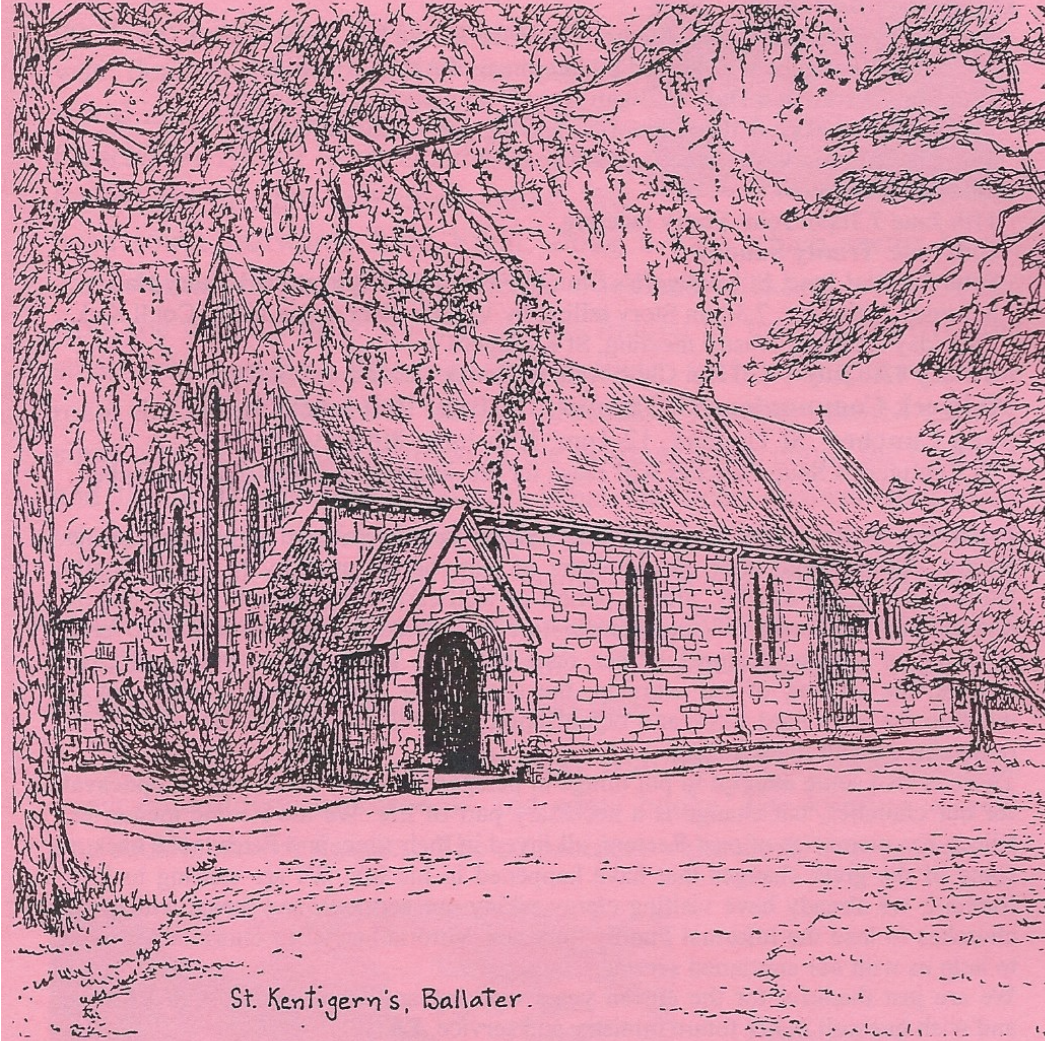


The Deeside Tattler

June and July 2025



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



Rector: Vacant

The Rectory, 7 Invercauld Road, Ballater, AB35 5RP

Contact: Tel No 07352 750090

email: upperdeesidechurches@gmail.com

Lay Reader: Hugh Dawson, Tel. No 013398 87054

Dates for the Diary

Wednesday 28th May, 11am Memorial service for the late Mary Fennell, St Kentigern's. Followed by interment of Ashes at Tullich.

29th May **Ascension Day** 11.30am Holy Communion at St Thomas's

Thursday 29th May, 6.30pm Vittoria's leaving party, Rhu-na-Haven.

Tuesday 3rd June Vestry meeting, St Thomas's

8th June **Pentecost**

11th June 7.30pm Joint Vestry meeting

15th June **Trinity Sunday**

Saturday 21st June, St Kentigern's Church Fayre 1.30 - 4pm at the Victory Hall,

Saturday 28th June, 7.30pm Story telling by Vittoria Hancock in aid of Coull Kirk

Thursday 3rd July Vestry meeting, St Kentigern's

Sunday 13th July 14.30 Hot Choc Walk to Knock Castle from Ballater

Midweek Communions St Thomas', 11.30am, 10th June; 8th July

Soup Lunches St Thomas', 12-1pm, 10th June; 8th July

St Kentigern's Soup Lunches will cease for the summer, and restart in September.

From the Editor: The magazine this time is largely devoted to tributes to our Rector Vittoria, who after eleven years of very happy ministry to us, is finally leaving at the end of May, after a period of well-earned Sabbatical. She is hugely missed, and between them, our contributors have managed to give a good overall covering of various features of her time with us. There are so many different aspects, the leading of our worship, the social side, the personal caring, not to mention the very hard work and organisation. Not all are covered, but all will be remembered with thankfulness.

