

The Deeside Tattler

December 2022 and January 2023



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

27th November, **Advent Sunday**

9.30am, Advent Communion

followed by mulled wine and mince pies, St Kentigern's

11.15am, Advent Communion, St Thomas

10th December, 1.30-3.30, St Kentigern's Winter Fair, Victoria Hall, Ballater

11th December, 6pm, Nine Lessons and Carols, St Thomas'

18th December, 4pm, Nine Lessons and Carols, St Kentigern's

24th December, Christmas Eve,

4pm, Crib Service, St Thomas'

6.30pm, Carols around the Crib, St Kentigern's

11.30pm, Midnight Mass, St Thomas'

25th December, **Christmas Day**

9.30am, Christmas Communion, St Kentigern's

11.15am, Christmas Communion, St Thomas'

1st January, 9.30am, Service of Carols and Readings, St Kentigern's

11.15am, Carol-a-long, St Thomas'

6th January **Epiphany**

12th January, 7.30pm, St Kentigern's Vestry meeting

From the Editor: Christmas is a joyful time, celebrating the birth of Jesus, and this edition of the Tattler reflects this. But our Rector sets the tone for a more thoughtful approach, in the preparation for His coming during the season of Advent. The Christian celebrations should not come too early, so that when it comes, Christmas Day itself will burst upon us all the more joyfully. So we include thoughts about Advent, and about some of the meanings behind our traditions. And Eileen reminds us that Christmas can be a time of sadness for some, and we should remember that too in the midst of the fun and celebrations. Christmas is for everyone in their own way.

We also have contributions on other topics, all welcome, and our thanks to all who are willing to share their thoughts and experiences.

We wish you all a joyful Christmas, and best wishes for a fruitful 2023! **Ed**

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From the Rector,
Rev'd Canon Vittoria Hancock



Dear Friends,

Every year, as the deadline for the December Tattler approaches, it is time for the annual Hancock pre-Christmas get together. It started out with just my mother and me, then my sister joined in, then my aunt and my cousin. I usually kidnap my mother and whisk her off to a hotel somewhere, abandoning my father to a diet of sausage sandwiches, chips, bananas and a packet of crisps. Don't feel sorry for him – he really wouldn't appreciate joining us for festive fun. You see, we normally try to find somewhere with a Christmas market, a good place for afternoon tea, and good places for a wander among shops with some history thrown in. It would be my father's idea of hell. He does not do browsing in shops, spending long periods of time walking around, or sightseeing. Nor does he really do Christmas – as in all the paraphernalia surrounding the festival. My mother, sister and I all do. We like the twinkly lights, carol singing, the atmosphere. This year is different. Due to my mother having back problems, my aunt's dementia getting worse, and me not being entirely fit, we have placed our trip to Carlisle on hold until next year. I have descended on my parents, and my mother and I will indulge ourselves in mixing the Christmas puddings, accompanied by the sound of carols on the CD player. It will be a different family get together this year.

Advent and Christmas is an odd time of year. I find it rather like the curate's egg – good in parts. Too full of Christmas events in Advent, meaning that Christmas Day almost seems lost in a morass of holly and tinsel. Notwithstanding the Hancock gathering – which functions as our Christmas - I much prefer a slow and steady build-up to the day, so that Christmas is the crescendo. The Christmas events seem to carry with them expectations, while often the day itself seems rather like a deflating balloon in comparison. I think that is partly why my father dislikes

Christmas so much. It isn't the day so much as all the hype surrounding it. There is a societal expectation that we will all be happy families, gathered around the table for lunch together, with smiling children and presents under the tree. The reality is that for some, Christmas day is a struggle. Either because there is the obligation to see family, or because there is no family to be seen. It can be the worst of times, full of forced bonhomie – when really we might prefer to be curled up in a corner with a book. For those who are estranged from family, or those who have no family or friends, it can be a lonely time. If there are tensions in a family, time with each other can be when those tensions explode.

How did we get from the birth of a child to this? To a feast with such expectations that it can literally make or break a family? Centuries of tradition and a moving away from the fast of Advent and the faith of Christmas means a misplaced emphasis on one day among many. Advent is a time of preparing hearts and minds for the coming of Christ – not just the coming of Christ at Christmas as a baby, but the second coming of Christ. It is a time to examine ourselves, to look at where our lives are heading, what our focus is – and why. To evaluate what has been, to look at where we are, and to imagine what might be. It is a time of sombre joy – sombre because we acknowledge how far we have yet to travel, joy for we know what is to come, the promised Messiah.

Christmas should be the culmination of this time of preparation. A time when we acknowledge that Christ has come to this earth, lived, breathed, walked, talked, laughed and cried. When we recognise that in true humility, God came as a small baby, defenceless and needy, that he might experience all that we do. When we celebrate with the shepherds and angels as they sing 'Peace on earth and goodwill to all'. When we praise the God who was and is, and is to come.

Alleluia! Glory in the highest heaven, and peace to all on earth!
Alleluia!

