11.00am will be the Rev'd Dr. Maithrie White-Dundas. Dr. White-Dundas currently serves as an assistant priest in St. Thomas's Parish on the Lisburn Road.

As many of you may have noticed the shelves from the library room have now been relocated to the corner of the hall. I'm very grateful to Tony Merrick for doing this work. Jack McCormick and Meisam Khalili have also been a great help in moving the books. We will have a borrowing system in

place for the books in the hall so parishioners can borrow them to read at home. The library room will then be refurbished as a comfortable meeting room for groups of up to a dozen people for meetings and study. Important reference books and archive material will remain in the room for anyone to consult.

I'd like to thank all those who responded to my request for volunteers to polish brass and tend to the grounds. We now have a full team of polishers and the results of their work already can be seen on the altar rail. Quite a few people also volunteered to help care for the grounds and plants in the churchyard, but a few more would be very welcome. The idea is to divide the churchyard into small manageable sections with one or two people responsible for each. Please speak to Judith Fawcett, who is kindly coordinating the care of the churchyard.

Last month, I asked if anyone would like to pay for a new Tunicle in memory of a loved one. The Tunicle is a liturgical vestment to be worn chiefly at a 11.00am Choral Eucharist and other major festivals by the Sub-Deacon, a role currently filled by Meisam Khalili. We're looking to buy four of them, in white, red, green and violet, to match the existing vestments. Two of them, the white and green, have been kindly funded by parishioners. If you would like to contribute to the cost of the red and violet ones then please speak to me. They are estimated to cost about £400 to £500 pounds each. If you would like to contribute towards these, perhaps in memory of a loved one, then please contact me in the next few weeks.

Finally, two things: firstly, Ascension Day will be on Thursday 14th May this year and there will be a Choral Eucharist at 7.30pm. Secondly, if anyone is in need of a pastoral visit or Holy Communion at home or in care, then please ring me on 07902792080 to arrange a call.

**YOURS SINCERELY IN CHRIST,**

**BRIAN STEWART**

### **SUPPORT ST. GEORGE'S BY QR CODE**

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





## MUSIC & WORSHIP

### **THURSDAY 2ND APRIL, MAUNDY THURSDAY**

#### **7:30PM Choral Eucharist, Parish Men**

Setting	Three part mass - Byrd
Gradual Hymn	270
Offertory Hymn	273
Communion Hymn	307
Motet	Ubi Caritas - Duruflé
Hymn	268

### **FRIDAY 3RD APRIL, GOOD FRIDAY THREE HOUR SERVICE**

#### **12:00PM - 1:30PM, Trebles**

Hymns	92, 90 (v1, 4, 5), 83
Anthems	Ex ore innocentium - Ireland God be in my head - Walford-Davies

#### **1:00PM - 1:30pm, Trebles and Gentlemen**

Anthem	Miserere Mei - Allegri
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#### **1:30PM - 3:00PM, Parish Men**

Hymn	84
Motet	Crux Fidelis - John IV King of Portugal
Psalm	22: 1-22
Hymns	95, 517, 439

#### **7:30PM, Parish Men**

Compline & Reproaches

### **SATURDAY 4TH APRIL, EASTER EVE**

#### **7:30PM Choral Eucharist, Chamber Choir**

Setting	Jackson in G
Gradual Hymn	117
Hymn	137
Offertory Hymn	113
Communion Hymn	93
Motet	Laudate Dominum - Mozart
Hymn	120

### **SUNDAY 5TH APRIL, EASTER DAY**

#### **11:00AM Choral Eucharist, Parish Choir**

Hymn	110
Setting	Little organ mass - Haydn
Psalm	118: 1-2, 14-24
Gradual Hymn	112
Offertory Hymn	117

Motet Amor Vincit Omnia  
Hymn 120

**5:00PM Evening Prayer, Choir Holiday**

**SUNDAY 12TH APRIL, EASTER 1**

**11:00AM Eucharist, Choir Holiday**

Hymn 139  
Gradual Hymn 106  
Offertory Hymn 352  
Hymn 336

**5:00PM Evening Prayer, Choir Holiday**

**SUNDAY 19TH APRIL, EASTER 2**

**11:00AM Choral Eucharist, Parish Choir**

Processional hymn 443  
Psalm 116 1-3,10-17  
Setting Ireland in C  
Gradual Hymn 121  
Offertory Hymn 124  
Communion 295  
Anthem Let all mortal flesh - Bairstow  
Hymn 361

**5:00PM Patronal Festival Evensong, St George's SSA**

Hymn 362  
Response Sumsion three part upper voices  
Psalm 16 1-11  
Canticles St Paul's Service - Marsh  
Anthem Sabra and the Dragon - Mawhinney  
Hymn 334

