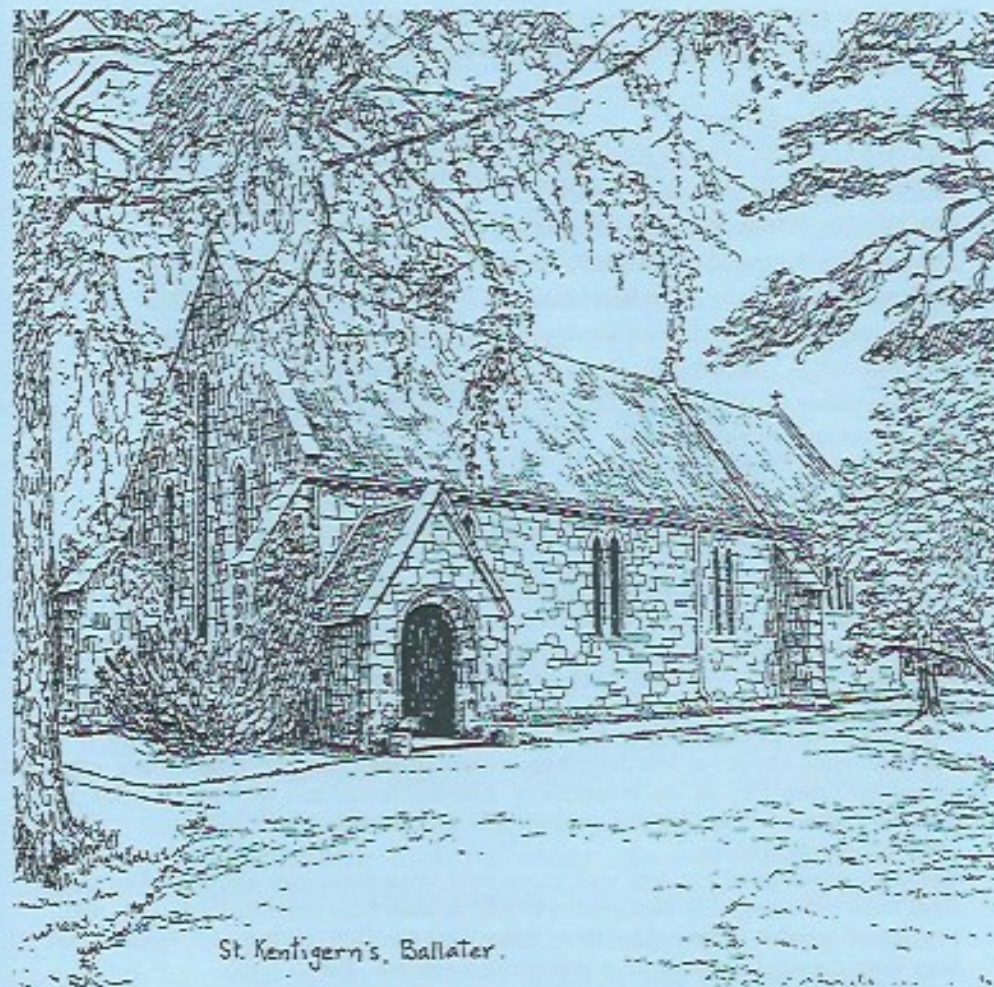


The Deeside Tattler

October and November 2021



St. Kentigern's, Ballater, St. Thomas's, Aboyne
with St. Ninian's, Braemar



Rector: Rev'd Canon Vittoria Hancock
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Note: DAY OFF. Vittoria is taking Friday as her normal day off,
and it would be helpful if we would respect that.

Dates for the Diary

10th October, 11.15 Harvest Communion, St Thomas'
13th October, 7.30, St Thomas' Vestry
17th October, 9.30am Harvest Communion, St Kentigern's
21st October, 7.30pm, St Kentigern's Vestry
7th November, 9.30am, Short Service and AGM, St Kentigern's
14th November, Remembrance Sunday. *Service still to be arranged.*
15th November, 7pm, Deeside-Donside Meeting, at St Thomas'
21st November, 11.15am. Short Service and AGM, St Thomas'
28th November, Advent Sunday

Provisional Dates for Advent

12th December, 6pm, Service of Nine Lessons and Carols, St Thomas'
19th December, 4pm, Ecumenical Carol Service, St Kentigern's

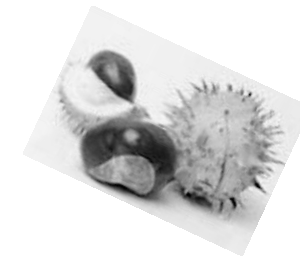
From the Editor: It is good that things are gradually getting more like normal in our churches. Any distancing between us is now voluntary, and we can at last use our Hymn Books and Prayer Books, with the covers removed from the bookshelves. It shows how strict the rules have been all this time, for it to be a reason for rejoicing. But we still have to wear masks by law, and this is hardly normality, especially when trying to sing!

We have some articles at last describing events in our churches! There was a very successful Open Day at the Humphreys' Rhu-na-Haven, and an equally good, if different, Autumn Fayre for St Kentigern's. It was good that both these events were open to the wider public.

There are other good articles, with more interesting memories and including one from Peter Sowrey giving background to Afghanistan from his time there years ago, so relevant to what is happening there today. Our thanks to all the contributors - do keep them coming! It makes for a interesting magazine. **Ed**

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From the Rector,
Rev'd Canon Vittoria Hancock



Dear Friends,

In Bridge Square in Ballater, and in the grounds of Aboyne Castle stand two trees which symbolise best to me this times of year. The one in Ballater is many years old, and stands, spreading out it's branches over the grass where in the spring the crocuses grow. The one in Aboyne is a younger version, still finding its feet in the pastureland. These are horse chestnut trees or conker trees – not too common in this area. We are reaching conker season. This is a period when nature seems to be slowing down for its winter rest, blanketing the ground with thick layers of leaves, rather like changing from the summer to the winter duvet. There are various touchstones in my year which I delight in. Conkers are one of those points of contact with nature and the cycles of the world. If a year passes without me acknowledging them, it means I have become too busy or distracted. It reminds that the world is bigger than just me, and to take a step backwards and refocus.

