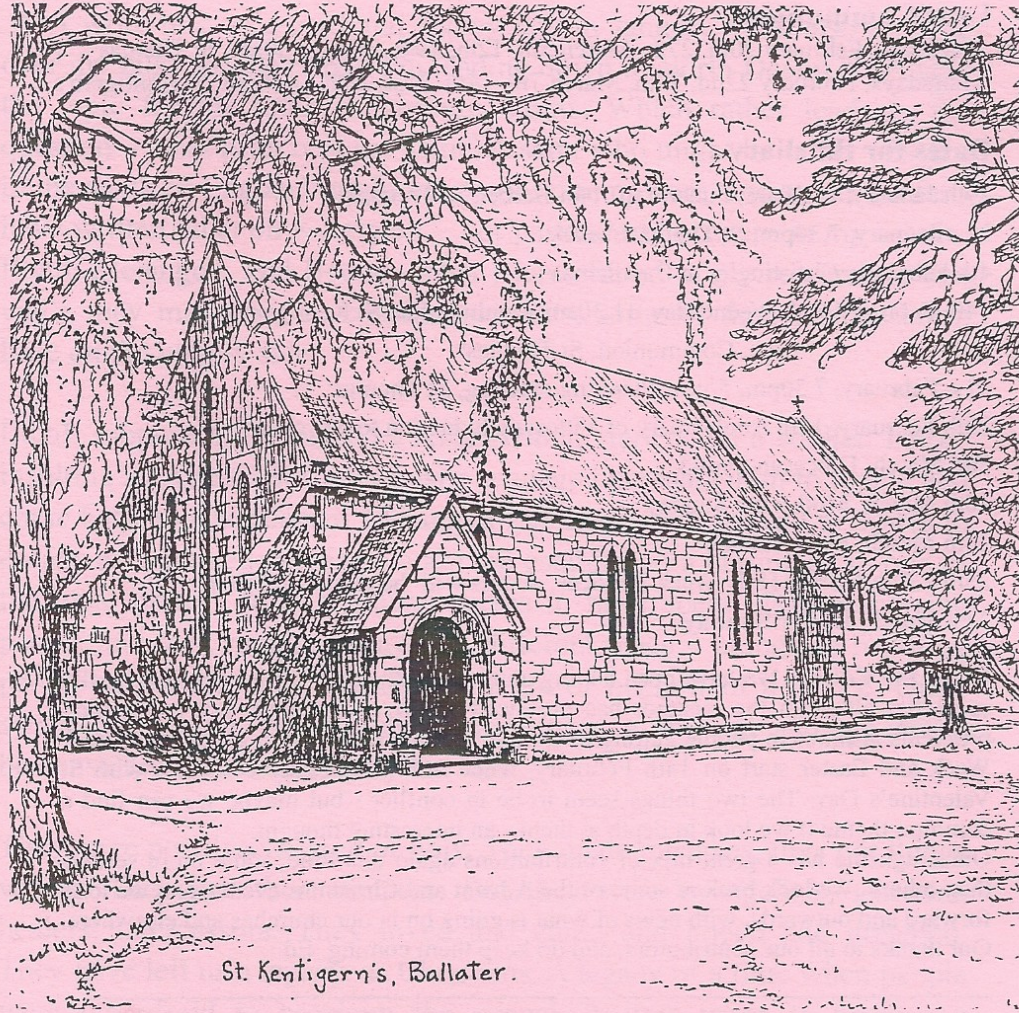


# The Deeside Tattler

February and March 2024



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.

