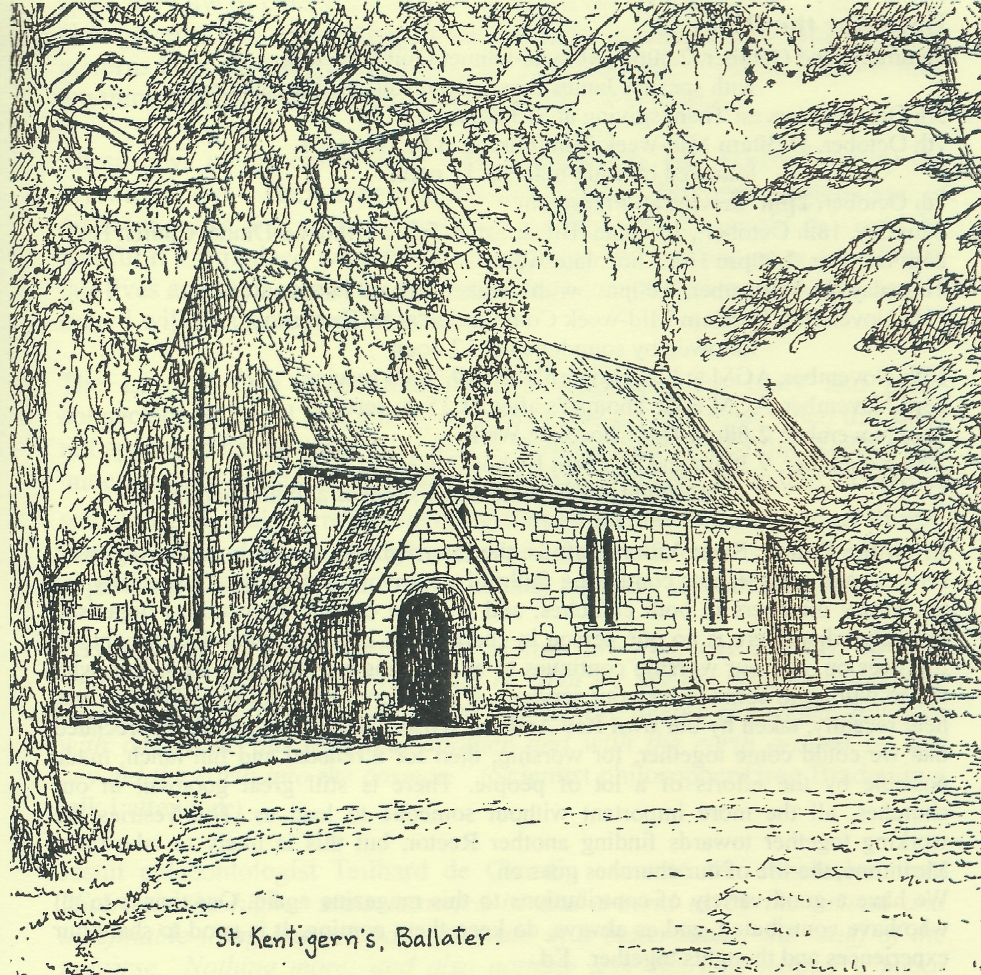


The Deeside Tattler

October and November 2025



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



Rector: Vacant

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Dates for the Diary

Saturday, 2nd October, 2.00pm Aboyne-Dinnet Guild meeting
with speaker James Fraser from Release International

5th October Harvest Thanksgiving at St Thomas's

7th October, **11.30am** Mid-week Communion at St Thomas's,
followed by soup lunch at 12 noon

7th October, **2pm** Service at Praesmohr

Saturday, 18th October:, 10.00am Breakfast & Talk at Aboyne-Dinnet Church Hall

26th October, **2.00pm** Hot Chocolate Walk

Thursday 6th November, 7.00pm, with speaker Donald Paterson

11th November, **11.30am** Mid-week Communion at St Thomas's,
followed by soup lunch at 12 noon

16th November, AGM at St Kentigern's after 9.30am service

23rd November, AGM at St Thomas's after 11.15am service

23rd November, **2.00pm** Hot Chocolate Walk

30th November, 9.30am and 11.15am Bishop Anne
presiding over Communion services at both churches.

