



Rev. Gilderoy Davison (1892 – 1954)

Earlier this year an e-mail was received via our website asking if we had any information about the Rev. Gilderoy Davison and his connections with St. Thomas Church.

Initial enquiries revealed that no one had any knowledge of him at all. However, after some research, it emerged that he was a prolific author with over 20 published books of crime fiction in the 1930s and 40s and had indeed spent some time at St. Thomas'.

Gilderoy Davison was born on 30th August 1892 in North Shields, Northumberland. He was the eldest of three boys born to Thomas and Minnie Gibson Davison (nee Brooks). On leaving school he became a bank clerk but by December 1915 he is mentioned in the London Gazette as being made a temporary Second Lieutenant in the 37th Division of the Army Service Corps. He was posted to France in April 1916.

Incidentally, his mother, Minnie Gibson Davison became commanding officer of the Northumbrian Division of the Women's Volunteer Reserve. In 1920 she was awarded an O.B.E. for her work and dedication during WW1.

On leaving the army it appears that he attended St. Catharine's College, Cambridge where he was awarded an M. A. (Canab). He also has some connection with Croydon.

He was the Curate at St. Thomas between 1927 and 1930 and lived at, Ruersdale (sic), Church Road. (Note – it is likely that this should read "Riversdale". Riversdale being the old vicarage. The new vicarage was in Princes Road in the house then known as Hibernia. This had been bought and donated to St. Thomas' by Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Okell of Glen Falcon in 1926).

He became vicar of St. Peter's Church, Bocking, Essex in 1934 where he remained until 1954. By this time he had already had some of his early works published. His main characters were 'Twisted Face' and 'Peter Castle'. All his works were published by Herbert Jenkins who also published works by P. G. Wodehouse and later, George Macdonald Fraser who also has connections with the Isle of Man.

In his book 'Prince of Spies', a Peter Castle novel, published in 1932, Davison's dedication reads, "This book is dedicated, with happy recollections of them, to all my friends in the Isle of Man".

Davison also wrote under the pseudonyms, David Gilroy and Roy Brooks. These names have a family link, Brooks being his mother's maiden name. Some of the books written under the name Roy Brooks include, 'The Flames of Fate', 'David Gilderfield' (1934) and 'The Infinite Road' (1936). These were also published by Herbert Jenkins.

Davison died on the 9th of May 1954 at St. David's Nursing Home in Exeter. He left his estate to his brother Thomas Brooke Davison. He is buried at the Church of St. John the Baptist, Plymtree, Collompton, Devon.

It would be nice to know if there are any copies of Davison's works hidden away in lofts or libraries in the Isle of Man or if there are any letters, photos or other memorabilia relating to Davison's time here on the Island.

More detailed information and photos will be posted on the website later.