### **Lent Communions**

Tuesdays, February 20th, 27th, March 5th, 12th, 19th, 26th 11.30am, St Thomas'  
Thursdays, February 22nd, 29th, March 7th, 14th, 21st, 28th 11.30am, St Kentigern's

### **Dates for the diary**

29th January, 11.30am, Funeral of John Barber, St Thomas'  
31st January, 7.30pm, St Thomas' Vestry  
4th February, Christingles at Candlemas  
14th February, Ash Wednesday, 11.30am, Communion, St Kentigern's  
6pm, Communion, St Thomas'  
21st February, 7.30pm, 5 year Planning meeting, St Thomas'  
28th February, 10th Anniversary of Vittoria's Induction to our churches  
2nd March, Diocesan Synod  
10th March, Mothering Sunday  
24th March, Palm Sunday  
25th - 30th March, Holy Week Services, details will be publicised later  
31st March, **Easter Sunday**

**From the Editor:** We have been having a quiet month since Christmas, liturgically speaking, although the weather has produced a few excitements, not to mention problems at times in people getting to church. But the serious periods of Lent, Holy Week and Easter start on 14th February, when Ash Wednesday coincides with St Valentine's Day. The two things seem to be in conflict - but maybe we can find a common theme if we look in depth at them - an interesting thought.

Our magazine has a great mix of contributions again this time, some more serious than others. We look back at some of the Advent and Christmas events, and we look forward and outwards, with news of what is going on in our churches and elsewhere. Our thanks to all our contributors, and do keep them coming. Ed

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From the Rector,  
Rev'd Canon Vittoria Hancock



Dear Friends,

As I write this on a cold and snowy day in January, I am also mulling over my talks for the retreat I'm leading down in North Devon. This year the topic for the talks is *Obscure Saints*. Which rather leads to the question – what is an obscure saint? A saint who might be rather obscure in the south of England might not be obscure up here, and so on. So far I have written talks on Kentigern – not particularly obscure in my mind – Illtyd, Melangell, and Beuno. What I have found in my research is that while they may now be considered saints, some of their actions are a little on the unholy side.

Illtyd, supposedly a cousin of King Arthur, started life a soldier, before insulting an Abbot (St Cadoc), who managed persuade him to repent and come back to Christianity. Melangell ran away from Ireland to Wales to escape an arranged marriage, and then established a hermitage in one of the local princes forests. Beuno seems to have spent his time cursing people and then running away to a different place – alongside restoring people to life. He was supposedly a son or nephew of a prince. Other saints have similar tales to tell. Most of them, in this day and age would be considered eccentric, to say the least.

They were not always good or holy. They made mistakes, they got things wrong. They lost their tempers. But they were evangelists, teachers, healers, intercessors. They loved and cared and hoped and dreamed. They have left us a legacy, as Christians. A legacy of a time when people were not afraid to proclaim the gospel. A time when to become a Christian meant a change of life, a willingness to leave home and family and go wherever God might send you. A time when, walking among those who were not Christian, or followed other gods, speaking of the God of Christianity was a dangerous act. No-one wants their status quo

to be rocked, their beliefs and practices to be swept aside. The old Celtic saints lived in a time when Christianity was something new, something radical.

And they demanded of their followers that they live lives which were equally radical. We live in a day and age which seems, on the surface, to be increasingly secular. But there is also a rise of interest in things spiritual, things 'other'. There is a need for something – but what? Perhaps we need to turn again to the age of the saints, when Christianity was new and fresh and radical. When to become a Christian meant a change of life, a change in the way of living, a refocusing of commitments and priorities.

Valentine, who has become the patron saint of lovers, was martyred for continuing to evangelise his faith. This year his day coincides with Ash Wednesday, a day when we turn again to God, when we dedicate ourselves to seeking his will, and, over the next 40 days, commit ourselves to spending time asking questions of God and ourselves, that we might fully proclaim the Gospel, in both words and deed. As we head towards the season of Lent, how are you going to use this time to refocus heart and mind and soul?

Every blessing,  
Vittoria

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### 10th Anniversary

Bishop Bob led the Induction Service



Ten years ago, on 28th February, Rev Canon Vittoria Hancock was inducted to our churches, and has served us faithfully ever since. We have enjoyed a period of stability, happiness, and above all, growth. She has led us through all sorts of developments in our worship, our witness, and hopefully in our daily Christian lives. And after all this time, new ideas continue to come through. There is much cause for celebration and of Thanksgiving to God.

### Lent Course

This year the Lent Course will take place on Tuesday evenings, 7.30-8.30pm at the Rectory in Ballater. This year's theme will be 'Walking with the Saints'.