There is also some attempt to put things in perspective - it is an enormous upheaval for our churches, but change is a necessary part of life. We have some memories, Eileen has memories of past Rectors, all loved in their time, and Peter looks back at some of the great changes that have happened in his life. We are starting to look forward, we already have visiting clergy taking our services, and teams within the churches to lead the informal Family Services. Vittoria has taken enormous trouble to help us with our continued service.

We are just thankful for the eleven years working and worshipping with Vittoria, and wish her well in her future ministry and service. **Ed.**

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Letter from Vittoria

Dear Friends,

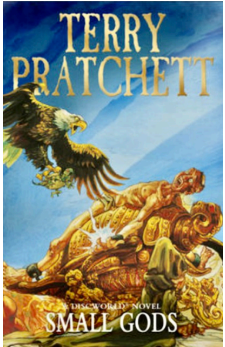
You may have thought you'd heard the last of me... but Sheila persuaded me to write one final letter for the Tattler. So here we go. I have just been away for retreat. I was determined not to let the outside world intrude too much on my time away. Pluscarden Abbey is a wonderful place, tucked out of sight in a small valley. You head south eastwards from Elgin, along a road which seems to get narrower as you go. Past open fields, woodland, trickling brooks. Even from the turn-off up to the Abbey it is hidden by trees. Then over the small bridge and up the wooded drive until, with a sharp turn in the road, the Abbey church is suddenly revealed. A rather stunted church, since all that has been restored of the original is the choir, the crossing and the north and south transept. What has been restored is a place where you step in from the world into quiet. Where coloured light floods through the stained glass windows. Where there is a regular cycle of prayer and praise 8 times a day. Starting at 4.30am, and finishing with Compline at 7.30pm. I did not manage either the 4.30am or 6.15am services while I was there.

I – as usual – took far too much away with me. I took some knitting, some embroidery, a notebook, and some books. The knitting – well, one sock is almost finished. The embroidery – the work in progress

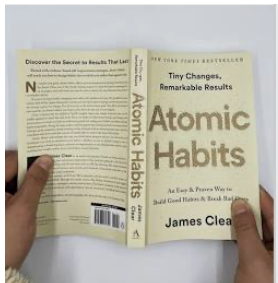


*Pluscarden
Abbey*

was never touched the whole time. Writing – a little bit. The books, well, that was another story. I took some books with me – Small Gods, by Terry Pratchett, and Atomic Habits by James Clear. I can highly recommend them both. But they might not be the obvious choice of reading for a retreat. (I possibly need to say here that I did also take my Bible, my prayer book and my Bible commentary!).



Small Gods is a Discworld book, written by an atheist, as a work of fiction. Yet within it there are – I found – lessons which we need as Christians to remember. Particularly within the institutional church. “Around the God there forms a shell of prayers and Ceremonies and Buildings and Priests and Authority, until at Last the God Dies. And this may not be noticed.” “Belief shifts. People start out believing in the god and end up believing in the structure.” I have always tried to put people before the structures, rules and ceremonies of the church. Feeling that I would rather be told off when I get to heaven for being too open and too generous in my welcome of all than be told that I haven't not welcomed God in the stranger. At times I find the protocols and procedures involved in the institutional church somewhat restrictive and stifling to the voice of God. In this interregnum you will be meeting with other clergy who do things in a different way. Who preach differently, preside differently, have different expectations. This is good. It is possible to get so caught up in the structure and ceremonies and buildings that we are distracted from God. Sometimes we need shaking up a little, out of our comfort zone.



Atomic Habits is another interesting book. It is about the theory that real change comes from the compound effect of hundreds of small decisions. Doing a tiny thing each day leads to exponential growth. He is applying this to personal growth, whether this be in the professional world, or in terms of fitness, or a hobby. But it can equally be applied to spiritual

growth as individuals, or as a church community. Last year I challenged the St Kentigern's vestry to pray each day for church growth. To chose a time of day and just say 'Lord, we are asking that your church will grow. Please send revival' – or something along those lines. I suggested it was attached to something they already did – so when they made their morning cup of tea, to just simply pray. Nothing elaborate. I don't know how many of the vestry members are still praying – hopefully some. But it is a small habit that can be done by anyone. Once a day, when you make your morning cuppa, you will pray for ... whatever lies on your heart. Church growth, peace in the world, the economy, your friend who is ill.... Let praying become a habit. Let Bible reading become a habit. Let walking, or meditation, or journaling, or reflection, or welcome become a habit. Remember 'habits are easier to build when they fit into the flow of your life'

While on retreat I did some thinking and praying, and lots of just being. I looked at some of the habits I have in my life – some good, some not so good. I did some thinking about why I do things in certain ways. Is it just routine, ceremony, practise? My thinking and praying and being will continue over the next couple of months as I take some time off, amongst the job-hunting and sorting and packing. By the time you read this, I will probably be away again to Lee Abbey. I am trying to be open to the wind of change and the breath of God. I invite you to join me in spirit as we journey onwards in our lives.