If you explore the pockets of my jacket you will often find conkers rolling around, glistening chestnut red, polished to a smooth finish. I have a bowl of nuts and cones at home which sits on the side, waiting for the entry from the new autumn. Conkers to you may bring back memories of your school-days, having conker competitions in the yard. To me, the conkers bring back memories of other trees, from an enormous spreading tree at Bodelwyddan in North Wales, where I used to take a picnic on days off, and sit and watch the view, to the conker tree which balances on the cliff edge down at Lee Abbey. There is a bench there under the branches, and across the valley you can see the sea, and hear it crashing on the rocks.

We all have touchstones, parts of the year upon which our memories lie, which serve to mark the passing of time. For some that may be birthdays or anniversaries. For others it may be events such as Midsummers Eve. Others may look for the first crocus or daffodil, or for the first opening of the buds on the trees. All too often we rush madly through life, possibly pausing briefly to acknowledge an event, but then heading onwards to the next thing. Yet the world is ours to glory in and revel in. It will go no faster if we are impatient. So this is my encouragement to you. Go out. Enjoy the autumn, even the damp days. Savour cups of tea with friends. Make your own touch points in the year, which keep you grounded amidst the uncertainty of life.

One of my favourite passages is from Ecclesiastes 3 – for everything there is a season. Remember that the seasons of life are myriad, but that in the end, the One who is in control is God, if we choose to hand that control to him. Without God all else is, as the writer says, only vanity.

Every blessing,

Vittoria

The Independent Review into the Diocese of Aberdeen and Orkney

I cannot ignore that fact that our Diocese and Bishop has been featuring heavily in the press recently, and not for the right reasons. Accusation and counter-accusation, secrecy, leaking of documents, and reluctance of the church hierarchy to take action is messy and uncomfortable. The Independent Review of the Diocese has been released, with its recommendations, and it does not make for easy reading. Statements from the College of Bishops seems to be followed by different statements.

To paraphrase the Palace on a different matter 'The whole family is saddened to learn the full extent of how challenging the last few years have been. Whilst some recollections may vary, they are taken very seriously.' As a family of God, we are saddened, dismayed, indignant, and sympathetic to those who feel they have been bullied and diminished. Whatever the outcome, we must aim to build a stronger, better family of God, where those who feel they are bullied can speak out, and where those who are perceived to be bullying are challenged and where needed rebuked and disciplined.

There will be some resolution to this, but what and when I cannot say. My fear is that others may end up being hurt and bruised on the journey to justice. My plea is that justice be tempered with mercy, and the willingness to all to set aside one's own opinions and to look at the evidence, not to listen to rumours and counter-rumours. My hope is that love may prevail, however that looks in this situation, and to that end, I ask your prayers.

Vittoria Hancock

Clouds and light.

I have been thinking about two particular dates in the last few weeks.

August 6th is the **Feast of the Transfiguration** when we remember the account of Jesus with 3 of his disciples going up the mountain to pray. While they were there, the disciples were overwhelmed by the dazzling light streaming from Jesus as they prayed with him. They saw God's almost unbearable radiance in the human face of Jesus. Then a cloud enveloped them and they were terrified. They heard a voice saying, 'This is my Son, my beloved. Listen to him.'

By a terrible irony, August 6th is also the day when the first atomic bomb exploded over Hiroshima (in 1945). Here too there was a blazing light, followed by a mushroom cloud, but this time bringing appalling death and destruction to the city. 135,000 people were killed or injured, while the radiation released, affected future generations as well.

Last week, was the 20th anniversary of 9/11, the terrorist attack in the USA when the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York were demolished by 2 hijacked planes being flown into them. Here again, there were fearful flashes of light, thick clouds of smoke, and when the towers collapsed the streets were covered with a sort of sandstorm of dust, debris and thick fumes. 3,000 people died, many others were injured. The political and international consequences are with us still, the tragic situation in Afghanistan being only the most recent.

How do we try to hold together these vastly different experiences? Two bringing death and destruction, the other bringing the hope of salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus?

How are we able to hold onto the compassion and mercy of God in the knowledge of the death and destruction of which we human beings are capable?

A few days ago, I listened to a very moving performance of the great Bach St Matthew Passion from the BBC Proms, and then on the last night of the season, before all the jolly razzmatazz, they performed a new Choral arrangement of Samuel Barber's Agnus Dei from his Adagio for Strings. Both these very different works brought tears, hope and beauty to this listener.

Our prayer may be 'Lord have mercy'

Carol Simmons

Midweek Communions

Midweek Communions will start again in October. Dates are:

St Thomas' 10.30am, Tuesday 12th October, 9th November

St Kentigern's, 10.30am, Thursday 28th October, 18th November

Memories of Afghanistan

It is now 45 years since my Kabul assignment to organise highway maintenance training for the Government and the changes are minimal, mainly concerning the education and employment of women, all of which has taken place in the last 20 years of occupation.

The country is wild and mountainous, most of it above 4000 ft; Kabul lying at over 8000ft. The climate ranges from the 30's in midsummer to minus 25 in mid-winter. Cities are joined by narrow tarred roads but the rest are tracks and 4x4 vehicles were necessary. Tribalism was extreme throughout rural areas, where villages were made up of mud houses without electricity and running water and traditional agricultural practices continued. Some 70pc of the population were illiterate.