It will also be available on zoom at the same time, and copies of the handouts will be available, if you are unable to come but would like to follow along at home.

### Soup Lunches

These follow on from our midweek communion services, although you are very welcome to come to one without the other. During Lent, they will be from 12-1pm. St Thomas', Aboyne, 12-1pm, 20th, 27th February and 5th, 12th, 19th, 26th March St Kentigern's, Ballater, 12-1pm, 22nd, 29th February, 7th, 14th, 21st, 28th March

### Hot Chocolate Walks

The hot chocolate walks are resuming – these are gentle strolls in the local area to explore a point of interest, with a stop for hot chocolate or a beverage of your choice in your flask. There are rarely big hills, bogs, or rivers to negotiate. If it is lashing down with rain, snowing a blizzard or blowing a hoolie, we stay at home. No endurance test is needed.

On 8th February, there will be a walk around Kincardine O'Neil. We will meet in the school car park in Kincardine at 2pm. On 17th March there will be another walk – suggestions as to location appreciated! Any suggestions for other walks, please let Vittoria know. Taking part in these walks is at your own risk. Please come suitably dressed with appropriate footwear.

### Five Year Plans

As we work our way through 2024, you are going to hear the phrase 'five year plan' being used. If you've ever worked in industry or management, you are probably familiar with the phrase. All churches are being asked to come up with a five year plan. Five year plans are long term goals and plans. The idea is that you need to know where you are aiming to go in the long term so that you can start looking at the steps to get there. Most of us already work in one year increments – what are your goals this year, how much do you want to save, and so on. But many of the things we might want to do take more than a year. The same goes for the church. A 5-year plan helps us put those big projects into perspective and gives us the space we need to dream.

Five years is not a magical time-scale. The important thing is that it is a time-scale which encourages us to dream dreams, to get comfortable with unpredictability. But it also needs to be short enough so that we can start planning. This isn't for 'some day' dreams, but the 'how do we start' dreams. We are meant to pray, think and talk about what we want to build, develop, and/or grow. Then, working backwards from that point, come up with an action plan.

How can you help? Firstly, listen. Ask God what his desire is for our churches. Secondly, look. Look and listen to the communities to which you belong. What do they need? What does the church need? Thirdly, if you have a dream, a hope, a desire, let the Rector or the vestries know. But be prepared to act yourself as well.



## The St Kentigern's Christmas Fair



*Anne and Marilyn presiding over the Christmas Stall*



*Hilary and Sabrina showing off a well laden cakes and candy stall*



*Jean and Susan raring to go with the coffee and cakes!*



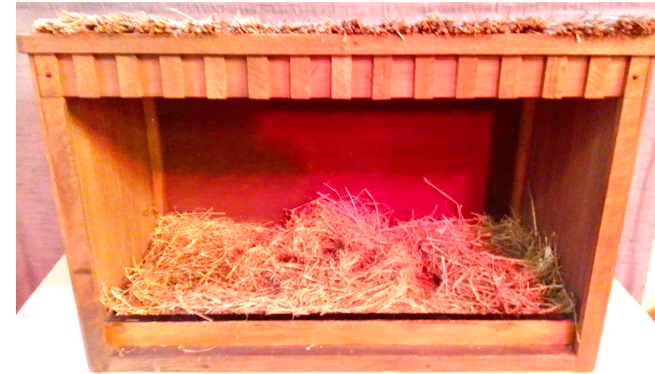
*The Queen's Gift*



*The Raffle prizes given out*

The Fair raised the magnificent sum of £1937.00. Thanks to all who worked so hard, and to everyone who came to support the Fair.

## A new King born in an old stable



The stable used to house the nativity scene at St Thomas' Church was made by my Dad, Jack Pavier, about 35 years ago. Our building company was doing a lot of work at The Donside Paper Mill and Neil realised that all the pallets used for deliveries were being thrown away. What a waste. He brought them home and my Dad would break them up and chop the wood for kindling. Unknown to us he used some of it to build the stable which has been used ever since at Christmastime. Now we have a new King born in an old stable. What could be more appropriate.

