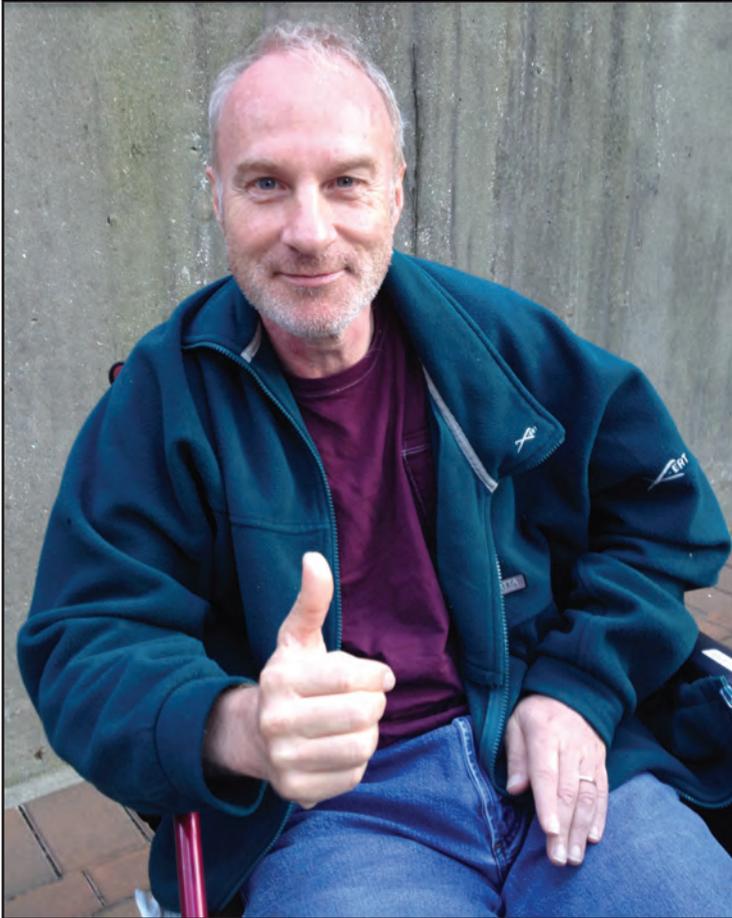


# Celebrating the Life of **Graham Usher**

12<sup>th</sup> December 1958    8<sup>th</sup> August 2013



**Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2013**

St Bride's Church  
Fleet Street  
City of London

Graham Robin Usher passed away peacefully early Thursday morning, August 8<sup>th</sup> 2013. He died at home after succumbing to the effects of a rare degenerative brain condition known as Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease. He was 54. Graham was born on 12<sup>th</sup> December 1958 in Debden, a Council Estate on the Eastern outskirts of London, the second son of John and Mary Usher. His working class background and the labour union activism of his father, a printer, formed the bedrock of his worldview. He left school without graduating but later entered art college on the strength of his portfolio. He studied English and Philosophy at Sussex University, earning a Bachelor's degree with distinction.

After leaving university Graham became active in the revolutionary left, engaging in passionate support of the 1984 miners' strike and taking part in the anti-fascist and anti-racist struggles of the time. He also worked in further education colleges in London's multi-racial East End, teaching immigrants and refugees. This experience, and his disillusionment with what he considered the arid political landscape of the Thatcher years, led him to take a job teaching English in Gaza in the early 1990s. There he switched to journalism shortly before the Oslo Peace Accords were signed in 1993.

Graham started by writing for the specialist magazine Middle East International but quite quickly became the Palestine correspondent for The Economist. He wrote also for Egypt's English-language Al Ahram Weekly, Middle East Report, The Nation, and Race and Class. He broadcast for numerous outlets, chief among them South African radio. Graham's journalism and the publication of two books – Palestine in Crisis (Pluto Press 1995) and Dispatches from Palestine (Pluto Press 1999) – established him as the most authoritative and perceptive Western journalist in the Occupied Territories, and a remorseless critic of the Oslo Process. In 2005 he left the Middle East for Pakistan, where his wife Barbara Plett was posted as BBC Correspondent. Graham continued reporting from there and later from the United Nations, when they moved to New York in 2009.

