

IAIN B GALBRAITH
MA MPhil MTh ThD FTCL
President of the Church Service Society
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John Shaw-Dunn writes:

Iain Galbraith came to Hillhead as organist in 1990. He found a Presbyterian interpretation of Sainte Chapelle, a small choir, mostly of semi-professional singers, and a temperamental Willis. One singer was a wayward solfa-ist with an affection for Dykes and Sullivan: we still became firm friends.

Under Iain`s tutelage our repertoire was extended, to include even his own compositions. We began to sing with neighbouring churches. We helped with compiling a congregational supplement to CH3. At Christmas, the East Dunbartonshire Wind Band was invited to our loft, to fill a candlelit church with quadriphonic sound.

Iain, always meticulous in gown and hood, was tall and magisterial. He had an engaging slow, low pitched laugh, but he was not a man for frivolity. The meetings of the Worship Committee, often sociable and discursive, may have tried his patience, but Iain often remembered Hillhead for his ‘best work’. We would certainly agree.

Alison Robertson writes:

The Scottish Stained Glass Trust & Symposium (SSGT&S) began in 2003, and by 2004 Iain was actively involved, bringing an immense passion for stained glass in Scotland and a deep desire for it to receive the recognition it deserved. From then on he sustained a steady flow of useful comment, fully-sourced information readily-shared, and sound advice. His photographic gifts to SSGT&S included *A Pictorial Survey of Stained Glass in Scotland, with Narrative* in seven A4 volumes, numerous annotated pictorial calendars, *Stained Glass in Scotland* in 12 A4 volumes of illustrations, envelope after envelope of smaller ‘snaps’ almost every one accurately annotated on the back, and much else: 1700 photographs, and still counting. He said the Praise Window in Upper

Largo, signed Guthrie and Wells, is actually by artist David Gauld. Who knew? His powers of recall were legendary. He also placed many of his photographs and stained glass records with Historic Environment Scotland in Edinburgh to be professionally conserved and accessible to all.

Iain lived and loved his Christian faith, and for him death held no fear. With his minister in Alexandria, he created a Stained Glass Room in the church there, to make his convictions, and his stained glass records, accessible to more people. Sadly, due to the pandemic, my planned visit there did not take place.

Personally, he showed me immense, gentle kindness over the years, and was an inveterate encourager, for example, expressly for me, making an Advent 2014 gift, *A Book of Angels*: 35 stained glass angels in Scotland by 23 artists. It has been a privileged to know and share the gifts of this remarkable man: his passing, for SSGS&T, is an incalculable loss.

Douglas Galbraith writes:

In his presidential address, Iain quoted from one of the first musical theorists, Guido d'Arezzo: 'But doctrine too, not skill alone, is musician's warranty'. Iain was skilled in both. His was not just a life dedicated to church music but part of a family, his grandfather and great-grandfathers precentors at the old kirk of Bonhill.

Iain was a teacher both by profession and nature, his main career musical education. Later he was to offer his pastoral gifts as guidance teacher at Douglas Academy, within which there is a special unit for those with exceptional ability in music, closely linked to the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. He was to practise these skills also in the presbytery of Glasgow as pastoral adviser.

'But doctrine too, not skill alone' – Iain was steeped in the Church of Scotland, growing up in a family whose kirk lore reached back into the 19th century. Iain was an elder, then a Reader, then ultimately Moderator of the Presbytery of Dumbarton. In 2018 he marked 60 years as a church organist, but his skills were not only applied locally (over several congregations). He was a giant among organists, recognised by his fellows in tasks given and honours bestowed. He

was also a composer, one whose work was made to be sung, and it was. He also served on the music committee of CH4.

His presidential address ended in recalling a verse in the parable of the Prodigal Son. 'Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard musick ...' (Luke 15:25, AV). He continued: 'And that is the inward inspiration, the constant renewal, that week upon week, year upon year, for many years now, as I too approach the Father's House, *I hear music*'.

At the thanksgiving service in Lomond Church, presiding minister and friend Ian Miller offered these memories and reflections:

This service is Iain's; he laid it out in detail. Would you have expected anything else? The music too. Iain always saw his music as an offering to God. As was his life. He also directed that we should not be extolling his virtues, achievements and interests. His wishes shall be honoured ... well, not completely! Iain, you must have known that we would want to say something because of the love and admiration we had for you, to talk of how we valued your friendship, benefited by your advice and were often a little in awe of your expertise and wisdom.

He was first in my company on the 6th August 1975. Little did we both know that from that moment a deep friendship would begin. He remembers that night. It was my induction to the parish of Bonhill. He remembers the weather, the sermon, the text from 2 Corinthians, the instruction to me that I was to point people to the unseen realities. I can't even remember the preacher! But over the years a strong bond developed between us. He was measured and careful whereas I could be erratic and impulsive. There were differences but also similarities. Both only children, both passionate and totally committed to what we did.

He could be straight, uncompromising, he did not suffer fools gladly yet had a tremendous compassion and understanding for people who were hurting. He was a great encourager of people, particularly of young people; he had a unique ability to inspire young lives.

Those last three years spent here with him at Lomond have been for me a huge blessing He often referred to it as 'the golden years'.... For me it was 'the last of

the summer wine'. And it grieves me to the core that it was to end so abruptly. We shared great hopes for this church. We were passionate in our conviction that the light of faith could burn brightly at Lomond if we all worked together as a team. He believed the call to the church and to us as individuals is to preach and live the gospel, to care for those in need, to speak out where there is injustice and to love one another as Jesus would have us do.

And to do it until God calls us home and we are reunited with him, and all we have loved and lost.

John Shaw-Dunn

after lecturing in human anatomy in the University of Glasgow for many years, is now Honorary Research Fellow in its School of Life Sciences. He brought a keen knowledge of liturgy to the General Assembly's Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion and is a member of the Church Service Society, having also served on its Council.

Alison Robertson

is a hymn writer and composer and one-time geography teacher, who worked for the Church of Scotland's Committee on Artistic Matters in the early 1990s. In 2003, she founded, with the committee's Chair, Professor John R. Hume, what became the independent Registered Scottish Charity SC039375, the Scottish Stained Glass Trust & Symposium of which she is Honorary Secretary. She is a member of the Church Service Society.

Douglas Galbraith

is a part president and former Secretary of the Church Service Society.

Ian Miller

was for 37 years minister of Balloch parish church and is now locum minister at Lomond parish church, Balloch, where Iain Galbraith latterly was organist and his wife, Sheila, the choir leader.