From the Editor: Since Vittoria left us, the Interregnums is now in full swing, with services and other events continuing faithfully. It involves extra work especially for the Vestry members in both churches, and it is not easy to keep things organised properly when there is no one person in charge. But it is important that our church life goes on, and our worship continues to be meaningful, thanks to the clergy who are so willing to come to take our services. A joint service for our two churches was held recently, taken by our own Rev Andrew Wilson, and it was greatly appreciated that we could come together, for worship, then for a relaxed and fun lunch, made possible by the efforts of a lot of people. There is still great goodwill in our churches, all the more important without someone to lead us. The Vestries are working together towards finding another Rector, but this is likely to take time. Meantime, the life of our churches goes on.

We have a good variety of contributions to this magazine again. Our thanks to all who have contributed, and as always, do keep them coming. It is good to share our experiences and thoughts together. **Ed**

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Letter from Rev Ken Webb



Dear Friends,

The Law of One

In my sermons I have occasionally alluded to the way in which some passage of scripture illustrates the truth of one of three fundamental cosmic laws, the Law of One, the Law of Three and the Law of Seven. The Law of One governs how everything in our universe is related. The Law of Three governs how anything new is created. And the Law of Seven governs how anything that exists develops, evolves and is transformed.

These laws or principles were known intuitively and experienced by the mystics of old. They appear again and again in different religions and in different ways and with different languages. So I thought it would be helpful if I explained what these cosmic laws are and how they function in our lives and their relevance to what is happening in the world today. In this issue I will focus on the Law of One.

The Law of One states that there is an underlying unity and inter-connect- edness to all that exists, both seen and unseen, even when this does not ap- pear to be the case. And that is because there is a Divine Reality that under- lies and exists in everything that we perceive as matter. There is something eternal, there's something transcendental to the world of things, lives, souls, and minds. And the goal of human existence is quite simply to experience union with that Reality, ideally on every level of existence.

"As different as ancient wisdom traditions are from one another, they all share a very similar story. And that is "that we are the product of a living essence, an intelligent essence, and that we are deeply connected, not only with ourselves, but with one another and with the earth around us and be- yond the earth into the cosmos." (Scientist philosopher Greg Braden in a talk I attended.)

Jesuit palaeontologist Teilhard de Chardin came to the conclusion that, *"Spirit is the higher state assumed in and around us by the primal and in- definable thing that we call, for want of a better name, the 'stuff of the uni- verse.' Nothing more; and also nothing less. Spirit is neither a meta-phe- nomenon (something that exists along side but is separate from the physic- al, nor an epi-phenomenon, (that is a bi-product of physical processes); it is the phenomenon."*¹

These days increasing numbers of scientists are finally coming to the conclusion that what the ancient wisdom traditions knew experientially to be true is actually the case. There is increasing evidence across multiple scientific disciplines that points to the fact that everything, including us humans, have emerged from a deeper consciousness. We are inseparable, not only from each other and all living beings, but also from the whole universe that is a multidimensional living and conscious entity. We live in a cosmic web of life which underlies and connects all life forms in our universe. Every atom of life interacts with every other atom. None of us is truly separate from others and, indeed, from anything.

Unfortunately, most people and most politicians cannot see the underlying reality in which we live and move and have our being because it demands a level of consciousness that is higher than that of ordinary everyday waking consciousness. Most see only separation. Hence we live in a divided world. Cosmologist Jude Currivan², in an interview I heard, said, *"We need to heal the great separations that have existed in our being, and between different tribes, peoples and nations and between humanity and the rest of nature. We are integrating heaven and earth, masculine and feminine within each of us to birth the divine child."*

That same creation process that formed the universe, and our planet, with all its incredibly beautiful and diverse life forms, is also the process that brought each of us, individually, into being. We are all made of stardust! Starting with undifferentiated cells, full of potential, a body with unique features grew in a womb and a person with a unique potential for being a creative force in life was born,

Becoming whole is a process of integration. It will take us on a journey during which, like Odysseus, in Homer's Odyssey, we have to overcome various challenges before coming home to our True Self. We then have to learn to live from that centre, a centre that is simply resting in awareness. Even if we have had some profound experience of being united with the One (the name for God in all the languages of the ancient Near East), we don't experience that state all the time. So, this is where we have to live by faith and not by sight.

Ken Webb

1 Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Spirituality*, p.93-94

2 Author of 'Cosmic Hologram'

Forthcoming events:

*There will be a service at Praesmohr on 7th October. Anyone is welcome to go along and give your support.

*At St Thomas's, there will be mid-week Communion at 11.30am and soup lunches at 12 noon, on 7th October and 11th November. Everyone is welcome to come to one or both of these, and join in the fellowship.

*Sue is running further Hot Chocolate Walks for members of both churches at 2pm on 26th October and 23rd November. Venues will be advertised later. Do join her in a gentle and companionable stroll through the lovely countryside.

