



THE ROCK

Anglican Parish of
Cabersham Saint Peter,
Dunedin, New Zealand

July 2019—Trinity



Nelson prospects

By The Vicar

Ask any moderately informed New Zealand Anglican what the Nelson diocese stands for and they will answer “Its pronounced evangelical churchmanship.” It need not necessarily have been that way. The first bishop of Nelson, Hobhouse, was a Selwyn appointee and like him was a pre-tractarian high churchman, but health concerns compelled his early retirement in 1864.

Evangelical Lockdown

Enter on the scene Andrew Burn Suter, a pronounced evangelical who stayed many years in office and who left his mark on the cultural life of the city, hence the Suter art gallery. In addition to his choice of parish clergy of one particular sort another factor came into play, the increasing dominance of clergy trained at Moore Theological College, Sydney, one of the more hard line evangelical colleges of the Anglican Communion.

The Peter Sutton Counter-Revolution

As the 1960s dawned Nelson diocese laity were tired of being in an evangelical one party state led by a succession of Moore College Australian bishops. In two successive electoral Synods they blocked the attempts of their clergy to foist yet another hard line evangelical on them and in this situation of electoral deadlock the bench of bishops stepped in and chose the relatively unknown and recently appointed Dean of Dunedin, Peter Sutton, to be the next bishop of Nelson.

At 43 Sutton was relatively young to be a bishop, and was the first New Zealander to hold the position. For the next 25 years he would try hard to respond to the frustrations of the Nelson diocese laity and to his own inclinations with a string of clergy appointments brought in from outside the diocese who would make for a more balanced kind of Anglican identity and who would move the diocese up the candle to some extent. So it was that the Reverend Gavin Yates, a well-known radio broadcaster, was brought in from the Wellington diocese to what was a successful ministry at Westport and then to be Dean of the Cathedral. When he left that position the Reverend Michael Hurd was invited to move from St Michael’s, Andersons Bay, to what would be a happy and successful ministry at Nelson Cathedral. Under these Deans the Cathedral became a dependable focus of traditional Anglican practice, informed preaching and warm pastoral engagement. Stoke parish church nearby would also become a place of classical Anglicanism in these years.

All this was fairly moderate—there was still not a whiff of incense to be had in the diocese—and there were still plenty of evangelical clergy around but Nelson had now become a mixed economy.

However, the Peter Sutton counter-revolution, or should one call it counter-reformation, was a precarious achievement.

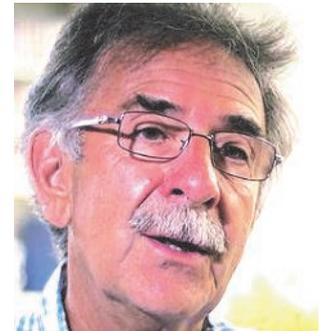


Christ Church Cathedral, Nelson.

PHOTO.: WIKIPEDIA COMMONS.

Countering the Counter-Revolution

Incoming bishops often bring with them a string of relational connections from their former ministries which they can activate to offer to parochial nominators in the choice of new Vicars. Peter Sutton did that but in the end he came to the end of his inventory of clergy and ordinands he could influence and persuade to sustain the mixed economy. The evangelical clergy bided their time, waited Sutton out and struck decisively at the next episcopal electoral Synod. They had had a nasty shock and were determined to roll back the counter-revolution. So it was that the Reverend Derek Eaton, a former CMS missionary, Provost of Cairo Cathedral and inspiringly successful Vicar of All Saints’ Sumner, in Christchurch, was elected bishop. He was charming, able and ruthlessly efficient in putting the evangelical humpty dumpty back together again.



Bishop Derek Eaton.

PHOTO.: WWW.BISHOPDALE.AC.NZ.

