

# REMEMBERING MARGARET GASH

20 May 1915 – 30 October 2014



A Service to Celebrate the Life of Margaret Gash

31 January 2015, 1.00pm

St Luke's Church  
30 Eardley Road, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 1XT



# ORDER OF SERVICE

## **ORGAN MUSIC**

Played by Paul Isom

## **WELCOME**

Reverend Mark Griffin

## HYMN

The King of love my shepherd is,  
whose goodness faileth never;  
I nothing lack if I am his,  
and he is mine for ever.

Where streams of living water flow,  
my ransomed soul he leadeth,  
and where the verdant pastures grow,  
with food celestial feedeth.

Perverse and foolish oft I strayed,  
but yet in love He sought me,  
and on his shoulder gently laid,  
and home, rejoicing, brought me.

In death's dark vale I fear no ill  
with thee, dear Lord, beside me;  
thy rod and staff my comfort still,  
thy cross before to guide me.

Thou spread'st a table in my sight;  
thy unction grace bestoweth;  
and O what transport of delight  
from thy pure chalice floweth!

And so through all the length of days  
thy goodness faileth never:  
Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise  
within thy house for ever.

*Henry W. Baker (1821-1877)*

## BIDDING PRAYER

## READING

John, Chapter 14: 1-14 (King James Version)

Read by Alicia Kennedy

## POEM

Read by Lesley Morgan

Death is nothing at all.  
I have only slipped away into the next room.  
I am I, and you are you.  
Whatever we were to each other,  
That we are still.  
Call me by my old familiar name,  
Speak to me in the easy way you always used.  
Put no difference into your tone,  
Wear no forced air of solemnity or sorrow.  
Laugh as we always laughed  
At the little jokes we always enjoyed together.  
Play, smile, think of me, pray for me.  
Let my name be ever the household word that it always was;  
Let it be spoken without effort,  
Without the ghost of a shadow in it.  
Life means all that it ever meant;  
It is the same as it ever was;  
There is absolute unbroken continuity.  
What is death but a negligible accident?  
Why should I be out of mind  
Because I am out of sight?  
I am waiting for you, for an interval,  
Somewhere very near,  
Just around the corner.  
All is well.  
Nothing is past; nothing is lost.  
One brief moment and all will be as it was before.  
How we shall laugh at the trouble of parting when we meet again!

*Henry Scott Holland (1847-1918)*

## MUSIC

### Walthamstow Hall Music Scholars

Six Metamorphoses after Ovid, 3rd movement

*Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)*

Charlotte Fry, Upper Sixth Student (Oboe)

Partita II

*J.S. Bach (1685-1750)*

Jessica Bache, Upper Fifth Student (Violin)

## HYMN

### Walthamstow Hall School Hymn

*(Songs of Praise 194, Tune: Loughborough)*

Our Father, by whose servants  
Our house was built of old,  
Whose hand hath crowned her children  
With blessing manifold,  
For thine unfailing mercies  
Far-strewn along our way,  
With all who passed before us,  
We praise thy name today.

The changeful years unresting  
Their silent course have sped,  
New comrades ever bringing  
In comrades' steps to tread;  
And some are long forgotten,  
Long spent their hopes and fears;  
Safe rest they in thy keeping,  
Who changest not with years.

They reap not where they laboured,  
We reap what they have sown;  
Our harvest may be garnered

By ages yet unknown.  
The days of old have dowered us  
With gifts beyond all praise:  
Our Father, make us faithful  
To serve the coming days.

Before us and beside us,  
Still holden in thine hand,  
A cloud unseen of witness,  
Our elder comrades stand:  
One family unbroken,  
We join, with one acclaim,  
One heart, one voice uplifting,  
To glorify thy Name.