I stepped down from the aircraft and instantly hit the rigid regulations that stand in this strange part of the world. Every item I had brought into the country was meticulously entered into my passport in the local Dari language (taking up 10 pages) and all my documents, including an Entry Visa were carefully studied.

It was a relief to find a colleague waiting patiently for me outside the Airport, but as we drove into the city I immediately felt I'd gone back in time some 2000 years. Bearded and robed Afghans filled the grubby streets, donkey carts rumbled back and forth, street corners had water-carriers and scribes, camel caravans headed out of town to cross the nearby Hindu Kush mountain range; Nearly all the women wore the hooded chadri with their faces fully covered. Noisy, smelly and chaotic were the only words that could describe the scene. Luckily the company had rented a fairly modern house and hired an English-speaking cook, so the team could relax in comfort.

As time went by it became apparent that Kabul had quite a large expatriate population who looked after themselves. We had a British Embassy Club with various sporting activities and a Saturday film night where I was projectionist. We held church services in the Embassy (the city church having been burned down). The Americans had a Commissary where we could buy western food. There were several acceptable restaurants and the Kabul Intercontinental Hotel. There was even an Amateur Dramatic Society (for which I looked after lighting and sound).



When Jean and our daughter came out some months later I was able to move to a more modern house and found a houseboy who had been a British Embassy driver. We were later to meet his family, and his wife produced some beautiful embroidered linen which we use to this day.

We managed the occasional trip out of Kabul (one had to take a picnic for refreshments, and take care what you photographed), and one memorable one was

through the Kabul Gorge towards Kandahar. The narrow road is full of hairpin bends dropping some 3000 ft in under 10 miles (perfect places for an ambush as has happened in Britain's imperial past).

Officialdom was strong, giving us the occasional hard time. One such event started with Jean collapsing in a restaurant at a dinner to celebrate American Thanksgiving. To our surprise a Scottish doctor came over to assist (we still keep in touch) and it was suggested that she should return home. To leave Afghanistan required an Exit Visa, so we contacted her neurosurgeon in the UK and he wrote back suggesting that Kabul was unsuitable (due to its high altitude). However when we took his letter to the authorities for the issue of the Visa, they took offence and threatened us with jail - It took the British Embassy a day to sort out the misunderstanding.



Overall we found individual Afghans to be courteous, kind and hospitable people, and generally our time there was not unpleasant.

Peter Sowrey

Tour of Britain, 2021, Final Stage 8

The country's biggest professional cycle race, Tour of Britain, came for the first time this year to Aberdeenshire - and in particular, they came to Aboyne, and cycled right past St Thomas's, just after our service had finished!

The main road was closed of course, so leaving the church was not going to be easy -



and anyway, why not join the fun and make it a social occasion! Most of the congregation did just that. Coffee was provided and taken outside (note the coffee cups!), and we went over to the wall to watch a succession of police on motor bikes, all cheerfully waving to us, and finally the cyclists themselves.

And here they are!

Sheila

Open Garden and Open-Air Joint Service



Marcus and Sabrina kindly opened their gardens at Rhu Na Haven House to the public to raise money for St Kentigern's Church. There was an open-air church service preceding the Open Garden Day event on 1st August, which made a lovely change in these strange times, as no masks were required. The joint service with both congregations from St Thomas' and St Kentigern's churches was well-attended. It was a wonderful location and the sound of the river nearby, birdsong and a few bees buzzing around made it even more special. There was even a short spell of 'soft refreshing rain', which seemed to appear on cue during the hymn 'We plough the fields.'



Thankfully, the weather cleared up and stayed fair throughout the afternoon, so people could flock to the event, explore the gardens and wonder at the marvel that is the fairy-tale-like walled garden, which took several years to establish, just stunning. It was a real treat to see the beautifully laid out garden. There was a board with pictures of how the walled garden looked in 2006, also after Storm Frank in 2015. So much work has gone



into it and the result is amazing. Marcus and Sabrina's grandchildren were stewards. People could wander around the beautiful gardens all afternoon. The cake tent in the walled garden soon sold out of the delicious looking cakes and macaroons. There was an ice cream van next to the house and teas were served in the badminton hall. Hordes of people flocked in to enjoy the mountain of



cakes. Spotted was a surprise guest: Jim McColl from Beechgrove Garden, who enjoyed his visit.

The event was very well attended the final total for the Garden Opening is: £2,294.20

Welcome to the Rhu-na-Haven Gardens Open Day 2021.



When Sabrina and I moved to Rhu-na-Haven nearly seven years ago, we set ourselves a target of having the Walled Garden open within five years. That should have been last year, but things are looking even better with the extra year

THE WALLED GARDEN. This is the main garden for the house, and was lovingly looked after by my parents for 40 years. Run as a market garden for a short period, it was let go

for four years and was beginning to revert to nature. Repairs in 2015 started with the fruit cage, extensively damaged after heavy snowfall. The central flower border was reinstated in memory of my mother's lovely borders, and the raised beds put down to vegetables and sweet peas!



THE WOODLAND WALKS. Between the Walled Garden and the River there are four walks which meander through the open woodland, the one nearest the river having splendid views. Please take care as the surfaces are uneven as the paths are not manicured! Here again the non native beech trees, about 150 years old, are gradually being replaced by naturally regenerated sessile oak, which will help stabilise the river bank in times of excessive flooding.

THE FAMILY. The house was bought by my parents James and Violet Humphrey in 1956, as there was no suitable house on Dinnet Estate, owned by my grandfather Sir Malcolm Barclay-Harvey, who also most conveniently owned the fishings in

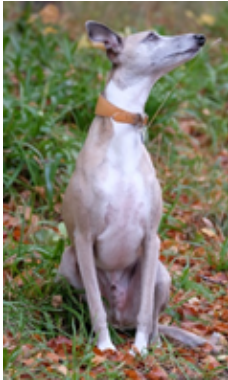


front of Rhu-na-Haven! The Barclay side of my mother's family were granted the lands of Towie (Barclay) by King Malcolm III in 1187, and the Harveys owned Carnousie near Turriff, which was sold in 1914. The Humphreys were Irish Plantationists who moved to Saint John, New Brunswick, after being "asked to leave" New York in 1783! Happily our eldest grandson Harry is back living and working there again.



