

Avoch Linked with Fortrose and Rosemarkie Church of Scotland

Quarterly Newsletter Issue 9 September 2021

When Samuel Morse sent his first 'electronic' message in 1844 using the words 'What hath God wrought?' he may just have been wondering if quicker forms of communication might be something of a mixed blessing.

We'll all have our own views on that! But there is no doubt, as Bob Moore explores in a pandemic reflection, that the Zoom platform allowed many of us to gather for worship when church buildings had to be closed.

Now that we have returned to a degree of normality, we have commemorated the 200th anniversary of the opening of the Rosemarkie church building while beginning to think about what 'church' might look like in the future, a discussion that is likely to preoccupy us in coming months.

Once again I am enormously grateful to everyone who has contributed to this expanded edition - so much material submitted that 25% of the December Newsletter is already in place.

That still leaves 75% to fill so please feel free to contribute articles or ideas for articles by Saturday 30 October via calum.macsween@btinternet.com

Many thanks

CM



**Tea Coffee Sugar Raisins
Sultanas Almonds Cashews
Honey Dates Chocolate
Coconut milk Olive Oil Soap
(from the Holy Land) Toilet
roll Gardening Gloves Cards**

Dear All

These are most of the items I sell for Traidcraft from my home. However, if you would like to see more you can go on to their website and look at the catalogue. Also I can lend you a catalogue if you would wish to browse through it. Then, if you fancy something, I can order it for you. You would receive your order about a week after I put the request in. I usually order at the beginning of a month.

Many thanks for your support

Linda 620433 or email simpsjo5@hotmail.com



**Bridget Houston and Anne Fiddes presenting
Jill Anderson (centre) with a card and
vouchers as a sincere thanks for 30 years - yes,
30 years! - cleaning of Rosemarkie Church.
Enjoy retirement, Jill!**



The Body of Christ – One Body Made Up of Different Parts

I was thinking recently about the church as the body of Christ. Paul says in 1 Corinthians: *12 Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. ... 14 Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.* As we move into the phase of life and church-life after the pandemic, we're conscious of the way that we need to draw on the resources of the whole church and the different members and the skills that they have as we look forward to the next stage of our existence.

Perhaps it was the reference to the foot in verse 15: *15 Now if the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body.*

Or it may have been all the sporting events of this summer including the Euros and now the Olympics after the drought of the pandemic but my thoughts turned somewhat back in time (and it really had to be back in time to the period when I was still playing football) and to my team at school. It may come as a surprise to some seeing my somewhat stiff aging posture, but I was active in sport in my teens and twenties. Having developed competence and confidence at badminton even by the time I was about twelve, I worked out one day on the football field, that if I applied the same skills to football that I'd developed at badminton, I could find my niche. My natural position was striker and so I worked out that I needed to focus on the goal area, be a little deceptive and a little unexpected but learn to hit the ball hard (in a controlled way) at the target and "play the percentages." To my surprise, with a bit of practice it actually worked. Good strikers have a predator's heart and my natural role was to be an "ambush hunter" – that worked well in my early teens but got harder as defence skills improved in senior teams!

What struck me looking back was the my football team was made up of classmates with very different skills but each was suited to the role they had: "A" was good in defence – not very heavy, but solid, canny, always holding his place, and tough in a challenge - really a quintessential defender; "N" the goalkeeper seemed to be "all hands" ... he had a real gift of putting his body in the way of the ball and his gloved hands seemed to be three times the size of mine and always used to very good purpose; "G" was a natural midfield player but had that added gift of always looking about ready to pass – he would keep an eye on the whole field in front of him and see ahead to dictate play and to give our side a real advantage; (later, when I saw expert players like Franz Beckenbauer (right), I realised the way that he played with his head always up looking around showed that "G" was an instinctive mid-fielder).



And then there was “R” the striker who went on to play professionally and become a serious goal-scorer. He would sweep down on the ball and pass through the opposition like a force of nature as if the ball were held to his feet by magnetic properties that the rest of us had failed to develop and would waft it into the net with remarkable regularity ... A football team is a body of people – a group with different skills and attributes, in some senses, they even use different parts of their own bodies, contributing in specific ways: the defender’s trunk and legs; the goalie’s hands; the midfielder’s head; the striker’s heart (focussed on “the kill”) as well as their feet ...

14 Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many. ... 19 If they were all one part, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, but one body. In the church, like other human collections of people, we should not expect to have the same gifts - the body needs to have many parts. If the whole church were doing what “the minister” does – who’d be getting the building ready and putting the heating on for services? Who would be keeping the website up to date? Who’d be playing the organ and other musical instruments? Who’d be working with children and young people? Who’d be organizing the finances and putting in returns to the Church of Scotland at 121 George Street in Edinburgh? Who’d be looking after the building? Who’d be planning outreach to the whole community and so on?

8 But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. That’s true of the human body – and it’s true of the body of Christ. In other words, the capacity of the church to make a difference in the world around it doesn’t reside in one person. Rather, it is a function of the community as whole organism doing its work by each member playing its part. We can learn lessons from a football team that illustrates these functions – we can learn to cultivate it in our own church life.

21 The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!” No part of the body of Christ can say: “I don’t need you.” We have to reflect that in the way we function as a church community - we have to recognize our dependency on a range of gifts. As Paul says: *27 Now, you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.*

Ask the Minister - Reminder

Do you have a Biblical or theological question that you would like answered?

Most of us do!

The minister has kindly agreed to respond to congregational questions in a new column that will run in every second newsletter. Please contact Warren directly with the queries you would like answered.

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Jennifer Pearks 1946 – 2021

Losing someone, someone as beautiful, and vibrant, and energetic, and youthful as Jennifer; a wife, soul mate, mother, grandmother, mother-in-law, sister, friend, office-bearer, elder, good sport, active member of our community, a unique human being leaves your inner world shaken and clouded. The words of Rev Sam Torrens at Jennifer's funeral perfectly sum up the feelings of sadness and shock of many when they heard of Jennifer's sudden illness and passing on May 1st. She is missed by so many.



Jennifer was born on 11 November 1946 in East Ardsley, Yorkshire, the youngest of three, and grew up in Rothwell. Her dad, Alec, was a significant influence, her guiding light and the spark that ignited a lifelong love of amateur dramatics.

Following a happy childhood and fond memories of Rothwell Grammar School, just short of her 17th birthday, Jennifer met Allan Pearks at his 20th birthday party. Romance blossomed, engagement followed, leading to marriage at Rothwell Parish Church in September 1966 and a first home together (cost £2200) in West Ardsley.

Emigration to Canada was considered but family and friends were no doubt relieved when Allan and Jennifer opted for a new home, first in nearby Overton and then in Nether Poppleton. Son David arrived in 1969, followed by Catherine in 1971 and Rebecca in 1984. By that time, the family had moved north, first to Scorguie, Inverness and then to 'Eddirdail', Ness Road East as Allan took up a new post as a contracts manager with John G MacGregor Ltd in Inverness..

Jennifer's love of amateur dramatics flourished with the Poppleton Players, the Florians in Inverness, culminating in being a founder member of the fondly remembered Black Isle Theatre Club. At the same time, her partnerships with Allan moved to a new level when they became joint director-shareholders of their new company, Black Isle Construction Ltd, in 1982 which they ran successfully until retirement in 2005.

Jennifer and Allan also shared a love of travelling, experiencing new places, exploring cultural and historical sites. Retirement provided endless opportunities and generated a myriad of happy memories.

But it is as a wife, mother and grandmother that Jennifer will be most fondly remembered and most sorely missed, sentiments captured beautifully in these words by David as part of the family eulogy:

Mum had boundless time and energy for the whole family, but particularly for her children and grandchildren. She created warmth, peace, love and laughter. The strong family bond she embedded is her legacy; providing us with support and allowing us to find comfort in each other.

Mum guided us all and was amazing at giving advice in just the right way. She was always interested and wanted to listen if we needed help. Above all, mum's greatest love was for our Dad, Allan. She was completely devoted to him and they loved each other more and more with every day that passed. Theirs was a very special marriage.

Jennifer's church family also grieve our loss of someone who contributed so much in such a diversity of roles, member: elder, reader, door welcomer, performer of short dramatic pieces, supporter of youth initiatives.

Rev Sam's prayer of thanks at Jennifer's funeral is also ours.

Loving heavenly father, we want to thank you for Jennifer.

For all that she was as soulmate, companion and wife to Allan, for all the memories they made together; for the way they met; for the love that blossomed; for the life they've shared; the places they've been; the team they became; blended characteristics and personalities that overflowed into each other to shape who they are. For the 50 plus years of togetherness that blessed their lives....we give you thanks.

For all she was as a mother to David, Catherine, Rebecca,.....for the ease with which she invested herself in their upbringing; for the many family events that gave her satisfaction and joy; for the birthdays; the shows; the sleepovers; the prize days; holidays; the graduations; the weddings, Catherine, Bobby, Findlay; the baptisms of Stuart and Calum, Hannah and Daniel, Ruaridh, Kirstie and Gregor, all the celebrations and anniversaries. For all that sparkled within her rich family, we give you thanks.