With every blessing for now and for the future,
Vittoria



There are wild goats on the rocks near Lee Abbey - Vittoria took this close-up last time she was there. A wonderful place to get immersed in nature!

Rev Vittoria Hancock

Vittoria was not our first woman priest, so fitted in well with our Congregation after her Institution in February 2014. A happy, cheerful countenance, quick mind and a good sense of humour endeared her to all right away, and I have found her very easy to get on with. Her first real challenge came less than two years later when Storm Frank flooded a substantial part of Ballater, and together with the Church of Scotland Minister David Barr, she set up and ran a help centre round the clock to help those who had lost their homes. Appreciation of her ecumenical and outgoing manner towards all in both Aboyne and Ballater



The Duck Race

was reflected in the large turnout at Christmas services ("Carols round the Crib") and the use at that time of our church by the primary school.

Our congregation was never large, and we no longer have a Sunday School, but thanks to Vittoria's dedication we do seem to be holding our own if showing a slight increase recently. Her mid-week Communion with soup lunch have attracted members of other denominations, and during Covid her weekly service sheets were so successful that they continue online. St. Thomas' in Aboyne is fortunate in still having a choir, augmented for special occasions such as Choral Evensong and the Carol Service, and with her lovely singing voice she led us in singing items such as the Peruvian Gloria.



*The new Canon,
with Canon Philip Hughes*

Vittoria quickly took an interest in the broader work of the Diocese, helping out until a new Bishop was appointed, and was elected a Canon for her services. Sadly the new appointee has not been well received which has led to a particularly challenging time for the Diocese, and Vittoria hopes to move on to a less stressful situation into which she could put her undoubted energy and drive.



Carols round the Crib



Recently she managed to get hold of tradesmen to carry out repairs to both the church and the Rectory at a time when most of us found that particularly difficult! She was also very good at keeping us up to the mark with current legislation and regulations.

We miss her terribly already, and hope she will soon find something suited to her talents which she will enjoy, and I know many of us will be keeping in touch with her.

Marcus Humphrey May 2025

More about Vittoria

Since Vittoria joined St Thomas over 11 years ago, she has become and will continue to be a great and special friend. She has transformed St T with her enthusiasm, dedication and expertise. She has been really approachable and as soon as she arrived, I took an instant delight in her company. My own spiritual journey has been hugely enhanced by her inspirational presence in both my and Warren's life. I've been encouraged to attend Bible study/Lent/Advent courses and have learnt such a lot.



It's been particularly fun to see what outfit she found for children's services which has brought the gospel message so alive for young people. I've enjoyed her stories and loved that she has introduced some new music into the church – the Peruvian Gloria in particular. As a chocolate lover, the hot chocolate walks have been a great success for me – any excuse!

The Hot Chocolate Walk to Glen Tanar

Vittoria has been a great role model for a life with Christ at its centre. Humble, inclusive, creative, innovative, thoughtful, diplomatic. Whilst I wish she wasn't going, she is leaving St Thomas in a great place and with an enduring legacy to continue the worship of God. I pray that she will soon find another place to inspire and lead God's people.

"The Lord bless you and keep you"

Sue Burgess

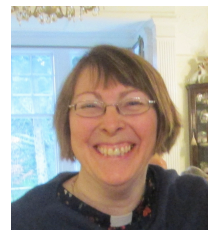
Something about dear Vittoria, who can forget get that Smile, and the song she sang heart felt. " Coventry Carol" .

I do have a song for her, it's beautiful like her spirit..

"Tears of salvation " from Dark Sacred Opera..

Hurts my heart she's hurting. God has a way of getting us where we're meant to be.

Helen



Memories about Vittoria from Aboyne-Dinnet Church

Rev Vittoria Hancock enriched our lives in many ways. Here are a few memories we treasure:

She organised a special Choral Evensong for the Feast of St Thomas. The music, provided by the choir, was beautiful and the words thought-provoking. She delivered a punchy homily on what we know about St Thomas, from the Bible and from tradition. Afterwards, I enjoyed a chance to talk. Though the story of 'doubting Thomas' is very familiar, something had struck me for the first time.

'Vittoria, wouldn't it have been agonising, having someone grasping inside an open wound?'

She acknowledged this might be so.

'But then perhaps Thomas realised that he was causing such pain and would have been very gentle?'

Again Vittoria conceded that this might be so.

When I got home I got the usual enquiry about the service and I told the Other Half about Doubting Thomas and my conversation with Vittoria. Thomas would have been respectful in his investigation of the Wounds of Christ.

He didn't forget. We chanced to be in Chartres Cathedral and he went off to investigate the sequence of sculptures illustrating the story of Christ.

He drew my attention to one scene. 'Look at Thomas! He is really rummaging around in Christ's side!' He was shocked.



My other memory concerns Sharmann's Induction by Presbytery to the joint charge of Aboyne-Dinnet and Cromar. As the local Episcopalian Rector, Vittoria was there too.

Everything was very formal. Presbytery had to convene beforehand, then process in full robes, into the Sanctuary before a congregation of one hundred and eighty. The Induction took place

during the service. The Right Hand of Fellowship was duly extended. Frivolities such as food, drink, presents and entertainment were reserved until after the Dismissal.