Joint service, St Thomas's and St Kentigern's

On Sunday 31st August we had a joint service at St Thomas, led by Rev. Andrew Wilson, whose reflection was both thought-provoking and very entertaining. The service was very well attended, with people from both churches enjoying a Bring and Share lunch afterwards. Here are some photos of the event.



The Nicene Creed, for the 1700th Anniversary

This glorious statement of the Christian faith, the Nicene Creed, has been passed down through the centuries and will be on the lips of hundreds of millions of worshippers across the world this morning.

The Nicene Creed helps us to express what Christians believe. It declares our faith in the God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It speaks afresh to us of the Good News of Jesus Christ, who came into the world to save us, and it helps prepare us for that day, when our voices will unite in joyful song, and praise forever the Lamb upon the throne.

You might ask, why do creeds matter? Creeds have been used since the dawn of church history and they have been used for teaching, in preparation for baptisms and they are used in communal worship as part of church liturgy. Creeds are relevant particularly today in our modern world where people are looking for substantial truth and stability.

The intent of the creed was not to invent a new doctrine, rather it was to reaffirm and clarify the Apostolic faith of the church. It was responding to a heresy by a priest called Arius from Alexandria. In the early 4th century, Arius claimed that although he held JESUS in high regard, he believed that Jesus was only a semi-divine being. At the order of Constantine, 318 bishops gathered in Nicaea in 325 to rearticulate the Christian faith that GOD is 3 persons - Father, Son and Holy Spirit-all wholly God.

In other words, the purpose in developing the Creed was to give expression to the understanding of God as TRINITY. This means that Christians believe in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This was established as the Orthodox Christian belief.

After 325, the creed was modified in 381 which expanded the description of the Holy Spirit. This is the creed as we know it today. Some of the modifications were not accepted by all churches but it is the only authoritative ecumenical statement of faith of the Christian faith accepted by the Catholic Church, the Eastern Orthodox Church, Oriental orthodoxy, the Church of the East and much of the Protestant Church including the Anglican Communion.

Of course, the Nicene Creed doesn't really begin in Nicaea. It begins with Jesus. What happened at the Council of Nicaea was the culmination of three hundred years of Christian thinking and praying, responding to the astonishing Christ Event, the dramatic revelation of who God really is, that was given to the very first Christians in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It was Jesus, opening his arms wide for us on the cross that showed us what God was like. Our reading from Matthew in the story of Jesus' baptism, is where we get a glimpse of God as the Holy Trinity.

So, I think it is worth pausing to consider how astonishing this anniversary is. The Nicene Creed has summarized, expressed and opened out the heart of our shared Christian faith for seventeen centuries! It has persisted through wars and revolutions, through changes in dynasty, the birth and development of languages, the rise and fall of Empires. It has even survived the tragic divisions of Christendom.

For even as churches and nations battled each other over different understanding of church order, of scripture and sacrament, they still held this creed in common.

It was adopted because it eloquently sums up the core of Christianity and it has been a unifying point for Christians since 325, 1700 years ago.

Susan Smith *(A Talk given by Susan at Morning Worship)*

Events at Coull Church



There have been several recent events in the lovely Coull church, a little off the road between Aboyne and Tarland. This church belongs to the Church of Scotland, who are now selling it. The local group, Cromer Future Group, are determined that this church will not be lost to the community, with its opportunities for worship together, as well as other events, like the recent story-tellings. They are therefore working to buy the church, and have been told that the Church of Scotland is willing to sell it to them, if the funds can be found. Hence a series of events to raise the money, and in doing so, providing some very lovely experiences for all who wish to come.

Sunday 14th September: Rev Ken Webb presided over a Christian Taize, chanting first developed in France. This was a time for quiet meditation in a beautiful setting, and it was enjoyable and calming.. Ken started by encouraging us all just to pause, breathe slowly, and become aware of the divine presence among us. There followed a series of short readings, each on the theme of one of a series of Taize chants that were handed out to everyone. They are short and simple, musically perfect, and they were played over and over again, so that the music, and the words, could sink into our consciousness in a very peaceful way.

We were invited to sing along, the words were given in Latin and in English, the music in four parts, choose which part you want to sing! Probably most of us just sang the tune. They were all very simple to sing, though the only one I was familiar with was 'O Lord hear my prayer'. I seem to remember we once sang that as a chant at St Thomas's. Indeed, it is something that could easily be incorporated into a suitable service in church.

Our thanks to Ken for introducing this and leading us through a meaningful experience.