He also made the processional cross and the candlesticks which were made from broom handles also from the builders yard.

Recycling and upcycling are not new!!

**Gill Scott**



And here are the old crib figures, much loved in their time, but sadly now much the worse for wear. They retire gracefully to make way for the new figures.



## Faith Renewed

After Alexandria our voyage took us to Haifa in Israel from where we were able to visit Jerusalem. We approached Jerusalem on the road over the flank of the Mount of Olives, seeing the Holy City in the morning sunlight in much the same way as Jesus and his followers must have done, although the appearance of the city would be greatly changed in two millennia. The city walls were rebuilt by the Ottomans, and the golden Dome of the Rock which is the most easily distinguished feature from a distance was built around 690 AD, and forms the centre piece of the controversial Al-Aqsa mosque compound.

Entering the city on foot through the Dung Gate we proceeded to the Western Wall of the Temple Mount, where we were able to pray, males and females at separate sections, under the watchful eyes of the Israeli Defence Force. A moving experience, since this piece of Jerusalem can be proven to have existed at the time of Christ, having been part of the second temple, constructed by King Herod.



Following the Via Dolorosa we visited the church of the Holy Sepulchre, which contains the last five Stations of the Cross and so reputedly marks the spot where Jesus was crucified, buried and resurrected. The most moving part of the experience was seeing the Stone of the Anointment and the reverence with which it was treated by women from the Eastern Orthodox Church who polished it with oil and garments which were then considered to be blessed. The

experience is more enjoyable if you are able to suspend disbelief and ignore some of the inconvenient historical facts around this church, which was not built until 400 years after the crucifixion and has been rebuilt three times since. Meaning that its contents are probably symbolic rather than historically accurate. The church is used and managed by priests of the Roman Catholic, Greek, Coptic, Syriac and Ethiopian Orthodox faiths, who reputedly find it difficult to agree on most aspects of its running, which does not bode well for the unity of the Christian Faith. None the less it was an uplifting spiritual experience.

We left the city walls, crossed the Kidron Valley and entered the peaceful Garden of Gethsemane. Here among the olive trees, some over 1000years old, it was easy to imagine that night around two millennia ago when the temple priests and elders came to arrest Jesus and to believe in the events that followed, leading up to the resurrection



From Gethsemane we travelled South to Bethlehem, crossing into the West Bank through the huge security walls and a massive blast protected checkpoint where our papers and vehicle were checked by the IDF. In the centre of Bethlehem lies the world famous Manger Square, and as we arrived a team of workers was erecting the Christmas Tree which usually features on the TV news every Christmas. We had been away from home for some time and this scene was so reminiscent of the one we usually see in the less famous Station Square, Aboyne, that we felt some pangs of homesickness.

Opposite Manger Square is the Church of the Nativity which is built on the site of the stable in which Mary gave birth to Jesus. The stable was not a building, as most people (and Nativity sets) imagine it, but a cleft in the rocks, roofed over to form a shelter for animals. It now forms the Grotto of the Nativity and is located beneath the altar of the church, accessed by steep steps behind the altar. We had been warned that we would not be able to visit the Grotto because of time constraints to be back before shore leave ended, a service being in progress and coach loads of people ahead of us. We joined the queue anyway – the coach-loads miraculously melted away to their coaches, the Armenian priests ended their service and Lo! We were near the front of the reduced queue and invited behind the altar to descend to the Grotto! An unforgettable experience to see the Silver Star marking the very spot on which our Saviour was born. Our faith renewed we returned to our ship, stopping at one of the gift shops near Manger Square to buy an olivewood nativity set, albeit constructed in the inaccurate traditional manner.



