**The Revd Horace Launcelot****Uprichard, MA
(1917 - 1994)**



The Revd H.L. Uprichard's coming to Drumbeg was almost accidental. After Mr McGarvey's retirement, a number of clergy took the services while the parish was vacant. According to Horace, he was asked to stand in for another clergyman at Morning Service one Sunday at short notice. Immediately after the service a number of Select Vestrymen met together and unanimously endorsed the enthusiastic opinion of Archie Willis, 'Yon's our man'. The nominators and Bishop had little difficulty in deciding who would fill the vacancy in Drumbeg! Horace Uprichard was instituted on 17th August 1953. Born in Portadown in 1917 he was educated at Portadown College before going up to Trinity College, Dublin. He had always shown great ability in sports, particularly Rugby Football, and he combined an excellent academic career with playing for T.C.D.'s first fifteen and representing Leinster at Inter-provincial level.

After graduation he was ordained in Kilmore Cathedral in 1942 and became Curate assistant for one year, before joining the Royal Air Force with the rank of Squadron Leader. He was Chaplain to the R.A.F. College at Cranwell and later went to France with the British Liberation Army. From there he moved to Java and to Japan, and served as Senior Chaplain. On completion of his R.A.F. service he was appointed by Bishop W.S. Kerr as Head of the Southern Church Mission, Ballymacarrett.

From his time as Chaplain to the R.A.F. he brought a fresh, concise clarity of diction, a brisk, eager cheerfulness and youthful zest for the things of God that were to remain the hallmark of his ministry for almost 30 years, and influence for good the lives of many people within and far beyond the boundaries of the parish. He possessed great ability in the effective use of both radio and television, whether as commentator on a Rugby match from Ravenhill or presenting the Epilogue on television, there was always a distinctive masterly touch. This expertise in the field of communication resulted in his being appointed Church of Ireland representative on the Board of Religious Advisors to Ulster Television; for 13 years he was also Chairman of that body.

In 1947 he married Helen Bellamy in St Margaret's, Westminster. They had three sons, John, David and Andrew.

One of the benefits arising from his television and radio contacts was the broadcast service on the Home Service of the B.B.C., at 7.45pm on Sunday 25th June 1961 from Drumbeg Parish Church. This was a great experience for all of us who took part. About 20 years later we also had the privilege of having an overseas broadcast on 21st February, 1982. Following this broadcast, Horace was delighted with the number of appreciative letters received from listeners overseas, to whom the sound of the Ulster accent had brought nostalgic memories of home.

On 31st July 1960, a memorial window in the porch was dedicated to the memory of Samuel Rentoul McGarvey by the Venerable George Quin, Archdeacon of Down.

On Whitsunday 1975, a new lectern bible was dedicated, presented by Mrs Margaret Neill.

Horace's ministry will be remembered as a time of expansion and renewal. The old rectory was really too large for a rector with a young family - too difficult to heat and maintain. After nearly five years of negotiations with the Diocesan Council, agreement was reached for the subdivision of the property; the sale of the old rectory and the provision of a new, modern, more compact house. The new Vestry was completed in 1958 and a further extension of the graveyard was made in 1966. For many years the triangle of ground embraced by the old wall of the Drum Garden and the churchyard wall had been a dumping ground for all the wastes from the churchyard, overgrown by elder bushes, thorns, thistles and nettles, it was an eyesore to anyone coming into the new extension by the steps from the old graveyard.

During the years 1974/75 two members of the Select Vestry undertook to clear the area and construct a memorial garden for the interment of cremated ashes. It was dedicated on 18th January 1976. A plaque on the wall records their work.

As, sadly, so often in our history, the Rectory at Drumbeg was to be plunged into mourning suddenly and unexpectedly when Horace's and Helen's middle son David was killed in a road accident in Germany, where he had been serving as a Flying Officer in the Royal Air Force. Known affectionately to the family as `Tid' he was very dear to them and his death dealt them a blow from which they never fully recovered. A small memorial window was dedicated by the Chaplain, R.A.F. Bruggen, in his memory on Sunday 29th June 1975.

Below this window a bronze plaque was dedicated just recently on Sunday 28th August 1994, the 20th Anniversary of David's death, in memory of Horace Launcelot Uprichard, Rector of Drumbeg from 1953 until his retirement in 1982. He died on 6th February 1994.