

The Wood of the Cross

Programme note

In the autumn of 2024, I was invited to join a poetry group that met in the home of Dr Peter Ashton in Montgomery. In my state of, I suppose, semi-reclusive semi-retirement, this was a timely invitation — one I accepted with equal amounts of excitement and trepidation (the gathered company was of the highest esteem).

I was given an opportunity — to revisit my many volumes of poetry, a collection stretching across nearly five decades, some of which would have barely been opened for many, many years. What joy!

What joy also the company, friendship and mutual respect of these special people. What joy the gentle hospitality of Peter.

Through our readings and discussions I have learnt much — and more, probably, about myself than I had realised remained to be learnt. I shall continue to learn.

Peter often shares with us his own poems, many of which may be described as spiritual reflections. Without exception, these are thought-provoking and deeply, deeply sincere — an opinion I believe shared by all of us.

A copy of *The Wood of the Cross* sat on my desk; I didn't pay it much heed after Peter's reading, or so I thought. One night a short while later, I woke in the small hours with lines from the poem circling my mind. The next day, I began to compose this setting.

Thank you, Peter, for your words, your sincerity and for simply being Peter.

Ian Morgan-Williams
26 January 2025

Footnote

The Wood of the Cross may also be performed as a unison song, omitting the alto part and lower soprano notes.

The music is dedicated, "for Peter, with respect and admiration".

Please contact the composer via his website should you wish to perform *The Wood of the Cross*.