

RECOLLECTIONS OF ST. MARKS DUNDELA PARISH AND RECTORY c. 1920-5

by Diana McFarlan née Barton

As is known the Rev. A.W.Barton came from the T.C.D. Mission, Belfast to be Rector of Dundela in April 1914. Therefore some of the enclosed snapshots of boys groups, streets etc. in Belfast at that time may be Mission or St. Marks people. He was therefore Rector at the time of the Battle of the Somme 1916 when the Ulster Division was decimated and some parishioners had to be consoled for the loss of two sons at once. Among those he had to visit with such news was Mrs Lucy Smiles of Westbank ( now the Methodist Home ) who was a half-sister of Mrs Beeton of Household Management fame. Left a widow at 50 she brought up 3 girls and 8 boys there, of whom Alan and Sam were killed in France . She and her entertaining daughter Aileen were good friends of the Rectory ; Aileen later wrote a life of her grandfather ' Self-Help ' Smiles.

Another interesting parishioner was Major Ted Lewis, a widower with a large house on the Circular Rd, with two sons, Clive and Warren. Clive was C.S.Lewis, author of The Problem of Pain, Screwtape Letters etc.; a lecturer in poetry at Oxford and then Cambridge. He fought in the trenches in 1918 and though prepared for confirmation by A.W.B. and confirmed lost his faith for some years but regained it to become an influential <sup>Christian</sup> writer. In his autobiography " Surprised By Joy " he describes his boyhood and father etc. ; but altogether omits to say that his maternal grandfather was Mr Hamilton, the first Rector of St. Marks. I have just found the following reference in the Ecclesiastical Gazette to Mr Hamilton and the foundation of the parish: " Ballymacarett... also sent forth two very fine and prosperous congregations, Dundela and Willowfield..... It is with pleasure I announce the commencement of another new church in Belfast. The foundation stone of St. Mark's at Dundela, Sydenham, a fashionable suburb of this town, has been laid by his Grace the Lord Primate. The Lord Bishop of the Diocese, the Rev. F.R.Wynne of Holywood, and Rev. T.R.Hamilton, Incumbent of the church, took part in the ceremony. Mr William Ewart J.P. gave a brief sketch of the progress of the congregation since its formation, and concluded by presenting a beautiful silver trowel to the Primate. "

C.S.Lewis mentions the kindness of the two daughters of Mr Ewart, Mrs Forrēt ( still alive at Glenmachan ? ) and Miss I.K.Ewart. The silver cross was given by the latter and she should be called Miss Kelsie Ewart from her second name Kelso, not Miss Isabella.

In 1918 A.W.Barton went to France as a Chaplain and Y.M.C.A. worker. His curates <sup>about</sup> at that time included John Elliott, brother of Cyril Connor, who became a permanent Chaplain. A.W.Barton was also Chalain to the Church Lads Brigade and in 1921 was presented as such to King George V on his