We give thanks for the wider family here gathered and beyond this building and pray that in sharing their memories of Jennifer as a sister, sister in law, aunt, they will be comforted and be a comfort to others.

We give you thanks for the person she was, as a woman of faith; for the joy she brought to our church; for the friends she blessed; the warmth she generated; the silent prayers offered for those near and far; for the contributions she made to Trekkers; Holiday Clubs; Oasis youth group; all age worship; for the gift of a cheerful smile so freely given; for her willingness to serve as elder and Session Clerk, taking her service seriously but not so much herself, as exemplified in one memorable Advent Sunday she acted Mary the mother of our lord trying to explain to the whole church how exactly she fell pregnant!

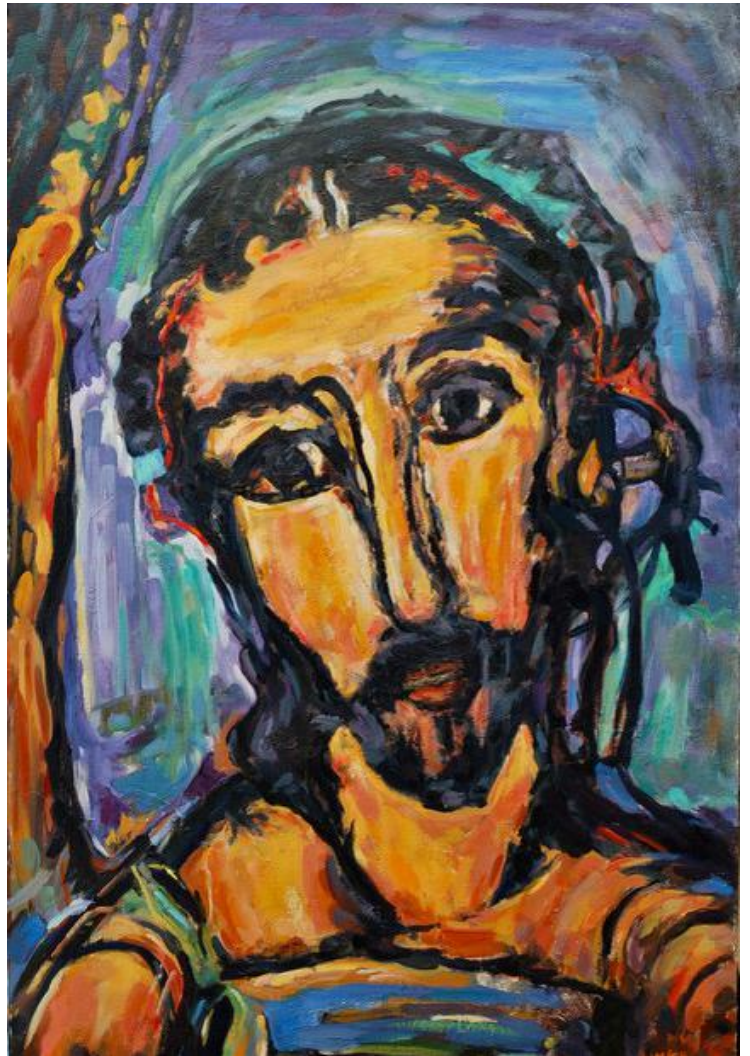
Thank you for that dramatic talent, on stage with the black isle theatre club, in church with sketches and monologues, or at large at St Boniface Fair.....we thank you for all that she was within community.

Amidst the pain of parting, we ask for the grace to trust you until we meet again through Jesus Christ our Lord Amen

A Profound Experience of Compassion

Ever tried meditating on the face of Jesus? Well one way is to try and paint it! This was an idea that emerged almost by chance last year. It was lock-down and I was encouraged to copy a painting that I loved.

What a challenge! There are so many amazing paintings by wonderful artists: Monet, Van Gogh, Toulouse Lautrec, Cezanne, Whistler, Turner, Constable – to mention just a few. But I've always loved the work of Georges Rouault and his painting "Head of Christ (The Passion)" 1938. The original is now in the Cleveland Museum of Art and is big – almost 4ftX3ft or 105X75cm. I had a large canvas about the same size and thought – 'Let's go for it!'



Partly this was an opportunity to learn about particular ways of using paint by a great French master. Partly it was trying to experience something of the spiritual in art. Rouault was a Christian who painted many biblical scenes and whose faith found artistic expression in a passion for the poor, the fugitive and the clown.

I was doing so as a member of the Redcastle Art Group, under our tutor Jonathan Shearer. All 12 of us in the group chose different paintings to study and copy. I can only say it was very powerful studying this remarkable image of compassion, sorrow and pain. At the same time it is imbued with resurrection hope, transcending the imminence of crucifixion.

To the right of Jesus' head there is a rough impression of a tree, symbolising the cross. His hair is twisted and torn suggesting the crown of thorns and there are impressions of red blood in his hair, forehead and running down the right of his head. The background is dark, suggesting the sin of the world but all the focus is on his face, radiating the promises of forgiveness, new life and freedom for all. The white of the eyes are exaggerated to express the pain and tears he is experiencing for all of us.

Rouault has used all his artistic expressionist experience to use colour bravely and carve out the terrific bold shapes of beard, hair and shadows around the face. Like Rembrandt's painting of the Prodigal Son this is a work that you can look at and look at and look at – and still find it speaking to you. Trying to paint it is just another way of looking at it - a meditation - and then trying to share something of this very personal experience with others.

Nature Notes

If there's one thing that makes spring special, it's the cheery, overhead twitter of the first arriving swallows. This year was rather disappointing, in that arriving swallows seemed to be scarcer than usual. Considering the very considerable journey that these and other small summer migrant birds have to make to reach here, it's not surprising that climate and weather conditions should play a big part in influencing how many survive.



Kathleen and I once stayed in a Bedouin tent in the northern edge of the Sahara. (But that's another story!) Our stay in such an inhospitable place brought home to me how difficult desert crossings must be. Water is all in places with such high temperatures and birds must find water sources where they can, to refresh themselves and stay alive. Not far away from the tent and some nearby hobbled camels was a clump of palm trees, some of them half-hidden in drifted sand. The underground water level had clearly dropped and, for thirsty migrant birds, the small oasis with water that once existed there was no more. Increased desertification through changing climate patterns poses an increasing risk to bird migrants which have to pass through extremely inhospitable parts to make it to these northern places.

Swallow pairs return separately to the mud cup nests they've used the previous year and somehow manage to meet up in the very same place once more, while young birds are capable of finding their way from here to southern Africa with no previous experience. Perhaps you've noticed that when adverse weather conditions force flying insects down towards the ground surface, swallows sometimes flit deliberately close to you in the hope of getting any disturbed insects. When a swallow flies really close, it's a sobering thought that it may have been doing exactly the same thing round the legs of an antelope or zebra in the tropical heat of Africa only weeks before.

Swallows pop up in the Book of Psalms (Psalm 84)

*Even the sparrow has found a home,
And the swallow a nest for herself,
where she may have her young –
A place near your altar,
Lord Almighty, my King and my God.*



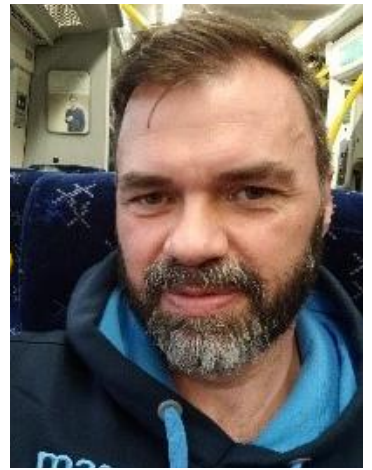
The Psalmist is really painting a word picture of the love of God, which allows these small and fragile creatures to construct their nests and live in safety within the sanctuary of the temple.

Hopefully, those pairs that have nested in our part of the world over the past weeks of summer will have produced lots of youngsters to keep up the population of these much loved birds.

Douglas Willis

The Gospel and Climate Change

Back in June, thanks to Fortrose Free Church, Dr Jamie Grant, Vice Principal and Lecturer in Biblical Studies, Highland Theological College, UHI delivered an engaging, thought-provoking talk on the gospel and climate change via Zoom. An abridged version follows.



In thinking about the gospel and climate change, we should begin by looking at the theological underpinnings and consider the God we worship. We know him as a Creator God. We are his creatures and he created this world as a locus, a habitat, in which we can enjoy a relationship with him.

Creation itself is an act of love, an act of staggering grace, and the created order reflects the glory of God. Genesis chapter 1 begins, In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth and, in the creation story that follows, And God saw that it was good becomes a repeating refrain. Creation is a good gift to bless humanity. It is good in every sense of the word.

But God is not just a Creator God, he is a Creative God. The Creation isn't just good, it's extravagantly good, reflecting God's glory for humanity's benefit. It is God's triumph over Chaos. God uses all his incredible creative power so that we can delight in birdsong (Psalm 104).