As part of the service, Sharmann and Vittoria pledged before us all to work together for the glory of the Lord. I could just see a twinkle in her eye. What was coming? A surprise? Indeed there was. She whipped her own present out of her cassock. She knew from her own experience that being in charge of two parishes, there would be a lot of travelling to out-of-the-way places and here was a local guide.

Sarah Wright

Aboyne-Dinnet from Christa - The Easter Vigil



For me, Vittoria has introduced a service to Aboyne which I hope will stay with us for a long time. I have heard of Easter bonfires in Germany, and I believe that they are just lit for fun. The tradition of those bonfires most certainly goes back to pagan times, when people lit fires in spring to celebrate the return of light after the long winter months.

Vittoria introduced me to a new concept, the *Easter Vigil and Bonfire*. In this service one remembers the story of Jesus' death and resurrection. The bonfire symbolises the light of the risen Christ. Once the bonfire is lit, the attendees share the peace of Christ with each other and then light their hand-held candle before they proceed into the dark church and as such bring in the light!

Over the years these services have become a welcoming highlight in my life. A few years back it was agreed between our two churches that we would share hosting these vigils in alternative years. The socialising afterwards is also rewarding, and everyone always seems to enjoy their sausage in a bun! Thank you, Vittoria, for bringing this tradition to our area.

Christa Markham

Around the
bonfire
at St Thomas's



And Carol Birss writes:

Our Easter Vigil took place on Holy Saturday on a fair evening and was attended by a congregation from St Kentigern's, St Thomas's and from Aboyne, Dinnet Parish Church. We met around a bonfire (symbolising 'the fire of God's love and the power of the Holy Spirit') and heard lessons and prayers led by our rector, Vittoria and by the parish minister, Revd Sherman Maromo. After lighting candles, from the bonfire we took our lights into the dark church where the Paschal candle was lit - a symbol of the light of the Risen Christ and His triumph over darkness. Our own candles reminded us that we are all called to spread this light of Christ in our lives.

After this moving vigil we were treated to delicious sausages with caramelised onion in rolls! No Easter symbolism but lovely to share food and fellowship with everyone who attended the Vigil.

Candlesticks, Colours and Christingles.

Vittoria has many gifts and talents, and we all remember different things about her.

These are just three that came to me.

Several people kindly helped with brass cleaning before Easter, but Vittoria was clearly the most experienced, especially when it came to the large candlesticks behind the altar. Only she knew how to unscrew the different sections to clean each one thoroughly, and crucially how to screw them back together again!

The liturgical colours used such as purple for Lent, gold for Easter mark the seasons of the church but Vittoria often wore some lovely colourful, patterned clothes which included a fine warm bright red winter coat.



I had never made a Christingle until I came to St Thomas's, so I was rather apprehensive when we were invited to make our own during the Candlemas service in 2023. I'm not good at crafts but was reassured that all the 'ingredients' were provided, and I remembered their significance as I created the Christingle. The activity was enjoyed by everyone from age 3 to 90+ and was a new way of thinking of sharing the light of Christ which had come into the world.

Dressed for the Christingle! **Carol Simmons**

and - Computers!

One of the things for which Vittoria will be hugely missed is her extraordinary skill on the computer, combined with a lot of determination when things are not going right! She has amused herself in helping with a computer class on a regular basis - perhaps part of her 'out-reach'? - or just fun.

However, I gather I am not the only one who has called on her for help when at crisis point with computer problems, and she has never failed to put things right, however long it takes.

Thank you, Vittoria!

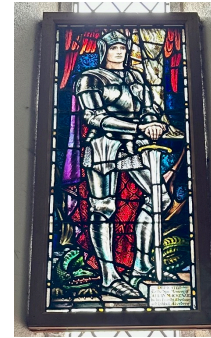
Sheila



Hot Chocolate Walk- Easter Monday

Our last Hot Chocolate with Vittoria was on Easter Monday.

We started by looking into St Kentigern's to see the beautiful painted altar (in a side aisle, and a stained glass panel which had once been, in the now ruined St Nathalan's Chapel, on the old House of Glenmuick Estate. This chapel was to be the destination for our walk.



St Nathalan lived about 620-678 and was an early Christian Saint who preached in Deeside and founded several churches in the area. According to some sources he was made The Bishop of Aberdeen by the Pope after performing a miracle.



6 walkers and a dog had a delightful walk to the remains of the chapel, where only the tower remains. After a pleasant walk this peaceful setting made a perfect place for our break and cream eggs!



We will all miss Vittoria leading us on these enjoyable walks which usually involve visiting a place of interest and give us a chance of fellowship. It was, however good to hear that these walks are going to continue in the months to come.

We are so grateful to Vittoria for inspiring us to continue this important part of our fellowship with both congregations.

.Carol Birss

Fond Memories of St Thomas's

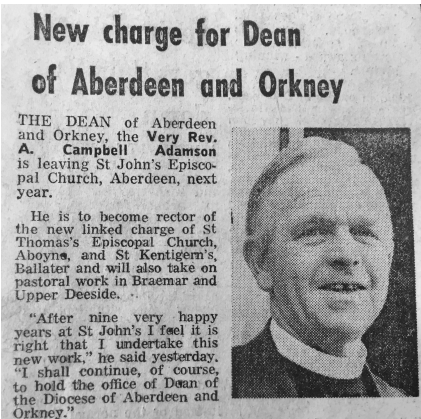
My association with St. Thomas's began many moons ago during the Second World War when we lived in Strathdon, and my father introduced us one Easter Sunday to St. Thomas's. In 1921 I have said before that my father, Hector Simon and his brother Leslie were two of the first communicants after St. Thomas's was built. They had to travel by pony and trap all the way from Logie Coldstone to Christ Church, Kincardine O'Neil for services.