**SUNDAY 26TH APRIL, EASTER 3**

**11:00AM Choral Eucharist, Parish Choir**

Processional hymn 457  
Psalm 23  
Setting Ireland in C  
Gradual Hymn 282  
Offertory Hymn 376  
Communion 307  
Motet Jubilate Deo - Britten  
Hymn 463

**5:00PM BCP Eucharist, Parish Men**

Setting Martin Shaw  
Motet In Pace - Lassus  
Hymns 338, 376, 457



## APRIL CALENDAR HOLY WEEK & EASTER

### APRIL 1ST

10:30am

Eucharist: Fr Keith Suckling

### APRIL 2ND

1:00pm

Eucharist: Fr Terence Dunlop

**MAUNDY THURSDAY**

7:30pm

Choral Eucharist, Stripping of the Altar & Vigil: The Rector

### APRIL 3RD

10:30 am

Stations of the Cross: The Rector

**GOOD FRIDAY**

12:00 – 3:00 pm

The Three Hours and Liturgy of the Cross: Conductor – The Rector

7:30 pm

Compline and Reproaches: The Rector & Fr Dunlop

### APRIL 4TH

7:30 pm

Easter Liturgy, Holy Baptism Confirmation & First Eucharist of Easter: The Bishop, The Rector & Fr Graeme Pollock

**EASTER EVE**

### APRIL 5TH

9:30 am

Eucharist: Fr Terence Dunlop

**EASTER DAY**

11:00 am

Choral Eucharist: The Rector

Preacher: The Rector

Readings: Acts 10: 34-43; 1 Colossians 3: 1-4; John 20: 1-18

Reader: Warden

Intercessor: Archdeacon Harte

Servers: Banji Akinyele, Agape Laoye, Mark Claney

Tea and Coffee: Valerie Roberts, Helen Crowe, Holly Ferres

5:00 pm

Evensong: The Rector

Lessons: Song of Solomon 3: 2-5; 8: 6-7; John 20: 11-18 (Paddy Sloan)

### APRIL 8TH

10:30am

Eucharist: The Rector

### APRIL 12TH

9:30 am

Eucharist: The Rector

**2ND SUNDAY OF EASTER**

11:00 am

Eucharist: The Rector

Preacher: The Rector

Readings: Acts 2: 14a, 22-32; 1 Peter 1: 3-9; John 20: 19-31

Reader: Karen Brett

Intercessor: Anne McBride

Servers: Tony Merrick, Janet Sandikli, Jonny Calder

Tea and Coffee: Steven McQuitty, Jack McCormick

5:00 pm | **Evening Prayer:** The Rector  
Readings: Daniel 6: 1-23; Mark 15: 46 – 16: 8 (Canon Tom Layden)

**APRIL 15TH**

10:30am | **Eucharist:** The Rector

**APRIL 19TH**

9.30 am | **Eucharist:** The Rector

11:00 am | **Choral Eucharist:** The Rector

Preacher: Rev'd Maithrie White-Dundas

Readings: Acts 2: 14a, 36-41; 1 Peter 1: 17-23; Luke 24: 13-35

Reader: Mark Claney

Intercessor: George Woodman

Servers: Omolewa Akinyele, Stevev McQuitty, Mark Claney

Tea and Coffee: Mina Kelly, Richard Oldfield

5:00 pm | **Choral Festival Evensong:** The Rector

Preacher: Rev'd Canon Tom Layden SJ

Lessons: Haggai 1: 13 – 2: 9; 1 Corinthians 3: 10-17 (The Rector)

**APRIL 22ND**

10:30am | **Eucharist:** The Rector

**APRIL 26TH**

9.30 am | **Eucharist:** Rev'd Terence Dunlop

11.00am | **Choral Eucharist:** Fr Keith Suckling

Readings: Acts 2: 42-47; 1 Peter 2: 19-25; John 10: 1-10

Reader: Meisam Khalili

Intercessor: Pam Tilson

Servers: Banji Akinyele, Mark Claney, Tony Merrick

Tea and Coffee: Catherine Hunter, Rosejane Peck

5:00 pm | **Choral Eucharist:** Fr Brian Crowe

Lessons: 1 Peter 2: 11-17; John 16: 16-22 (Janet Sandikli)

**APRIL 29TH**

10:30am | **Eucharist:** Fr Keith Suckling

**APRIL 30TH**

1:00pm | **Eucharist:** The Rector & Fr Graeme Pollock

The Walsingham Group meets at this Eucharist – all welcome



## NEWS & NOTICES

### ~ HAPPY BIRTHDAY, GEOFFREY! ~

Geoffrey May celebrated his 103rd birthday on Saturday 28th March. We held a small reception to mark his birthday after the 9.30am Eucharist on Sunday 29th March. Geoffrey is a weekly attendee at the 9.30am Eucharist and also regularly reads the lessons at Evensong at 5.00pm. Anyone who has heard him read a lesson will realise what a wonderful voice he has and how beautifully he reads. Our warmest good wishes to Geoffrey for his 103rd birthday and many more.