Every blessing,
Vittoria

Advent Communions

St Thomas', 11.30am, Tuesdays 29th November, 6th, 13th, 20th December
St Kentigern's, 11.30am, Thursdays 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd December

Midweek Communions

10th January 2023, 11.30am, St Thomas'
26th January 2023, 11.30am, St Kentigern's

Soul Soup Lunches

Soup for the body, company for the soul. Over the winter months, our midweek communion services will be moving to 11.30. The plan is to then have a soup lunch available from 12 onwards. This is open to anyone – you do not need to come to the service to join us for lunch, nor do you need to be a member of the church in anyway. Please come and join us and enjoy some company and some warmth.

Christingle Service

This year we are holding our Christingle services on **5th February**, when we will be celebrating **Candlemas**, that great festival of light. Candlemas marks the formal end of the Christmas Season.

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## **Sharing Advent and Christmas**

Advent and Christmas are perhaps the most commercialised time in the whole of the church year. How, amongst all the shopping and parties and twinkly lights, do we not only hold on to the seasons, but share them with our families and friends? Here are some suggestions

Remember the liturgical colours and use them in your homes – purple is for Advent, gold and white for Christmas. Don't let Christmas invade the house too early – if you do want to put decorations up, why not use the purple colour of Advent and then swap to the gold and white of Christmas on Christmas Eve.

Why not try the Mexican idea of a Posada – a nativity set - the holy family, shepherds, and kings move from house to house during Advent. Each family takes a turn to host them, before they end up in church on Christmas Eve.

When you put the Christmas Tree up, use the Christmas Tree Blessing prayer to remind you why we have one (*See over the page:*)

Celebrate the days after Christmas as well – there are various traditions that can be revived, such as going for a ride on St Stephen's Day (Boxing Day), drinking spiced wine on St John's Day (27<sup>th</sup> December), eating porridge on Holy Innocents (28<sup>th</sup> December), and eating doughnuts on St Sylvester's Day (31<sup>st</sup> December).

Take time at the New Year to rededicate yourself and your family to God.

The Advent Wreath is one of the most popular symbols used by Christians during the season of Advent.

Traditionally there are 3 purple candles 1 pink candle plus a white candle in the centre.

The second candle for the Old Testament Prophets foretelling the birth of Christ.

And the fourth candle for Mary who bore and loved Jesus.



The second candle, or Bethlehem Candle, recalls how Christ appeared in the flesh in a humble manner, being born of a virgin in a stable in Bethlehem.

The fourth candle, the Angels' Candle, reminds us of the heavenly host that announced the good news of our Saviour's Birth.

Then of course there is white candle, the Christ Candle, in the centre of the wreath, which is lit on Christmas Day, proclaiming the Christ, the Light of the world.

The two versions share the anticipation, the joy, the love, and above all the proclaiming of Christ, the Light of the World.

**Anne Richardson.**

[illegible]

**26th December: Look out for Good King Wenceslas**

Most of us probably know that on 26th December (the Feast of Stephen) ‘Good King Wenceslas’ looked out....’ We probably also know that the snow lay round about, ‘deep and crisp and even’. Beyond that, he’s just someone in a carol that’s not often sung nowadays.

However, **Wenceslas** was a real person, a duke, and effectively king of Bohemia in the 10th century. In modern terms, he was Czechoslovakian. He was known as a generous and kind monarch, deeply Christian and given to good works. So, the story in the carol by the Victorian hymn-writer J.M. Neale, while possibly fictitious, is at least in line with his recognised character. ‘Page and monarch’ braved the ‘bitter weather’ and the ‘cruel wind’s wild lament’ to take food and fuel to a poor man living rough.

Neale's carol was enormously popular in the 19th century, because it perfectly expressed Victorian Christian ideals of benevolence and almsgiving. Christian men of 'wealth and rank' are urged to help the poor, and so 'find blessing'. Ignoring the 'wealth and rank' bit, it's still good advice, at Christmas or any other time.

*(From the Parish Pump)*

## A large, snow-covered evergreen tree stands in a snowy yard at night. The tree is heavily laden with snow and is decorated with numerous warm white lights that are glowing. The background shows a dark sky and some bare trees, suggesting a winter setting.

Ever wondered why we have trees inside our houses at Christmas? It's an old, old tradition. Going back to the ancient Egyptians and the Romans. Something still green to display in the depths of winter - a promise of spring, a promise of the future. The 2nd century Christian Tertullian condemned those Christians who brought laurel leaves and greenery into their houses at winter time. But it's now a symbol that has been adopted by most Christians. It's said that St Boniface, a British missionary sent to Germany back in the 7th Century, used the fir tree as a way of explaining the Trinity. The first decorated tree we know of in literature was in the early 1500's, in Latvia. Historically, Martin Luther, the Protestant

reformer, has been credited with the idea of putting lights on the tree. It's said that when walking home one night, he saw the stars twinkling through the branches and decided to mimic this beauty of creation on his own tree. Whatever the truth of these legends, for me it's the symbol of God's eternal love, of everlasting hope, of promises fulfilled and promises to come.