His friends and readers remember him as a journalist with fierce intellect, analytical clarity and deep political commitment. Graham had a remarkable ability to grasp the larger picture, but embed it in the lives of the ordinary people and political movements that he instinctively understood to be at the centre of the story, even when they were assigned to the margins in mainstream news copy. As a man he will be remembered for a keen wit, a humble spirit and great warmth and generosity. He was a jazz fan, a devoted follower of the football team Manchester United, and a lover of literature and theatre, involved in the dramatic telling of many a tale both onstage and off.

Graham lost his father John in 1970. He is survived by his beloved wife Barbara, his mother Mary, his brother and sister-in-law Geoff and Frances Usher and their children Stephen and David, his uncle Stan Tebbs, numerous cousins, and a multitude of friends.

**Organ Music Before The Service**  
*Goldberg Variation 25* Johann Sebastian Bach

**Hymn**

*The Lord's My Shepherd*

The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want;  
He makes me down to lie  
In pastures green; he leadeth me  
The quiet waters by.

My soul he doth restore again,  
And me to walk doth make  
Within the paths of righteousness,  
E'en for his own name's sake.

Yea though I walk in death's dark vale,  
Yet will I fear no ill:  
For thou art with me, and thy rod  
And staff me comfort still.

My table thou has furnishèd  
In presence of my foes;  
My head thou dost with oil anoint  
And my cup overflows.

Goodness and mercy all my life  
Shall surely follow me;  
And in God's house for evermore  
My dwelling-place shall be.

## **Bidding Prayer**

The Rector

### **Choir**

*Ubi Caritas* Maurice Duruflé

*'Where charity and love are, God is there'*

### **First Reading**

*1 Corinthians 13*

Read by Matthew Carr

### **Choir**

*In My Life* John Lennon/Paul McCartney arr. Daniel Jordan

### **Second Reading**

*A Lover's Call* by Khalil Gibran

Read by Barbara Plett Usher

### **Jazz Band**

*My One And Only Love* – Guy Wood/Robert Mellin

### **Third Reading**

*The Beautiful Game*

Read by Mark Taylor

### **First Address**

Geoff Usher

### **Choir**

*Valiant for Truth* Ralph Vaughan Williams

*'My sword I give to him that shall succeed me in my pilgrimage'*

## **Fourth Reading**

An excerpt from *Dispatches From Palestine* by Graham Usher

Read by Barbara Smith

## **Second Address**

Rema Hammami

## **Choir**

*I Shall Be Released* Bob Dylan arr. Matthew Morley

## **Prayers**

The Rector

## **Hymn**

*Jerusalem*

And did those feet in ancient time  
Walk upon England's mountains green?  
And was the holy Lamb of God  
On England's pleasant pastures seen?  
And did the countenance divine  
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?  
And was Jerusalem builded here  
Among those dark satanic mills?

Bring me my bow of burning gold!  
Bring me my arrows of desire!  
Bring me my spear! O clouds, unfold!  
Bring me my chariot of fire!  
I will not cease from mental fight,  
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,  
Till we have built Jerusalem  
In England's green and pleasant land.

**Blessing**  
The Rector

**Organ Voluntary**  
*The Firebird* Igor Stravinsky

**Jazz Band**  
*When The Saints Go Marching In* New Orleans Second Line style

*A retiring collection will be taken for  
the work of St Bride's Church  
and the MRC Prion Unit (CJD Research)*

*The congregation is warmly invited to a reception  
after the service at the City of London Distillery  
22-24 Bride Lane, London EC4Y 8DT*



St Bride's Church  
Fleet Street, London EC4Y 8AU  
020 7427 0133 [www.stbrides.com](http://www.stbrides.com)

Service led by  
*The Venerable David Meara*  
*Rector of St Bride's & Archdeacon of London*

Director of Music  
*Matthew Morley*

Organist  
*Nicholas O'Neil*

Jazz Band  
*Musicians from the*  
*Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music & Dance*

Trumpet  
*Tom Dennis*

Piano  
*Sam James*

Drums  
*Corrie Dick*

Acoustic Bass  
*Conor Chaplin*



Photo by John Tordai.

*My motivation was nothing other than political, in the sense that politics for me means morality in practice. The reason is self-evident. If history is written by its winners, then journalists who side with the losers should write in the faith that the last, in the end, shall be first. Until that rendezvous with victory is come, our job is to bear witness and to give voice – for ‘the struggle of people against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting.’*

Graham Usher, *Dispatches from Palestine*. Pluto Press 1999