**Jean and Eddy Horton**

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## News from Aboyne-Dinnet

The Guild are holding two meetings, both in the Hall. All are welcome and entry is by donation. The meeting will start with a hymn and reading, followed by a talk from a guest speaker, and finishes with refreshments

**Thursday 1st February at 7pm:** Speaker is from Aboyne Refills Topic 'Old bottles, new contents' She will be explaining her views on caring for the earth by recycling

**Thursday 7th March at 7pm:** Speakers will be Rev John and Patricia Purves: Topic 'All around the world'

## Service of Nine Lessons and Carols



The tradition of Services of Nine Lessons and Carols became popularised in the form we now know it by Kings College Chapel in 1928, when the BBC first broadcast this now famous service. To many people this broadcast marks, every year, the start of their Christmas preparations. The Order of Service is used throughout the world much as it was in that first broadcast. The first carol is traditionally 'Once in Royal David's City' with the first verse being sung by a soloist. The service then proceeds with both well known and occasionally specially commissioned new carols and anthems sung by both congregation and choir. This beautiful music is interspersed with lessons from the Old and New Testament with the main theme being "the development of the loving purpose of God."

Our Service of Nine Lessons and Carols was held in a packed and festive looking church on the second Sunday of Advent. It began with the traditional first carol - 'Once in Royal David's City' with first verse sung as a solo by the choir's conductor Lucy Bailey.

Lessons were read by members of all the Aboyne Churches and we were blessed with a large Augmented Choir to lead us in the singing of a wonderful selection of carols telling the story of Christmas and of God's great love for all of us.

As is traditional at such a service this wonderful Augmented Choir, conducted by Lucy Bailey sang four beautiful carols as well as leading us in the congregational singing

The first one, 'What Sweeter Music' by John Rutter, is one of his most popular carols. It was written originally for Kings College in 1958 setting the powerful words of Robert Herrick to music, highlighting the gifts we can all bring to Christ.

....What sweeter music can we bring  
Than a carol for to sing  
The birth of this our Heavenly King?

Secondly we heard the carol 'Adam lay Ybounden'- a 15th century text set to beautiful music by Boris Ord- a one time organist of Kings College, Cambridge

'Hush, go silently' was the choir's third carol - a stunning Carol whose words and music were written by our very talented Organist, Sheila Maxwell

And lastly the moving message of Longfellow in 'The Bell Carol' by Phillip Ledger (at one time Director of the choir at Kings College and later of the RSAMD) These words seem so relevant to our world:

....And in despair I bowed my head:  
"there is no peace on Earth," I said  
For hate is strong and rocks the song  
Of peace on Earth this Christmas

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:  
"God is not dead, nor does He sleep!  
The wrong shall fail, the right prevail  
With Peace on Earth this Christmastide

After this wonderful, moving and joyful service, we were treated to mulled wine and eats while also enjoying fellowship with one another.

### Carol Birss

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### Advent candles

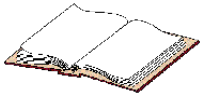
Our churches each displayed the advent wreath and candles during Advent. The candles were lit, one for each week, symbolising the Christian concepts of hope, peace, joy and love. The central white candle, representing Christ, was lit on Christmas Day.

*St Kentigern's*

*St Thomas's*







## Readings for February and March, 2024

4th February Epiphany 5	Malachi 3:1-4 Hebrews 2:14-18 Luke 2:22-40	Margaret Jaffray	Rider Family
11th February Epiphany 6	2 Kings 2:1-12 2 Corinthians 4:3-6 Mark 9:2-9	Stanley Ewen	Jill Binns
14th February Ash Wednesday	Joel 2.1-2,12-17 2 Corinthians 5.20b- 6.10 Matthew 6.1-6,16-21	TBA	TBA
18th February Lent 1	Genesis 9:8-17 1 Peter 3:18-22 Mark 1:9-15	Anne Richardson	Carol Simmons
25th February Lent 2	Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16 Romans 4:13-25 Mark 8:31-38	Sabine Muir	Isabel Wilson
3rd March Lent 3	Exodus 20:1-17 1 Corinthians 1:18-25 John 2:13-22	Hilary Mutch	Anne Harper
10th March Lent 4 Mothering Sunday	Numbers 21:4-9 Ephesians 2:1-10 John 3:14-21	Susan Smith	Rider Family
17th March Lent 5	Jeremiah 31:31-34 Hebrews 5:5-10 John 12:20-33	Sabrina Humphrey	Jill Binns
24th March Palm Sunday	Zechariah 9:9-10 Philippians 2.5-11 Mark 11:1-11	Margaret Jaffray	Meg White
28th March Maundy Thursday	Exodus 12:1-4, 11-14 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 John 13:1-17, 31b-35	TBA	TBA
31st March EASTER SUNDAY	Isaiah 25:6-9 Acts 10:34-43 Mark 6:1-8	Marcus Humphrey	Aboyne Family

## 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

### **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**

### **Glimpses of Hope.**

Velvet dark glittering heavens,  
 choirs of stars appearing,  
 Singing God's glory.