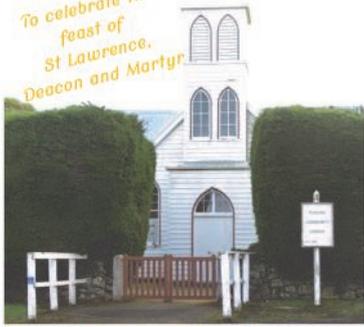
The Financial Sinews of Success

Derek Eaton didn’t just move clergy on and move in clergy of the right persuasion. He also reorganised the financial and investment base of the diocese. New business people were brought in to the diocesan Trust Board. Unlike the Dunedin Trust Board, which invests principally in shares and bonds, its Nelson counterpart invests primarily in commercial property. In order not to generate relational difficulties with the Nelson business community its investments are mostly in Christchurch and Dunedin. Readers might be surprised at some of its Dunedin floor space ownerships.

Commercial property investments can be a tricky business but Nelson
(Continued on page 4)

Expedition to Pukehiki Church

To celebrate the feast of St Lawrence, Deacon and Martyr



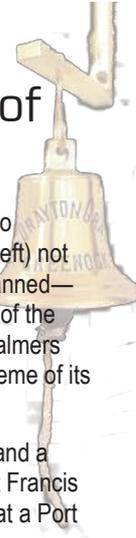
10 August 2019
11am Eucharist
Followed by lunch
at the Portobello Hotel

Note the change of date

After Pukehiki, St Mary Star of the Sea

With the parish expedition to Pukehiki Church (see at left) not yet undertaken, the next visit is planned—this time a voyage to St Mary Star of the Sea, a Catholic Church in Port Chalmers which is known for the maritime theme of its interior.

Departure is Saturday, 5 October and a Service to celebrate the feast of St Francis of Assisi will be followed by lunch at a Port Chalmers restaurant.



Uncle Joe's features

Long-standing Rock advertiser Uncle Joe's featured on a recent (Sunday, 21 July 2019) episode of *Hyundai Country Calendar* on TVNZ One.

The episode traced the development of the Uncle Joe's business from a one-woman, one-product walnut producer to the present day with a considerable staff and a wide range of products sourced from nuts and seeds. Particularly interesting is the way in which the business expanded in many cases simply by wondering what to do with by-products. For example, the decision to produce walnut and hazelnut spreads as a way to use the solid matter left over after nuts have been pressed for oil. All together an interesting and impressive story.



More online:
At time of writing the episode is available to view at *TVNZ OnDemand*.

<https://www.tvnz.co.nz/shows/country-calendar/2019-s-country-calendar-stories/episode-20>



Postcards coming

A set of four postcards—pictured below—has been designed and will shortly be available for purchase by visitors and parishioners.



The idea arose during the training session for people who are going to host guided tours during the new “open hours” at Saint Peter’s. It is expected many visitors will like to have a memento to take away with them.

And perhaps parishioners will enjoy using images of their parish Church when corresponding with friends and family.

The four postcards cover aspects of parish life: one is of the Church building, another the grounds, the third the interior of the Church and the fourth features characters from both our early and recent history.



Book of Common Prayer on display

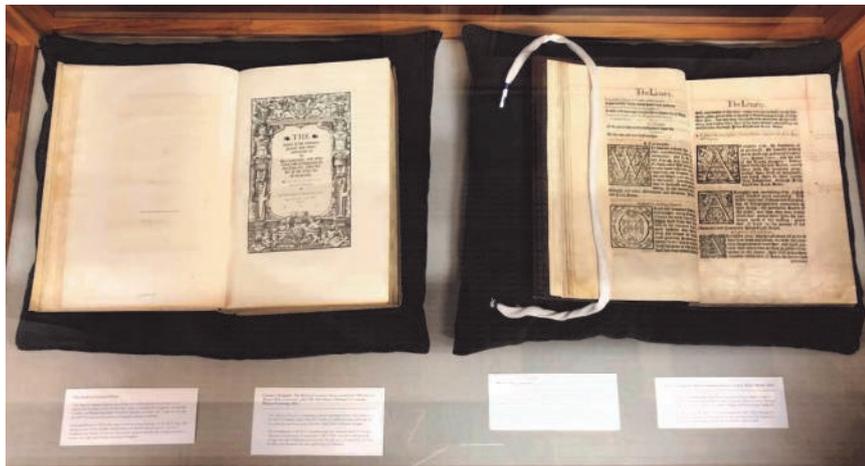
By Shelley Scoular



On display at the third floor of Dunedin City Library at the moment is an exhibition of *The Book of Common Prayer* curated by Julian Smith, the Reed Rare Books and Special Collections Librarian.