The Doors Open weekend was very popular, with people coming from near and far to see the Kirk. Over 40 people visited during the two days, and the storytelling by volunteer Joan Anderson from Ballater was much enjoyed as she explained the role of St. Nathalan in bringing Christianity to the surrounding area according to local legends. Several visitors who could not make Ken Webb's session, have commented on how much they would like to see "well-being" events at the Church, non-denominational and perhaps nature themed given the lovely surroundings.

Future plans include a short Remembrance service. And the final service run by Tarland Church will take place around Christmas. Details later.

PASSAGE ALONG THE ELBE, April-May 2025. Part Two



Martin Luther

The cruise along the Elbe continued with a walking tour of Wittenberg. The Reformation started here on October 31, 1517, when Martin Luther nailed his famous 95 Theses to the wooden doors of the castle church. The doors were destroyed in a fire in 1760 and the church was seriously damaged again in 1813. The church has been restored, and the bronze doors of 1858 bear the latin text of Luther's theses.



Castle Church, Wittenberg

After lunch on the ship, we set sail for Magdeberg, arriving there early the following morning. First mentioned in 805 as a small trading settlement, it became important under Otto the Great, who founded the Benedictine Abbey of Saints Peter, Maurice, and Innocent. Burned down in 1188, Magdeberg became a flourishing commercial centre in the 13C and was a leading member of the Hanseatic League. In that century it also established an autonomous municipal administration, Magdeburger Recht (Magdeberg Law) that later was widely adopted throughout eastern Europe. The city is situated at a natural cross-roads on the Elbe, at the junction of several major railway lines and arterial highways, and is linked to the Rhine river by the Mittelland Canal and with Berlin and the lower Oder river by another system of canals. Today it is a centre of food processing, particularly sugar refining and flour milling, and of metalwork and heavy engineering.



Bridge of Spies

On our final morning we sailed from there to Berlin, and on our way passed under the famous "Bridge of Spies" at Glienecke where prisoners were exchanged between the Russians and the Americans during the cold war.

We were taken to Frederick the Great's

hugely expensive yet magnificent folly, the Sanssouci Palace at Potsdam. It was his bolt-hole where he could relax with his dogs, and was built between 1745 and 1747 by Goerge Wenzeslaus von Knobelsdorf according to the King's ideas and sketches. The inside of the palace has been completely renovated and we were able to view the rooms which are still originally furnished, and which exhibit masterpieces by Watteau, Panini and Pesne.



Sanssouci Palace

This was the only occasion when it rained, as on the rest of the trip we enjoyed unbroken warm sunshine, and I would counsel anyone thinking of going on a river cruise to go early in the year, otherwise there might not be enough water to keep the ships afloat, even in the Danube.

Marcus Humphrey
July 2025

Morning Worship - the Potter's Clay

On Sunday 7th September we had our Morning Services in both churches, led by Sabine and Susan from St Kentigern's. The theme was



The Potter and the Clay, and everyone was given a



piece of playdoh to create a pot or cup. It was fun to see all the creations at the end of the service, when the 'clay' vessels were collected in and put on display.

The children were given a lump of salt dough, out of which they could create an image of themselves or an animal. Connie made a beautiful owl, which she took home to bake and paint.

Susan did a very interesting talk about the 1700th anniversary of the Nicene Creed. This is being marked with several events, locally and nationally, emphasising the importance of this well-known creed.

Sabine Muir

Ballater Victoria Week

St Kentigern's had their annual Afternoon Tea on the 12th August, as part of the Ballater Victoria Week celebrations. It was attended by locals and visitors. Two ladies from New Hampshire said they really enjoyed their visit and the lovely cakes.



We took part in the annual scarecrow competition. Our entry was Joseph and his coat of many colours. He sat in the porch for the duration of Victoria Week.

We're already thinking about next year's entry so any suggestions and help making it are very welcome.

News from Aboyne-Dinnet

All meetings will be in the Church Hall on Huntly Road

Community Life Group:

Saturday, 18th October:, 10.00am Breakfast & Talk We will have a speaker from the Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF). Chris Smith will give us an inspiring insight from some of the world's most challenging places under the heading: HELP. HOPE. HEALING

The breakfast will start at 10am and once we have eaten, our speaker will start his presentation. Tickets are still £5 but need to be booked in advance. Please call Christa on 01339886562 or send an email christa.markham@btinternet.com



The Guild is having a couple of interesting talks as well:

Saturday, 2nd October, 2.00pm James Fraser from Release International will speak about Operation Hope, a project to help Christian communities in Upper Egypt who face poverty and discrimination. Entry by donation.