Freezing, frost laden twigs,  
 glistening in early dawn,  
 Longing for sunlight.

Sun sparkling snow blanket,  
 sheltering the snowdrops,  
 Promise of springtime.

Hope of resurrection.

*Carol Simmons*

### St. Thomas's, 11.15am

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

### **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.

The next services are:

**4th February**  
**Christingle for Candlemas**  
**3rd March A Holy Place**

**From the Bible for the young and not so young**  
**Moses and the Passover**



The Passover is the most important festival in the year for the Jews, and was so in the time of Jesus. The Last Supper, taking place just before His crucifixion, was a celebration of the Passover. So what was it all about?

The Israelites had come to Egypt at a time of famine in their own country, were welcomed by Joseph, who was one of them but settled in Egypt - and that is another story. The Pharaoh of the time welcomed them, and they made a very happy home for themselves in Egypt.

But Joseph died - at the ripe old age of a hundred and ten! - and so did the Pharaoh. A new Pharaoh came into power who looked at the Israelites making themselves rich and prosperous in his country, and thought they might turn

against him, there were too many of them for him to feel safe. So he started to make things difficult for them, gave them landlords who ill-treated them, and did horrid things like getting them to make bricks but not letting them have the straw they needed to do so. This all went on for several years.

Now, we know the story of Moses left in a basket for the Pharaoh's daughter to find, take home and bring up. Moses grew up in Egypt in the home of the Pharaoh's daughter, but was aware that the other Israelites were not so fortunate. He was looking after a flock of sheep one day, and came to what is known as the Mountain of God. And to his astonishment he found a bush that was in flames, but not consumed. And God called to Moses out of the bush, telling him to go to Pharaoh, and ask that he should bring the people of Israel out of Egypt, to what they called the 'Promised Land.' And God promised to be with him.

So Moses went to the Pharaoh, who refused to let them go, he found their labour too useful. This started a real battle between them, each being determined to win. God was on the side of the Israelites of course, and He sent a series of plagues to the land of Egypt. One was an enormous hailstorm mixed with fire, that ruined the crops standing, then there was a plague of locusts. Each time, Pharaoh repented and the plague stopped, then Pharaoh changed his mind and would not let the Israelites go after all.

Finally God said right, this time all the first-born of the Egyptians will die, and perhaps that will bring Pharaoh to his senses. This was to happen at midnight one night. But to spare the Israelites, they were each to be given a lamb to slaughter that night, and smear the blood on the outside door before eating it. Then as the 'Angel of Death' came past to kill the Egyptians, he would know this was an Israelite home and pass over them. And so it was, and Pharaoh finally agreed to let them go- in fact it was all so awful that the Egyptians couldn't wait to get rid of them. But this was a day to be remembered always, as the day they got their freedom and set off for their Promised Land. So Jesus celebrated this, and told his followers that they should do the same. And our Communion Service and taking the bread and wine as Jesus did then, is still part of our Christian worship.



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 increasing, 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 lessing cocksureness when my memory seems to clash with the memories 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







# BASS NOTES

## Only When I Laugh

Let's start with a question: What is an *Ig*?

Along with other members of the Aboyne Probus Book Group, I have been reading Paul Merton's memoir *Only When I Laugh*. As many of you will know, Paul is the more hirsute member of the duo who have sat opposite each other on the satirical show *Have I Got News for You* for many years now. His more follically-challenged partner in satire is Ian Hislop. In my view (though not everybody's), the two of them are sharp, entertaining, funny, and work well together. They could not have more strikingly different backgrounds.