The books come from the Reed Liturgy Collection, a subset of the Reed Rare Books Collection.

Chronologically the display begins with a facsimile of the first *Book of Common Prayer* (1549) compiled by Thomas Cranmer.



Two of the editions of *The Book of Common Prayer* at present on display in the Dunedin Public Library.

PHOTO'S: JILLBOWIE.

Twelve other examples are on display, ranging from a 1636 original from the reign of Charles I to a 1902 edition published to commemorate the Coronation of Edward VII.

The famous 1662 version was published after the Restoration of the monarchy as *The Book of Common Prayer* was not allowed to be used during the Commonwealth Protectorate. The exhibition does not have an actual 1662 edition, but there is a 1669 Charles II version which follows the same style as the one we use at our 8.00 am service on Sundays.

My favourite is a small 1890s edition with a hand embroidered cover (pictured at right).

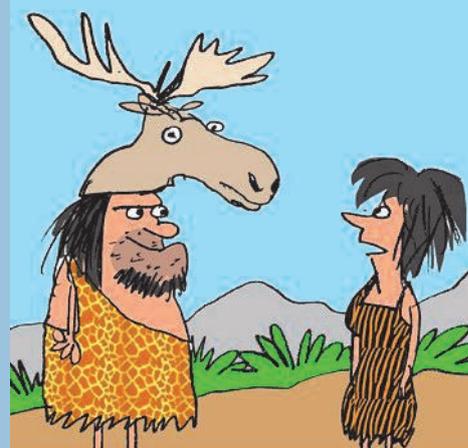
The exhibition will be available until 17 October 2019.

Thank you to Julian Smith for the information and Jill Bowie for the photographs. 📷

[Shelley Scoular, Julian Smith and Jill Bowie are members of the staff of Dunedin Public Libraries.—Ed.]



The Frolicsome Friar



"Grog, you look great! Did you moose your hair?"

SOURCE: WWW.HOWTOGEEK.COM.

The Articles of Religion

ISSUED BY THE CONVOCATION OF CLERGY OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN 1571

XXV. Of the Sacraments.

Sacraments ordained of Christ be not only badges or XXVI. Of the Unworthiness of the Ministers, which hinders not the effect of the Sacraments.

Although in the visible Church the evil be ever mingled with the good, and sometimes the evil have chief authority in the Ministration of the Word and Sacraments, yet forasmuch as they do not the same in their own name, but in Christ's, and do minister by his commission and authority, we may use their Ministry, both in hearing the Word of God, and in receiving the Sacraments. Neither is the effect of Christ's ordinance taken away by their wickedness, nor the grace of God's gifts diminished from such as by faith, and rightly, do receive the Sacraments ministered unto them; which be effectual, because of Christ's institution and promise, although they be ministered by evil men.

Nevertheless, it appertaineth to the discipline of the Church, that inquiry be made of evil Ministers, and that they be accused by those that have knowledge of their offences; and finally, being found guilty, by just judgment be deposed.

Letters

The Rock welcomes letters to the Editor. Letters are subject to selection and, if selected, to editing for length and house style. Letters may be:

Posted to: The Editor of The Rock,
c/- The Vicarage, 57 Baker Street,
Caversham,
Dunedin, N.Z. 9012

Emailed to: TheRockEditor@stpeterscaversham.org.nz

Ask The Vicar

For answers to questions doctrinal, spiritual and liturgical.

Write to: Ask The Vicar, c/- The Vicarage as above

Or email: AskTheVicar@stpeterscaversham.org.nz

ASK THE VESTRY

Questions about the secular life and fabric of the parish may be:

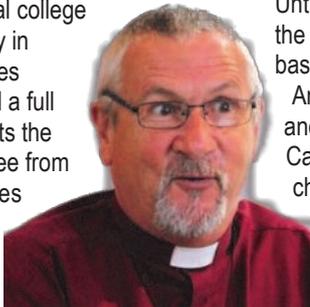
Posted to: Ask The Vestry, c/- The Vicarage as above

Emailed to: AskTheVestry@stpeterscaversham.org.nz

Nelson prospects

(Continued from page 1)

has managed it so well it has grown its investment capital base to a remarkable extent. The other small New Zealand Anglican dioceses are perpetually struggling with money worries and cash shortages. Not so the Nelson diocese. The revenues from the Trust Board finance the bishop and the diocesan theological college and sustain ministry in remote rural parishes which cannot afford a full time Vicar. This sets the bishop of Nelson free from the financial anxieties which beset so many of his fellow bishops. He is free to play a greater role on the national stage if he so chooses.