Thursday 6th November, 7.00pm Donald Paterson will give us a tour of "the St Kilda archipelago - remote, uninhabited but not forgotten!" Entry by donation.

Saturday, 27th November, 10am - 12noon, the two groups join forces and invite the public to come to their annual **Christmas Bazaar and Coffee Morning**.

Mystery music

A friend of mine, a professional organist, was asked to play for a wedding. Unfamiliar with the church's organ, she went to the sanctuary to practise. Curious about a small keyboard that slid out from under the two regular keyboards, she tapped out a couple of bars of a simple tune but heard nothing. Then she played a few more notes, but still no organ music.

Just then a man came running into the church, shouting, "Who's playing 'Three Blind Mice' on the church-steeple bells?" She had been operating the carillon.

Permission

Extract from an official letter notifying residents of a new boundary road: "It is hoped to take the new by-pass through the old cemetery, provided we can get permission from the various bodies concerned."

An Evening of Praise



As part of the Deeside Festival, St Thomas's held an Evening of Praise on Sunday 17th August.

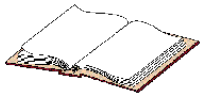
On a magnificent summer evening, the well filled church was treated to an expertly woven tapestry of music and word to bring us much joy.

The programme was inspired, and brought together well known hymns, new and familiar choir anthems sung by the Augmented Choir and conducted by Lucy Bailey, vocal solos (Joyce Wintour and Lucy Bailey with David Fletcher on piano) and an instrumental performance (treble recorder, violin and bassoon) playing Telemann, with readings both secular and biblical (read by Margaret Heald and Irene Legge). The mixture of well known and new pieces wove together a perfect tableau of Praise.

Among the evening's varied works was a moving piece - Magnificat - words by our recently departed Rector Vittoria, and music by our organist Sheila Maxwell. How lovely for us all to have a reminder of Vittoria on this evening and to hear her hymn of Praise sung so meaningfully by the choir.

This splendid Evening of Praise was ended by delicious canapés and wine being served to us all.

Our thanks to everyone who made this such a successful evening.
Carol Birss



Readings for October and November 2025

5th October Trinity 16	Habakkuk 1.1-4; 2. 2 Timothy 1. 1-14 Luke 17. 5-10	Susan Smith	Sue and Warren Burgess
12th October Trinity 17	2 Kings 5.1-3, 7-15 2 Timothy 2.8-15 Luke 17. 11-19	Hilary Mutch	Irene Legge
19th October Trinity 18	Genesis 32. 22-31 2 Timothy 3.14. 4.5 Luke 18. 1-8	Maggie Jaffray Ewen	Chris and Margaret Heald
26th October Trinity 19	Jeremiah 14. 7-10, 19-22 2 Timothy 4. 6-8, 10-18 Luke 18. 9-14	Stanley Ewen	Jill Binns
2nd November Trinity 20	Daniel 7.1-3, 15-18 Ephesians 1.11-23 Luke 6. 20-31	Sabine Muir	Rider Family
9th November Trinity 21	REMEMBRANCE	<i>No service</i>	<i>No service</i>
16th November Trinity 22	Malachi 4. 1-2a 2 Thessalonians 3. 6-13 Luke 21.5-19	Marcus Humphre	Carol Birss
23rd November Christ the King	Jeremiah 23. 1-6 Colossians 1.11-20 Luke 23. 33-43	Hilary Mutch	Isabel Wilson
30th November ADVENT SUNDAY	Isaiah 2. 1-5 Romans 13. 11-14 Matthew 24 .36-44	Sabrina Humphrey	Meg White

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.

Day Dream by Arthur S J Tessimond

One day people will touch and talk perhaps easily,
And loving be natural as breathing and warm as sunlight,
And people will untie themselves, as string is unknotted,
Unfold and yawn and stretch and spread their fingers,
Unfurl, uncurl like seaweed returned to the sea,
And work will be simple and swift as a seagull flying,
And play will be casual and quiet as a seagull settling,
And the clocks will stop, and no-one will wonder
or care or notice,
And people will smile without reason,
Even in winter, even in the rain.

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:

5th October The Bread of Life
(led by St Thomas's)

2nd November Your reward in heaven
(led by St Kentigern's)



From the Bible for the young and not so young Jesus' Ministry of Preaching and Healing

Jesus was brought up in Nazareth, where His father Joseph was a carpenter, but He left there after the start of His ministry, when He announced that the Kingdom of God had arrived, and the congregation turned against Him. So He went on to Capernaum, some distance away, and was teaching in the synagogue there when a man with an 'unclean spirit' shouted out. Jesus took pity on him and cleansed him of the

spirit.