*G. W. Briggs (1875-1959)*

## TRIBUTE

Pat Savage

## PRAYER

### Walthamstow Hall School Prayer

Read by Jackie Lang

Almighty God, who hast in Thy good providence disposed the hearts of men to mutual charity, that here on earth in divers brotherhoods they may prepare the coming of Thy Heavenly Kingdom, we give Thee thanks for every human fellowship, but more especially that Thou hast prepared this our ancient House and still dost guide the footsteps of her children, not weighing our merits nor measuring Thy fatherly affection. Send forth Thy light upon those assembled here and on our brethren dispersed through all the world, that we and they being knit more closely in the bonds of friendship may likewise grow in love of Thee and obtain together those eternal mansions which Thou hast promised by the mouth of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## HYMN

Morning has broken, like the first morning  
Blackbird has spoken, like the first bird  
Praise for the singing, praise for the morning  
Praise for the springing fresh from the word

Sweet the rain's new fall, sunlit from heaven  
Like the first dewfall, on the first grass  
Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden  
Sprung in completeness where his feet pass

Mine is the sunlight, mine is the morning  
Born of the one light, Eden saw play  
Praise with elation, praise every morning  
God's recreation of the new day

*Eleanor Farjeon (1881-1965)*

## TRIBUTE

Julia Gilbert

## POEM

**So Many Different Lengths of Time**

*Brian Patten (b. 1946)*

Edited version read by Penny Sumerfield



## CHOIR

God be in my Head

*Henry Walford Davies (1869 – 1941)*

## PRAYERS

### **The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father, who art in heaven,

hallowed be Thy name;

Thy Kingdom come;

Thy will be done;

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses,

As we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation;

but deliver us from evil.

For Thine is the Kingdom,

the power, and the glory,

for ever and ever.

Amen.

## HYMN

For the beauty of the earth,  
For the beauty of the skies,  
For the love which from our birth  
Over and around us lies,  
Lord of all, to thee we raise  
This our grateful hymn of praise.

For the beauty of each hour  
Of the day and of the night,  
Hill and vale, and tree and flower,  
Sun and moon and stars of light,  
Lord of all, to thee we raise  
This our grateful hymn of praise.

For the joy of human love,  
Brother, sister, parent, child,  
Friends on earth, and friends above,  
Pleasures pure and undefiled,  
Lord of all, to thee we raise  
This our grateful hymn of praise.

For each perfect gift of thine,  
To our race so freely given,  
Graces human and divine,  
Flowers of earth and buds of heaven,  
Lord of all, to thee we raise  
This our grateful hymn of praise.

For thy Church which evermore  
Lifteth holy hands above,  
Offering up on every shore  
Her pure sacrifice of love,  
Lord of all, to thee we raise  
This our grateful hymn of praise.

*Folliot S. Pierpoint (1835-1917)*

**FILM**

Walter Bonner Gash: The Artist's Daughter Remembers  
Introduced by Jason Pennells

Memories of Margaret  
Introduced by Abigail King

**CLOSING WORDS AND BLESSING**

Reverend Mark Griffin

**ORGAN MUSIC**

Hornpipe from Water Music  
*George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)*  
Played by Paul Isom

You are warmly invited to stay for refreshments, which will be served at the back of the church after the service.

Margaret was involved in The Children's Society for a large part of her life, and the collection taken at the service will be in aid of this, in memory of Margaret.

At the back of the church you will find available a postcard of Margaret's father's painting *The Inseparables*, depicting Margaret with her friend Vera, the catalogue *Walter Bonner Gash – Unsung Edwardian Hero*, produced to accompany the exhibitions of Margaret's father's work which took place in 2011, and copies of the film *The Artist's Daughter Remembers*, also made for these exhibitions.

If you would like to take a copy of any of these items, you are very welcome to do so. Please, in exchange, make a donation to The Children's Society. There are plates and Gift Aid envelopes available at the back of the church.