### ~ SPECIAL FESTIVAL EVENSONG - 19TH APRIL, 5.00PM ~

Join us for a Special Festival Evensong on 19th April at 5.00pm, as we look ahead to our Patronal Festival of St. George (23rd April). The service will include a guest preacher and the premiere of a new choral work, *Sabra and the Dragon*. Refreshments will be served afterwards in the Parish Hall.

### ~ PARISH CHOIR NEWS ~

The Parish Choir is delighted to welcome three new probationers; Valentine, Penelope and Margaret. These three siblings will be joined by their twin brothers in September. It is wonderful to see them as they begin their musical journey with the church.

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

The SSA choir will be singing at the Patronal Festival Evensong on April 19th and would really love to have a large number of the congregation to attend. The Choir will perform the Premiere of *Sabra and the Dragon* a work commissioned by two members of the choir and dedicated to the St George's SSA choir and to the women of St George's. Anita Mawhinney, the composer, will be invited to join us and we are grateful to our sabbatical travelling colleague, Ms Elizabeth McConnell for her poem to which Anita has sensitively set the music.

The 'Odd Crocs' concert will take place on the 12th of June, an event performed by choir members but on instruments and devices not usually

heard or seen on a Sunday. This is a choir fund raising concert, there are no tickets, but you are encouraged to use the yellow envelopes to show your appreciation!

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

~ David, Maeve, Mark and Daniel

### ~ FLOWERS AT ST GEORGE'S ~

Flowers have decorated the sanctuary and been part of our worship here at St George's to the glory of God over the years and we are grateful to those ladies who have arranged them faithfully each week.

One of those stalwarts is our very own Brenda Claney. Arriving armed with buckets of flowers and greenery she could be found skilfully placing individual stems which would be transformed into lovely arrangements at the altar. Or directing operations in the church where helpers would be working on decorations for the nave and narthex. Or soaking oasis in the flower room where the various vases, pots and containers are stored. Or instructing newly arrived recruits in the art of simple flower arranging.

After more than 25 years service, Brenda has decided it's time to hang up her scissors and secateurs. She will be missed by us all as the creative director of all things floral and we thank her for her invaluable contribution.

We always welcome volunteers (not just ladies!) to help, and especially with the festive flowers for Harvest, Christmas and Easter. We plan to be down at St George's on Saturday 4th April at 10.00am this year to prepare the church for the Easter season. You don't have to be an expert florist, just a willing pair of hands. So do please join us.

~ Anne

### ~ THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT ~

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

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

~ Martin

## EASTER (GENERAL) VESTRY 2026

The Easter Vestry was held on Sunday 22nd March at 12.30pm.  
The following appointments/elections were made:

### **CHURCHWARDENS**

**Rector's** James Dingley  
**People's** Martin Taggart

### **GLEBEWARDENS**

**Rector's:** Tony Merrick  
**People's:** Pam Tilson

### **SELECT VESTRY**

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Rector	Michael McGlade
Fr William Odling-Smee	Lyn McGlade
Archdeacon Harte	Kieran McGlade
Philip Black	Adam Gadd
Jim McIlmoyle	William Miscampbell
Peter Hunter	Matty Jeffrey
Madeleine Welch	Francis Fitzgibbon

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### **PAROCHIAL NOMINATORS COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Anne McBride  
Matty Jeffrey  
Pam Tilson  
Philip Black

### **DIOCESAN SYNOD MEMBERS**

George Woodman  
Lyn McGlade

### **UNDER 35 SYNOD MEMBER**

Sergio Carlos-Temez

### **SUPPLEMENTAL MEMBERS**

Michael McGlade  
Michael Clendinning  
Kieran McGlade  
Tony Merrick

**SAINT GEORGE'S SINGERS**  
**Saint George's Sinfonia and Soloists**

*Present*

**AN EASTER CONCERT OF WORKS BY G.F. HANDEL**

Chandos Anthem: My Song Shall be Always

Vespers Psalm: Dixit Dominus



The Chandos Portrait of George Frideric Handel (1685-1759).  
Painted c. 1720 by unknown artist

**WEDNESDAY, 15TH APRIL AT 7:45PM**

**Saint George's Church, High Street, Belfast**

**Tickets £20 (students £10)**

**AVAILABLE FROM CHOIR MEMBERS AND AT THE DOOR,**

**OR BY REQUEST TO: [contactstgeorges@gmail.com](mailto:contactstgeorges@gmail.com)**



## THE LUCKY STICK

by Paul McLaughlin

The old spinning mill had seen better days. Linen, for so long the cloth of choice at tables, ordinary and elite, around the world, had been usurped by upstart polyesters from the Far East. Flax, regarded as an expensive luxury, was left in the ground to rot and the Victorian building that had provided work for hundreds in North Belfast over the years had been allowed to fall into dereliction.