It was different here, the people were amazed that he should command the spirit to come out with such authority, and the word went round the district, so that everyone knew of this extraordinary man, and what He could do. So they brought all sorts of sick and disabled people for Him to heal, until He felt the need to go to a lonely place to pray. The people followed Him, wanting Him to stay with them, but He said He had to go to more places to preach the Kingdom of God, and so His travels went on.

One day He was teaching with Pharisees and lawyers sitting by, when some men came along with a friend who was paralysed. They knew that Jesus could help them, but could not get near for all the people round about. And they were so desperate, and so sure that Jesus could heal him, that they made a hole in the roof, took the man up, and let him down with ropes right in front of Jesus!

He was of course astonished, but Jesus saw their great faith, and said to their friend 'Your sins are forgiven'. The Pharisees protested, they said that only God can forgive sins, but Jesus stood up to them. He asked if it was easier to say 'your sins are forgiven', or 'Rise up and walk'. Then He turned to the man, and said 'Rise, take up your bed, and go home'. And the man did just that, he got off the bed, picked it up, and went home - glorifying God. And all the people were filled with awe and also glorified God. This was something they had never seen before!

And so the ministry of Jesus went on apace. He had chosen twelve men to be His disciples, and they went with Him. There were also a few women, whom Jesus had healed and cast out devils, and they ministered to Him. So Jesus was well supported along His travels. At this time, He was not the lonely figure we tend to picture, but a leader of a group of friends.

Jesus continued His travels through cities and villages, healing, and preaching the good news of the Kingdom of God. Crowds followed Him, though with increasing opposition from the Pharisees. They did not like the way Jesus did not keep to their rules, like not healing - or 'working' - on the Sabbath, or eating with unclean people like tax collectors, which Jesus saw as part of His ministry. The conflict grew, but that is another story.

Ghost of the Forest

We climb the hillside in the damp
Mist that clings to clothes and hair
Staring at the shadows that loom ahead
Stopping and breathing.

Listening
to the sounds carried on morning waves

We reach the plateau
And around

The fog blankets moor and wood
The breeze begins to rise
The earth stops to draw breath
As it hovers between night and day

And then with a sigh
The cloud lifts
Revealing tufted moor
Alive with sound
And in the distance
The flick of a white tail.

Vittoria Hancock



Peaceful Cat

It is summer-time, and Dinnet Cat
does like to lie peacefully outside.

Still a great companion!

Life as an Apprentice Engineer with the Southern Whaling Fleet



“HVALBLÅST! ... HVALBLÅST!”, the cry rings from the masthead above. The deck beneath my feet starts to vibrate. At my side an engineer spins the wheel, and the open-crankcases triple expansion steam engine commences its rhythmic pounding. There is a smell of hot oil, sea air and steam. I wedge myself against the ship's side as it heels over in a fast turn; footsteps clatter overhead; there are sounds of frenzied activity. The engine telegraph rings, and the engineer spins another valve wheel bringing the engine to a stop. There is an uncanny silence, only broken by the regular whooshing of a Weir feed pump. In the background I can hear the “ping, ping” of the ASDIC sounder, an early type of sonar, and time seems to stand still.

“BOOM”. The whole ship shaking to its very rivets and the engine goes into “Full Astern” as we take the strain on our sprung mast. A winch grinds; we have a whale on the line! One hundred and twenty tons of living creature is now fighting for its life, and within twenty minutes it has drowned.

It is March 1957, the end of the austral summer, and I am in the Antarctic Ocean (now formally known as the Southern Ocean) on board the 500-ton whale-catcher “Southern Archer”, part of a thousand-man, 15-vessel whaling expedition. Our vocation, whatever our trade, is whaling – the killing of the world's largest creatures for their meat, blubber, and by-products to make soap, margarine, animal feed and fertilizers for a hungry and greedy world. The thousand-odd men cover many trades and professions – from helicopter pilots to cabin boys; from grizzly Norwegian gunners who sail the whale-catchers, to flensers, those skilled in the butchery work of giants; from Master Mariners who know these ice-filled seas like the backs of their hands, to engineers who run the ship and its intricate machinery; blacksmiths and electricians, boilermakers and carpenters, radio officers and ASDIC sonar ratings, sailors and cooks, chemists and scientists, doctors and government inspectors. They are all there to operate and run, control and support, the largest pelagic hunting expeditions known to man. Their combined experience is prodigious, and being fairly new to the game as a young apprentice engineering cadet, I feel I am in reasonably safe hands.