This is a Christmas Tree Blessing I came across a few years ago:

## Vittoria

## Christmas Tree Blessing

Holy Creator of Trees, bless with your abundant grace this our Christmas tree as a symbol of joy. May its evergreen branches be a sign of your never-fading promises. May its colourful lights and ornaments call us to decorate with love our home and our world. May the gifts that surround this tree be symbols of the gifts we have received from the Tree of Christ's Cross.

Holy Christmas tree within our home, may Joy and Peace come and nest in your branches and in our hearts. Amen. - *Author Unknown*

AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA

## Christmas Trees for sale at St Thomas's

Since some of the large trees were removed from the St Thomas's churchyard a few years ago, a forest of tiny ones took off! Last year they were big enough for a small Christmas tree, and of course they are a bit bigger this year. We can't let them all grow to a full height, so they are being sold to anyone who wants one, in exchange for a donation to St Thomas's. They are of course particularly appropriate for a eco-congregation.

I got one last year, it was lovely and smelt nice! If you want something fairly small and attractive, I can strongly recommend them.

You can see them growing nicely in the grounds near the church. Get in touch with Warren if you want one, and he will make sure you get it.

**Sheila Maxwell**





### A Cruise across Central Europe - part 3

We arrived in Vienna to a glorious sunny day. We set off by coach, having had to change our itinerary as the whole city centre was cordoned off due to an LGBT march! So we departed for the southern part of the Vienna Woods, visiting the fabulous Cistercian Abbey of Heiligenkreuz. It is a lovely place with beautiful stained glass windows and a fascinating history. All the monks are working there and training younger men. When the BBC asked for a recording of their famous Gregorian chants they replied that they did not record them, it was just something they did every day. So three weeks later a BBC recording crew turned up, recorded them, and they went straight to the top of the charts!

After taking in so much there, we set off for Mayerling where there really isn't anything to see. But it is the tragic tale of Crown Prince Rudolph, who committed suicide with his commoner sweetheart, Mary Vetsera, which ultimately led to the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It left Franz Joseph with no heir, and he had to struggle on until 1916. We drove on to Baden, a Roman town famous for its thermal springs. It is one of the loveliest places we have been to so far, and is where Beethoven composed his 9th Symphony, and where we were able to indulge in a little retail therapy!



*Baden*

We started next day with a city tour by bus through the Ringstrasse, which gave us a taste of the beautiful architecture we were to see. We stopped at the Belvedere Palace which was built on the top of a hill giving it a commanding view over the city, slightly spoilt now by all the new build.

We drove on to St. Stephen's Cathedral which has an amazing spire over 448ft. high, built in the 13th century. We then had an hour to ourselves so we walked through the Hofburg Palace, the winter palace of the Hapsburg dynasty, into the Cathedral. A service was taking place, and it was lovely to sit and listen to the music.

On the way to the Cathedral we had seen people coming out of another church, which is where the Vienna Boys' Choir sings, and they were all coming out in their sailor suits. We then walked past the place where the Spanish Riding School is located, how I longed to go to a performance, and I shall definitely do so when we come back. We also walked past the horses' stable block, round the corner from where they perform. One horse had a red saddle cloth on, which shows that it is one of the experts!



*Gates of Belvedere Palace*

The architecture all around us was breathtaking, it really is an unspoilt city which never got bombed during WW2, unlike the places we were to see later. In the



*Schonbrunn Palace*

afternoon we were taken to the Schonbrunn Palace on the outskirts of Vienna, which was the favourite summer palace of Maria Theresa. The facade is breathtakingly enormous, a central block with two identical side wings. It took us two hours to see it all and it is quite magnificent. The charitable trust that runs the palace has managed to get back a great many of the artefacts that were plundered after WW1, including a desk found in Egypt, pictures from all over and other pieces of furniture returned by members of the family. It was a wonderful history lesson with an excellent guide. We refreshed ourselves in the Palace Cafe with a drink and most delicious apple strudel!

After a leisurely breakfast we cruised through the Wachau Valley, which is a beautiful stretch of the Danube as it flows through a narrow gorge between the foothills of the Bohemian Massif in the north west and the Dunklesteiner Woods in the south east, and is considered to be one of the finest landscapes in Europe. There are delightful villages along the banks of the Danube, with castles and monasteries, including the castle where Richard Coeur de Lion was imprisoned. Many of the villages have steeply terraced vineyards. In the afternoon we did a walking tour of Melk, a delightful town with an enormous Benedictine Abbey looming over it. The first historically recorded mention of Melk was in AD 831, and since then it has continuously developed through being an

established fortified castle to being an active monastery. Here the 25 monks run a public secondary school of over 900 pupils, as they see the religious and intellectual formation of its pupils as an important spiritual duty. Our guide had been to school in the Abbey and she absolutely loved it. The Abbey itself out-Baroques any Baroque architecture we had ever seen before, the internal decoration being massively sumptuous with huge quantities of gold leaf; it certainly was one of the architectural highlights of our trip.



*Melk Abbey*



*Baroque Interior*

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**Marcus and Sabrina Humphrey**



# BASS NOTES

## Geoffrey Studdert Kennedy

Sometimes it is the little words that count.