I had seen it only from a distance before that morning in late Autumn 1998 when my wife's Uncle Davy, back home from California for a holiday, insisted that we pay it a visit. "It's been restored as an artists' hub," he said, "Whatever that means. And I hear there's a fella working there who's a genius with woodwork". I nodded along with him, but all the time wondering how a man who had lived in the USA for nearly fifty years and only came home, as he still called it, every few years could have such inside information. "Josie Gorman told me *all* yesterday down in the American Bar", he explained, as if anticipating further questioning. "We just ask for big Eamonn".

So, an hour later, we found ourselves parked in the appropriately named Flax Street, wrapped up well against a biting Northerly wind and heading up well-worn stone steps from a grey and depressing hallway onto a second floor divided into small units by wooden, glass-windowed partitions. The room, for it had once been one, still looked enormous despite the dividers and just as drearily forbidding as it must have seemed to the multitude of young people who laboured here, most often in horrendous conditions. Ear-splitting noise, lung-infecting fibres and dust and a dampness that penetrated bones were *normal* for most days in the history of this place. Today, dark and Satanic certainly, but to our joint relief, the jailhouse décor belied the fact that the old mill was a hive of industry with artists and artisans of all shades working away happily. An emotion not normally associated with the flax mills of my native city.

Big Eamonn didn't disappoint. He *was* big, jolly in a typically Belfast kind of way with jokes like jags and black as ink. His unit was big too and impressive in a sort of unfinished way and he was very welcoming. Even inviting us to join his Irish set dancing class. Uncle Davy was having none of it. "I'm looking for a blackthorn stick, big man," he said as we both scanned rows and rows of 'blanks' as they called the raw branches that

hung high and seasoning around the artist's workshop. "A good one, mind you, and not at tourist prices either," he said, desperately trying to regain an accent that had long disappeared like morning mist off the Golden Gate bridge. "I may live in San Francisco", he said, "but I'm born and bred right here long before you were thought of." Eamonn laughed that off, quoted £30 for the stick, which would be ready in a fortnight, and offered a bargaining hand, his palm damp with spittle. They then argued as only two Belfast men can, loudly, until Eamonn said, "Twenty is what it will cost me to make, but you can have it and the luck that goes with it." So the stick was bought and collected the day before Uncle Davy flew from Belfast to London to catch his connecting flight to New York, with the two men bantering each other until we were out the studio door. Eamonn's final shot was a killer. "You'll never have luck with it, Yank."

Well, former ship's captain and lawyer David Gault was a man of logic and mathematics. He didn't believe in luck, good or bad, but may have had second thoughts as he came out of the gents' rest room at Terminal Five in Heathrow airport to find that his beautiful, twenty-pound blackthorn stick had been spirited away by an opportunistic thief. He had had it and the luck that went with it for less than 24 hours.

## A REFLECTION ON THE LIFE OF LADY PATRICIA RAMSAY, ON THE 140TH ANNIVERSARY OF HER BIRTH

by Jack McCormick

On the morning of **17th March 1886**, the Feast of Saint Patrick, Patron of Ireland, a new Princess was born in Buckingham Palace; Victoria Patricia Helena Elizabeth, granddaughter of Queen Victoria, and youngest child of Prince Arthur, Duke of Connaught and Strathearn, and Princess Louise Margaret of Prussia. The Princess's parents, mindful of both her lineage and her birthday, named her "Patricia" in the Saint's honour. That single detail, a royal child, bearing the name of Ireland's apostle, felt like a small bridge between worlds: the grandeur of empire and the faith of its people.