Some two weeks previously, I had been lowered over the side of the mother factory ship in a basket by a bosun controlling a winch, onto a smaller catcher boat. With an average

sea running, the two ships, separated only by a dead whale as a fender, moved up and down 40-feet every few seconds. No fairground ride could ever match the feeling of being lifted 25-feet above the deck – swung out over the sea, a mere 60-feet below, and then dropped with perfect timing to land on the whale-catcher below as it rose on the rolling swell. The vessel that had been my home for several months was the floating factory ship “Southern Venturer”, and to me, she was the ugliest vessel imaginable. At over 900-feet long, 120-feet wide and standing over 130-feet above the waterline, she was the size of the (first) “Queen Elizabeth” passenger liner, albeit with a hole in her stern enormous enough to fit a large whale through. Her bows and hull were specially reinforced against ice, and with a helicopter hanger on top of her aft-superstructure to house the ship's two Sikorsky S-65 helicopters.

Packed inside, on top of the oil storage tanks, was a complete whale-processing factory two decks high, running almost the entire length of the ship, and equipped with giant pressure cookers for rendering-down blubber, conveyors, grinders, oil separators and control stations, with hardly an inch to spare. Deep within her bowels and under the after-accommodation



block were the main engine and boiler rooms housing two giant triple-expansion steam engines for propulsion, and sixteen Scotch marine boilers for steam-raising. Her power plant could run a small city and her evaporators generated 600-tons of freshwater daily. Above these was a ramp by which whale carcasses were hauled to the main deck for processing known as “Hell's Gates”, and over the centre block was a 500-ton winch to pull these massive creatures out of the water. Accommodation for the nearly four-hundred-member crew was in two tower blocks situated at each end. I shared a tiny cabin just below the helicopter pad and above the great slipway – right in the middle of all the noisiest action. But, as we worked 12-hours on and 12-hours off, seven days a week, I was usually too tired to notice. And this went on until nearly 2000 baleen whales have been destroyed and the season is over.

Thank God it is all in the past, and sanity and conservation now prevail!

But I was there, amongst those men who followed the toughest, roughest and most dangerous vocation known to man. For a while I was the highest-paid cadet at sea, with over 500-hours overtime made in three months; earning over £240 during my six-months at sea, a huge sum of money to a young lad in 1957. Today, all I have to show for it is my Rolex watch, bought with the proceeds of my first voyage, and my precious memories of an industry that has, with the exception of so-called ‘scientific whaling’, ceased to be. Reflecting back, I am proud to have been a Whaler – to have sailed amongst the last of the few – to have eaten salt pork and beef from the barrel – and to have experienced the company of those amazing individuals, Norwegian and British alike, whose combined trades and professions made up that unusual vocation of whaling.

Peter Sowrey

Choir Memories



Back in 1950 when I was in Secondary 2 at Alford school we were given a singing teacher by the name of Mrs. Isabella Cowe. She had the idea that perhaps she could form a choir together with the senior classes for those of us who could sing, and then we could take part in Aberdeen at the Music Hall and compete with other schools.

However, we would have to practise on a Saturday morning. Now I lived just over twenty-two miles away in Strathdon, but did that bother me, no way! I could get up and bike down to the eight o'clock bus, like I did on school days, and come home on the lunchtime bus. My dear long time friend, Frances, had joined as well and she got on the bus near Kildrummy Castle so it was good fun and enjoyable.

The two songs that we had to learn was Handel's "Where'er You Walk" and Schubert's "To Music". Well, we practised very hard all those Saturday mornings, and as the day grew near, we had to decide what we were going to wear. Now in those days we did not have a school uniform, so someone suggested kilts, white blouses/shirts and tartan ties. We all managed to get kitted out by borrowing what was needed if we didn't own it ourselves and off we set for Aberdeen early in the morning. I remember I had to stay overnight with Mrs. Cowe so I could make the bus leaving from Alford.

We arrived safely just outside His Majesty's and walked through to the Music Hall where lots of boys and girls were waiting to take part in the choir competition. I don't know who played for us up on the stage, but Mrs Cowe conducted us, then the waiting to see how we fared and gosh, we were first in our section! So outside we had to go and have our photograph taken, such excitement and hilarity on the way home.

Several days later we were told that the BBC had requested our presence at their studios off Midstocket Road for an audition. So eventually we all turned up one day dressed in kilts and were showed into the sound proof studio. Then the voice of Herbert Wiseman, spoke over on a microphone, welcomed us and asked us to sing our two songs, which we did. We were thanked and asked us to leave, but no one saw us all dressed up, a bit strange, but it was an experience.