BASS NOTES

It's a Dog's Life



There was a time when the male of the family was the head honcho, the supremo, the revered patriarch. Now, it is neither the male nor, indeed, the female who rules the roost. These days it is a joint post held by the family pet and the mobile phone.

I realised this truth all too painfully during the summer, which Archie and I have spent in recovery and rehabilitation.

As mentioned in a previous *Bass Notes*, I fractured my pelvis in late April, by tripping over a threshold. Now steadily improving – thanks for asking. I had good treatment in Aberdeen, and this would normally have been followed by some rehabilitation in our excellent community hospital, but it

was closed thanks to Covid and so I had to rely on Johanna's nursing skills (firm but fair), plus some input from a community physiotherapist and her occupational therapist colleague. Over three months, with their help, I went from lying down, to standing up (with a zimmer), to walking tentatively (with a zimmer), to walking with two poles, then one pole, then venturing nervously down steps into the garden to sit on well-cushioned garden furniture. This was my human experience of health care and rehabilitation. Professional, but by no means a five-star luxury experience, with a good deal of it conducted via a mobile phone.

Archie, on the other hand, suffered from an unspecified health condition for several weeks in early summer which caused him to lose interest in walks, fun and food. Eventually, the vet diagnosed pancreatitis. He had scans, blood tests and x-rays and for several days was on an intravenous drip to flush out the toxins from his system. In his time, he has had several annual check-ups from vets, who always weigh him before doing anything else. Archie is such a stoical creature of ingrained routine that, on arrival at the vet's consulting room, he walks straight on to the scales without bark or whimper, stands there looking gloomy, as only a whippet can, and waits for the vet to pronounce his or her verdict in kilograms. A sensitive creature, he is desperate for the opportunity to escape from what he clearly sees as a chamber of horrors – the dog I mean, not the vet.



This summer, however, was a concentration of horrors over many days both for Archie and for his master's bank balance. Vet appointments were made with an ease that humans dealing with the NHS can only dream of in these pandemic days. Treatments, medications and procedures came thick and fast – and at a cost.

What Archie did not realise, of course, was that he was living through a brief period of boundless luxury, a kind of canine health care paradise in which he was the centre of attention for those humans bustling around him. On his final day of intravenous therapy we pictured him lying on his back with the drip inserted into a limp leg while he was addressed by a white jacketed waiter: 'Now sir, today chef has prepared a delicately flavoured *'Bonio en croute'*, and to follow may I recommend our *'chew du jour'* – excellent for sweetening the breath'. That chew, incidentally, a world away from the stuff that Archie hoovers up in the woods on a daily basis, and which may well have caused his pancreatitis in the first place. An anxious and attentive vet called several times to check on his progress both during and after his treatment.

Compare his treatment to that of his master, who was cared for professionally, but whose treatment, however competent, could scarcely be described as five-star wrap around care.

So, to conclude our summer of recovery, rehabilitation and financial pain, Archie will in future spend much more time on the lead, and much less time freely scanning the ground seeking out and devouring unmentionables. His master will continue trying to remain upright, while repairing his body, his pride and his bank balance. In his dreams he may occasionally be transported to a time when the patriarch simply growled or snapped his fingers to make things happen. My live-in matriarch meanwhile struggles with her computer, her mobile phone and her tethered dog, dreaming of a time when humans ruled the roost and not technology with all its challenges.

Talking of which, I had a friend many years ago who wore sandals and a beard. As he jay-walked casually across city streets, he would shout at motorists 'Man came before the car!' Those are wise words for anyone responsible for devising technological innovation, or planning health and social care services – stand back and remind yourself that what you are designing will be used by humans. And humanity with all its needs and foibles was around for a long time before your service, your computer or your phone was a twinkle in your eye.

Eric Sinclair



...if you have been affected by any
of the issues raised in this sermon...

St Kentigern's Autumn Fayre



Selling raffle tickets, with the teas behind

The Fayre eventually took place on Saturday 18th September, a lovely sunny day. The doors opened at 1:30pm and I thought 'Oh no where are all the people!' It was a slow beginning but thankfully it didn't last long.

We had to be extra careful due to Covid, people had to check in with a QR code, or leave names and contact details. Despite this, it was very much enjoyed by all. People flocked to the hall and it was busy all afternoon.

It was so good to see folk and have a natter, even though I should have been concentrating on persuading them to make a purchase from our stall! Being a stall holder gives you the privilege of having a very welcome cuppa and a piece brought to you during the afternoon - many thanks to all those on teas, which looked to be well supported, and not forgetting all those with stalls, and the preparation that goes before, THANK YOU.

Old favourites like the Cake and Candy stall, the Bottle stall, Bits and Bobs, Books, Plants and raffle were all back.



A well-stocked plant stall



Susan Smith and her team were busy all afternoon.



The cake stall was popular!

We had some new stalls, too: Linda Hill organised a wonderful Nearly New stall, selling clothes, handbags and shoes.



Tanya Hensell had a stall with some of her Glenkindie Pantry pink elderflower cordial and chutney.



Paul Mogford had a wonderful display of his beautiful nature photo cards.



Congratulations to all who won raffle prizes, (sadly not me) and congratulations to Carole Nicoll on winning the Queen's Gift, a beautiful Crystal Carafe.

And finally, (*drum roll!*), the grand amount raised was **£4,270-91**.