**A Childhood of Duty and Distance:** The new Princess was baptised on the 1st of May at the Parish Church of St. Anne, Bagshot, and her godparents included Queen Victoria, Ernst II, Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, Princess Elizabeth Anna of Prussia, Prince Wilhelm of Prussia (later Kaiser Wilhelm II), Princess Helena of Schleswig-Holstein and Prince Albert of Prussia. Described by Queen Victoria as "a dear, pretty little thing", Her Royal Highness's earliest years were steeped in royal ritual. Prince Arthur upheld the strict dignity of what was still the House of Saxe-Coburg and Goth. Yet, beneath the discipline, The Duchess of Connaught's Prussian heritage lent an artistic air to the family circle. Princess Patricia, or 'Patsy', as she was known in the family, grew up at Bagshot Park in Surrey; a rambling estate of trees and sunlight where she and her siblings were educated under governesses. As the Duke's military career drew him abroad, Princess Patricia's world widened. The Princess accompanied her parents on postings to India, and later to Canada, where her father served as Governor-General. There, amid the vast landscapes of the Dominion, she found a freedom of spirit rare for a royal daughter. Canadians adored her, her easy warmth and her unpretentious manner. So great was their affection that in 1917, her likeness appeared on the Canadian one-dollar note; a gentle symbol of a monarchy made human.

**The Princess and Her Regiment:** In 1918, Princess Patricia's name was given to a new battalion: Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry; the first Canadian regiment to fight on the Western Front. She personally designed their regimental colours, embroidering a crimson flag with a central coronet and her initials "VP." The men called themselves the "Princess Pats," a name they still bear with pride. Throughout the Great War she followed their fortunes with devotion, knitting comforts, sending letters, and serving as Colonel-in-Chief from 1918 until her death more than half a century later. The regiment still marks her birthday as a regimental

feast. Funded by Andrew Hamilton Gault, the regiment was the last privately raised regiment in the British Empire. Princess Patricia's quiet faithfulness, unheralded, unsentimental, outlasted the age of empire that created it.

**Love Over Rank:** When Patricia and her older sister Princess Margaret, known in the family as 'Daisy', reached adulthood, they were the two most eligible Princesses in Europe, and, thus, their uncle, the Prince of Wales, was determined they would marry a European king or Crown Prince. This he achieved for Princess Margaret, who married the Crown Prince of Sweden. Princess Patricia had been the intended bride for the Crown Prince; however, it was Princess Margaret with whom he fell in love. Princess Patricia continued travelling the world with her parents, who had not succeeded in their wishes to pair her with one of the sons of the Portuguese King Carlos I. Her parents persisted, but Princess Patricia insisted marriage "wasn't for her", rejecting Adolphus Frederick of Mecklenburg-Strelitz and Grand Duke Michael Alexandrovich of Russia ... indeed the British newspapers announced that Princess Patricia and the Grand Duke were to marry, but neither knew anything about it, and Buckingham Palace issued a denial. However, two years later, the two were "paired" at a social engagement. It wasn't until Princess Patricia met her father's aide-de-camp that she changed her tune about marriage. In February 1919, she married Commander Alexander Ramsay, a naval officer and younger son of the Earl of Dalhousie. Their wedding, held in Westminster Abbey, drew thousands to the streets; a public spectacle crowned by a private choice. On that day, Princess Patricia did something extraordinary: she renounced her royal title and style. Fully her own desire, rather than a condition of marrying a commoner, she was no longer Her Royal Highness Princess Patricia of Connaught, but simply Lady Patricia Ramsay, granted precedence under Royal Warrant before the Marchionesses of England. It was not rebellion, but freedom. She kept her place within the royal family yet chose to live without the constant framing of rank. Lady Patricia and Captain Ramsay settled at Clarence House, then later at a quieter estate, Ramsay Lodge, by the waters of Mar Lodge in Aberdeenshire. Lady Patricia did not retire from life; she entered it more fully; she painted, gardened, raised her only son Alexander, and maintained her regimental duties - she had stepped gracefully from the gilded stage, into the ordinary light.

**The Artist's Hand:** Like her mother, Lady Patricia possessed an artist's temperament. Her preferred medium was watercolour: still landscapes, soft winter light, muted greens and blues. In later life she became an Honorary Member of the Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colours, and her work hung in several London exhibitions. Painting offered

her what royal life rarely could: stillness.

**A Life of Service and Stillness:** Lady Patricia has been described as “a princess who gave up grandeur for grace.” She continued to attend royal occasions, such as weddings and funerals, but always as Lady Patricia, never as the lost princess. However, she did insist on riding to and walking in procession at the Coronations of 1937 and 1952 with the other Princesses of the Blood Royal. On the 8th October 1972, Sir Alexander (he had been made a Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian Order in 1937) died at their home in Surrey, Ribsden Holt, which had been bequeathed to them by Lady Patricia’s aunt, Princess Louise. To the end of her days Lady Patricia remained a quiet link to the Victorian world that had birthed her. When she died on 12 January 1974, at the age of eighty-seven, she was buried beside her husband at Frogmore, the Royal Burial Ground near Windsor. Her funeral was modest, attended by The Queen and members of the family. Lady Patricia was survived by her only son, Captain Alexander Ramsay of Mar, who died in 2000. His wife, Flora, the 21st Lady Saltoun, died in 2024, and was, by my calculations, the last surviving great-grandchild in-law of Queen Victoria. You have probably never heard of Lady Saltoun, however, she was usually present on the balcony of Buckingham Palace for Trooping the Colour, until a decade or so ago.