MARGARET GASH  
Some Recollections



## Margaret recalls her father and childhood

*Below are edited extracts from an essay Margaret wrote in 2010 for inclusion in **Walter Bonner Gash – Unsung Edwardian Hero**, a catalogue produced to accompany two exhibitions of her artist father's work.*

*The exhibitions took place in 2011 in Gallery 27, 27 Cork Street, London W1S 4NG, 8-12 February, and in Manor House Museum and Alfred East Gallery, Kettering Borough Council, Sheep Street, Kettering, Northants NN16 0AN, 19 February-2 April.*

### **Reminiscences of My Father**

It is not easy to write about the personality of your father when you have only known him through childhood. I was thirteen when he died so, naturally, the happy times when we did things together come first to mind. I clearly remember sitting on his knee while he read to me, and when we went for walks in the country and gathered wild flowers, particularly at buttercup time. There were occasional times when we went out for days and one such day was very special for we all went to the Great British Empire Exposition at Wembley in 1924. Every country of the Empire was represented, and the larger ones had a pavilion of their own. There was also an art exhibition and my father was asked to exhibit in that.

There were also the occasions when I was with him and watched him painting – usually this was preceded with a warning from mother to be careful not to touch the easel. I have no doubt that my father loved his home and family, otherwise they would not have been the subject of many of his pictures.

I recall being told that, when my father was planning to leave Nottingham in the late 1890s, his intention was to go to London. However, he decided to break his journey and stay briefly with a friend in Kettering. With no firm arrangements for living in London, he seems to have been persuaded to stay while he clarified his plans. He soon found work teaching and from then onwards Kettering became his home.

In 1907 he became Art Master at the Old Grammar School (now demolished) in Gold Street. He stayed there until it was closed and pupils were moved to a new County Grammar and combined High School which was built in 1913. He continued to teach there, part-time, mainly with the boys, until he died.

In Kettering it was not long before my mother became the subject of a portrait – a drawing in red chalk on toned paper – dated 1909. A small portrait in oils of my grandmother (my mother's mother) belongs to this period and must have been painted shortly before her death. Perhaps because of her illness and her death my parents' decision to marry was delayed, or so it seems, until January 1911 and then it was a very quiet affair in Nottingham.

Their home was in Kettering at 145 Stamford Road. The house was in a fairly recently built row of houses on the edge of the town. It looked out on to a pleasant grass verge with sycamore trees and across the road to fields, haystacks and farm buildings. I remember a lovely poppy field. My father soon painted the view from a front window and that oil painting, and two others, is now owned by the



*Margaret  
in the hall  
of the house  
in Stamford  
Road*

Alfred East Gallery in Kettering. By this time my father was nearly 42 and, after many years in lodgings, having a wife and home of his own must have brought him enormous pleasure. This, I think, is evident in his choice of subjects for pictures for, in the next few years, there are several involving family members inside the home.

My brother, Norman Bonner, was born in November 1913. In May 1915 I was an addition to the family and during the following years paintings seemed to centre frequently on the family.

*Family  
portrait*



Still inspired by the home environment, my father looked to our small garden in the summer, when hollyhocks grew in wild profusion. There was no need to nurture them with great care, as they sprang up between the paving stones.

*Hollyhocks*



Even though I was older, perhaps seven, I have no clear recollections of posing but probably, by now, I had accepted that everyone was expected to pose for their father from time to time. The scene shows an early evening light coming from the left, and this plays, with varying brightness and clarity, over the area of



hollyhocks. Quite clearly this movement of light was of special interest to my father when planning the picture.

When plays were produced at school, my father was called upon to paint scenery. Sometimes it was a large canvas hung over the back wall of the stage, and I have an oil painting which is a study for such a canvas in preparation for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. I was then nine and in my first year at the High School and was given the part of Mustard Seed. A yellow dress was made for me but because I was skinny, they had to make one of less flimsy material to make me look fatter.



*Mustard Seed*

I am ashamed to admit that I was not always a co-operative model. An occasion which I remember clearly was when my school friend, Vera, and I were having fun standing on our hands against a wall in the garden and mother called me in with a message from father that he needed me to pose for a picture. What strange phases one goes through.