Eagle-eyed members of St Thomas' choir will instantly recognise below the opening bars and lines of Geoffrey Studdert Kennedy's carol *Come Worship the King* to be sung at the Christmas Carol service in December, set to music by Sheila Maxwell. They are both interesting people, Sheila and Geoffrey.

G.A. Studdert Kennedy      **Come worship the King**      Sheila Maxwell 2008

**Moderato**

SOPRANO  
ALTO

mp

mp

mp

TENOR  
BASS

**Moderato**

mp

Ped. Man.

We are all familiar with Sheila's musical talent, her prodigious energy and her many contributions to the life of St Thomas'. What may be less well-known to you are the writings of Geoffrey Anketell Studdert Kennedy (1883-1929).



Born in Leeds, the seventh of nine children, Geoffrey was the son of Jeanette and William Studdert Kennedy. His father William was the vicar of St Mary's, Quarry Hill in Leeds but had been born in Dublin and Geoffrey inherited an enthusiasm for his father's Irish ancestry. After studying in Dublin and training at Ripon Clergy College, he became vicar of St Paul's, Worcester in 1914.

When war broke out, he joined up as an army chaplain on the western front and had a distinguished career, saving lives and comforting many wounded soldiers.

G.A. Studdert Kennedy MC

The citation for his Military Cross reads: *For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. He showed the greatest courage and disregard for his own safety in attending to the wounded under heavy fire. He searched shell holes for our own **and** enemy wounded, assisting them to the dressing station, and his cheerfulness and endurance had a splendid effect upon all ranks in the front-line trenches, which he constantly visited.*

Notice the third little word 'and' in that citation.

The soldiers had a nickname for him – *Woodbine Willie* – which was a reference to Geoffrey's habit of offering wounded and dying soldiers a cigarette. His biographer, William Purcell, used this nickname as the title for his 1962 book about Studdert Kennedy and there is a play about his life by David Gooderson.

Geoffrey was also a poet and published a book of poems about life in the trenches, modestly entitled *Rough Rhymes of a Padre*. Having read some of these, I think his work stands comparison with that of some of the much better-known war poets such as Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon. It is clear from the poems – which are peppered with dark humour – that his sympathies lay with the front-line troops, who, he felt, were not always well led by their commanding officers.

After the war, he became vicar of St Edmund King and Martyr in the City of London. He now described himself as a Christian socialist, although he never joined any political party. He became an outspoken critic of the established church and on his death, at the age of 45, was refused burial in Westminster Abbey by the Dean of Westminster 'because of his socialism'.

If you search on the internet for the carol Sheila set to music, what you will often find is this:

*Come worship the King,  
That little **dear** thing,  
Asleep on His Mother's soft breast.  
Ye bright stars, bow down,  
Weave for Him a crown,  
Christ Jesus by angels confessed.*

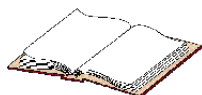
If he had lived in 2022, I am confident Geoffrey would have approved of the small change in line 2. As I say, sometimes it is the little words that count.

**Eric Sinclair**

**Composer's note** While I agree that the word 'white' sticks out inappropriately for modern readers, I am not sure this is the right substitute. To my mind, this lovely poem dwells on the wonderful but stark contrast, almighty God, and tiny baby. I love the phrase 'five little fingers of God.' The more personal and sentimental word 'dear' brings in a sense which is not present in the rest of the poem. But I couldn't think of a suitable alternative of one syllable !

**Sheila Maxwell**





## Readings for December 2022 and January 2023

|                                   |                                                          |                        |                          |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 4th December<br>Advent<br>2       | Isaiah 11:1-10<br>Romans 15:4-13<br>Matthew 3:1-12       | Margaret Jaffray       | Carol Simmons            |
| 11th December<br>Advent<br>3      | Isaiah 35:1-10<br>James 5:7-10<br>Matthew 11:2-11        | Susan Smith            | Isabel Wilson            |
| 18th December<br>Advent<br>4      | Isaiah 7:10-16<br>Romans 1:1-7<br>Matthew 1:18-25        | Anne Richardson        | Anne Harper              |
| 24th December<br>Christmas<br>Eve | Isaiah 52:7-10<br>Hebrews 1:1-4<br>John 1:1-14           | N/A                    | Michael Bruce            |
| 25th December<br>Christmas<br>Day | Isaiah 9:2-7<br>Titus 2:11-14<br>Luke 2:1-14             | Marcus Humphrey        | The Aboyne Family        |
| 1st January                       | Isaiah 63:7-9<br>Hebrews 2:10-18<br>Matthew 2:12-23      | Carols<br>and readings | Andrew and Isabel Wilson |
| 8th January<br>Epiphany           | Isaiah 60:1-6<br>Ephesians 3:1-12<br>Matthew 2:1-12      | Susan Smith            | Carol Simmons            |
| 15th January<br>Epiphany<br>2     | Isaiah 49:1-7<br>1 Corinthians 1:1-9<br>John 1:29-42     | Anne Richardson        | Meg White                |
| 22nd January<br>Epiphany<br>3     | Isaiah 9:1-4<br>1 Corinthians 1:10-18<br>Matthew 4:12-23 | Hilary Mutch           | Anne Harper              |
| 29th January<br>Epiphany<br>4     | Micah 6:1-8<br>1 Corinthians 1:18-31<br>Matthew 5:1-12   | Stanley Ewen           | Warren Burgess           |

6.30pm on Christmas Eve: Carols around the crib at St Kentigern's  
11.30pm on Christmas Eve, there will be Midnight Mass at St Thomas's.