In church recently I was studying the plaque of Rectors of St. Thomas's who served us so well over all these years and recalled some of the special ones for me. There was Rev. J. Wattie who always used to peer round the pillars to see who was in church, and Rev. Hastie-Smith who married my sister, Sheila in November 1958.



Then Rev. Thomas Beattie who married Barrie and me, and also baptised Pam, and Rev. Douglas Banyard who baptised Gill.

Later on in 1979 came Rev. Campbell Adamson who conducted our father's service funeral. Happy times with Rev. Patrick Jones who married Pam at St. Andrew's Church in Alford, and Gill in dear St. Thomas's.



Then when I joined the Augmented Choir the Rev. Curry welcomed us. He was followed in 2014 by dear Rev. Vittoria Hancock who will be greatly missed. We were so lucky to have her here for eleven years, so we must say a very big thank you for all her hard work and help. May God bless her in what the future holds for her. Dear Vittoria, you will always be remembered by us all.

Eileen A. Davies

More memories



And service was important, Vittoria was always ready to get involved in the social activities of our churches.



And she loved the children - she would sometimes join them in the Children's Corner during the intercessions, partly to keep them occupied, but also she loved their company.



Finally the last service at St Thomas's came. There was a full-throated rendering of 'Guide me, O Thou Great Redeemer' from a large congregation, then a presentation by Anne Harper, all rather emotional.

And to finish off with - of course - Coffee/tea and Cake - a very special one which said 'Thank You' to Vittoria.





Readings for June and July 2025

1st June Ascension 1	Ezekiel 36:24-28 Acts 16:16-34 John 17:20-26	Sabrina Humphrey	Sue and Warren Burgess
8th June PENTECOST SUNDAY	Genesis 11:1-9 Acts 2:1-21 John 14:8-17	Hilary Mutch	Irene Legge
15th June TRINITY SUNDAY	Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31 Romans 5:1-5 John 16:12-15	Sabrina Humphrey	Christopher and Margaret Heald
22nd June Trinity 1	Isaiah 65:1-9 Galatians 3:23-29 Luke 8:26-39	Susan Smith	Jill Binns
29th June St Peter and St Paul	Zechariah 4:1-6a, 10b-14 Acts 12:1-11 Matthew 16:13-19	Marcus Humphrey	Meg White
6th July Trinity 3	2 Kings 5:1-14 Galatians 6:7-16 Luke 10:1-11, 16-20	Susan Smith	Rider family
13th July Trinity 4	Deuteronomy 30:9-14 Colossians 1:1-14 Luke 10:25-37	Stanley Ewen	Carol Birss
20th July Trinity 5	Genesis 18:1-10a Colossians 1:15-28 Luke 10:38-42	Maggie Jaffray Ewen	Carol Simmons
27th July Trinity 6	Genesis 18:20-32 Colossians 2:6-15 Luke 11:1-13	Anne Richardson	Isabel Wilson

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 1970	Holy Communion 1970
4th Sunday	Holy Communion 1982	Family Communion
5th Sunday	Morning Prayer	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

Young Church at St. Thomas's

Children are welcome at all the services at St Thomas's.

The children's corner contains books, colouring materials 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. During the Interregnum, they will be led by members of the congregations of St Kentigern's and St Thomas's alternately.

The next services are:

1st June Prisoners released
(led by St Thomas's)

6th July Peace to this House
(led by St Kentigern's)

Guide me, O thou great Redeemer,
pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but thou art mighty;
hold me with thy powerful hand.
Bread of heaven,
feed me now and evermore.

When I tread the verge of Jordan,
bid my anxious fears subside.
death of death, and hell's destruction,
land me safe on Canaan's side.
Songs and praises,
I will ever give to you,

W Williams, (1717-91)
sung to Cwm Rhondda

From the Bible for the young and not so young

The Picnic by the shore



One of the loveliest stories in the New Testament comes at the end of St John's Gospel(*Ch21*). After the crucifixion, the risen Jesus had come to the Disciples in their upper room, and shown Himself to be alive. But they were no longer actively following Jesus as they had for so long, so perhaps feeling at rather a loose end, Peter said he was going fishing, and the others went along with him. Some of them had of course been fishers before Jesus called them

So they piled into the boat, set off, and, stripping off their clothes for work first, cast their nets for some fish - and nothing happened all night! No fish!

It was beginning to get light, when they saw this man on the shore. He called to them, asking if they had any fish, and of course they had to say 'No!' Then it happened - the man told them to cast their net on the right side of the boat, which they did - and suddenly they found so many fish they could hardly hold them all in their nets.

'The disciple whom Jesus loved' realised - this was Jesus! 'It is the Lord' he said, and Peter, in his excitement, hurriedly put some clothes on, couldn't wait to get to Jesus, and jumped into the sea.