Many thanks to all who came and gave their support.

Anne Richardson

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Ballater Victoria Week Scarecrow

This year's scarecrow was Daniel in the lion's den, placed in the church porch, surprising (or frightening) passers-by.

Barbara Simpson and I produced this year's entry for the 'Lite' version of Ballater Victoria Week. Daniel and the lion sitting beside him had identical 'rock star' wigs.

We got 37 votes in the Society category, so we're very pleased to get the prize cup back.

Now we need to put on our thinking caps for next year's entry. Any ideas anyone?

Sabine Muir





Readings for October and November 2021

		St Kentigern's	St Thomas's
3rd October Trinity 18	Job 39:1-18 Matthew 11:25-30	Hilary Mutch	Sue Burgess
10th October Trinity 19	Job 23:1-9, 16-17 Hebrews 4:12-16 Mark 10:17-31	Margaret Jaffrey	Rider family
17th October Trinity 20	Job 38:1-7 Hebrews 5:1-10 Mark 10:35-45	Sabine Muir	Isabel Wilson
24th October Trinity 21	Job 42:1-6, 10-17 Hebrews 7:23-28 Mark 10:46-52	Sabrina Humphrey	Peter Sowrey
31st October Trinity 22 All Souls	Isaiah 25:6-9 John 5:24-27	Stanley Ewen	Irene Legge
7th November Trinity 23	Ruth 3:1-5 ; 4:13-17 Hebrews 9:24-28 Mark 12:38-44	Carole Nicoll	Lara Elson
14th November Trinity 24	1 Samuel 1:4-20 Hebrews 10:11-14, 19-25 Mark 13:1-8	Anne Richardson	REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY NO SERVICE
21st November Trinity 25	2 Samuel 23:1-7 Revelation 1:4b-8 John 18:33-37	Marcus Humphrey	Anne Harper
28th November ADVENT SUNDAY	Jeremiah 33:14-16 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13 Luke 21:25-36	Margaret Jaffrey	Patricia Cruickshank

Midweek Communions

St Thomas' 10.30am, Tuesday 12th October, 9th November

St Kentigern's, 10.30am, Thursday 28th October, 18th November

CHURCH SERVICES AT BALLATER AND ABOYNE

St. Kentigern's, 9.30am

1st Sunday Morning Worship
2nd Sunday Holy Communion 1982
3rd Sunday Holy Communion 1982
4th Sunday Holy Communion 1970
5th Sunday Morning Prayer

St. Thomas's, 11.15am

Morning Worship
Holy Communion 1982
Holy Communion 1970
Family Communion
Morning Prayer (Matins)

Sunday Club St. Kentigern's, Ballater

Children are welcome to attend any Sunday Service, and families are invited to use the materials in the Hall if so required.

The **St Kentigern's Sunday Club** normally meets on the **third Sunday of every month at 9.30am** in the Church Hall. The children are brought back into Church to join their families during the Offertory Hymn.

These Services will be advertised when they have been resumed.
Anne R.

Young Church at St. Thomas's

Children are welcome at all the services at St Thomas's. The children's corner contains books, colouring and toys for small children, so do make use of them.

Morning Worship at St. Thomas's

(on the first Sunday of the month)

This is normally a non-Communion Service, not specifically for children, but they are of course especially welcome.

Next Services will be:

3rd October:

St Francis of Assisi

7th November:

The Kingdom of God

The Chapel of St Ninian, Mar Lodge, Braemar

There are no services meantime, due to Covid-19 restrictions.
Future services will be advertised

Jesus said to His Disciples (*Matthew Ch 5*):

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.

Blessed are those who suffer persecution for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Youth Corner

The wise and foolish Maidens



Jesus loved telling stories to illustrate what he was trying to say to people. One was the story of the ten maidens.(or virgins, some people say) There was a grand wedding, and the ten maidens were going to meet the Bridegroom, in great excitement. He was unfortunately delayed, and they had to wait a long time, curling up to sleep until he came.

Then at midnight, the cry got up, 'Here he comes!!'. So they got up in a hurry, and rushed to get their lamps sorted for the occasion. Five of them were all prepared, had extra oil with them, trimmed their lamps, and went in to meet the bridegroom and share in the wonderful feast. How happy they were!

But alas, five of the maidens had not thought to bring any more oil, their lamps had gone out, and there was nothing to fill them with. They pleaded with the other five, but they said they didn't have enough to pass any on. So as they went happily through to the feast, the foolish maidens were left behind with the door shut. And they were devastated!

Jesus has been speaking to his disciples about the Kingdom of God, saying that He will come again, no-one knows when. So here He is telling his disciples to be prepared all the time, and not to be caught out as the foolish maidens were. There is a lovely hymn that explains more of what this means. It has a jolly tune that you may know, so try singing it.

Give me oil in my lamp, keep me burning.

Give me oil in my lamp, I pray.

Give me oil in my lamp, keep me burning,

Keep me burning till the break of day.

Chorus: Sing hosanna, sing hosanna,

Sing hosanna to the King of Kings!

Sing hosanna, sing hosanna,

Sing hosanna to the King!

Give me love in my heart, keep me serving.

Give me love in my heart, I pray.

Give me love in my heart, keep me serving,

Keep me serving till the break of day.

Chorus:

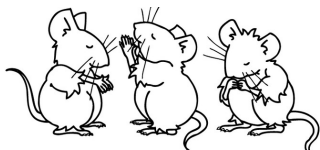
Give me joy in my heart, keep me singing.

Give me joy in my heart, I pray.

Give me joy in my heart, keep me singing,

Keep me singing till the break of day.

Chorus:



Seek God's will in all you do and He will
show you which path to take.
from Proverbs 3:6 NLT

Plan ahead — It wasn't raining
when Noah built the ark!