The story of Lady Patricia Ramsay’s life is a glimpse of a rare balance; born to splendour, yet born on the Feast of, and named after, a former slave whose humble and pastoral ministry inspires us still today; drawn to simplicity; bound by duty, yet quietly sovereign in her own choices. She reminds us that grace is not the absence of structure, but the freedom found within it. Lady Patricia Ramsay’s life reads almost like a psalm of contentment: “She walked among the mighty without pretence, and among the humble without fear.”



*Admiral the Hon Sir Alexander Ramsay and Lady Patricia Ramsay (1969)*



**GIOVANNI BATTISTA PERGOLESI**  
*Septem verba a Christo in cruce moriente prolata*  
by Francis FitzGibbon

Giovanni Battista Pergolesi was an Italian baroque composer, violinist, and organist. He is considered one of the greatest Italian musicians of the first half of the 18th century and one of the most important representatives of the Neapolitan school. He was born on 4th January 1710 in Jesi, in what is now the Province of Ancona (then part of the Papal States). His family name was Draghi, but, having moved to Jesi from Pergola, the family was called Pergolesi, meaning 'of Pergola'. He studied music in Jesi under a local musician, Francesco Santi, before going to Naples in 1725, where he studied under Gaetano Greco and Francesco Feo. He attended the Conservatorio dei Poveri at Naples, where he earned a high reputation as a violinist. On leaving the Naples conservatory in 1731, he won some renown by performing the oratorio in two parts *La fenice sul rogo, o vero La morte di San Giuseppe* ('The Phoenix on the Pyre', or 'The Death of Saint Joseph'), and the *dramma sacro* in three acts, *Li prodigi della divina grazia nella conversione e morte di san Guglielmo duca d'Aquitania* ('The Miracles of Divine Grace in the Conversion and Death of Saint William, Duke of Aquitaine'). He spent most of his brief life working for aristocratic patrons such as Ferdinando Colonna, Prince of Stigliano, and Domenico Marzio Carafa, Duke of Maddaloni.

In 1732 he was appointed maestro di cappella to the prince of Stigliano at Naples and produced a Neapolitan opera buffa, *Lo frate 'nnammorato*, and a mass (probably his *Mass in D*). Both were well received. In 1733 his opera seria *Il prigionier superbo* that was produced. But it was the comic *intermezzo* *La serva padrona* inserted between the acts of *Il prigionier superbo* that achieved success. In 1734 Pergolesi was appointed deputy *maestro di cappella* of Naples, and in May he went to Rome to direct the performance of his *Mass in F*. His subsequent operas met with only occasional success. Despite his short life and few years of activity, he managed to create works of the highest artistic value and historical importance, such as the *intermezzo* *La serva padrona* (*The Maid Turned Mistress*), which played an important role in the development and diffusion of the opera buffa in Europe, *L'Olimpiade*, considered 'one of the finest opera seria of the early eighteenth century', and his *Stabat Mater*, which is among the most important works of baroque sacred music of all time.

In addition, he also composed a wide variety of sacred music,

oratorios, operas, orchestral sinfonias and concertos, keyboard sonatas, and trio sonatas. His health began to fail, and in 1736 he left Naples for the Franciscan monastery at Pozzuoli, where he finished his last work, the celebrated *Stabat Mater*. He was cared for latterly by the Franciscan Friars and died in extreme poverty of Tuberculosis aged 26 on 16th March 1736 and was buried at the cathedral at Pozzuoli.

The *Septem verba a Christo in cruce moriente prolata* was composed between 1730-1736. It is not a drama or a Passion, but a meditative didactic oratorio. It was probably intended for an extra-liturgical devotion on Good Friday between noon and three o'clock in the afternoon. According to Reinhard Fehling, who has edited a critical edition of the score and parts, this tradition had spread from South America through Spain and all over Europe under the name of the *Devotion of the three hours of the agony of Christ*.

The history of this fascinating work is as shrouded in mystery as its probable composer, and almost resembles an Indiana Jones adventure in its final discovery and authentication during a long period of musicological 'archaeology'. The title of the work and the assertion of Pergolesi's authorship have haunted scholars for a century or so, initially on the sole basis of an incomplete manuscript, catalogued in the Bavarian state library since 1882 and regarded there as genuine. It was known of in the 1930s when two manuscripts of monastic origin drawn up in the middle 18th century came to light. In 1936, Bertha Antonia Wallner, discovered a complete set of manuscript parts, made in the Abbey of Metten about 1760. Her stylistic analysis, published in 1936 confirmed that it must be as indicated on the flyleaf of the manuscript, an early work by 'Sig, Pergolese'. However her discovery and assessment of the work did not lead to a published edition.

