

7<sup>th</sup> January 2022

## Endurance

**“A man may die, nations may rise and fall, but an idea lives on.  
Ideas have endurance without death.”**

*J F Kennedy, as quoted by Larry Chang in ‘Wisdom for the Soul’*

A news item caught my eye this week. Steve Burnett, an Edinburgh-based maker of musical instruments, was passing the former home of the legendary Anglo-Irish explorer, Ernest Shackleton, when he discovered that the house was being completely refurbished. Seeing discarded items in a skip outside he asked if he could rescue some of the floorboards so he could have a memento from the home of someone he greatly admired.

Between 1914 and 1917, Shackleton and a crew of 27 men (and a cat) attempted to make the first land crossing of the Antarctic. But their ship, *The Endurance*, became trapped in the ice and sank ten months later, though, remarkably – and thankfully – all the crew survived.

Realising it was close to the centenary of Shackleton’s death, Burnett decided to create an enduring tribute to such a great man, and from the discarded floorboards fashioned an exquisite violin. And, on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2022, the new violin was presented to the world in Shackleton’s memory. Interviewed for TV news, Burnett said he hoped the violin would be a symbol of one of the most incredible journeys of survival in human history.

Inside the violin are the names of all 28 members of the expedition. “We’ve all got to reflect where humanity is now,” Burnett said. “This violin is also a time capsule with a message, through the power of music, and through the connection with Shackleton – directly from the floorboards.”

It’s an amazing story, and one that warmed my heart. But, encouraged by Burnett, I reflected further, and came back to the words of President J F Kennedy quoted above: “A man may die, nations may rise and fall, but an idea lives on. Ideas have endurance without death.” Shackleton has been dead for a hundred years, but the example of his life has a greater endurance. His ship lies at the bottom of the sea, but ideas enshrined in exploration, and valour, and teamwork, and survival live on. “Three things last forever,” said St Paul, “Faith, Hope and Love, but the greatest of them all is Love.” There’s your endurance, right there! Let’s keep making music to celebrate the truth of that!

### **A prayer for today**

*I have music in my heart because God’s Love endures beyond all things. Amen*

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