The Wonders of Nature

Swallows

For more than 20 years, swallows have come back to Deeside in the spring to raise their offspring, and without fail, one or more pairs have made my garage their home for the summer. They are wild and independent, and yet give me a curious sense of need to care for them. The windows stay open through the summer for them to come and go as they please. The adults are nervous of my company, but not the young ones. It is exciting to see the first one just sitting on a rafter motionless while I gaze at it. Then more come, and just at the beginning they will come and sit together. The photo was taken a day or two after they came out of the nest, a second brood, and a wonder to behold!



Sheila

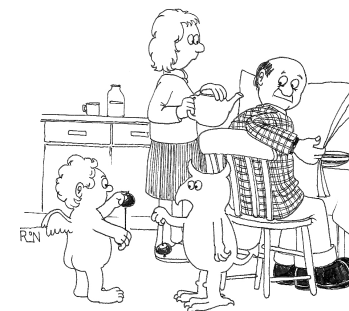


Conker

I remember a day
When I walked in the wood
Hearing the leaves crunch underfoot
When glancing downwards
I saw the coppery sheen
Of a conker
Enveloped by its hedgehog shell
And stooped to pick it up
Marvelled at the velvet softness
The silky smooth surface
And was content.



Vittoria Hancock



*an epic struggle between good and evil
took place in the vicarage kitchen*

Happy Memories from Cheltenham

When working and living in Cheltenham I became a member of the Cheltenham Operatics Dramatic Society. That was one of the best things I could have done for various reasons. I learnt a lot, made many friends, and had lots of fun. We did two Musicals a year and one Play. We were all amateurs, cast, orchestra, backstage etc. All the shows were sell-outs.

We were opened by the local dignitaries on a Monday night, had the Matinees Wednesday and Saturday, and had to be out by Sunday lunchtime.

We had a social side as well, skittles, cricket, trips etc. We also had an annual Dinner Dance, and went Carol singing. We would visit other groups and also do some concerts.

Funny things happened, especially when people were collecting their costumes. We did 'Show Boat' and some of the men had to wear brown tights. Seeing them trying to get them on was very, very funny, they had not a clue!

I did not join the one in Aboyne in case I compared it.

I certainly enjoyed my time with them, and have good memories.

Daphne Laing

Amazingly, 'CODS' is still flourishing today! Said to be one of the oldest amateur dramatic societies in the country, they have been performing in Cheltenham for 128 years. Ed

The Seedpod

Such a grey day
With a sorrowful sky
Brooding overhead
Yet I walk
Not wanting to talk to God
Yet he speaks to me
For in the dullness
Comes a shaft of light
Illuminating a seed-pod
Opening up to the warmth
Promises of life to come
And I smile
As the Son breaks through
Comforting me with a warm embrace
I know
The best is yet to come

Vittoria Hancock

17th CENTURY NUN'S PRAYER

LORD Thou knowest better than I
know myself that I am growing
older and will some day be old. Keep me from the
fatal habit of thinking I must say something
on every subject and on every occasion. Release
me from craving to straighten out everybody's
affairs. Make me thoughtful but not moody;
helpful but not bossy. With my vast store of
wisdom, it seems a pity not to use it all, but Thou
knowest Lord that I want a few friends at the end.

Keep my mind free from the recital of endless
details; give me wings to get to the point. Seal
my lips on my aches and pains. They are increas-
ing, and love of rehearsing them is becoming
sweeter as the years go by. I dare not ask for grace
enough to enjoy the tales of others' pains, but help
me to endure them with patience.

I dare not ask for improved memory, but for
a growing humility and a lessening cocksureness
when my memory seems to clash with the mem-
ories of others. Teach me the glorious lesson that
occasionally I may be mistaken.

Keep me reasonably sweet; I do not want to be
a Saint - some of them are so hard to live with -
but a sour old person is one of the crowning works
of the devil. Give me the ability to see good things
in unexpected places, and talents in unexpected
people. And, give me, O Lord, the grace to tell
them so.

AMEN

A Variety of Pets

Over the years we have had a considerable number of pets starting with fish, tropical fish, 2 Siamese fighters, 2 Angel fish, 2 Zebras and 2 Black Mollies. Living in London and out working all day, I did not have to take them walks, then when we flew to Kenya, Barrie's uncle said he would look after the fish, well he made a shelf for the tank to sit on, but unfortunately his carpentry skills were not up to much and down came the shelf, tank and all. He scooped up the poor fish and popped them in his goldfish pond outside, they either died or were eaten by the goldfish. Poor things!

Our first pet in Kenya was a little guinea pig we called Peanuts, he lived on the verandah outside our bedroom in the Plums Hotel, such a friendly little chap.

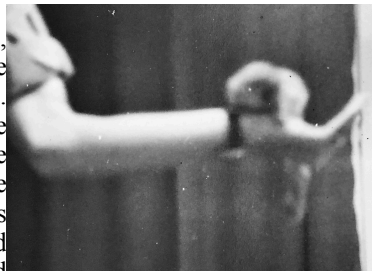
Once we found a little cottage to rent, we purchased a pup, a cross between a Scottie and Spaniel, black with white bib and toes so we called her Spats. She was a lovely pet and we flew her home when our tour was up, had to be quarantined for six months, stayed in a kennels outside Banchory. Lived until she was fourteen years. One of my uncles said you have to give her a pedigree and suggested she was an African Beagle, at least she looked like one with her long ears!



Next was a Siamese kitten, her mother belonged to our next door neighbours, but her brothers were black and white! She was a chocolate point and just beautiful, we called her Topsy, we wanted to bring her home too, but the one time we had to take her to the vet, she got so distressed, thought it too cruel to shut her in a box, so our neighbours took care of her when we left.