One of the first to recognise it as by Pergolesi was the conductor Hermann Scherchen, who found a set of manuscript parts in the Zurich Central library in the 1950s, by drawing attention to it, more than an hour long and colourfully scored for four soloists, trumpet, two horns, harp, lute strings organ and basso continuo, calling it 'one of the most heartfelt works of art, full of profound tenderness and an all-conquering sense of beauty'. Without any knowledge of the other manuscript, he drew up a score from the Zurich source. A stylistically unreliable handwritten vocal score by him was subsequently used by Pergolesi scholars who had in the meantime undergone a paradigm shift in which only original manuscripts by Pergolesi were an acceptable guarantee of authenticity

However his judgement remained unheeded. It was only the discovery of two further unknown manuscripts and performing parts in the abbeys of Kremsmünster in Lower Austria and Aldersbach in 2009 by the scholar Reinhard Fehling, which prompted the firm of Breitkopf & Härtel to

publish a critical edition based on his latest scholarly findings. These sources were identical with those already known. In the course of its eventful history, its covers and attribution of authorship had gone missing, with the result that it had remained unnoticed. The Abbey where it was added to the inventory in 1760 is regarded as one of the chief bastions of Italian music north of the Alps, moreover it possesses reliable documentation concerning the relations with Italy of earlier musicians based there. Of these, Franz Sparry, 1740 above all had particularly extensive contacts with members of the Neapolitan School, such as Durante, Feo, Leo and Pergolesi. He brought back some of their manuscripts to the Abbey. Hence it became possible to establish a direct connection with the origins of the work for the first time.

Subsequently Reinhold Fehling assembled the various manuscript sources and in so doing showed that there had been a documented performance tradition of it in the mid-18th century in the Protestant city of Zurich in the early 1770s. Importantly, the recognition that all the manuscripts stem in principle from the same state of the work, which made it possible for the first time to prepare a coherent, clear-cut score using the Kremsmünster manuscript as principal source and the other manuscripts as comparative sources. Extensive and detailed comparisons with similar works by Pergolesi such as the related oratorio *La morte di San Giuseppe*, (also recently discovered) have also revealed far reaching parallels that tend to corroborate the work's authenticity.

The *Septem verba a Christo in cruce moriente prolata*, is a cycle of seven cantatas each consisting of two arias. The Gospel text of the *Seven last Words from the Cross* is sung on the Gregorian reciting note. Then the first aria is sung by Jesus on the Cross (usually a bass, except for the second cantata where the part is sung by a tenor). In his role as *doctor optimus*, the best of all teachers, he explains the meaning of the word from the Cross that is placed in Latin translation as the heading of each cantata. The second aria is intended for the *Anima* (Faithful Soul), who listens to him reverently (soprano, alto or tenor). He or she formulates the answer of the 'Bride' to the heavenly 'Bridegroom'.

In what is probably the only comparable cantata cycle with the *Seven Last Words* as a subject, the Protestant cycle in German by Christoph Graupner (1743), the individual cantatas are longer, each comprising three recitatives, two arias and a concluding chorale, because they were to be performed not as a continuous whole but on seven consecutive Sundays. In Pergolesi, unlike Graupner's cantata cycle, there are only occasional recitatives (five in all). These are highly expressive *accompagnati*, but the work as a whole depends first and foremost on its arias. The dialogue between Christ and Anima is an essentially rhetorical one, predominately

conducted in fourteen ‘discourses in music’ but not an intimate conversation. A duet between Jesus and the Faithful Soul, of the kind customary in Bach’s dialogue cantatas will be possible only in heaven. The decisive factors in the success of an interpretation are the ability to sustain the *da capo* form of the arias and the necessary imagination to perform these *da capo* sections in a creative manner and with musical and dramatic flair.

In the only complete modern recording, René Jacobs with the Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin (Harmonia Mundi, 2013) — is itself an editorial reconstruction, based on the published edition by Breitkopf & Härtel, but also drawing on the Metten manuscript for ornamentation and Zürich for vocal disposition, and informed by the Kremsmünster and Aldersbach strands. This recording represents the first coherent synthesis of the Central-European manuscript tradition. The recording therefore documents not just Pergolesi’s lost original, but the archaeology of its transmission.