The others were more careful, they dragged the net to the shore, absolutely full of fish. And there was Jesus with a charcoal fire, fish lying on it, and bread, ready for breakfast. Jesus told them to get some they had just caught, and they all had breakfast together.

Then Jesus spoke to Peter, asking him three times if he loved Him, then saying to 'feed my lambs', tend my sheep', and finally, when Peter got distressed and said 'you know I love you', he said to 'feed my sheep'. Jesus warned him that there would be trouble ahead, but said 'Follow me!' - which Peter of course did for the rest of his life.

'The disciple who Jesus loved' had been listening to all this. Then this disciple admitted to having written all that was in the Gospel - it was John himself! He had been there, and knew it was all true. He has left a wonderful record for us still to learn about Jesus.

Magnificat

The tide had swept in
Across the salt marsh
In between the dunes
The edges of the waves freezing
On that cold day
A band of light stretched across the sky
Reflected in the water
Bright blue coalesced into molten silver
I stood and watched the changing mood
Closed my eyes
Listened to the wind
The waves
The birds
The sound of high tide
A swirl of sea-birds take off
Wave after wave
Rising then falling
Wings beating in unison
With every down stroke comes a flash
A dazzle of white
In the evening light

A duck sits placidly in the deep channel
Reflected in the pooling water
At my approach it takes flight
Beating down steadily
Retreating to place of safety
This is not the expected
But more
Excitement with tranquillity
Feast for eyes and ears
A celebration of the senses

A pausing point
When I am aware
That all is beyond mere knowledge
Understanding
That deep within
New life has sprung into being
A seed is planted
To be nurtured into growth
Future promises lie cradled
In my heart and soul
Hope wings through the air
And joy transcends all.

Magnificat!

(Vittoria Hancock)

Memories of Aboyne

2. The Fifties

During the Easter school holidays I picked up day-old chicks from the railway station and reared them in a paraffin-heated brooder. They were replacements for 200 hens that were free range, with access to our paddock.

My sisters were busy too. They had their ponies: Gundar, a Cream Norwegian from Glentanar, and Thunder, a black Shetland. The ponies' tack was repaired by Sandy Murdoch the saddler, a little man with pebble glasses whose skill was fascinating to watch.

Our mother was a friend of Eileen Beeley, who came to us on Christmas day bringing, if we were lucky, a box of her truffles. You bit into their shell dusted with cocoa to the scrumptious soft centre, rich in double cream. Queen Mary heard about them, called on Mrs B and approved and arranged for a box to be sent to her.

A condition of entry for forestry at Aberdeen was a year's practical work. My prof recommended Glentanar. So one autumn day I biked up the glen to join the forestry squad. That January (1953) the Great Gale had blown hillsides of big pine trees higgledy-piggledy. We cleared the chaos by hand with 2-man saw and with axe to sned (cut) branches flush with the trunk. In the spring we planted trees from the estate nursery, and later with hand-sickle cut away bracken that would have suffocated them. I was so lucky to be with grand workmates and was sorry to leave them.

Now my Doric is rusty but good enough to get the gist of tales of early lives, and the village news and gossip. This in the fish-queue, a longish wait enlivened and not a chore.

Rodney Heslop



These Norwegian Fjords, in direct line from Rodney's sister's, are being ridden today at Glen Tanar by our lovely church members, Archie on Stumpy, Connie on Murray and Teddy on Odin, with their mother Katherine on Spot

The History of the Norwegian Fjords of Glen Tanar

The Norwegian Fjord Horse is one of the oldest and purest horse breeds in existence

These sturdy horses, with their distinct dun colouring and dorsal stripe, have captured hearts for over **2,000 years**.

Believed to have migrated to **Norway** with early settlers, they played a vital role in agriculture, transportation, and warfare. Their strength, calm temperament, and versatility made them invaluable companions to farmers and warriors alike, and they continue to be popular today for riding, driving, and therapy work.

Norwegian Fjords were brought to Glen Tanar in 1929 by Lord and Lady Glen Tanar, grandparents of Michael Bruce and continued to be bred by his mother, the late Honourable Jean Bruce, until 1993

The Fjord breeding was then taken over by Glen Tanar Equestrian Centre where there are currently 18 Fjords enjoyed by many riders including the Rider family. Breeding continues, though now based on the Rider's farm in Strathdon, but still very much influenced by the legacy of the good bloodlines introduced by the late Honourable Jean Bruce.

Jacqueline Riley,

Glen Tanar Equestrian Centre, Grandmother to the Rider Children

John Lovie and the Easter Chicks

More than thirty lovely little chicks were knitted by John's carers Claire and Janine. John helped to stuff them with chocolate eggs, and they were dotted around the church. Then they were distributed to members of the congregation at the end of the service.



John Lovie
holds one of the
Easter chicks.



Music and Readings for Passiontide



This moving and beautiful event took place in St Thomas's on the first Sunday in April, on a beautiful spring evening with a large congregation. It was a wonderful way to begin our two week seasonal journey towards Easter.

The St Thomas's Augmented Choir, conducted by the very talented Lucy Bailey, helped us mark the start of two weeks of Passiontide with well known and some less well known anthems. Readers gave us meaningful readings, secular and biblical for this season (one in Doric). Music from the choir included the magnificent Mozart's 'Ave Verum', Stainer's 'God so loved the World' and 'In Thee, O Lord, have I put my trust' (wonderful words from Psalm 31 and used in the Te Deum) by our own talented organist Sheila Maxwell.