We also adopted a Dachshund who came wandering by one day, called her Emmy, could not trace her owner so the Kenya RSPCA found her a home with a couple who had already booked a flight for their own dog who had suddenly died. They loved Emmy so off she went to a good home.

Last pet abroad was a bushbaby, we called him Toto, (Swahili for baby) he was a right character, only nine inches tall with an eleven inch tail with great big eyes. He played with Spats and Topsy, he could leap from the floor to the top of the door in one leap. He did not have to go into quarantine, so our friends kept him until we got home and then sent him on to us, they had one as well called Gill so they sent their one home to us and then collected her when they returned. So twice I had to go to Heathrow RSPCA who were very kind to them, fed and really looked after them. I was living back in the flat in London beside Finsbury Park at the time so it was no problem for me to pop and get them. They were very fond of each other and it was only



the once Toto bit me. I think he was trying to protect Gill and boy was it sore, sunk his teeth in one of my thumbs, I prized his jaw open then he promptly bit my other thumb. His bite was like a ferret, it brought tears to my eyes in more ways than one! Barrie made him a big cage with a heated bed and he was very popular with all the children, but he was always kept in his cage in case he bit them. In the evening when all the doors were shut we let him out to play, favourite game was hiding in the piano and popping up to say hello to Spats, who sat watching for him. Our vet had to get in touch with London Zoo to find out how much anaesthetic he could give him when he had to scale his teeth, he lived for five years and seven months.

Eileen Davies

Harvest Service Collection for Aberdeen Cyrenians

There will be collection boxes at both churches at the Harvest Festival services on Sundays 10th and 17th October, for goods to be donated to the Aberdeen Cyrenians. Items such as dried goods, tinned vegetables and fruits, ravioli, pasta, biscuits, teabags, and toiletries will be very welcome.

Recycling for Good Causes

The Braemar Guide Sheiling is a local project which has served the young people of the area and community groups for over 60 years. At Braemar Guide Sheiling, many of the Brownies or Guides, Cubs or Scouts benefit from the huge opportunities for informal learning in the fabulous location – on the edge of the village, adjacent to The Princess Royal and Duke of Fife Memorial Park – home to the Braemar Gathering.

After some 60 years, the old building was no longer fit for the purpose, and a new purpose-built facility is being built, at considerable cost. So the latest fundraiser has just been launched, with a partnership with Recycling for Good Causes. We send off bags weighing 10kg. Recycling for Good Causes sell the items and we get 75% of the amount they raise. Our first bag has gone - full of phones, old cameras and lots of jewellery, so we are waiting to see how much that raises.

We are collecting jewellery and watches, coins and currency, mobile phones,, cameras and gadgets, and stamps, loose or in packs. Full details are in a readily available leaflet advertising this.

We also collect used printer cartridges through another company.

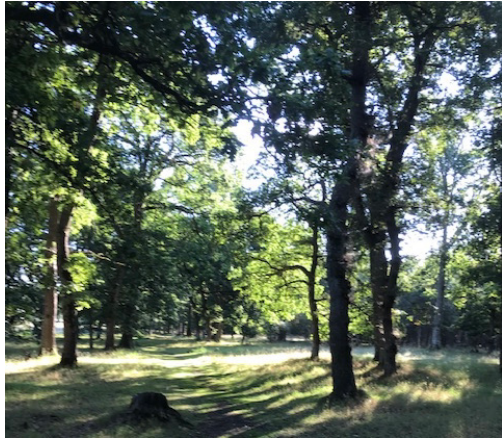
I will put a box in both churches shortly, so please empty your cupboards and donate unused and unloved items to us.

If people want me to collect items, my phone number is 07968 093984. Or contact braemarsheiling@gmail.com or www.braemarsheiling.org.uk for details and collection. Many thanks

Sue Burgess

A walk in the Castle Woods

The sun was shining through the Scots pine as I began my morning walk .The signs of early autumn were evident, dewy cobwebs on the grasses and small trees. These woods have been much appreciated by dog walkers and walkers alike during the



lockdown. Mostly deciduous but with areas of Scots pine.

I walked on through the pine and came to the oaks, a field is on one side here. Cattle and sheep graze here at various times. The oaks provide nesting sites for the resident wood peckers.

Crossing the stream into another oak wood, there is evidence of replanting. Green protectors for young oaks are in evidence there, also clumps of branches which offer cover for small birds during the winter.

It was among these branches earlier in the year that I saw two tawny owlets. I had been told about them by a fellow Walker. However they were so well camouflaged I nearly missed them. They looked so vulnerable it was a relief to know that the parents were nearby.

Coming out of the woods onto the main track, I turned into the field. This year it has been covered in a selection of lovely grasses and wild flowers. Deer are often to be seen here. Aboyne Castle provides a nice backdrop

I then re-entered the wood, walking home through clumps of wild brambles and decaying fungi.

Irene Legge



Little things -

A little thing happened the other Monday morning. I try to do my shopping at the Co-op on a Monday. I was on my way when a gentleman passed by, and saying ‘Good morning, what a beautiful morning - enjoy it!’

Then on the way out of the Co-op another gentleman said ‘Oh, what a perfect morning, I feel like singing!’ I almost thought he was going to.

I have no idea who they were, but I really did feel better. How something so simple can lift one’s feelings!

Daphne

A Unique Invitation

During my lifetime I have attended many weddings, but never one where so many events were planned around it. This special one was the marriage of my American nephew John in April 2000.

From the start it was going to be different; Peter and I flew to Maine (where my younger sister lived) via a short break in Boston (where friends lived). After a few days we were joined by my elder sister and her husband. Together we all explored Mount Desert Island, enjoying freshly-caught lobster, and the sights of the Acadia National Park. Then we all took a side trip to Canada (Quebec City) and had a few nights stay at the famous Chateaux Frontenac Hotel. Retuning to Maine, our side of the family then had a spectacular two day drive down the US East Coast and over the Chesapeake Bay bridge-tunnel to Virginia Beach, where the wedding was to take place.