Bishop Richard Ellena.

PHOTO.: WWW.ANGLIOCANTONGA.ORG.NZ.

Life after Derek

After 16 years of his long and glorious reign Derek Eaton retired to be succeeded by the Reverend Richard Ellena, the popular Vicar of Blenheim. Richard Ellena was a much appreciated pastoral bishop and his musical skills were an asset. However, he could not and did not operate as an evangelical national statesman who was prepared to throw his weight around on the Provincial stage and offer leadership to the “biblically orthodox” evangelical community as the human sexuality crisis developed. That vacuum was increasingly filled by the

Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans New Zealand under the leadership of the Reverend Jay Behan, Vicar of St Stephen’s, Shirley, in Christchurch. Something that did change on his watch though was the kind of Cathedral culture which would from now on be permitted and attempted.

Nelson Cathedral Woes

Until then, in a kind of unspoken concordat, the Cathedral was left as a kind of last bastion and tribal reservation of classical Anglicanism which drew many from near and far who liked all that the Anglican Cathedral tradition has to offer. That has changed with the appointment of the last two Deans who were and are of the evangelical/charismatic persuasion. Slowly but surely traditional Cathedral culture has ebbed away and with it not a few of the Cathedral parishioners. Now the evangelical dominance is complete.

Background Social and Cultural Context

One of the things which makes the Nelson and Tasman region so interesting and rewarding to live in is its varied and diverse human ecology. Alternative life-stylers, European type hospitality venues, a vibrant arts and crafts tradition and a progressive and highly educated young elite were all in evidence in this region long before these became normative in other parts of New Zealand. This has prevented Nelson becoming a provincial backwater and gives it high cultural capital. To mention but three manifestations of this—the “Volume”

bookshop is one of the best in New Zealand with an innovative reach out engagement programme with the reading public, the Music School has an excellent concert programme and the Saturday Market in Morrison Square offers a remarkable miscellany of food, drinks and clothes. Looking beyond the city Golden Bay is, like Waitati, a place where the 1960s are making their last stand.

I have often thought that given this context it would make sense for the Anglican Church to offer a variety of approach roads into its life with city parishes reflecting the diversity of Anglican churchmanship which is normal in most dioceses. To be fair to Nelson diocese religion it has kept its churches open and its congregational numbers up in a way that few other dioceses have. Yet I suspect its atonement-centred, narrowly Biblicist and puritan style of religion has little to offer the groups mentioned above.

The “Armed Man” Affront

Just how off key and out of touch the evangelical leadership can be with the wider public was illustrated by the infamous “Armed Man” incident. Nelson’s premier choral and music societies have often performed their works in the Cathedral. Just a few years ago they proposed to perform *The Armed man: a Mass for Peace* by Karl Jenkins, a contemporary work much performed around the time of the Great War commemorations. With rehearsals well under way the then Dean refused to allow the Cathedral to be a venue for this choral piece because it

(Continued on page 5)



Inside Christ Church Cathedral, Nelson.

PHOTO.: WWW.NELSONANGLICAN.ORG.NZ.

Nelson prospects

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included the Muslim call to prayer. There was a furious public reaction, particularly amongst the culture vulture section of it, and the Cathedral became a no-go zone for choral and music groups.

Ourselves Alone

I have noticed how at provincial national gatherings the Nelson delegates appear to stand apart and do not seem to have much to contribute. The diocese no longer sends its ordinands to the national theological college at St John's, Auckland because it regards it as unsound and instead retains them at its own college in Nelson. In a variety of ways it seems to regard itself as a world unto itself pursuing an "ourselves alone" policy, which is the way the republic of Ireland conducted its affairs between the wars.