God is also a consistent God. John begins Revelation 21, Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. John uses the Greek word *kainos* for 'new' which means of the same ilk but now renewed, transformed as opposed to *neos* which means brand new. It is consistent with the sense that the New Testament is *kainos* – the Old Testament is not surpassed, it is renewed.

tearfund

as an organisation has a full, expansive view of the gospel of the Kingdom. They are attuned to Luke's gospel of restoration and transformation and are committed to praying for radical social transformation. They are also leaders in climate change campaigning with added credibility in that they are embedded in communities most affected.



Climate change talk is everywhere and it can provoke feelings of helplessness and hopelessness. But climate change is a reality and it is a current reality not an impending one. We can already see more extreme weather patterns across the globe. There is a growing awareness of human impact on the environment and, as a result, an increasing sense of urgency.

And this is a humanitarian crisis, not just an environmental one. It is the poorest in the world, so dependent on subsistence agriculture, who are most affected by climate extremes of severe drought and destructive flooding. Working for food stability and agricultural predictability is a matter of social justice.



This where **Tear Fund** are most active. Through their Reboot Campaign we are invited to join them in prayer and action to tackle injustice and help end the climate crisis. They want to see the world rebooted for a greener, fairer future.



Current campaigns include clean water projects and agricultural initiatives such as developing a new strain of bananas with better yield and less soil erosion. Some programmes have a wider social benefit. For example, installing solar panels provides lighting and allows young people, especially girls, to study in the evening and, so, helps address gender imbalance in educational opportunities.

So, what can we do? Well, we can all do our own bit by recycling whenever possible; by minimising food waste; by looking for alternatives to plastic; by using public transport or car sharing where possible; by seeking out green energy suppliers.

We can also donate to Tearfund Scotland, safe in the knowledge that the money goes to people on the ground, to the communities where accountability for the use of the money lies. And, of course, we can pray alongside Tearfund because, as Christians, we are never helpless, never hopeless, because we believe in a God who gets things done, the same God who created everything in the first place.

Jamie Grant



Lord God, you made the world and declared it was 'very good'. And yet, we have not treated the earth and our fellow humans with the care and respect they deserve. We are sorry and ask for your forgiveness.

Give us the courage to keep raising our voices about the climate emergency, which affects people living in poverty the worst. And may your Spirit of peace be in the hearts of all people, so that conflicts end in peace, and relationships are restored.

Amen

Tear Fund Resources

Pandemic Reflections 1

As we celebrate increasing freedom from Covid and its restrictions, we should be thankful that the Black Isle has been relatively fortunate. Remember those in cities, vulnerable in so many ways including isolation in small flats with their jobs at risk. Yet Covid could prove to be no more than a rehearsal for far greater world wide problems from climate change. 50 degree temperatures in California, bush fires in Australia, and floods in Germany are evidence of what our children and grandchildren face. Let us act to meet those challenges using our experience of the current pandemic - starting right now!

Anthony Bryant

A Favourite Hymn

One of my (very many) favourite hymns is MP 590 *Seek Ye First*.

It reminds me of a true story of a wonderful hope. There was a Godly gentleman, Hugh MacLeman, who lived in Avoch many years ago. He lived in a small house in the Dock area. Many houses then had to pay a rent to Mr Fletcher who owned and lived in Rosehaugh Mansion and estate. Hugh was a fisherman and, as the fishing at that time was very poor, he had no money to pay the rent for a long period of time.

When Mr Fletcher realised that the money was not being paid, he decided that he must enquire. He took his horse and trap to the village one day and knocked loudly on Hugh's door. Hugh (a small man) came and looked up as Mr Fletcher said, "Are you aware that you are going to be removed from this house soon?" "Yes, sir!" said Hugh. "I'm looking forward to the great day when I shall be transported to my Heavenly mansion for eternity."

There was a long, long silence. Hugh promised that all the rent arrears would be paid for in full when he had the money. Mr Fletcher could not sleep that evening and went back the next day to ask Hugh what he meant and asked him if he would come with him to Rosehaugh mansion and explain.

Hugh agreed and went into the house for his chart and compass (the Bible). "In my house there are many mansions, if not, I would have told you." Hugh got employment from Mr Fletcher and shaved him every day, cut his hair when necessary etc. And as a result, they became great friends. The hymn echoes Jesus' words "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you." We all have a choice where to spend eternity. How shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?

ARJ

Seek ye first the Kingdom of God,
And His righteousness,
And all these things shall be added unto you.

Al - le - lu - ia.
Al - le - lu - ia.
Al - le - lu - ia.
Al - le - lu, Al - le - lu - ia.

Ask and it shall be given unto you;
Seek and ye shall find.
Knock and it shall be opened unto you.
Al - le - lu - ia

Man shall not live by bread alone,
But by every word,
That proceeds from the mouth of God.
Al - le - lu - ia.....

Seek ye first the Kingdom of God by Karen Lafferty first emerged as a one verse response to a Bible study on Matthew 6:33 fifty years ago in 1971. It is a verbatim repetition of the verse, capturing the spiritual encouragement Karen Lafferty felt after the Bible study. Its success inspired her to develop a career as a 'Musicianary'.

The second verse, from Matthew 7:7 quickly followed and, later, a third verse from Matthew 4:4 echoing Deuteronomy 8:3. Most hymnals contain all three verses, sometimes with verses 2 and 3 in reverse order but keeping true to the wording to the KJV of the Bible.

In true folk tradition, others have added their own verses to a lovely melody that encourages reflection on the words. You're maybe singing it right now!

Pandemic Reflections 2

The pandemic has been a reminder that we should never take anything for granted: be it food on shop shelves, the freedom to travel, the opportunity to welcome others into our homes or the chance to spend time with friends and family.

It has been a time to discover unimagined resilience; it has been a time to face intense isolation. It brought new ways of working, more virtual 'everything,' and enhanced team work. It brought a season of national gratitude, an appreciation of those often overlooked - community and care home carers, shopkeepers, those providing transport, delivery and infrastructure services, as well as those active in the education and health sectors. It brought trimmed-down weddings and hug-less funerals. It brought expressions of kindness, practical help, local care and somewhat paradoxically, the possibility of greater connectivity.



Nationally, the Christian Medical Fellowship arranged virtual daily prayer meetings; and the local CMF Highland Group (of almost 100 health care workers) used its WhatsApp group to share prayer requests and support one another. The vaccine roll-out has gone well but we do not know what the future will bring. Even as I write today, we have had news of a member of our wider family, a 60 years old, fully vaccinated grandfather, dying in ICU from COVID.

For those of us in the West, the pandemic has been a taste of what much of the rest of the world experiences every day: uncertainty, disruption, the lack of ability to assume things will work, economic hardship, suffering and pain. In the relatively stable, comfortable global north, as we go through our day-to-day lives many decades after the last major conflict in Western Europe, perhaps we have slipped into complacency, a false sense of security - or even an attitude of entitlement?

The pandemic challenges any such assumptions to the core. It affords an opportunity for a major re-assessment of our beliefs, values and priorities. In Luke chapter 12, there is a very successful rich man who decided that he had ample supplies for many years and could simply relax, eat, drink and be merry. However, he had not calculated on his life being demanded of him. The story raises a question which the pandemic asks stridently "where is our treasure?"

Stroma Beattie

Pandemic Reflections 3

"Our need will be the real creator." Plato

There is no question that the restrictions which came into force to keep us all as safe as possible during the Covid pandemic required a rethink of how we worship and communicate.

The most significant development was undoubtedly the innovation of holding our services online using the Zoom platform. By this means, we maintained a sense of gathering and had the ability to socialise at the close of worship using the chat room feature.

We were fortunate to have Aileen to lead us ably in our praise. However, the inherent audio time lag made it virtually impossible to synchronise congregational singing so, with our microphones muted, we were able to sing along enthusiastically in the privacy of our homes - that may have had the spin off benefit of encouraging us to try new hymns and not feel self-conscious while learning.

Zoom gave us the ability to have short group discussions on aspects of our faith, something I feel zoom permitted more elegantly than an in-church situation. For me this was a plus as I feel we need to be given more encouragement to discuss our faith. Zoom also allowed Warren to continue taking part in the primary school assemblies.

The downside of Zoom for me was the need for a meeting code and passcode which gave a shade of exclusiveness to the proceedings when we really need to be inclusive.

The order of service with links to a recording of the hymns was available on our website for those with internet access but who did not want to attend a Zoom service. Physical copies of the order of service were also available, on request, to those who were housebound and did not feel inclined to use a computer. While those without internet access missed out on some aspects of the service, they may have benefited from the ability to read the service at their leisure.

On the pastoral side things were more difficult and we had to rely on telephone calls, the distribution of information sheets and socially distanced chats on the doorstep to keep in touch with our members. Funerals were the biggest challenge and undoubtedly it was a blow to be unable to have a service to celebrate the life of a dear one, and to feel the physical support of friends.