The fun began two days before the wedding, with a twilight cruise (including dancing and drinks) aboard the “American Rover”, a three-masted schooner, around Norfolk Bay. The next evening was devoted to a family rehearsal (including dinner) at the local Arts Centre with us all dressed in our finery. The wedding itself took place on the third day in the local Episcopal church - groom and all the male family members dressed in tuxedo’s. This was followed by a magnificent reception at the local Golf and Yacht Club – which, of course, went on till the small hours. The morning after was devoted to an open-air “Sunday Brunch” which Peter and I had to leave early to drive to Washington, D.C. to catch a flight home.

The fun wasn’t over yet. After dropping me at the airport, Peter was away over an hour returning our hire car, so British Airways staff took pity on me stuck in my wheelchair and upgraded both of us to Club Class for the flight to London. What a trip!

Jean Sowrey



Jean and sister, with brother-in-law cooking lobster

Di Hogarth



Diana Hogarth was born on 18th July, 1928, the first child of David and Marjorie Cochran of Balfour, Birse. She studied drama at the Royal Academy of Music in London, then taught acting and elocution at St. Margaret's School for Girls in Aberdeen and was active in the theatre community in Aberdeen.

In 1967, Diana returned to London to pursue her life-long goal of acting professionally. She found success as an actress, especially on BBC radio where she regularly appeared in plays and as a poetry reader, but also on the stage and on television. In addition, she continued to teach acting, most notably as an instructor at Balls Park teacher training college in Hertford.

Diana's first husband was Alan Robson, father of her children Mark and Simon. Later, she married Paul Hogarth OBE RA, and following his death in 2001, she decided to come back to Aboyne where a new career awaited her as a member of the Aboyne and Deeside Festival Committee.

It was Hugh Moffat who recruited Geoff Cormack and Diana Hogarth to the committee of the Aboyne and Deeside Festival, and in doing so recruited two undoubted stars, with wide experience and boundless energy that belied their years.

Di could contribute richly to festival programme planning from her professional experience of a lifetime in Drama and the theatrical world. This brought big names like Timothy West, Prunella Scales, Saeed Jaffrey, Todd Gordon, Jacqui Dankworth, and Jonathan Miller to Aboyne.

How did the Festival Committee achieve this? Very simply, Hugh Moffat had the vision and Di often had the personal link. Di and Prunella Scales, for example, had been at school together!

Di was also the facilitator and dynamic participant of the regular festival feature *Poetry at Balfour*, where she gave readings under her stage name Diana Robson, along with Sheila Reid, Geoff Cormack and James Reith on piano. Through Di, Balfour also hosted summer afternoons of music with Lucy Bailey, Moira Docherty, and Colin Hunter and eventually the afternoons of poetry reading and music became a combined Balfour programme.

Di in the Aboyne and Deeside Festival played an enduring and unfailing role, and did so as one with her friend Geoff. Her presence at the entire festival programme was her custom and only when it became physically beyond her, did she relent by not attempting to attend everything. She was a remarkable lady, and her death is a loss to many in Deeside and elsewhere.

Mark Robson and Andrew Wilson

Funerals

We mourn with Chris Mackay and all the family following the death of Ray Mackay from St Ninian's, Braemar. We pray for them all in their time of loss.

The ashes of Kathleen Beck-Slinn were laid to rest in St Thomas' in August.

Pearl's Family

One of the best things I have done in the last eighteen months has been able to get in touch with my second cousins in USA

John Simon, my father Leslie's eldest brother, got married at Christ Church Kincardine O'Neil in 1908 they had planned to emigrate to Canada but when she got pregnant they decided to wait till after the birth. The baby boy was born at the end of November 1908 but unfortunately the baby was ill, and John went out to Canada himself, with the intention that his wife would follow when baby was better. But sadly the baby died at 9 months old, just a month after his father had left.

John had sailed from Glasgow on SS Athenia to Quebec on 29/08/09, when he was 24 years old, his destination was Moose Jaw in Saskatchewan. Elizabeth sailed from Glasgow on SS California on 20/01/10, and her destination was to Canyon City. She was 28. John had got a position from a Scottish family as a teamster, and Elizabeth joined him at the farm as cook.

I had found out on the 13th census of USA, 19th April 1910, that they were now in Portland, Oregon and they had a daughter in 1914 called Marjorie.

I also found John had signed his WW1 draft card in 1918 age 33 but was never called up. In 1920 John was a street car motor man (from photographs he sent home to his parents). He died in 1939 age 54, from pneumonia

This is all the information I had, and in spite of speaking to all my relations I got no further, except a name and address in one of my aunts' address book. The name was the key, but the address was out of date.

In Sept 1920 I got in touch with the researcher at Aberdeen and North-East Family History Society in Aberdeen (I've been a member for years) and he was a eventually able to find me an address from a Find a Grave site. This had the death of my cousin Marjorie, but more importantly, the names of her next of kin, her son and daughter with an address in an area south of Portland. I'd found my second cousins but as Marjorie had died in 2001 aged 87, I wasn't sure if her family was still alive. But anyhow I wrote a brief letter asking if they were my second cousins and gave my email address. I got a reply back almost immediately from John, who was now 81 and very happy to hear from me. We have corresponded since, also with his sister Caralee, who is 75. It has been wonderful to share all this information with my cousins and family here.

As my brother still stays in the old family home at Logie Coldstone, from where John left all these years ago, I wonder (but have never asked) why they never kept in touch. But I suppose when the older aunts died, it was lost to our generation.

Pearl Reid

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Lay Eucharistic Ministers: Michael Adie, John Lovie

Then sings my soul...

“HOW
GREAT
THOU ART”