This tendency has come into sharp relief in a recent internal debate as to whether the diocese should withdraw from the Province and throw in its lot with the emerging Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans New Zealand diocese which will be affiliated to GAFCON (Global Anglican Future Conference). Some of the younger more militant clergy favour this option, pointing out that the Constitution of our Province is a voluntary compact which gives a diocese the right to withdraw if it so chooses. The financial self-sufficiency of the diocese also gives it the ability to go it alone. Older members of the diocese by and large do not want to go down this road. They may not be happy with the outcome of the same sex blessings debate but they would prefer to stay on board. After all the General Synod resolution in this matter gives a diocesan bishop the right to ban same sex blessings in his diocese and that is the way things are in Nelson. Incidentally, any openly gay Ordinand in the diocese of Nelson has to sign an undertaking that they will be celibate for life before they can be ordained.

Two Roads Diverged in a Wood

What we are seeing both at national level and also within the Anglican Communion itself is the emergence of two different and rapidly diverging ways of being Anglican, two contested styles of Anglican identity with emergent changes in both traditions. At national level the Anglican Church of Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia is morphing into a liberal protestant sect increasingly dominated by identity politics, a religion of "isms" and fashionable causes, with a somewhat vague doctrine of God. Its emergent rival, the Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans New Zealand, is forming itself into a diocese, has elected its first bishop, the Reverend Jay Behan, who will be consecrated in October with the lead ordaining bishop being Archbishop Foley Beach, who is both Archbishop of the Anglican Church of North America and chairman of the GAFCON primates' council. They are certainly "biblically Orthodox" as they proclaim themselves to be, yet are uninterested in liturgy, the regular celebration of the Eucharist, the sacramental tradition and other related hallmarks of traditional Anglican identity.

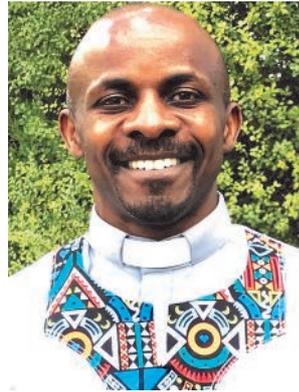
There is a divergence too within the Anglican evangelical world. The older generation of "Prayer Book" evangelical clergy were prepared to wear distinctive liturgical dress, cassock, surplice and stole, or choir dress, or sometimes alb and stole, thought it important to celebrate Holy Communion reasonably often, loved *The Book of Common Prayer* and were prepared to use *The New Zealand Prayer Book 1989*. The younger generation of

evangelical clergy has often dropped all that, wears casual dress to lead Services, has a band on stage and leads Services of a kind which could be found in pretty much any contemporary revivalist or Pentecostal church.

Which Way for Nelson?

All of this poses a dilemma for the Diocese of Nelson and for its next Bishop, the Reverend Steve Maina, who will be ordained in late August. He has been the head of the New Zealand Church Missionary Society for the past 10 years and will therefore know and be accustomed to getting along with the leadership of ACANZP. His election has been assented to by the standing committees of the ACANZP dioceses.

On the other hand he is a Kenyan, and Kenya is one of the Provinces which will be boycotting next year's Lambeth Conference. He has also been a parishioner of the Reverend Jay Behan at St Stephen's, Shirley in Christchurch. There are strong bonds of respect and friendship between the two of them. Just to make things more interesting, one of the 12 parishes making up the new FCANZ diocese is located in Blenheim.



Steve Maina, next Bishop of Nelson, "has a delicate balancing act".

PHOTO: WWW.NZCMS.ORG.NZ

Steve Maina has a delicate balancing act to carry out and difficult choices to make and deserves our prayers. It is hard to predict which way he will take the diocese.