*Margaret with Vera*

My father's last major painting was called *The Inseparables* and it is of my school friend Vera and me, walking in a meadow. The finished picture was exhibited at the Paris Salon. I used to like to go and sit with my father when he was working and I recall, on one occasion, I watched him painting the sunlight on my left arm in this picture.



*The Inseparables*

*Margaret Gash 2010*



# Former pupils remember Margaret

*An edited selection follows of recollections of Margaret received from former Walthamstow Hall pupils on hearing of her death.*

I should think that many of us who knew her might say ‘Dear Miss Gash’ at the mention of her. I can see her now, perhaps taking a table at lunch, listening intently, and courteously questioning something - a perfect example of constructive conversation over the shepherd’s pie.

She very kindly allowed me to do my Oxford scholarship papers in her tiny bed-sitting room at school. There were beautiful books on her shelves, interesting pictures on her walls and a kind of distillation of her ‘pure and peaceable wisdom’, which calmed the nerves of the junior aspirant.

As we were both boarders we came to know each other a little better than might have been the case. For those of us who were at school for perhaps a decade, it was always a great delight to find her still there when we went back to Walthamstow Hall! Still listening courteously, wisely considering, and even a few years ago when in her late eighties, standing interminably, head cocked, giving her full attention to those who were queuing to talk to her.



The gentle and unassuming Margaret Gash, who we all knew and loved, had a huge influence on my life, and no doubt on many others as well. In the turbulent years towards the end of the Second World War her art room was a tranquil oasis of peace. She introduced me to lettering and encouraged me in my flower studies.

These were the skills that led me on to such a satisfying and happy life as a designer. For that I am so grateful. She remained a friend throughout her long life, always interested in everyone’s activities, never complaining about her own problems and increasing infirmity. We will always remember her as a very special much loved person.

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Miss Gash was a very special teacher and her kindness and gentle humour were an oasis in boarding school life. As a young boarder we were not allowed into older girls' rooms but the night she was on duty Miss Gash always turned a blind eye and pretended not to notice when I called in to see my sister studying in her room.

She gave us a love of and abiding interest in the history of art and the pictures she taught us about are as clear in my mind today as when she first introduced us to them!

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She remained the same kind, sympathetic person that we all remember from Walthamstow Hall days. Our family loved her and we all benefited from her example – she was unfailingly concerned for other people and always looked for the best in everything, including our artistic efforts!

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She was kindness itself.



My quiet supportive and encouraging art teacher, and I still remember her History of Art course, which she made so riveting.



My memories of her are – standing in front of my paintings with her finger on her chin, asking me to turn it upside-down to see if it balanced. Also, when we started using clay to make our own pots (which I've still got); one particular pot was made by rolling out 'worms' and building them on top of one another. I was always too heavy-handed and couldn't get them even. Then she would come along and put the roll right, then the second and third ... until she remarked upon what a nice pot I'd made!!

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Certainly a favourite teacher of mine. Very caring, kind and encouraging, her Art Room was always a happy oasis for free expression. I recollect her showing no favouritism. As Housemistress of Chartwell, she took time to listen to different ideas. I do remember an attempt at some white, fluffy catkins on 'sugar paper'. With the paint still wet, I managed to spill brown powder paint all over it. With no reprimand, Miss Gash calmly tipped the excess paint into the sink and commented on the attractiveness of speckled catkins, adding that several works by great artists had been enhanced by mistakes!

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She was such a kind and calm presence.

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Such a kind person.

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A very kind person, which as someone who was hopeless at Art I particularly appreciated!



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A charming person and sensitive teacher.

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Miss Gash taught us to wash brushes properly and checked by pinching the brush from the base with her thumb to see if the water was clear. I never forgot this and have followed this lesson, as well as her many others, as best I could. At least the brush lesson has been successful... I can still hear her reading out the composition subject for an exam. Gazing over our heads out of the window, she slowly spoke in her gentle voice: "A group of people are waiting at a bus stop. It is raining". The result I still have – a very

depressing picture – but she could make anything sound interesting. I got in touch with her again after many years when I was painting myself and realised how much I owed her.