### CHURCH SERVICES AT BALLATER AND ABOYNE

|            | <u>St. Kentigern's, 9.30am</u> | <u>St. Thomas's, 11.15am</u> |
|------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1st Sunday | Morning Worship                | Morning Worship              |
| 2nd Sunday | Holy Communion 1982            | Holy Communion 1982          |
| 3rd Sunday | Holy Communion 1982            | Holy Communion 1970          |
| 4th Sunday | Holy Communion 1970            | Family Communion             |
| 5th Sunday | Morning Prayer                 | 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

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### A prayer at night.

Lord it is night.

The night is for stillness.

Let us be still in the presence of God.

It is night after a long day.

What has been done has been done;

what has not been done has not been done;

let it be.

The night is dark.

Let our fears of the darkness of the world

and of our own lives

rest in you.

The night is quiet,

Let the quietness of your peace enfold us,

all dear to us

and all who have no peace.

The night heralds the dawn.

Let us look expectantly to a new day,

new joys,

new possibilities.

In your name we pray.

*(from a New Zealand Prayer Book)*

## 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:

**4th December: Roots and Branches**

**1st January: Carolling Along**

**5th February:**

**A light in the darkness**

## From the Bible, for the young and not so young

### The birth of Jesus - how it came about



Christmas is a lovely, happy time when we think about the birth of the baby Jesus, God coming to earth in human form, to bring salvation to us all, a cause for much celebration.

But before Christmas comes Advent, the time of waiting for it all to happen, and much of it concerns His cousin John the Baptist. It was he who baptised Jesus at the start of His ministry. We sometimes forget that John too had an interesting story behind his birth, which is told in St Luke's gospel at some length.

The story begins with a priest called Zechariah, and his wife Elizabeth. They were quite elderly, led good, blameless lives, but they

had not been able to have children. Then one day, Zechariah was serving as priest in the temple. It was the custom for the priest to burn incense inside the temple, while the people would pray outside, meaning that he was on his own there.

To his astonishment, an angel appeared by the altar, and of course this terrified Zechariah. But the angel spoke to him, told him not to be afraid, and then gave the news that his wife Elizabeth was going to have a child, who was to be called John. This was to be a special child, who would be filled with the Holy Spirit, and prepare the way for the coming of the Lord, meaning Jesus.

Poor Zechariah could not believe this at all, he said he and his wife were too old for such a thing. But the angel, who said his name was Gabriel, said he had been sent to tell him this good news. And he added that because he didn't believe it, Zechariah would be unable to speak. So after this, he went home to his wife. And sure enough, Elizabeth became pregnant, and we are told that she hid herself for five months.

Then after this, the angel Gabriel appeared again, this time to Elizabeth's cousin Mary, who was engaged to Joseph. He greeted her, saying 'the Lord is with you', and told her that she would become pregnant and have a son, to be called Jesus. Mary protested that she was not yet married, but the angel said the Holy Spirit would come, and her child would be the Son of God. This was astonishing, but Mary took it in, and said she would do as the Lord wanted. And the angel Gabriel left it at that, and went away again.

Mary would have been quite agitated by all this, and she hurried off to stay with her cousin Elizabeth for the next three months or so.

After Mary returned home, it was time for Elizabeth to give birth to her child, and all her family and friends rejoiced with her. The child had to be given a name, and the people all said he should be called after Zechariah after his father. But after what the angel had said, Zechariah, who was still not speaking, wrote that his name is John. And for his obedience his speech miraculously came back, and he spoke in praise of God who had done such a wonderful thing. The neighbours were rather alarmed by all this and it got spoken about everywhere. It was truly a miracle. It was not long after this that Jesus was born, and this too is an amazing story. You will be more familiar with this, it is told over and over again in carols and Bible readings.

One of the lovely things about the story of Elizabeth and Mary is the way it shows Jesus - and John - coming into a real family, with a human story of fear, then acceptance, on the part of real people. Jesus was the Son of God, but He was also a man, who lived among us.

## THE WORD CHRISTMAS.

In my teaching days and the world of the Literacy Hour, as Christmas approached, I and my class of 5 - 6 year olds would take the word Christmas and come up with a 'Christmasy' word beginning with each letter. It generally came up like this:

C - crackers.

H - holly.

R - Rudolph.

I - ice cream. (A treat from the Parent/Teacher Group.)

S - stocking.

T - tinsel.

M- mince pies. (After some clues, but I am sure they thought they were meat pies.)

A - antlers.

S - Santa.

Now what would we grown-ups come up with?