Three things to look for as possible predictors of future choices are:

- ◆ Will he attend the GAFCON global bishops' conference in May 2020 in Kigali, Rwanda?
- ◆ Will he attend the July—August 2020 Lambeth Conference?
- ◆ What sort of Cathedral worship, life and leadership will he want to make happen there? I know what I hope for but we shall see what happens. 🙏

Rock music

(Continued from page 8)

child of the manse, the BBC was established as an agent of Christian mission and values. The broadcasting and religion section of the BBC handbook of 1928 spoke of the aim 'to make Britain a more Christian country'. Now don't harrumpf. All that proselytizing stuff went ages ago, being replaced with a priority to increase religious literacy. And a good thing, too. The overwhelming majority of the

Can church music be a topic of controversy? Part 1

world's population is religious. And the BBC doesn't have to be religious itself, or make you religious, in order to fulfil the obligation to educate people about what being religious actually means.

Songs of Praise is not a work of great intellectual dexterity, but provides many people with a chance to feel part of a church service. And it is too easy to sneer. The point of the BBC is to do stuff the market is bad at. 🙏



REFERENCES:

FROM GILES FRASER: 'AS 'SONGS OF PRAISE' VIEWERS WILL FIND OUT, THE MARKET IS BAD AT DOING RELIGION'

[HTTPS://WWW.THEGUARDIAN.COM](https://www.theguardian.com).



By Deirdre Harris,
Vicar's Warden

Researching the duties of a church warden I was most intrigued to find that the Vicar's Warden has the responsibility for maintaining order and peace in the church and churchyard at all times, especially during services. As we have a very well behaved and mostly elderly congregation I am sure this will not be a difficult task at Saint Peter's!

By statute of the Anglican Church in New Zealand the wardens are required to be spokespeople for the vestry and to provide support and to encourage the work of the Vicar. They must also ensure that the decisions of vestry are put into effect.

The wardens are lay members of the congregation. The People's Warden is elected at the AGM and the Vicar's Warden is appointed by the Vicar. The wardens have responsibility for the superintendence of the buildings, furniture and equipment of the parish. They must provide for the carrying out of all repairs authorised by the vestry.

Historically in the Anglican Church these duties were carried out by the vergers and the sexton. The latter was in charge of the church and churchyard and was often the grave digger, bell ringer and sometimes also involved in burying the dead. Today in New Zealand churches very rarely have graveyards and those which do have long since ceased to have burials. There are no churches with graveyards in the Dunedin urban area. The office of vergers dates from the fourteenth century. The vergers were responsible for the property and all the removable goods belonging to the parish.

Many of the vergers' duties, now technically the wardens', are now delegated and shared amongst members of the congregation. Today bell ringing is carried out by sidespeople who also make sure the congregation is welcomed and provided with hymn books, service sheets and newsletters. The sidesperson also checks that collection monies are deposited in the safe. We are fortunate to have a very able treasurer who maintains our financial records and sees that our

liabilities are discharged promptly.

In the UK once a year a "Terrier" was drawn up. This was an inventory of all property belonging to a parish and it would be given to the Archdeacon at the time of the annual "Visitation".

The "Visitations" are held in May of each year. All the parishes in the diocese are visited and the new wardens sworn in by the Archdeacon and sometimes the Bishop. My brother was for over thirty years the registrar for the Bishop of Chelmsford and May was a busy time for him. I remember my mother, when visiting the UK, enjoyed going to various churches with my brother on the "Visitations".

Wardens must call for the AGM to be held and present at it a record of the proceedings of the vestry for the past year. It is important that parishioners inform the wardens of any matters that are of concern to them. When parishioners are able to help during services and at other activities this participation links us together into a vital Church family.

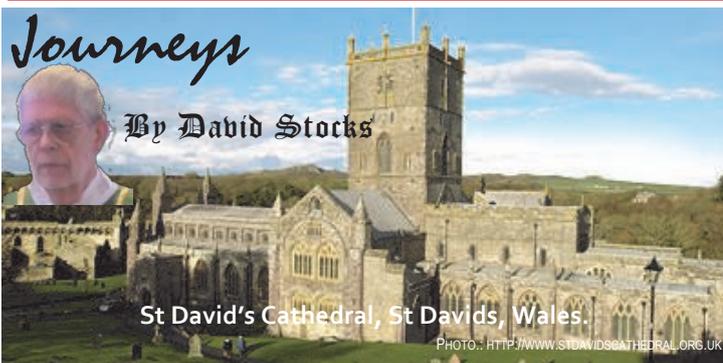
Today work on Saint Peter's required for earthquake strengthening, roof replacement and other restoration is a major issue which the wardens, the vestry and ultimately the whole parish will have to deal with in the next few years. The position of warden will be a challenge for me. 📧

CHURCHWARDEN CORNER



Journeys

By David Stocks



St David's Cathedral, St Davids, Wales.