I feel the most frustrating aspect of the pandemic regime has been our inability, as a church, to continue with our normal outreach to the unchurched members of the community. I am sure individual members have done their utmost to help and support their neighbours and friends but there has been little opportunity to influence and spread the Gospel beyond our immediate circle.

Regarding the future, I don't see us returning to what was considered normal pre-pandemic. It may be worthwhile to help those who feel intimidated by a computer and offer some tuition, where welcome. It may even be found to be fun. I feel there will be a continuing need to adapt to circumstances and consequently our way of doing things will evolve. Necessity is indeed the mother of invention.

RSM July 2021

Pandemic Reflections 4

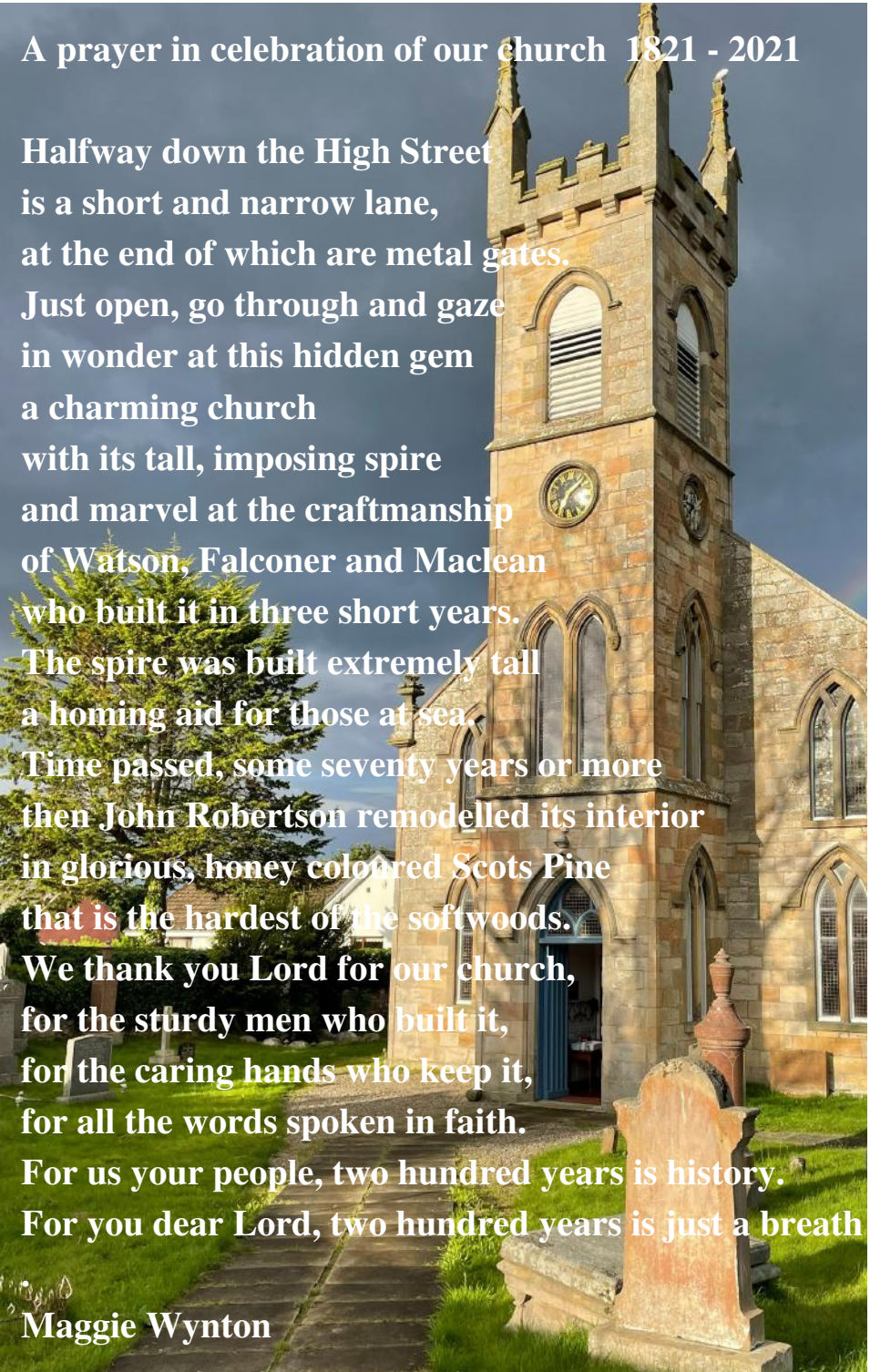
Gifts to be reclaimed post-pandemic: 1) The beauty and value of the human face, which we are now so used to seeing covered up. The God of the Bible sees the infinitely varied faces of each of his human children, knowing and valuing our uniqueness and individuality. 2) A new delight in the songs of the Church, sensing how integral they are to Christian worship, a perception shared across so many denominations. 3) A renewed Christian psychology to address post-Covid uncertainty. Christians know of something very different that moves us: a perfect love that casts out fear, the "theological virtues" of faith, hope, and love that are the proper, God-given drivers of Christian life.

Adapted from *Church News*

Rosemarkie Church Bi-Centenary

12 08 1821 - 12 08 2021

A prayer in celebration of our church 1821 - 2021



Halfway down the High Street
is a short and narrow lane,
at the end of which are metal gates.
Just open, go through and gaze
in wonder at this hidden gem
a charming church
with its tall, imposing spire
and marvel at the craftsmanship
of Watson, Falconer and Maclean
who built it in three short years.
The spire was built extremely tall
a homing aid for those at sea.
Time passed, some seventy years or more
then John Robertson remodelled its interior
in glorious, honey coloured Scots Pine
that is the hardest of the softwoods.
We thank you Lord for our church,
for the sturdy men who built it,
for the caring hands who keep it,
for all the words spoken in faith.
For us your people, two hundred years is history.
For you dear Lord, two hundred years is just a breath

Maggie Wynton

Around 6.20pm on Thursday 12 August, a heavy rain shower swept through Rosemarkie. By 7pm a large rainbow arced across the sky over the village and the church was bathed in sunshine.

Inside, around 40 people had gathered to commemorate the bi-centenary of the opening of a much loved building. At the front of the church Session Clerk, Jack Kernahan, was dealing with a challenge that would have mystified his 19th century predecessor - the laptop had chosen 7pm as a good time to start a 'Windows Update'!

The slight delay did nothing to detract from what proved to be an enjoyable, meaningful celebration of 200 years of faithful worship in the building. Our gratitude for the dedicated commitment of the generations who have gone before us became a recurring theme of the elder-led service.

Edward Plumptre, who wrote *Thy Hand, O God Has Guided*, was born 6 days before Rosemarkie Church was opened and, led by Aileen Fraser on keyboard, his hymn was sung with enthusiasm by the congregation present. *Your hand, O God has guided / your flock from age to age; / your faithfulness is written / on history's open page. / Our fathers owned their goodness, / and we their deeds record; / and both to this bear witness: / one church, one faith, one Lord.*

Appropriate words to start the service followed by equally appropriate words from Maggie Wynton in the prayer poem above, acknowledging the design, the craftsmanship, the care with which church has been maintained and 'all the words spoken in faith' over the past twenty decades.

Douglas Willis (right) ascended to the pulpit and read from 1 Corinthians 3 10-17, using the 1611 Authorised Version as read on August 12, 1821.

Douglas Simpson followed with a reflection on the past 200 years of Rosemarkie Church. The minister in 1821, Rev Alexander Wood, (right, below) was the third generation of the Wood family to be the parish minister in a collective ministry that spanned 134 years.

Douglas continued, *Rosemarkie had been an important seat of Christian learning since St Boniface established a church in the 8th century and a monastery had been built two centuries earlier by St Moluag under the influence of St Columba and the Iona fellowship.*

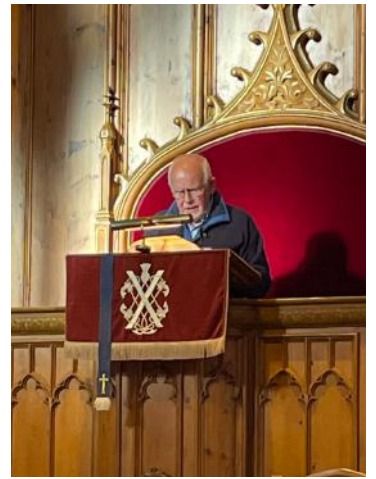
But in 1821 the three year construction was completed by the masons Falconer and Watson along with joiner James MacLean and the high tower of this latest place of worship in this long time centre for Christianity stood proudly overlooking the Moray Firth.

Major changes to the layout of the building took place in 1894 with the former vestry blocked off and the balconies constructed giving the current very agreeable configuration . And it was around this time that the remarkable Rosemarkie Cross slab was discovered indicating strongly that the Picts were certainly not averse to the Christian message.