One of my most influential teachers at Walthamstow Hall. I probably remember some of her advice more than any that I received from any other teacher. She taught us how to evaluate our own work in a clear-sighted way; she was often quite critical, because she would say that ‘You must learn to take criticism or you will never achieve anything worthwhile’ (something I still quote), but it was always constructive and always balanced with something positive, and she had a way of saying things so gently that it took the sting out of any criticism.



She was so selfless and always so interested in others.



She was always a most wonderful lady – incredibly, she remembered one’s name, even 60 years on!



I was one of her pupils at Walthamstow Hall from 1946 to 1953. It was a fortunate encounter for me. Margaret was the perfect art teacher – and a lovely exemplar of a good person. We all loved her. When a few of us went on to art school she kept in touch and followed our progress.



She was a truly influential teacher for those of us in her classes at Walthamstow Hall. Her enthusiasm for Art and her attention to detail mean that those of us who went on to Art College followed by careers in the visual arts had the best of foundations. I particularly remember her love of Italian Renaissance art. Later on I was always in awe of how she managed to stay in touch with so many past pupils, following our careers and families with such encouraging interest. I will always remember her with huge affection and acknowledge the influence she had on my personal career path ... she used her talents well.



Margaret was my much loved art teacher. Had it not been for her, I may not have pursued an art career which has given me so many years of pleasure and rich experiences. When a work is going wrong, I still hear her firm, kindly advice in my head!

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Miss Gash was kind and fair to everyone. She was friendly but at the same time managed to keep her dignity and professionalism without being sentimental. ... She was always encouraging, even over poor quality work. She did not seem to mind us hanging about the art room when we were supposed to be elsewhere. Her perpetual enthusiasm and encouragement was infectious. She also seemed so calm and did not lose her temper.

Personally, she enabled me to thrive in drawing and painting. I was not so good at History of Art, but even in that subject she helped me with books and pictures. I obtained an A+ in A-level Art. It was because of her and her help. This started me to develop in other ways.

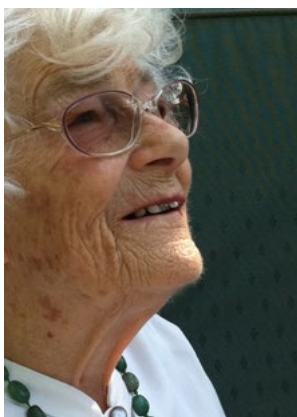




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*She was a lovely lady in so many ways  
– gentle and strong, loving and caring  
– a privilege to have known her.*

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# Tribute

*This tribute was written and delivered by one of Margaret's godsons, Jason Pennells, at Margaret's funeral service on 21 November 2014.*

We have come here together to say goodbye to Margaret, and because we share memories of this special person. She was part of our lives, and we, each, were part of hers. Each one of us – those who are here today, those who are unable to attend this service, and those who have gone before her.

Margaret *was* special. Largely, this was because she made *you* special. You knew Margaret was focused on you, and on what *you* were saying, what *you* were doing, and what *you* were worried about, were enjoying or were dreaming of. And when speaking of others, she would similarly be focused on *their* wellbeing, *their* successes and *their* difficulties.

She would always seek to understand and ask about *you* and your current concerns. If she was worried, she was worried about *you*, not about herself. She would always put herself in the background. If you called or visited, knowing she had been unwell or was in pain, she'd brush that topic to one side and ask "*How has your week been?*".

This was not false, not mere politeness: you could tell it in her voice, in her attention and in her constancy: Margaret was sincere. Her attention, like her hospitality, was sometimes quite formal. But it was never a formality.

Margaret was kind.

She was selfless. She was giving and generous: of time, of attention, of praise, and of interest.

From my sister Abi, Margaret's close friend and neighbour, and increasingly, as Margaret became frailer, her companion and carer, there are many memories.