PHOTO: [HTTP://WWW.STDAVIDSCATHEDRAL.ORG.UK](http://www.stdavidscathedral.org.uk)

Following on from my article *Pilgrimage*, I thought it may be of interest to highlight some of the places Wendy and I have been to on pilgrimage. It is now 30 years since we were last in St. Davids so some things may have changed since then.

Approaching St.Davids from the east you may wonder where the Cathedral is. Well it sits in an area known as the Vale of Roses alongside the ruins of the Bishop's Palace and St Mary's College. It is a 39 step drop from the Gatehouse down to the door of the Cathedral.

"and so we came to the end of the world where the Patron Saint of Wales sleeps by the Western Sea."

- Francis Kilvert October 1871

The Cathedral City of St.Davids is situated at the western tip of Wales, a city but with a population of only around 2,000. Two pilgrimages to St.Davids were equivalent to one to Rome. The present building dates from around 1180. An earthquake in 1248 probably explains why the building slopes upwards from west to east. The nave roof, built of Irish oak, incorporates the Welsh dragon on its pendants. The Shrine to St David lies beyond the Choir and has been beautifully restored this century. Just south of the city is St Non's Chapel and it is here that David was born; just to the west the tiny harbour of Porthclais is where David was baptised by Bishop Elvis, now St.Elvis (not to be confused with Elvis Presley). A Chapel some miles further east is thought to be the only known dedication to St Elvis. David died in 588.

Our one abiding memory of our pilgrimage was on St David's Day when there was a school mass in the morning where many of the children wore traditional Welsh costumes sporting daffodils and leeks. The main Mass of the day included Confirmation, some being confirmed in Welsh and some in English. The music during the service was wonderful and the choir's rendition of Mozart's *Ave Verum Corpus* was an unforgettable experience as the choir was out of sight and the singing was ethereal and made your hair stand on end. One of Wendy's memories is the Bishop's sermon, she can still remember it and the next time we went to St David she told the Bishop how much he had impressed her. His reply was 'Did I preach the same sermon today?' 📧

Regular Services

(for variations consult *The Pebble* or our website)
All services are held in Saint Peter's unless noted otherwise

SUNDAY:

8am: Holy Communion according to the Book of Common Prayer

10.30am: Solemn Sung Eucharist

5pm: **1st and 3rd Sunday of each month:** Evensong and Benediction followed by a social gathering in the lounge.

THURSDAY:

10am: Eucharist

FIRST THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH:

11am: Eucharist in the lounge of Frances Hodgkins Retirement Village, Fenton Crescent

Special Services

Contact The Vicar to arrange baptisms, weddings, house blessings, burials, confessions and other special services.

Parish Contacts:

VICAR:

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Vestry Notes

By Alex Chisholm

Vestry Secretary

Vestry meetings are generally held every two months. Major points from the July meeting are:

- ◆ Vicarage smoke alarms have been upgraded
- ◆ The Kensington was a disappointing lunch venue for the Patronal Festival. A new venue will be sought next year
- ◆ A larger down pipe will be installed in the corner of the church where continual efflorescence is occurring. The plumber will dig around the downpipe exit point to see if there is an existing drain there
- ◆ Church post cards will be produced to sell to visitors to the church
- ◆ The earthquake strengthening project will be paused until March of next year to consider a number of possibilities
- ◆ A more powerful and effective light is to be installed outside the sacristy
- ◆ The first draw down of \$150,000 from the Saint Peter's renovation fund will occur in the first week of August with the remaining units being withdrawn in early November. The diocesan trust board growth fund in which it is invested has hit a record high per unit price. 📉



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For your diary

Saturday 10 August : Expedition to Pukehiki Church for 11am Eucharist followed by lunch at the Portobello Hotel