Eventually the BBC wrote saying they would ask us back when we got more of a repertoire. We did take part in the school's competition the following year, but alas no firsts this time.

I must apologise for not naming all in the photograph, but I cannot recall all their names so if anyone recognises themselves, please let me know.

The Alford Senior Choir was the very first one I joined, and I have taken part in WRI ones and the Strathdon Singers, but my favourite one is St.Thomas's Augmented Choir, who looked after me until my singing voice gave up on me.

Eileen A. Davies (Simon)

Everything I need to know about life I learned from Noah's Ark

1. Don't miss the boat
2. Remember we are all in the same boat
3. Plan ahead - it wasn't raining when Noah built the boat
4. For safety's sake, travel in pairs
5. Speed isn't always an advantage. the snails were on board with the cheetahs
6. Remember the Ark was built by amateurs; the Titanic was by professionals
7. No matter the storm, when you are with God, there's always a rainbow



.I take it our local supermarket has a rather good offer on tinned peas at the moment!

Lych Gate Notice Board

The sign by the lych gate has been completely overhauled!

Aboyne Men's Shed were commissioned to renovate the sign, and they removed it to the Shed to carry out the work. On examination it was found that the wood had deteriorated beyond repair. Only the triangular piece with St Thomas' Church and the door were recoverable. So a completely new sign was manufactured, incorporating the two pieces saved.

The 'new' sign was installed by Alan Thomas, Derek and Colin on 12th September.

We are very grateful to Alan and Aboyne Men's Shed. Their work and skill has restored to us a part of the St Thomas's 'furniture' which has been an integral part of the scene here for a long time, and it is lovely to have it restored.

If you look carefully at the original sign, you can see the lettering from the time of Rev Chris Hughes, very many years ago now. A part of the history of St Thomas's!

Thank you, Alan, Thomas and Colin, we are enormously grateful.

Sheila



Original sign showing deterioration



After renovation

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If you understand it...

When you get to the point where you really understand your computer, it's probably obsolete.

Personnel

Deaths

Kit Chambers died in September

Please pray for Julia and the family

Wedding

Gage Hands and Silvia were married in St Thomas's in September

Please pray for this couple in their future life together

Congratulations

Vittoria Hancock, who finally left us at the end of May, has been appointed Rector for All Saints, Lockerbie, and St John's, Moffat, to be installed on 14th October. This is a part-time appointment, which she says will leave time for all the many other things she wants to do in her life. In announcing her appointment, Bishop Nick says 'Vittoria brings experience and a passion for mission. I very much look forward to working with her as a colleague.' Vittoria says 'I wait with eager anticipation to see where God may lead us.' And may He lead them into the sort of happy and fruitful time that we enjoyed for eleven years! Congratulations and all best wishes for this next adventure.



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Hot Chocolate Walk - August

Although we were small in numbers for this month's walk we had a delightful walk and good chat over our drinks and snacks.



Our walk led by Sue was a walk around Loch Ullachie on the south Deeside Road from Ballater to Crathie.

Although so near Ballater it was an unknown walk for us so a wonderful surprise to find this tranquil and pretty loch. Water lilies were in plentiful supply and families of ducks were to be seen.

This normally quiet spot was unusually busy on Sunday as a large number of biologist were using canoes on the loch to survey some rare sub aqua plants!



Do please think of joining us on our next walk in September. The walks are not difficult and they give us a great opportunity to get to know each other and to enjoy our wonderful countryside.

Carol Birss

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



“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,
or to Sabine Muir at Ballater,
by November 18th

CONTACTS :

Treasurer
Secretary
Lay Representative
Vestry Members

Sacristan
Organist
Chalice Bearers

ST. KENTIGERN'S

Marcus Humphrey
Sabine Muir
Hilary Mutch
Sabrina Humphrey
Margaret Jaffray Ewen
Sabine Muir
Susan Smith
Stuart Wright
Hilary Mutch
Stanley Ewen
Roger Searle. Marcus Humphrey, Susan Smith,
Douglas Mutch, Sabine Muir

ST. THOMAS'S

Secretary
Treasurer
Lay representative
Vestry Members

Organist and Publicity
Child Protection Officer
Sacristans

Chalice Bearers

Flowers
People's Warden
(Maintenance Officer)
Patron

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
Warren Burgess, Peter Sowrey, Lara Elson
Andrew Wilson, Sue Burgess

Jill Binns
Warren Burgess
Michael Bruce

ST. NINIAN'S

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

Lay Eucharistic Ministers: Susan Smith, Sue Burgess