When I picked up Paul's memoir in December, I expected to be entertained by wit, a peppering of jokes and an overall atmosphere of sharp humour. Just the kind of thing we need at this time of year. I was wrong. While there is some humour in the book, it is subtle and easy to miss.

The memoir recounts Paul's life from very humble beginnings in 1950s west London, to the recent years of comedy fame through popular radio and TV programmes such as *Just a Minute* and *Have I Got News for You*. Several of us in the book group found that once we had read the book, we still did not have a clear sense of Paul Merton, the man. Yes, he had a youthful obsession to become a comedian; yes, he had a difficult time at secondary school; and yes, as he became well-known he got to know a lot of other well-known people. But of Paul Merton the real live person of flesh and blood, with beliefs, opinions and passions, other than comedy, we learned little. It was as if the three-dimensional Paul disappeared like a real life Dorian Gray as he mixed more and more with the high profile and the famous.

As a result, I didn't get the laughs I expected. Perhaps that is why he called the book a memoir rather than an autobiography. Maybe most comedians are like Paul. There's a hilarious outward persona protecting a private secret inner core of quiet seriousness, or even sadness. Maybe there is a little bit of that characteristic in all of us; always saying 'Fine' when someone asks how we are.

Anyway, I began this article with the intention of raising a slight smile via

Paul's memoir and I've ended it by using the word 'sadness'. So back to the question with which I began, a terrible joke taken from a cracker. The answer is, as you've already guessed, a frozen house without a loo.

And here are another two.

1. What is sung at a snowman's birthday party?
2. Why is it getting harder to buy advent calendars?

Text answers with your name to 07442 502574 by the end of January. There may be a prize. That's more than enough for now.

**Eric Sinclair**

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## Winter Now

'Tis winter now; the fallen snow  
 Has left the heavens all coldly clear;  
 Through leafless boughs the sharp winds blow,  
 And all the earth lies dead and drear.  
 And yet God's love is not withdrawn;  
 His life within the keen air breathes;  
 His beauty paints the crimson dawn,  
 And clothes the boughs with glittering wreaths...

O God! Who giv'st the winter's cold,  
 As well as summer's joyous rays,  
 Us warmly in thy love enfold,  
 And keep us through life's wintry days.

*From a poem by Samuel Longfellow 1819-92*

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*Helen's electric chasuble was the envy of everyone*

## Multiculture?

Open any newspaper today and you will see the word “multiculture”, We are led to believe that this is the way forward for our country, but is it?

Way back, when the £10 Pommies emigrated to Australia, they went off to become Australians. Scots who emigrated to the US or Canada were encouraged to become American or Canadian citizens and take up their way of doing things. Today we have vast communities throughout Great Britain and Northern Ireland.. the new “Multiculture” ... within which the people have brought their way of life, their language, their food, their traditions, even their way of dressing, to our country. And although a great many have taken out British Citizenship, they will never be absorbed as Scots, Welsh, Irish or English...this is a process that takes generations.

Whilst it is acceptable to take your way of life to another country when you are only there for a short period of time, it is not when you are emigrating to that country to establish a new way of life for yourself and your family longterm.

All the countries I have worked in were very strict on who was admitted and for what purpose. There were several countries where I was asked to postpone my arrival because the required Work Permit had been delayed. Zambia was the first, followed by Indonesia. The funniest was Malaysia... where the request came too late as Jean and I were in flight and on our way. The company solution was to tell us to take a local holiday, keep our heads down and wait for instructions. So on arrival in Kuala Lumpur we hired a car and drove to their Eastern coast for a short break during which Malaysia had a public holiday which celebrated friendship and their open society. Our hotel manager persuaded us to visit a small village locally to enjoy their hospitality which we did. Unfortunately we did not realise until we were enjoying their food, that the village was the home of the Minister for Culture and the the national TV cameras were accompanying him. So much for keeping a low profile!