What about;

C- Census.

H - Herod.

R - Room.

I - Inn.

S - Shepherds.

T - Treasures.

M- Magi.

A - Angels.

S - Saviour.

So let the story be told (using all the letters):

C - Census ordered by Rome.

I - Inn which was full when Joseph and Mary arrived in Bethlehem.

R - Room, not one to be had except a stable.

S- Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ is born and laid in a manger.

S - Shepherds, watching their flocks.

A - Angels, who brought them the news that a Saviour was born unto them.

M - Magi, the three Wise men led by a bright star.

T- Treasures they brought, gold, frankincense, myrrh.

H - Herod, wicked man, schemed and plotted evil plan.

And so the beginning of the story is told.

And we must continue the story.

**Anne Richardson.**



## St Kentigern's Harvest Meal

Following a Harvest Communion, St Kentigern's had a bring-and-share lunch.



It was sad to say goodbye to Bishop Michael, who is leaving Ballater and moving south to be with his family. But it was good to be able to say farewell and thank you, with a special cake, carefully inscribed with the words 'The Lord bless you and keep you'



And to mark the occasion, Vittoria proudly displayed St Kentigern's very own harvest, the potatoes from the church garden!



## Different Christmas this time

This year Christmas will not be the same for some of us at St. Thomas's due to the loss of beloved family members, but with God's help we shall come to terms with our loss and give thanks for the life we shared with them.

Personally speaking I lost my dear oldest sister and the following is the eulogy I wrote the day she passed away on 31st March this year.

Some of you may have known her, because she was married in St. Thomas's by The Rev. Hastie Smith on 15th November 1958. Her girls gave her the most beautiful service on 15th April in Torphins Parish Church.

My sister, Sheila Ann, born 16th August 1933, was the nicest, kindest big sister anyone could have and she looked after me for eighty six years. She took me to Strathdon school on my first day and also to Alford Junior Secondary in due time.

We spent an idyllic childhood together even during the war years in the safety of Strathdon, but that didn't stop us getting up to mischief like the time that we decided to polish the Lino stairs with a tin of Otto cold cream, Mum had just popped out to the shop next door and we thought it would give her a surprise!, well of course that didn't work and the cream kept gritty bits in it until it was finished. We welcomed our youngest sister to the family in 1946.

While Sheila was at Alford school, she became Dux equal the year she left to do a pre nursing course followed by her training at Woodend Hospital where she was awarded Best Nurse of the Year when she qualified. During this time Sheila and myself were confirmed in St. Mary's Carden Place, Aberdeen.

Proud we all were when Sheila won a beauty competition in the Lonach Hall at one of the dances, then she went on to Edinburgh to do her maternity training and her Queens District nursing.

Her first post was in Kelty in Fife where she met her beloved Tom and eventually they were married in St. Thomas's, Aboyne in 1958.. In due time along came Susan, Carolyn and the twins Lesley and Joanne, all lovely girls. She was a very good mum and granny and eventually went back to nursing when they grew up.

Sheila lost her Tom after almost forty years of marriage, but was very community minded, did not suffer fools gladly, but was certainly not afraid to say her piece at meetings that were going awry. She loved her church and was made an elder, was a member of the WRI and took office as secretary and president, was very talented in sewing and knitting.

Her latest love was puppy training with Guide dogs for the blind, where if they didn't pass the test she kept some of them as pets.

Sheila, a really clever, lovely lady in every way, we love and miss you, dear sister.

**Eileen Davies**



## Sales and collections in aid of Braemar Shelling#2

I am raising funds to rebuild the Braemar Guide Shelling , the original of which stood for 62 years and was used extensively by visitors from the local area, from around Scotland and also the local community. It will be an energy efficient residential facility for youth groups - in particular members of Girlguiding to stay for informal residential visits - learning outdoor skills along with teamwork and leadership whilst having fun with their peers. Taking girls and young women away is an integral part of the Girlguiding programme. It will house up to 24 youngsters with 4 adults, and will have a hall, kitchen, toilets and showers and bunk rooms with disabled access. We own the plot next to the Highland Gathering venue in Braemar. We have raised about £200,000 but need approximately £500,000, although we hope to get some materials donated to reduce the cash cost. Thank you for your support.

I am putting a **recycling box** in church if anyone has Jewellery (new/used or broken), Paper Currency and coins, stamps, mobile phones, cameras, electronic gaming consoles or Tablet Pcs to get rid of. (no laptops or computers) We also collect print cartridges - new or used and books. We get 75% of the value when items sold. Keeps those unwanted items coming please. Have a clear out before Christmas

Or buy an eco-friendly re-usable bag instead of wrapping paper. Make **wrapping Xmas Gifts** quick, easy and WASTE FREE! Forget sellotape & scissors! An added bonus is that clearing up on Christmas morning is a breeze as the bags can be re-used! The bags come in 4 sizes - tiny, small £4, medium £6 & large £8, and bottle bag £6. All made from 100% cotton with a pretty ribbon to attach a gift card in a smoke & pet-free home.