*... Of Margaret's sense of fun, even the solemn plaster bust of Augustus sporting a paper hat at Christmas.*

*... Of the kitchen wall, which had children's heights measured on it for over half a century (and latterly, Margaret's own height too, to show how she was getting shorter as the young were getting taller).*

Margaret was always modest about her own efforts, her own talents and achievements, and about her own significance to people. Yet she could look at a picture by someone else and find in it something positive to say, even if it was not to her taste.

Margaret was, as I say, constant. As she grew into her old age, she remained the same person. And she was the same person each time you saw her. And to everyone: there was no pretence, no façade as to who she was.

Aware of her own mortality, Margaret felt keenly the responsibility for ensuring her father's reputation as an artist of note. So, at the age of ninety-five, Margaret worked tirelessly to prepare and hold an exhibition of his work, in Kettering and in London; wrote a perceptive and detailed essay for the exhibition catalogue; and recorded, in a short filmed interview, some of her reminiscences and reflections on his painting.

My own memories of Margaret are more often than not domestic, based, above all, on time spent with her in her flat of the past 50-plus years: her kindness and voice accompanying the flow of cooking, attending to her mother, to her brother Norman, and to guests.

To all, Margaret provided a reliable and much enjoyed stream of afternoon teas, morning coffees, and lunches; and always a warm welcome.

Others among us knew Margaret in a range of other roles, and at other times: as a godmother (to William and Alicia, as well as to me), as a family friend, as a teacher, a colleague, a neighbour, a parishioner, a member of NADFAS; a supporter of the Children's Society, as the sister of Norman, or as the young girl in her father's paintings.

Some of us have known Margaret in recent years, others have known her from her childhood days in Kettering, and the family friendships which have lived on from then. Special among all these was Margaret's childhood friendship with Vera, who walked daily with her to Miss Ketcher's elementary school and who appears with Margaret in the painting *The Inseparables*. Vera's son Alan has written of Margaret,

*“Next to my mother, who was her life-long friend, she was the most influential woman in my early years. All the family loved her.”*

Many of Margaret's friends are no longer alive (Vera died eleven years ago). The details of Margaret's life, and her memories of those friendships, go with her – her childhood days in Kettering; her teaching days; her visits, conversations, holidays and friends around the country. She remembered and spoke of all these parts of her life with warmth and with fondness.

Margaret had never an unkind word for anyone. She always sought out and spoke of the positive, in each person and at every turn of events.

Margaret was a teacher. She taught art – its techniques, its history and its value. She also taught much more, through

example, both in her role as a teacher and in life. And as the poem and the Bible reading we have just heard suggest, the key to that has been how to relate to others, and to treat each person with selfless love and kindness.

Here are some comments from past pupils of Margaret's over the years, which capture something of these aspects of *Miss Gash*, the teacher:

*She was my lovely art teacher who kept in contact for years through Christmas cards. I remember her suggesting, when drawing a tree, to draw the spaces around it and not the actual tree. This, of course, resulted in a picture of a tree and I found it a magical way of seeing.*

*She was the first person to make me really aware that outward impressions can be deceptive. On the outside, she looked so 'proper', and yet she had the most subtle and supportive understanding of children I experienced at school. She was that teacher one always wants to find, that most influenced my youth. I am very pleased to have known her.*

*She was such a wonderful teacher as well as amazing person, and I owe her a lot.*

As these comments show, Margaret was a light in our lives. We carry that light on, and reflect on what it has shown us. Sad as we are at this time of parting, we are glad that she has lit up our lives.

And so, we each hold and cherish our own memories of Margaret. For me, Margaret was, is, and will always remain, a good, kind, giving, constant and loving friend.

Margaret: we thank you for being in our lives. And for welcoming us to be in yours. Rest in Peace.





Pictures by Margaret's father, Walter Bonner Gash, and tributes to Margaret, may be found on the website

[www.walterbonnergash.org](http://www.walterbonnergash.org)