*Jean accepting village hospitality in Malaysia*

Malaysia gave us further cause for amusement a little later this time relating to being accepted as Scottish. I decided to apply for membership of their Caledonian Society. Jean and I were duly interviewed by a committee who uncovered a number of factors they considered relevant. My parents came from Leeds and Bolton and settled in Glasgow in the early '30s. I was therefore educated in Scotland, attended college in Scotland, and had joined a Scottish company for my apprenticeship. Jean, however, had a Scottish Grandparent who had been born and brought up in Jedburgh. There was no argument - Jean could join the Caledonian Society... I should try the St Georges!

But then I remember Malawi, whose President decided that if the St Andrew's Society were to be allowed to continue their activities post independence, then they must allow Malawians to join.

Perhaps today we should emphasize the absorption of the British way of life and customs to a greater degree before we offer citizenship. We like our old traditions – from Royalty and the great state occasions to our rugby, football and cricket heritage; from steam trains to fish & chips, Blackpool illuminations, Yorkshire puddings, old school treats such as spotted dick and tapioca (frogspawn) - and try to show a way of life that wars, national service, rationing and many other setbacks over the years had forged a unity of community spirit that is now being lost.

Somehow it is disheartening now to see busloads of protesters descending on London to back the Yemeni's or the Palestinians. Oh yes, they are all “British”, but are they? We allow free expression of opinion that would not be accepted in the cultures that they have brought here. Is this the way they treat our freedom, by going against our government?

**Peter Sowrey**

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### *Snowfall*

*The snow falls gently  
Dancing in the air  
Outside the window  
Slowly carpeting the ground  
With a layer of white  
The snowdrops fight back  
Struggling to keep their heads up  
Until giving way to the weight  
They bow them in submission  
Stillness falls  
Sound is deadened  
And in the moon-light  
A sheen on silver glistens  
Vittoria Hancock*



## Burns Night Special!

Eileen's reply to the Ladies Toast

A' hiv tae reply, bit fit can a' say  
About oor fair sex, bit a' hiv turn't grey.

We've clairted oor faces wi' pooder and pint  
Filled in a' the cracks wi' a puckle cement.

Tae mak oorsels bonnie an' gie ye a treat  
Combed oot oor hair, so that we look neat.

We're a' dolled up noo in oor Sunday best  
An' waitin' for you mannies, oh fit a pest.

The lot o' us here are a richt hardie bunch  
We can all ate the haggis for a Burns Supper Lunch.

A dollop o' tatties an' bashed neeps as weel  
Fit cuid be better than a Burns Supper Meal?

A Man's a man for a' that, that's fit Rabbie seid  
But a man without an uman, is like a chucken without a heid.

We've vrocht day and nicht tae please oor guid men  
Ye didna expect me to say that a' ken.

Thanks for a' yir kind words, Geordie, he wishes  
We'll min o' them a fan we're washing the dishes.

Eileen A Davies  
24th January, 2007

## Congratulations and Commiserations

### Deaths

The funeral of Doreen Ewen took place in St Kentigern's in November  
The funeral of John Barber will take place in St Thomas' in January.

May they rest in peace and rise in glory.

*Please pray for their families and friends at this time.*

### Weddings

The marriage of Catriona and Kent took place in St Thomas' in December

### Congratulations

Congratulations to Carole Nicoll on becoming a certified yoga instructor. Well done, Carole.

Congratulations to our contributor Eric Sinclair, who has graduated with an MA with Merit in Creative Writing. Well done, Eric, but we are not surprised you did so well!

### Doreen Ewen

Doreen was brought up in the Torry area of Aberdeen, where she attended the United Free Church. She trained as a nurse at the London Clinic, rising quickly to become Ward Sister. She then moved back to Aberdeen, and was working in the Royal Infirmary when she met her future husband Stanley Ewen. They married in King's College Chapel in 1965, and had a very happy marriage. They had one daughter.

She was utterly devoted to her family, delighting always in what her grandchildren were up to. Annual family trips to the Keswick Convention, particularly when the singing of hymns of praise stretched the canvas roof, were moments of sheer joy for Doreen.

*Sabine writes:* Doreen was a very caring and constant presence at St Kentigern's for the past twenty years. She, like Stanley, was a stalwart and very much involved in the church and pastoral care over the years, always holding everyone in her prayers. We will miss her greatly.