Around eight generations have come and gone since the opening of the new building. Each generation has provided folk willing to maintain a witness for God in Rosemarkie , some extremely eminent like General Sir Richard O'Connor who served as an elder and whose New Testament resides in the cabinet at the entrance. Others like the recently departed Jean McArthur whose warmth and quiet faith lit up the church. Likewise, the contributions of the recently departed Sheena Munro and Jennifer Pearks who both occupied a variety of roles in the church will not be quickly forgotten.

Having referred to eight generations of church goers (and fairly amazingly) starting with Rev Alexander Wood the period from 1821 and 1967 was served by just 4 ministers. Four ministers in 146 years! Rev Alexander Wood (45yrs), Rev James McDowall (47yrs), Rev Robert Masterton (37yrs), Rev John Russell (21yrs). Since the union with Fortrose in 1967 a further 6 have come and gone: Rev Alexander Macrae, Rev James Forsyth, Rev Nicky Simpson, Rev Sam Torrens, Rev Alison Grainger, Rev Alan McKean. And we now enjoy the service of Rev Dr Warren and Stroma Beattie currently enjoying a much needed break. Should Warren decide to emulate his earlier predecessors in terms of length of service, he will be 95 before he retires!

1967 was a key date in the church's history when the union with Fortrose ended 1400 years of Rosemarkie having its own parish Church. The last several decades have seen a significant national decline in church attendance and F&R has not been immune. But although numbers are smaller the church is as active as ever through prayer meetings, increased givings, a developing



pastoral team, community action, international links, support for Traidcraft, Blythswood, Creative Crafts and so on. There are numerous wonderful artefacts at the entrance to the church (and the old clock mechanism upstairs) which bring to life the long history of worship here in Rosemarkiebut a church is not about buildings or 'things' remarkable as they may be. It's about people. People who are moved by the spirit to serve their God in their local community. And throughout the last 200 years and for centuries before that ordinary folk have offered their time and talent to serve God in this community.

Douglas went on to pay particular tribute to his fellow elders, highlighting their individual contributions to current church life before finishing, *I make no apology for paying tribute to these folk as I reach the end of my reflection because quite simply the future of church depends on people like them. And, of course, it also depends on practical contribution and the faithful prayers of each one of us here.*



A correspondent for the *Inverness Journal and Northern Advertiser* of 31 August 1821 reported: *We are informed that the new church lately erected in the parish of Rosemarkie, was opened for divine service on Sunday the 12th inst. on which occasion an excellent and very appropriate discourse was delivered by the Rev Mr Wood from 1 Corin iii ch11th v "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."*

And, so it was, those fortunate to attend the commemoration service can testify that an excellent and very appropriate discourse on the same text was delivered by Jack Kernahan as follows:

1 Corinthians 3:11 "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." or in the NIV "For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ." This was the first verse on which a sermon was preached in this church 200 years ago today by Rev Alexander Wood. During the subsequent 146 years up to the union there were only four ministers. Not only were good foundations laid, but also the gold, silver and precious stones of verse 12, solid preaching of the word of God has obviously followed the laying of the foundations.

Ephesians 2:20 tells us that "God's household is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which in which God lives by his spirit." On this foundation all the faithful ministers of Christ build. The doctrine of our saviour and his mediation is the principal doctrine of Christianity. It lies at the bottom and is the foundation of all the rest.

When most of the Jews in Corinth had rejected his message, Paul turned to the Gentiles, the non-Jews and established a church there. But within three years difficulties were arising and questions were being asked about Christian practice so this letter was written from Ephesus, telling those in Corinth how to set right a worldly church that regarded lightly the things they were doing wrong. The church was in the world as it had to be , but the world was in the Church as it ought not to be.

Paul therefore stressed the total necessity of Jesus being the only foundation on which a church can be built.

Following these thoughts on the foundations on which our Church is built and which are still totally relevant we turn to the future and the reading from Jeremiah 29:10-14, the well known assurance from the Lord himself: "For I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." We cannot deny that at the present time the Church faces an uncertain future, not just here in Fortrose and Rosemarkie, but throughout Scotland. The days of the village, or even the town, with its own minister are probably numbered. The words given to Jeremiah by the Lord were to indicate the end of the 70 year exile in Babylon. And the verse that follows is crucial: "Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart."

Many of us, hopefully all of us, can look back on our lives and see the plans that God had for us, and can also see prayers being answered, sometimes not in the way we were seeking, which was not in accordance with His will, but with something far better. So, in these uncertain times what is essential is that we seek, through prayer, God's perfect design for the future of the Church here in the Black Isle, and throughout Scotland. It may be very different to what it has been here over 200 years, but it will be His guidance for the way forward in both worship and mission in the 21st century.

There used to be a shop, there may still be, called "Remnant Kings". A remnant is a piece left over. In the Bible it refers to what is left of a community, such as Noah's family after the flood. Daniel and his friends were a remnant and sometimes we may think like that about numbers attending public worship. The Church of Scotland has lost 80% of its attendees since the 1950s. We may consider ourselves now as being "The King's Remnant".

But God never leaves Himself without a witness. We know of revivals in the early 1950s in Lewis and the Billy Graham Crusade in Glasgow in 1955 when 50,000 came forward to make a stand for Christ, but to what lasting effective is debatable. We had our own revival in the Black Isle in 1905. Daniel and his friends - that remnant - remained faithful, facing in the case of Daniel the den of lions, and his friends the "fiery furnace" for their faith, especially in prayer. Daniel's prayer in Chapter 9 is a wonderful example of prayer. Look at the fervency in verse 19.

While we all have the individual responsibility to spread the Saving Word of the Gospel given to all believers in the "great commission", a vital aspect of achieving revival and thus again filling this and many other churches is prayer. While prayer meetings are said to have been the birthplace of the awakening that swept over the Black Isle in 1905 and 1906, often revival can come from the fervent prayers of individuals or small groups. Maybe you are one of those individuals?

Our prayer to the Lord is put perfectly in the words of Habakkuk, 3:2, and is totally apt for our situation today in the "midst of the years", looking back in celebration and thanksgiving for what the Lord has given us and looking forward to the plans he has for us: "Lord, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, O Lord. Renew them in our day, in our time make them known; in wrath remember mercy."

*Our service ended fittingly with a rousing rendition of **The Church's One Foundation**.*

Following on from Jack's reflection. Each Thursday a wee group gets together for half an hour to pray. We pray for our congregation, our community and for the world. No topic is too big or too small! Prayers don't have to be long or eloquent but can be a simple sentence or two or indeed a silent offering to God. Prayer has been called the world's greatest wireless connection and we'd love more of you to exploit that connection! Usually there's about 8 of us so there's plenty room for more. If you're interested or want to ask any questions please don't hesitate to speak to me.

Douglas Simpson

Rosemarkie c1800 - 1850

The main landowners of the time were Roderick Mackenzie of Flowerburn, James Fowler of Raddery, Evan Baillie of Dochfour and Ethies, Sir James Mackenzie of Scatwell, the Rev. R. Millar of Kincurdie and Malcolm MacLean of Hawkhill.

The New Statistical Account of Scotland describes the character of the people of Rosemarkie (EP) as “generally speaking, sober, cleanly and industrious; and appear in every respect contented with their condition and the circumstances in which Divine Providence has been pleased to place them”.

Coal had largely replaced wood as the main fuel used as tree plantations had largely become exhausted by the middle of the century. Coal were then so readily obtained and at a very moderate cost. What wood there was – mainly fir – was exported to England via the “commodious harbour” at Fortrose.

The foundation stone of the current church was laid in June 1819 and the manse was built in 1833 “at a convenient distance from the church”.

There were two schools in Rosemarkie at this time as seen from the map, one in the High Street beside the church and the other, a Free Church School*, towards the north end of the High Street. The usual elementary subjects were taught and they were well attended, 30 to 40 being educated. There were three Sabbath evening schools in the parish, again well attended.

Poor and parochial funds were available to those in need, the average number of such persons being 86. Most received only small annual amounts as they were able to undertake small amounts of work over and above. The funding for this arose from the weekly church collections which were estimated to amount to £17 throughout the year and the interest on a capital of £200. In Fortrose, there was one good inn and several smaller ones in Rosemarkie where “inferior accommodation may be had”!

Finally, from the New Statistical Account, the following: “The appearance of the people of Rosemarkie, as respects their manners, dress and habits of industry, shows that in these, of late years, there has been a great advance. The improvements in agriculture since the former Statistical Account have been very considerable. The taste for reading has pervaded all classes of society; so much so that among tradesmen and the labouring classes, many valuable works are now to be met with, particularly of a religious character. There can be no doubt that the bulk of the people would be inclined to industrious habits.” (*The Free Church school would have been built soon after the 1843 Disruption.)

A Few Further Observations

In the late 18th century, there were at least 20 linen weavers in Rosemarkie. Much of the flax was steeped in a pond known as The Pows at the foot of the Fairy Glen and in a lochan between Rosemarkie and Fortrose. This industry ended when the then minister, whose manse was but a small distance from the lochan, was offended by the stench and ordered the lochan to be drained. By 1830, heavy taxes were imposed on linen to placate wool merchants.