It was good to see some new choir members swell the choir numbers for this evening and to be joined by impressive soloists Joyce Wintour, Lesley Stone and Lucy Bailey, who sang solos from the Messiah and Mendelssohn's Elijah. David Fletcher once again accompanied some of the works on both piano and organ. He also played an organ version of the lovely 'Pastoral Symphony' from the Messiah. We are so blessed to have so much local talent.

The evening ended by looking forward to Easter with the Hallelujah Chorus.

We are so grateful to all who made this such a memorable evening - readers, musicians and the catering team who spoiled us with an amazing array of refreshments at the end of the service.

Carol Birss

Stewardship 2 – Managing resources

“Blessed are you, God of the universe, for the abundance you have showered on each of us. It is enough and more than enough”

How do we manage the resources we have in the church? This question translates into discussions at vestry meetings on competing needs – what are the priorities for repairs at the Rectory? How much will a broken toilet seat cost? Who can we employ to help clear gutters? Who is replenishing the coffee stocks? These are both financial decisions but also about people and skills - looking at our congregations and our community to decide who can help – who might take on a small role to - help at services- cleaning brasses - decorating the church – baking - making music – reading or prayers - or one of the many roles needed to keep a vibrant church going.



Several members have expressed concern about how we will manage financially during the interregnum – be reassured – regular contributions to income continue, regular outgoings continue. We claim Gift Aid, we receive income from investments, we are fortunate to get grants towards specific expenditure, we have wonderful special events. Most of all we have a strong vestry who have robust discussions and a wealth of experience to make good decisions at and between meetings. We have a strong financial team supporting me – thanks to Warren, Alan and Marcus – working quietly in the background but essential to our success.

And of course, we have had the blessing of Vittoria leading us and leaving us in a strong position of confidence and giving us the ability to look ahead and build on everything she has developed with us with God's help.

As we move into an interregnum, everyone's contribution – financial or time based is essential and is welcome – it's all stewardship – it's all about managing resources. Everyone has a part to play in the future – we all need to ask God for help to determine what to do and then ask everyone to help make it possible.

Sue Burgess

Treasurer St Thomas

Weight

Signing the register at a wedding, the groom had difficulty in making his ball-point pen work. "Put your weight on it," said the vicar. So the groom complied: 'John Smith (twelve stone, four pounds)'

My Transition from Marine Engineer

It started with an illness which promised to sink my chosen marine engineering career, and, although I was not to know it at the time, it ended with my becoming a specialist international Human Resources Consultant .

In those days, the practical training of youth in the UK had much more emphasis than it has today. Universities took the top 10% of academically inclined school leavers, the rest followed apprenticeships and did any further studies in through technical colleges.

But it was also a time of change....at home the then Labour government introduced training legislation and set up Training Boards for each industry , enforced though levies on individual companies. Overseas, we were giving our commonwealth countries their independence only to find that their infrastructure and trade was controlled by Brits who had settled after World War II. Very few indigenous staff had qualifications or seniority.

For me the two developments became linked. At the time of my illness I'd been left behind in hospital in Newark, New Jersey with Rheumatoid Arthritis when my ship sailed without me. I was duly returned to the UK for convalescence. After some six months I was able to accept a local post as an Assistant Training Officer with the Mid Tyne Group Training Council. This was an eye opener of a post where I controlled the attachments of a wide range of engineering apprentices across firms in the group who ranged from Parsons turbines and shipyards to steel and cable manufacturing. As the new Training Boards grew I realised I needed to get more qualifications to succeed in this interesting new field, so returned to marine engineering to get my Chiefs Certificate.

It took some time though. This became my last voyage and it was nearly two years later before I started full time as a Trainer. To Jean's horror the promised shore job became an assignment in Nigeria to establish a skills training centre and my international career had become a reality.

Over the next few years I worked in both Zambia and Malawi, with a spell in Northern England setting up an engineering school for a large manufacturing company who built nuclear reactors. I then joined the London team of civil servants under the government's Chief Training Advisor supervising the new Industrial Training Boards. Novel being "the man from Head office" on lots of committees but not my scene. But I did learn a lot about supervisory, clerical and instructor training which proved crucial in later years.



*My first company plane
as Administrator (Lesotho)*

After a few more loosely related jobs... from managing a hospital equipment installation in Abu Dhabi and water supply training in Sumatra and the Philippines to an administrative role in a Lesotho road construction unit, my career path took me to the realm of international consulting engineers, where I specialised in studying the 2% of each international contract put aside by governments for the finding and training of indigenous staff.



*Water Supply HQ, Manila
(Philippines)*

This created a freelance role where, owing to Jean's disability I could pick and choose where and for whom I worked. It made for a precarious life with little or no continuity, but it worked for the final years of my employment, giving me broad experience on a number of major projects worldwide. By the time I retired my experiences had covered electricity and water supply, road airfield and dam construction, port supervision and plant maintenance. My marine background had proved it's worth.

Peter Sowrey

More about Cat



Home, sweet home!