The recycle box and the bags stay in church during Advent and Christmas.  
Many thanks **Sue Burgess**

## Carol singing from Aboyne-Dinnet Church



**On Friday 9th December** we will go carol singing at the Boat Inn. We would like to see as many people as possible to come along. There will be complimentary mulled wine and mince pies. The singing will start at 8pm

**Joy to the World!**

**On Saturday 17th December** we will be carol singing in the village. We will meet at 2pm outside the shops adjacent to the top car park and will then decide where else to go. Anyone is invited to come along for just one carol or until we stop singing!

## Helen Dray, BA(Hons)



Many of you know me as 'Helen, Vittoria's Friend' who can be seen out and about in Ballater and Aboyne on a fairly regular basis! Vittoria says that when I get fed up with the sea I come and see the mountains and then go back to the sea!! However, I am not sure that I can get fed up with either. I prefer to see it as supporting a dear friend in any way I can.

The reason I am writing is that I am overwhelmed by the love, support and good wishes I have received from people when I graduated recently, either in person or via Vittoria. There seemed to be only one way to say thank you to you all, by writing something.

I graduated with the University of Chester with a BA (hons) in Theology, Mission and Evangelism. It took six years part time, with a year's break between my Foundation Degree and my Degree. I studied with the Light College and Collective, a small Christian college that offers the above degree in a very practical way. It is the only college that offers this degree. It is distance learning with around six weekends a year meeting for a study block. I have loved my time there and made many great friends, and will miss them greatly.

The graduation was such a lovely day and I was so grateful to have the friends that supported me through out there. Vittoria and a mutual friend Gretel supported me by proof-reading essays, and encouraging me when things were hard. There was many a time when I said to Vittoria, I want to come to Ballater but not until I finish this essay. It gave me the push to get on with it! Vittoria's study was extremely useful, and it is probably fair to say that my dissertation was chosen for the books she had in her study and that she could provide! So to have both of them there was very special.

Thank you to both St. Kentigern's and St. Thomas's for making me so welcome when I am down, I love coming to see you all and to be in some way a part of both churches.

Thank you again for your best wishes,  
**Helen**

## Visiting Father Christmas

A mother took her young daughter to visit Father Christmas in his grotto at the garden centre. He greeted the youngster merrily and asked: "And what would you like for Christmas?"

The little girl stared at him, open-mouthed with horror. "Didn't you get my email?!"

## Shooting season

Butcher: "Sorry, sir, but I'm all out of wild ducks. I could let you have a fine end of ham."

Customer: "Don't be absurd. How could I go home and say I shot the end of a ham?"



## Andy - Fiddler par excellence



Andy Linklater, who has died at the great age of 92, was best known for his violin playing. It seemed as if his whole life was built round this, and his violin teaching. One had only to mention some local person, and he would say - oh yes, I used to teach him .... Over a very long period he got through a lot of pupils!

But he loved playing, he was instrumental in setting up the flourishing Deeside Orchestra, and conducted it for many years. He went to a lot of informal gatherings, contributing to all sorts of events, including of course weddings. This took him to a number of the large local houses, he had been to all

sorts of interesting places - including of course Balmoral Castle. And latterly he brought some instrumental music to St Thomas's, for instance playing with a quintet led by the late and much missed clarinetist Philip Greene.

Another of his great loves was fiddle music, he would pick up his fiddle for any occasion and give pleasure to everyone. An important date in his calendar was the Deeside Orchestra Viennese Evening and its successor. The orchestra interval was invariably taken up with Andy on his fiddle, along with an accordionist, playing for the Scottish dancing. This was always a lively spot in the programme.

His music was an important part of his life, but it was not everything, and he was an active and loyal member of St Thomas's. Way back in the '90's, before the days of 'Greeters' list, it was Andy who would hand you the books as you came in, with a lovely friendly welcome. He was a useful member of the vestry for many years. He did a lot of the practical things that are now covered so ably by Warren, and in fact almost to the end, he was seeing to the batteries and making sure the microphones were working in church.

But I suppose my happiest memories of Andy are those connected with his membership of the Choir. He perhaps did not have the strongest bass voice, but he was totally reliable in his singing, and a great asset to the bass line, he gave the others confidence. At their best, the basses would come out with a tremendous sound. And his friendliness and humour contributed to the happiness of the choir in sharing the music together. It was a great loss when he, and fellow member Geoff, a year older, finally had to give up.

Andy was of course a family man, he and Winnie had two sons, and five grandchildren, all living in Aboyne, so that there was plenty of contact between them all. One of my memories is of Andy writing a special fiddle tune for his first grandchild's Baptism, duly played in style. He did this for a number of individuals, for special occasions.

Andy led a very full life, added something to the quality of life with his friendliness and his music, and he will be missed. Our sympathy goes especially to Winnie, who provided him with a secure, stable and loving home on which to base all his numerous activities.