We had an election this year, 2021. Two hundred and one years ago, there was a general election. Did this excite the residents of Rosemarkie? Well, not exactly as not a single working male in Rosemarkie was entitled to vote. Yes, only men could vote and only wealthy ones! The election was brought about by the death of King George III – in those days, when the monarch died, the government fell. Voting started on 6th March and ended on 13th April, no one day polls then.

Scotland’s population was approximately 2.5 million; the number of voters was about 2,500, all men! Rosemarkie was part of the Inverness Burghs constituency and its MP was ‘traditionally’ in the hands of the Cumming-Gordon family; George Cumming was elected and was MP until 1826.

On 9th March 1822, a letter was sent from John Fraser to James Grant of Bught containing the minutes of a meeting of the heritors of the united parish of Chanonry and Rosemarkie held at Fortrose on 7th March. The purpose of the letter was to ascertain the respective ancient boundaries of the said parishes with a view to relieving the former parish from the assessment for the new church at Rosemarkie!

1821 Hatches, Matches and Dispatches**You may notice a family name here:**

Births	Parents	DoB
Colin Corbet	John Corbet & Mary Mackenzie	10/01/1821
Alexander Watson	Daniel Watson & Rose Davidson	13/01/1821
Sarah Doherty	William Doherty & Helen Rian	13/01/1821
Robert Reid	Robert Reid & Isobel Ross	25/01/1821
Daniel MacAndrew	Colin MacAndrew & Barbara Johnstone	16/02/1821
Alexander Dallas	Simon Dallas & Ann Paterson	16/02/1821
George Ross	Donald Ross & Isobel Bain	22/02/1821
Margaret Hope	Thomas Hope & Margaret Swan	27/02/1821
John Cleghorn	George Cleghorn & Agnes Hills	27/02/1821
John Down	John Down & Elizabeth Dunbar	15/03/1821
Jane Finlayson	John Finlayson & Margaret Mann	04/04/1821
John Reid	Donald Reid & Margaret Hood	06/04/1821
James Sutherland	Murdock Sutherland & Helen Maclellan	20/04/1821
William Hood	Donald Hood & Christian Ferguson	22/04/1821
Catherine Fraser	Thomas Fraser & Ann Fraser	22/04/1821
Roderick Milne	Robert Milne & Madelina Sutherland	24/04/1821
Alexander Munro	James Munro & Jane Simpson	26/04/1821
Andrew Taylor	Hugh Taylor & Ann Grigor	02/05/1821
Catherine Thomson	Alexander Thomson & Jane Macdonald	14/05/1821
John Young	William Young & ? Fairley	24/05/1821
Donald MacRitchie	William MacRitchie & Ann Fraser	05/06/1821
Hector Mackenzie	John Mackenzie & Isobel Munro	06/06/1821
James Forsyth	Alexander Forsyth & Isabella Gordon	07/06/1821
Catherine Mackenzie	George Mackenzie & Catherine Cameron	15/06/1821
Henrietta Watson	John Watson & Janet Fowler	19/06/1821
Christian McKeddie	James McKeddie & Catherine Nicol	19/06/1821
John Fraser	Alexander Fraser & Jane Simpson	24/06/1821
Margaret Elder	James Elder & Ann Williamson	26/06/1821
Elizabeth Munro	James Munro & Elizabeth Simpson	07/07/1821
Elizabeth Holm	Michael Holm & Helen Millar	28/07/1821
John Loban	Colin Loban & Margaret Forbes	31/07/1821
Christian Macdonald	James Macdonald & Jane Falconer	07/08/1821
William Reid	William Reid & Elizabeth Holm	28/08/1821
John Bain	John Bain & Christian Clark	01/09/1821
John More	Donald More & Margaret Elder	07/09/1821
Thomas Hood	Andrew Hood & Mary Gregor	17/09/1821
Jonathan Munro	John Munro & Margaret Denoon	28/09/1821
Warner Spalding	Warner Spalding & Christiana Matheson	03/10/1821
John Macqueen	John Macqueen & Margaret Campbell	10/10/1821
Hugh Thomson	John Thomson & Christian Junor	15/10/1821
Margaret Hood	George Hood & Ann Hood	19/10/1821
Alexander Ross	John Ross & Janet Gair	19/10/1821
James Macdonald	William Macdonald & Mary Corner	22/10/1821

Kenneth Grant	John Grant & Margaret Cameron	24/10/1821
Catherine Mustard	Hugh Mustard & Ann Ross	26/10/1821
James Ross	Donald Ross & Christian Bain	15/11/1821
Ann Reid	George Reid & Ann Hosack	18/11/1821
Roderick Allan	Jacob Allan & Mary Cameron	18/11/1821
Ann Ross	Donald Ross & Catherine Ross	18/11/1821
Ann Mustard	John Mustard & Abigail Holm	04/12/1821
Daniel Thomson	Donald Thomson & Janet Wilson	29/12/1821

Matches

Janet Wilson & Donald Thomson	10/02/1821
Helen Macpherson & Donald Monro	17/03/1821
Margaret Shaw & John Mackenzie	07/04/1821
Isobel Bain & John MacGrigor	18/05/1821
Margaret MacGillivray & George Urquhart	07/07/1821
Mary Corner & William Macdonald	07/07/1821
Isobel Bisset & John Mann	13/07/1821
Janet Bain & John Fraser	03/08/1821
Christian Clark & John Ewens	04/08/1821
Barbara MacIver & James Gair	11/08/1821
Isabella MacKeddie & David Bain	15/11/1821
Agnes Walker & Alexander Wood	18/12/1821
Janet Anderson & William Bain	28/12/1821

Dispatches

Christian Hossack (71)	30/01/1821
Christian Mackenzie (71)	30/01/1821
Elizabeth Watson (72)	01/02/1821
Elizabeth Mann (72)	01/02/1821
Ann Anderson (22)	26/04/1821
Alexander Miller (50)	26/04/1821
Sophia Fowler (19)	30/04/1821
Isabella Fraser (50)	04/05/1821
William Monro (16)	07/05/1821
John Elder (54)	31/05/1821
John MacLennan (36)	25/06/1821
John Bremner (83)	30/06/1821
Jane MacLennan (79)	01/09/1821
Thomas Junor (3)	01/11/1821
David Arthur (42)	04/12/1821
Donald Ross (53)	07/12/1821
Jane Mackenzie (54)	17/12/1821
John Mackenzie (55)	24/12/1821

Keith Lorraine

Finally, returning to the commemoration service, the second praise, *The King of Love my Shepherd is*, was also written by a man born in 1821. Henry Williams Baker not only wrote hymns, he was editor-in-chief of the Anglican hymnary *Hymns Ancient and Modern* which went on to sell 64 million copies. Linda Simpson read out the following poem written and, later, set to music by Henry Baker. The words seem particularly apt for this modern era.

O God of love, O King of peace,
Make wars throughout the world to cease;
The wrath of sinful men restrain,
Give peace, O God, give peace again!

Whom shall we trust but Thee, O Lord?
Where rest but on Thy faithful Word?
None ever called on Thee in vain,
Give peace, O God, give peace again!

Remember, Lord, Thy works of old,
The wonders that our fathers told;
Remember not our sin's dark stain,
Give peace, O God, give peace again!

Where saints and angels dwell above,
All hearts are knit in holy love;
O bind us in that heavenly chain!
Give peace, O God, give peace again!

St Magnus Kirk, Egilsay

When I was a Geography student in university, I was required to submit a dissertation for part of my degree. The subject area I decided upon was one of Orkney's North Isles. At 5am on a calm morning, I (with one other passenger) boarded the old steamer for its trip out of Kirkwall. The weather was remarkably calm and, as we headed northwards a long black ribbon of smoke from the funnel traced our passage among the islands.



As we passed the island of Egilsay, the early morning sun was falling on the stonework of a strange looking ruin, imparting a warm glow. St Magnus Kirk, I was later to learn, dates back to troubled times when Norse earls ruled the seaways of the north. At that moment, I resolved to see it in close-up one day.

In the next three years, I was to carry out further studies in Orkney requiring many other visits and in the years that followed I was a frequent visitor to the islands for one reason or another. Yet, in all that time, the opportunity to visit Egilsay and its eye-catching ruin somehow never came, until, that is, a few weeks ago.