But he's not happy about me working, follows me to the car. One morning he lay in the middle of the road. I thought, no please God he's not been hurt. I stopped the car and ran over to him- he half growled then ran off. He's fine, mad like me, I love my mad cat!

Helen



Where has she got to?

Victor Jordan 1936 - 2025.



Victor died on 27th April. Educated at Hereford School and St John's College, Cambridge, Victor spent most of his working life as a barrister in the Crown Prosecution Service, before retiring to his family home in Ballater. His connections on Upper Deeside ran deep; inter alia his great-grandfather had been Queen Victoria's Commissioner at Balmoral.

A member of St Kentigern's congregation for many years, and an authority on hymns, Victor chose the selection for Services over an extended period. He had a fine bass voice and was a member of the Aberdeen Choral Society, the Upper Deeside Churches Choir, the St Thomas's Choir, and took part in the various Songs of Praise Services held on Upper Deeside - most recently at Crathie Kirk.

Victor was a keen hill-walker, preferring to walk alone, and would often be seen on the Carn Leuchan track climbing up to the ridge on the Glen Tanar Estate above Ballater.

Singular in appearance and manner, Victor was a conservative in every sense of the word: in politics, in religion, and on social issues. Described by a friend as 'an Edwardian Gentleman' he was courteous and polite socially, but very firm in argument. Drawing on his legal knowledge he corresponded frequently and at length with those in power, from the Prime Minister down. A particular campaign he had pursued for years - with the National Park, the Council, and politicians various - was against the proposed Monaltrie Housing Development in Ballater.

Victor was a well known character in Ballater. In these last days it was heart-warming to find how his neighbours looked out for him, and cared about him, while respecting his determination to live independently.

Roger Searle

For Charity - Come and support rescuers of Coull Kirk! 28th June 7pm

Renowned story teller Rev'd Vittoria Hancock is helping save Coull Kirk, near Aboyne, Aberdeenshire. There has been a Kirk there since St. Nathalan brought Christianity to the Pictish Kingdoms in the 7th century. This beautiful gem has no electricity and is only used for a monthly service in the summer. It is being sold by the Church of Scotland and locals are raising funds to buy it for the Community. Vittoria is weaving her story telling skills on **Saturday 28th June at 7.00 p.m.** For more details contact secretary@coulltrust.org.uk



Coull church

Personnel

Death

Victor Jordan died in April 2025

Please pray for his family and friends at this time.

Baptism

Jamie Binns was baptised in St Thomas's on 27th April

Please pray for him and the family.



Jamie, one of our children at St Thomas's, is the son of Matthew and Janilyn Binns

Jill Binns is his proud grandmother.

The service took part in the last service that Vittoria took for us at St Thomas' - a tribute to her complete dedication to her ministry. And it made her last service even more special.

For Charity

No, this is not Mary Poppins! Vittoria wanted to make money for Alzheimer's, when a favourite aunt got the condition. So how did she choose to do it? Always ready for a bit of excitement, she did a charity trip by zip-wire! And she made a lot of money for a good cause.



WEB-SITES

St Thomas's Web-site has been transferred and upgraded. It has also been possible to return the photos in the Tattler to their original colour. The link is <http://www.stthomasaboyne.org>

If you want to get in touch, please email: stthomasaboyne@gmail.com or phone Tel No 07352 750090

St Kentigern's Web-site is: stkentigernsballater.aodiocese.org.uk

Some services are recorded at St Thomas's. The Youtube Link is: <https://www.youtube.com/@st.thomaschurchaboyne>

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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 Sabrina Humphrey
Tel 013398 85233

Prayer

"Devote yourselves to prayer,
being watchful and thankful."
Colossians Ch 4 v2

Anyone who would like to be prayed for especially, or has a friend who would like this, please get in touch

by phone **07352 750090** or email
upperdeesidechurches@gmail.com

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,
by July 15th

CONTACTS :

ST. KENTIGERN'S

Treasurer	Marcus Humphrey
Secretary	Sabine Muir
Lay Representative	Hilary Mutch
Vestry Members	Sabrina Humphrey
	Margaret Jaffray Ewen
	Sabine Muir
	Anne Richardson
	Susan Smith
	Stuart Wright
	Hilary Mutch
Sacristan	Stanley Ewen
Organist	Anne Richardson
Youth Leader	Anne Richardson
Child Protection Officer	Roger Searle. Marcus Humphrey, Susan Smith,
Chalice Bearers	Douglas Mutch, Sabine Muir

ST. THOMAS'S

Secretary	Anne Harper
Treasurer	Sue Burgess
Lay representative	Anne Harper
Vestry Members	Warren Burgess
	Sheila Maxwell
	Katherine Rider
	Carol Simmons
	Lesley Thomas
Organist and Publicity	Sheila Maxwell
Child Protection Officer	Lesley Thomas
Sacristans	Carol Simmons, Jo Elson, Lesley Thomas
Chalice Bearers	Warren Burgess, Peter Sowrey, Lara Elson
	Andrew Wilson, Sue Burgess
Flowers	Jill Binns
People's Warden	Warren Burgess
(Maintenance Officer)	
Patron	Michael Bruce

ST. NINIAN'S

For information, contact Diocesan Office tel [01224 662247](tel:01224662247)

Lay Eucharistic Ministers: Susan Smith, Sue Burgess