### **Reference Recording:**

Giovanni Battista Pergolesi *Septem verba a Christo in cruce moriente prolata*. Sophie Karthäuser, Christophe Duaux, Julien Behr, Konstantin Wolff. Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin, Dir René Jacobs. Harmonia Mundi HMC 902155

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## **~ SOLUTIONS TO THE MARCH DRAGON’S CHALLENGE ~**

### **Across**

1. CANDLESTICK, 6. RIPEN, 7. UNDUE, 8. UNITE, 10. FIX IT, 12. ABATE, 15. DENIM, 16. INTRO, 17. ELLEN, 18. NORTHUMBRIA

### **Down**

1. CIRCULATION, 2. LANCE, 3. SCUFF, 4. INDEX, 5. KLEPTOMANIA, 9. TUT, 11. ICE, 13. AFTER, 14. EPOCH, 15. DREAM

## LENTEN BLUES

by Paul McLaughlin

Stop all the sweets  
And refreeze the ice cream  
The confectioner's loss  
Is a desert father's dream.  
Silence the whinging  
Tell the martyrs to preach  
Their singular sacrifices  
Out of my reach.

Brag about prayer  
Like fruit on the bough  
Accessed on tip toe  
And holier than thou  
But keep to thyself  
All the joy you forgo  
I'm fasting so slowly  
That I don't want to know.

The days are like treacle  
The nights dark and deep  
My weakness is wakening  
My strength is in sleep  
Pour away the pop  
Spoon the sugar from me  
Stop all the sweets  
Until I am free.



## DISCIPLINE

by George Herbert

Throw away thy rod,  
Throw away thy wrath:  
O my God,  
Take the gentle path.

For my heart's desire  
Unto thine is bent:  
I aspire  
To a full consent.

Not a word or look  
I affect to own,  
But by book,  
And thy book alone.

Though I fail, I weep:  
Though I halt in pace,  
Yet I creep  
To the throne of grace.

Then let wrath remove;  
Love will do the deed:  
For with love  
Stony hearts will bleed.

Love is swift of foot;  
Love's a man of war,  
And can shoot,  
And can hit from far.

Who can 'scape his bow?  
That which wrought on thee,  
Brought thee low,  
Needs must work on me.

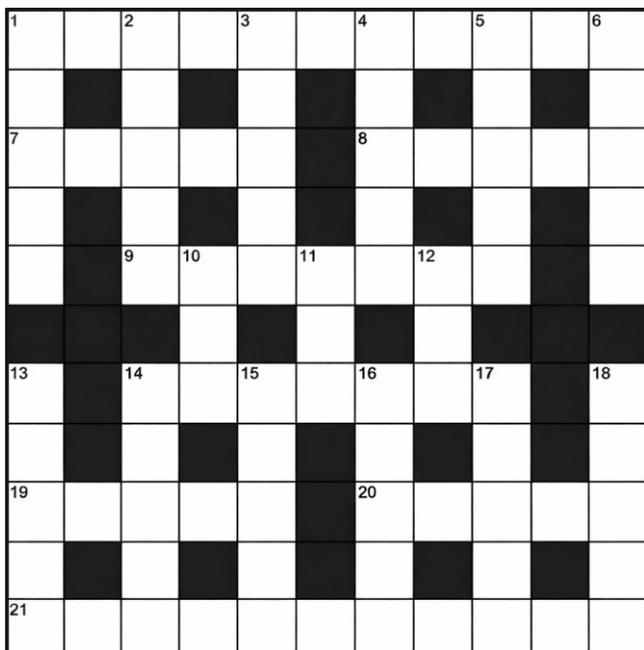
Throw away thy rod;  
Though man frailties hath,  
Thou art God:  
Throw away thy wrath.

*Poem submitted by Geoffrey May*



## THE DRAGON'S CHALLENGE

set by Martagon



### ACROSS

- 1 Daring, risk-taking (11)
- 7 Desert haven (5)
- 8 Good \_\_\_ (repaired) (2, 3)
- 9 Whenever (7)
- 14 Greek vowel (7)
- 19 Ancient Roman port (5)
- 20 Ancient Greek marketplace (5)
- 21 Inspiring (11)

### DOWN

- 1 Residence (5)
- 2 Goddess of the hearth (5)
- 3 Apt to pry (5)
- 4 Savory taste (5)
- 5 Fraction of a pound (5)
- 6 Planted (5)
- 10 Snooze (3)
- 11 Numerical prefix (3)
- 12 Chairman \_\_\_ Zedong (3)
- 13 Higher than (5)
- 14 French sword (5)
- 15 Muddle (5)
- 16 Alpaca relative (5)
- 17 Model, \_\_\_ Campbell (5)
- 18 Metallic noise (5)

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Solutions in next  
month's issue

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