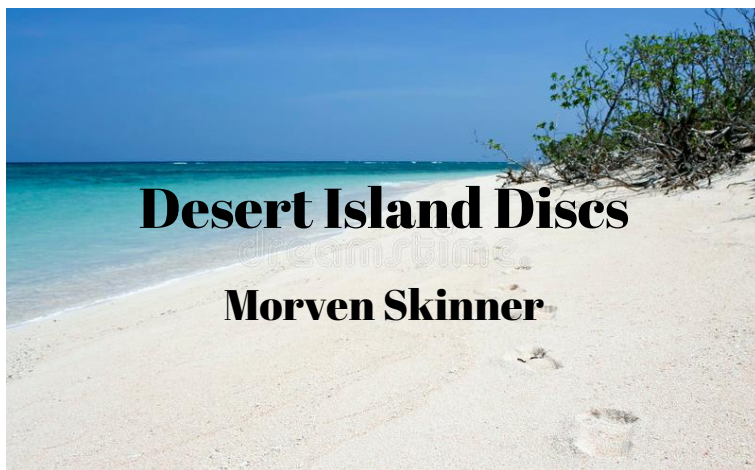
As sole passenger on the boat across to the island from neighbouring Rousay, I was enjoying the peace and a classic island day with blue sea, green islands and distant white clouds. The island itself was a bit of a Robinson Crusoe experience for I'd only a fleeting glimpse of one person working at the farm steading beside the ancient kirk. Up from the little pier, past swathes of bright yellow marsh marigolds in the damp pasture and the constantly calling of peewits overhead, I climbed over a stile and walked along the edge of a grass field to the ruin.

At the base of the solid tower I stood for a while, caught up in the mix of past history and the beauty of the moment. Across the water, neighbouring Rousay looked dark in front of the distant green fields of Mainland. The Christian faith once had a strong spiritual and material presence in the spot though the kirk is now missing its roof. Nesting starlings were now in residence in crevices in the tower which is reckoned now to be tometres lower than it would once have been. It's all too easy to see redundant church buildings as nothing more than a sad symbol of decline but the eye-catching St Magnus Kirk, for all that it now stands in ruin, hasn't lost the power to impress. Raised up to the glory of God and in commemoration of a saint, it stands still as a very visible reminder of the Christian zeal that put it in that place.

It had taken me some time finally to make it across to Egilsay, but standing there, by the church and its magnificent tower, surrounded by all that was best in a fine island day, it had been well worth the wait.

Douglas Willis

My first choice would be "Cailin mo ruin sa"" (Darling my own one) by Donald Ross. This brings back memories of my childhood, growing up on Lewis. As a very young girl my Dad used to take me to the ceilidhs held in the local hall and for some reason this song always stuck in my mind. It became my 'party piece' in later life when asked to "sing something in Gaelic."



Secondly, "Three Little Maids From School" from *The Mikado* by Gilbert and Sullivan. and sung by Yum Yum, Peep-Bo and Pitti -Sing. In my second year at Fortrose Academy we were taken to the Theatre to hear *The Mikado*. It was my first introduction to professional stage music and the love of any kind of stage music as stayed with me ever since.



My third choice would be "Rock Around The Clock" by Bill Haley and the Comets. Ah, those energetic teenage years when jive and rock and roll were all the rage! Those were the days when Charlie Fraser used to run buses to all the surrounding dance halls. To Resolis, Kirkhill, Beaulie, the Strath Pavilion and many others. The buses were always full of boys and girls and fun and laughter . What a time we all had before we became "proper grown ups".

My fourth and final choice would be "By Cool Siloam's Shady Rill" by Reginald Heber 1812 to the tune Belmont. I chose this because I find the words and the tune always very calming and peaceful. It is a song I have known for most of my adult life and it was the hymn played at the christening of both my children.

The book I have chosen is Lewis Grassie Gibbon's "Sunset Song". This was the book I studied for my Highers as a mature student and Grassie Gibbon's language and style made a big impression on me. I like to read it every now and again so that I can cry in all the same places!

My luxury item would be a clarinet. An instrument which, in my mind, I have always wanted to learn but never quite got there. I expect I would have plenty of time on this Desert Island to practise but can I cheat a little and ask for an instruction manual to go with it?

(Most certainly! Ed)



Lost Generations

Once again, as November approaches, the minds of many turn to remembrance. Warfare robs generations of people, both young and old. Here we have the story of two such people.

Torquil MacLeod and Ronald (Ronnie) Faed met at the Royal Naval College on the Isle of Wight before World War One. Torquil was born at Invergordon, Ronnie considered Galloway as home; his father was the artist, James Faed, whose job often meant his family was on the move. After training, they were ordered to join the Royal Navy's reserve fleet in August 1914 on 1st August, three days before Britain declared war. Torquil (left) and Ronnie (right) were sent to serve on board HMS Goliath, pictured below.



After a refit in South Africa, Goliath set sail for Gallipoli, part of the then Ottoman Empire, now Turkey. Goliath's task was to help cover the landing of British troops. The covering fire by British warships was being successful so the Turks decided that something had to be done to end this. On the night of the 12th – 13th May 1915, a Turkish torpedo boat managed to sneak up close to and fire on British ships. HMS Goliath was hit by three torpedoes. There were just three and a half minutes between the torpedoes striking and Goliath sinking. The water was extremely cold for those who found themselves in it; many lost consciousness. 570 of the 700 crew on board died. Both Torquil and Ronnie were amongst those who died; their bodies were recovered and were buried at sea. They are commemorated at the Chatham Naval Memorial, Kent along with 8,515 others. Both Ronnie and Torquil were just 15 years old, Ronnie only days away from his 16th birthday.

The oldest person to volunteer in the First World War was Quartermaster Sergeant Robert Robertson, aged 71; he died from bronchitis aged 74. The oldest verified casualty of the same war was Lieutenant Henry Webber, 68. The youngest verified person to die in World War Two was Reginald Earnshaw, aged 14 year and 151 days, buried in Comely Bank Cemetery, Edinburgh. Unbelievably, the youngest person actually to serve in an army of the First World War was a Serbian, Momčilo Gavrić, aged 8! He survived and died in 1993.

We should always take a little time each November to reflect on the past and remember all those who made the supreme sacrifice and those who continue to put their lives at risk defending our freedom.

Keith Lorraine

All Aboard the Jesus Boat

A sail on the Sea of Galilee in a 'Jesus boat' is a highlight for many pilgrim groups visiting the Holy Land. The routine is well established. The crew welcome you aboard, ascertain your nationality, run your national flag up the mast and choose appropriate music. A Scottish party will slip away from the jetty, saltire flying, ceilidh music playing and an encouragement to clap and dance to the music. Even the most nervous passenger relaxes.

Fifteen minutes later, the engines are cut. Being on the water offers a new perspective on the landscape. There the high cliffs of Mount Arbel below which the path from Nazareth – a long day's walk away – descends towards Magdala on the shores from Galilee. From there, the sweep of the northwest coast to Capernaum where 1st century Jews were clustered and where Jesus walked and taught. There the south east course across the lake from Capernaum to Kursi featured in Luke's description of frightened disciples wakening the sleeping Jesus during a squall and Jesus calming the storm (Mark 4:35-41). There.....

So much to see but gradually the focus returns to the boat, a silence settles other than the slap of water on the hull. It's the cue for worship to begin, a simple but memorable service of hymn, prayer, reading and reflection as we drift slowly north on the Sea of Galilee. All the time the crew keep a watchful eye until the right moment to restart the engines, switch the music to 'holy karaoke' and encourage joyful praise all the way back to the pier.

Back on terra firma there is an opportunity to see a more authentic 'Jesus boat' at the Yigal Allon Centre. A severe drought in 1986 brought the Sea of Galilee to an all time low, exposing much of the seabed below the shoreline. Two brothers from a nearby kibbutz ventured on to the mud and quickly found two small coins (the widow's mites of Mark 12:41-44), ancient nails and then a mud encrusted 'strake', the wooden rim of a very old boat. They had the good sense to stop and alert marine archaeologists who salvaged the boat and dated it to the first century and contemporary with the time of Jesus.



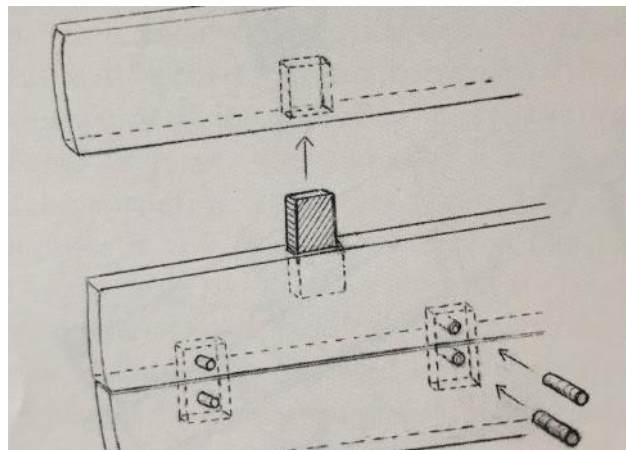
Strictly Not Dancing!



The ports and northern waters of Galilee



The boat now preserved in Yigal Allon Centre



Mortice and tenon joint



A model of how the boat would have looked

The wooden boat is 8.2m long with a beam of 2.3m and is thought to have been stripped of anything useful and sunk, the hull preserved in the sediments of the lake.