Sunday 25 August : Deadline for copy for the August edition of *The Rock*

Saturday, 7 September : Concert by The St Kilda Brass Band ("The Saints")

Saturday, 5 October : Visit to St Mary, Star of the Sea, Port Chalmers Catholic Church to celebrate the feast of St Francis of Assisi

Tuesday, 5 November : *Caversham Lecture*
'New Zealand Dairying: Blessing or Curse' – Richard Kyte

Tuesday, 12 November : *Caversham Lecture*
'Aftermath: the political landscape left by the winding down of the wars in Syria and Iraq' – Dr Bill Harris

Tuesday, 19 November : *Caversham Lecture*—Father James Harding examines the historicity or otherwise of the escape of the children of Israel from Pharaoh's Egypt and the meeting between Moses and God on Mount Sinai

Tuesday, 26 November : *Caversham Lecture*
'Church Romanesque architecture' – Rod Hamel

Rock music

By David Hoskins, Director of Music



Can church music be a topic of controversy?—Part 1

For nearly 60 years, the BBC programme *Songs of Praise* has broadcast to a large audience over television and now a number of digital platforms. The programmes are simple enough; a host takes the viewer to different parts of the country and hymns old and new are sung in lovely old churches. There is a sense of connection with a church culture many find both reassuring and enjoyable. More than a few in this parish tune in each Sunday evening at 7pm to watch *Songs of Praise*. The programme is on the Shine channel (perhaps not my first 'go-to' music source, but good on them at Shine for looking to present diverse musical styles!).

Over the years well-known personalities have fronted the programme: Dame Thora Hurd, Sir Harry Secombe and more recently Aled Jones. There is usually a form of simple testimony which is often deeply moving. All good, so far.

However, a new corporate ethos at the BBC—something akin to the most stringent days of Rogernomics here in New Zealand—has seen a 'competitive' market-driven style of both production and programming. Some of this has been for the good in terms of *Songs of Praise*. The format has proved resilient enough to incorporate praise bands, rock and soul artists and marvellous gospel choirs which compliment the cathedral and parish choirs always on offer. However, as the referenced Guardian article by Giles Fraser suggests more is happening here.....

Back in 2014, the director-general of the BBC, Tony Hall, announced a change of direction for the corporation. He called it a 'competition revolution'. With the Tories breathing down the neck over the license fee, Mr Hall spoke about creativity of the entrepreneurial spirit and the

need for deregulation: 'To use retail terminology, great programmes at great prices'.

All this is now filtering through. Familiar programmes are being offered out to the market to see if they can be made better and cheaper. Or maybe just cheaper. And the first two decisions have now been made, with *A Question of Sport* staying in-house and *Songs of Praise* being outsourced to Avanti Media and Nine Lives Media. Not only that, but along with the programme itself, the BBC is also handing over the talent required to make it. Thirty members of the BBC's religion team, pretty much its entire TV staff team, will be transferred to these private companies. Their jobs are now protected for three more years in the private sector. Then, who knows. From now on, the BBC's religion department will consist of little more than a commissioner and a lot of empty desks. Yes, *Songs of Praise* will continue for a while. But, like *The Great British Bakeoff*, its character will inevitably change.

Now here's my problem: The market is generally pretty bad at doing religion. I have been phoned up enough times by eager young researchers from production companies who want to make religion relevant to a younger generation but who have never heard of Lent or don't know the difference between Martin Luther and Martin Luther King. It does not inspire enormous confidence that *Songs of Praise* is now in the hands of the production company which made *Holiday Love Rats Exposed*.

How far the BBC has changed. Under the direction of John Reith, a

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Justin Welby
The Archbishop of Canterbury

Preaching at York Minster on 7 July, 2019.

“I was speaking in a church a couple of weeks back and someone came to see me afterwards and said, 'I wasn't going to come to listen to you, but I listened to you and you were a lot better than I thought you would be!' Well, set your expectations...”

“It is when we are fragile and weak that God is most able to use us. Jesus welcomes the disciples back to the news that Satan has fallen before them. Fallen before who?”



More online :

Read the complete sermon at:

<https://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/speaking-writing/sermons/archbishop-canterburys-sermon-york-minster>