**Sheila Maxwell**

## Congratulations and Commiserations

### Baptisms

Aurora Deakin was baptised in September in St Thomas'

*Please pray for Aurora and her family*

### Funerals

The funeral of Ruth Lovie took place in St Kentigern's in October

The funeral of Andy Linklater took place in St Thomas' in October

The funeral of Shirley Cooper took place in October

The funeral of David Jenkins took place in St Thomas' in November

The burial of the ashes of Elizabeth Millership took place in November

Barbara Simpson from St Kentigern's died in October.

Joy Harvey from St Kentigern's died in November

*Please pray for their families as they grieve the loss of their loved ones.*

### Congratulations

Congratulations to Helen Dray on attaining her Bachelor of Arts in Mission and Evangelism.

Congratulations to Vittoria on receiving the Queens Award for Voluntary Service. This was as part of the Cromar Future Group – a local digital skills group for children and teenagers, which she helps to tutor.

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### Ruth Lovie

Ruth Lovie was a loving wife, mother and grandmother. She was known for her hospitality and welcome, and an excellent cook, as many visitors to the house on Monaltrie Avenue can attest. A dental nurse by training, she met John while she was working in Dundee, and they married and built a life together, moving around Aberdeenshire before finally settling in Ballater.



At her funeral she asked for no eulogy, but for the focus to be on God. Her life was built on her faith in God, and it was that faith which was her driving force. She sought to live out the commandment to love God, and love neighbour with all of her life. Her faith was not just one of words, but one of deeds and actions. If help was needed, it was offered. If a listening ear was required, hers was available. Her presence at St Kentigern's, her wisdom and friendship, enriched our community. She is missed.

**Rev'd Vittoria Hancock** normally says the daily office of **Morning Prayer** on Monday's at 8.30am in St Kentigern's, and on Wednesdays at 9am in St Thomas's, - meantime discontinued. It lasts about 15 minutes, and anyone is welcome to join her.

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## Pastoral Cards for the sick or bereaved

We have a small selection of very helpful pastoral cards, which are suitable to send from the Church to anyone who is sick, going into hospital, or bereaved. They include appropriate readings and prayers. Recipients have commented on the encouragement and comfort these cards have brought them.

If you would like a pastoral card sent to a friend from:

**St Thomas's, Aboyne**  
Please contact Meg White  
Tel 013398 80034

**St Kentigern's, Ballater**  
Please contact Doreen Ewen  
Tel 013397 55538

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## WEB-SITES

St Thomas's Web-site has been transferred and upgraded. The new link is <http://www.stthomasaboyne.org>

If you want to get in touch, please email: [stthomasaboyne@gmail.com](mailto:stthomasaboyne@gmail.com)

St Kentigern's Web-site is: [stkentigernsballater.aodiocese.org.uk](http://stkentigernsballater.aodiocese.org.uk)

## Prayer Chain Ministry

"Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful."

*Colossians Ch 4 v2*

A small group meets for prayer as requested. The group prays for anyone who requires it, which may be for healing, guidance, strength in a difficult situation or for thanksgiving. Prayer can be for yourself or for someone else (with their permission). Confidentiality is maintained at all times.

The group members are eager to be contacted at any time for prayer, visitation or simply for a listening and sympathetic ear.

Please consider joining us in the uplifting and essential ministry of prayer. We really need as many as possible to support our Prayer Group.  
**Doreen Ewen Tel 013397 55538**

## Important

### The Tattler needs you!

Please send news, articles, stories, fillers, or anything else you can think of to enrich the Tattler. It can only be as good as you make it!

The next Edition is starting now. Please give or send all contributions to the Editor,  
or to Anne Richardson at Ballater,  
by January 17th

## CONTACTS :

Treasurer  
Secretary  
Lay Representative  
Vestry Members

Sacristan  
Organist  
Youth Leader  
Child Protection Officer  
Chalice Bearers

### ST. KENTIGERN'S

Marcus Humphrey  
Sabine Muir  
Hilary Mutch  
Sabrina Humphrey  
Margaret Jaffray  
Sabine Muir  
Anne Richardson  
Susan Smith  
Hilary Mutch  
Stanley Ewen  
Anne Richardson

Roger Searle. Mary Fennell, Marcus Humphrey,  
Susan Smith, Douglas Mutch, Sabine Muir

### ST. THOMAS'S

Secretary  
Treasurer  
Lay representative  
Vestry Members

Organist and Publicity  
Child Protection Officer  
Sacristan and Altar Guild

Anne Harper  
Sue Burgess  
Anne Harper  
Warren Burgess  
Sheila Maxwell  
Katherine Rider  
Carol Simmons  
Lesley Thomas  
Sheila Maxwell  
Lesley Thomas  
Carol Simmons, Jo Elson, Lesley Thomas  
Chalice Bearers Warren Burgess, Peter Sowrey, Andrew Wilson, Sue Burgess  
Flowers Jill Binns  
People's Warden Warren Burgess  
(Maintenance Officer)  
Patron Michael Bruce

### ST. NINIAN'S

Dr Hugh Dawson: Lay Reader, Treasurer, Organist  
Astrid Cheyne: Flowers  
Anne Richardson: Child Protection Officer

**Lay Eucharistic Ministers:** Susan Smith, Marie Wilde, Sue Burgess