The two key indicators of the boat's age were: 1) the use of mortice and tenon joints, which would have been well known to Jesus the carpenter; and 2) a boatbuilding technique which put the outer planking in place first and then attached the ribs. Carbon dating of the timbers confirmed the trees were felled between 130 BC and AD 90, give or take 100 years for any one sample. And there was no shortage of samples: twelve different tree species were found in the boat.

The planks are cedar of Lebanon, known for durability and ease of working. The ribs are Tabor oak and the keel part carob and part Christ-thorn wood. The other eight species - including willow, laurel and plane - were only found in small parts, probably as repairs.

The boat itself is lightly built, the planks of the hull less than an inch thick. The model shows it with a deep rounded stern and fine bow, a multi-purpose boat used for fishing, for cargo or for carrying people. It could be sailed or rowed by four oarsmen and a helmsman. Such boats would be common in the bustling lakeside communities who witnessed the ministry of Jesus.

So common were they, boats are mentioned more than 50 times in the New Testament. For example, in Matthew 4:18-22 Jesus calls his first disciples - Peter, Andrew, James and John - from their boats. It is by boat that Jesus crossed the Sea of Galilee and, on a mountainside later in the day, fed the crowd of 5000 who came to hear him (John 6:1-15).

In Luke 5:1-11 we see Jesus sitting in a boat while teaching the crowds on the shore before asking Simon Peter, tired and frustrated at not having caught any fish all night, to put to sea again whereupon they catch so many fish, they have to call other boats to help them.

The incident is recalled in John 21. After the crucifixion of Jesus, Peter and six other despondent disciples went back to their nets and, again, caught no fish. Jesus is standing on the shore but they do not recognise him. He asks them to cast their nets again and suddenly the net is full of fish. "It is the Lord," Peter shouts leaping into the water and making for the shore. He has recognised the Risen Christ. It is not a vision, not a ghost, not a figment of his imagination. It is Jesus who has conquered death and is about to send him on a mission that will have a worldwide impact to this day.

For the Young.....and the Young at Heart

A man called Phil was working late in his office when he ran into an IT problem. So he phoned his friend Frank who was an expert on IT fixes.

But when the phone is answered it's a softly spoken child's voice he hears. "Is your dad there?" he asks

"Yes," the child whispers

"Can I speak to him?"

"No, you can't. He's busy."

Phil can hardly hear him but tries again. "Is your mum there?"

"Yes," comes the quiet reply.

"Can I speak to her?"

"No you can't. She's busy too."

"Is there anyone else there?"

"Yes, there's a policeman."

Phil is now beginning to worry. "Maybe I could speak to him?"

"No you can't. He's speaking to the fireman."

Phil is now so concerned he's forgotten why he was phoning in the first place. Before he can think what to say next he hears a loud whirring sound. "What's that noise? Are you sitting beside a washing machine?"

"No," the boy chortles, "it's a helicopter. It's just landed."

Now he's really concerned. "What on earth is going on there?" he asks frantically. "What are they all doing there?"

The little boy giggles, "They're all looking for me."

Later that evening when stern words gave way to forgiveness, the wee boy's bedtime story was about the parable of the lost sheep. He listened intently. "Does that story mean that God was looking for me too?" he asked.

"Yes," replied his mum, and he always will until you let him find you. Always remember that."

"Look, Grampa! Look! Look at all the shells I gathered on the beach." Lucy came running in to the living room full to bursting with excitement. But just as she entered, her foot caught the edge of the sofa and she went headlong on to the carpet, shells spilling everywhere.

Grampa was off his chair in a jiffy. "It's alright, Lucy. It was an accident I'll help you gather them up. We'll need to be quick, though."

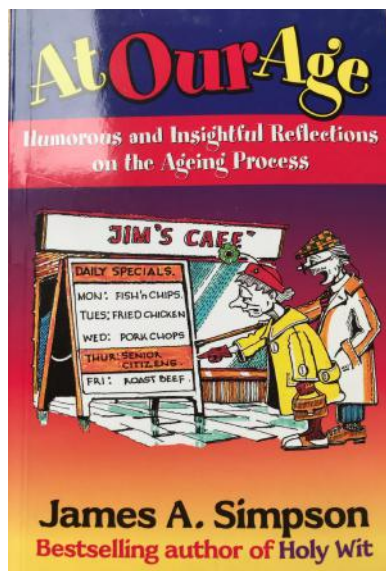
Both had heard the 'Harrumph' from Granny in the kitchen as she spied the sand shower spreading across the carpet. She was already heading to get the Hoover from the hall cupboard.

"Look, Grampa, that's a mussel, that's a limpet, that's a cockle, that's a bit of a sea urchin, that's whelk, that's a....."

Grampa heard the unmistakable sound of a plug going into a socket. "We need to hurry, Lucy or they'll all be disappearing up the Hoover."

Lucy wasn't easily distracted. "I can't find a small green one. It's special. To me, it is anyway." While Grampa negotiated a delay to the Hoovering, Lucy searched and searched until she emerged triumphantly from behind a chair. "Look, Grampa. This is the one I thought I'd lost but I've found it. It's even more precious to me now....."

At bedtime, Lucy held the small shiny green shell tightly in her hand and smiled as Grampa read the story of the lost coin (Luke 15 8-10) before finishing with a short prayer: "God of lost coins, of lost sheep, of lost shells and of all people, you remind us daily that you are always with us in love and forgiveness. Help us to share that with others in all that we do and say. Amen"



The older young at heart would enjoy *At Our Age* by Rev Dr James Simpson as he ranges far and wide exploring the joys and travails of old age. It's a book full of humorous observations such as these thoughts on 'signs of diminishing youth'.

- when the end of a man's tie does not come anywhere near the top of his trousers
- when we prefix words with 'wee' - 'I think I'll have a wee lie down.'
- when we start a joke with the punchline so we don't forget it
- the biggest fib we tell ourselves is, 'I don't need to write that down - I'll remember it.'
- when we go to bed before the Ten o' Clock News

Can You Name These Older Old People in the Bible?

1. He was the oldest person named in the Bible Genesis 5:27
2. He was Noah's father? Genesis 5:30
3. She was the mother of Isaac Genesis 17:19
4. She was Ruth's mother-in-law? Ruth 1:4
5. She was a member of the Tribe of Asher and daughter of Phanuel Luke 2:36
6. She was John the Baptist's mother? Luke 1:13
7. She was Timothy's grandmother and a great encourager of his faith. Timothy 2 1:5

*You are never too old to set a another goal or
dream a new dream* C. S. Lewis

Print Size

One of the downsides of using an A5 format is that print size and spacing can be an issue.

In response to a couple of comments after the last newsletter, I have increased both print size and spacing for this newsletter.

Any comments welcome.

CM



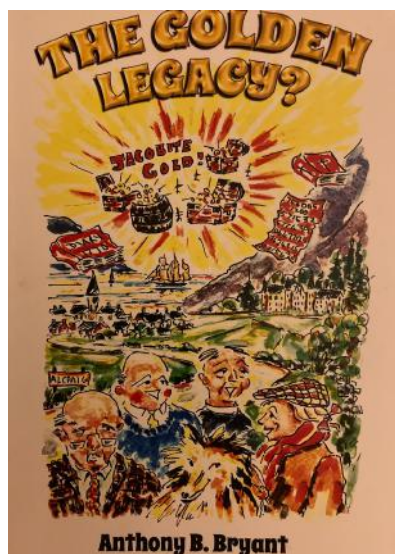
Pandemic Reflections 5

COVID 19 arrived in my working and home life in December 2019, earlier than the general population. At first it seemed like another flu that would be away by the spring along with the winter vomiting virus. Then the term 'Pandemic' emerged and we all became aware of what it meant: key messages of good hygiene, social distancing and staying at home to protect ourselves and others.

My office moved overnight out of Raigmore into Rosemarkie but the service for visually impaired people and their families continued - providing the help and information they needed to live in the 'new normal' world of lockdown isolation and the challenge of social distancing. The new normal also included supporting weekly shopping for the more vulnerable, using 'TEAMS' to visit my daughter and her husband both in total isolation, realising dogs do not understand that a computer screen does not allow them to find me sitting behind it and the chaos that follows when dogs knock computers off the desk!

My hope for the future as we learn to live with this virus, and the many others we are exposed to everyday, that we build on the success of telephone and online support, with face-to-face appointments where appropriate, thus reducing the waiting times in outpatient clinics. Secondly, to continue with the support and conversations with our neighbours and friends remembering the fears and anxieties 'lockdown' created and how we can all achieve so much more when we are a team and not a 'silo' living in isolation. Finally, to enjoy retirement which started March 31st 2021.

Janet Syer



Look out for the launch of Anthony Bryant's latest book, **The Golden Legacy**, when it is deemed safe to do so. This is Anthony's fourth book and has been ready for release for some time waiting for the lift of Covid restrictions and the passing of a period time to ensure that a book launch is safe for all.

However, if you want a copy now, please contact Anthony on 01381 620536. All proceeds will go to The Highland Hospice. An interview with Anthony about his writing will appear in the next newsletter.

Finally, remember.....

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