

Secretary's Scribblings!

Last time I wrote, there was snow on the ground, and I thought that Spring could not be far away. I was wrong, because the "Beast from the East" came upon us soon after, and gave us lots more snow! This gave us all many problems and difficulties, to say the least. Transport disrupted, people stranded on motorways, farmers struggling to look after livestock, power supplies lost. Locally, volunteers of all sorts stepped up to help those in need. The Tayside 4X4 Response Group, of which I am a member, was involved in ferrying doctors and nurses to Ninewells Hospital, and Perth Royal Infirmary, from all over the area, and assisting with Community Meals deliveries, and taking Social Care staff on home visits, for example. The community as a whole rallied round to help, and this feels like our faith in action, reaching out to others in need – remember Casting the Net?

Since then, the snow has gone, and the gardens are coming to life rapidly, as the days lengthen, and the temperature warms up. As I write this (mid April), I understand that temperatures in the next few days may be in the higher teens, perhaps into the twenties!! Surely Spring is coming!

Also, since my last "scribblings", your Vestry has been able to announce that the Rev. Elaine Garman will be our next Rector, and she introduced herself in the last issue of Eagle. The Institution date has been agreed as Saturday 14th July, 2018, at 1pm.

Work on the Rectory to effect repairs and renovations, and some redecoration, is hoped to be completed in good time to welcome Elaine and Gordon to Forfar and St John's.

We are about to move on in our life at St John's in a spirit of reconciliation, and a rebuilding of relationships. I, for one, am looking forward to the future with increasing optimism, and to welcoming our new Rector in July.

With all good wishes.

Richard Finch

Rotas

Wednesday May 2ndst

10.15 a.m. Said Eucharist

Sunday May 6th Sixth after Easter

Acts 10: 44 – 48, 1 John 5: 1 – 6, John 15: 9 - 17

11a.m. Sung Eucharist

Reader Douglas Burt

Wednesday May 9th

10.15 a.m. Said Eucharist

Thursday May 10th Ascension Day

Sunday May 13th Seventh after Easter

Acts 1: 15 – 17, 21 – 26, 1 John 5: 9 – 13, John 17: 6 - 19

11a.m. Sung Eucharist

Reader Madeline Kingston

Wednesday May 16th

10.15 a.m. Said Eucharist

Sunday May 20th Whit Sunday

11a.m. Sung Eucharist

Ezekiel 37: 1–14, Acts 2: 1–21. John 15: 26–27, 16:4b- 15

Reader Eleanor Rowlands

Wednesday May 23rd

10.15 a.m. Said Eucharist

Sunday May 27th Trinity Sunday

11a.m. Sung Eucharist

Isaiah 6: 1 – 8, Romans 8: 12 – 17, John 3: 1 - 17

Reader Richard Finch

Wednesday May 30th

10.15 a.m. Said Eucharist

Sunday June 3rd

11a.m. Sung Eucharist

Deuteronomy 5: 12 – 15, 2 Corinthians 4: 5 – 12, Mark 2: 23 – 3: 6

Reader Lee Winks

Wednesday June 6th

10.15 a.m. Said Eucharist

Sunday June 10th 11a.m. Sung Eucharist

Genesis 3: 8 - 15, 2 Corinthians 4:13 – 5:1 Mark 3:20 – 25

Reader FaySlingsby

Wednesday June 13th

10.15 a.m. Said Eucharist

The Daffodil Walk Sunday April 8th

This year, which is at least the 14th annual walk (my records only go back to 2004, so it could be more) was possibly too optimistically named – Daffodil Hunt might have been more accurate. There were plenty of flowers to be seen, but they were slightly aging snowdrops – pretty nonetheless. There were lots of lovely green spikes, some with a hint of yellow to come, but flowers apart, it is always a wonderful walk, and everyone, including the many dogs enjoyed it.

As usual, the weather was lovely – a bit chilly perhaps in the wind, but sunny and fine, perfect for the beautiful views. If St. Johns' were to warn the people on the Air Ministry roof of the 2019 date for our walk, they would not need to bother with any of their technology, they could safely assume 'a spring day with plenty of sunshine'. Since 2004 without exception, we have had perfect weather for the occasion.

After what my new toy – a pedometer – said was 2.2 miles, we arrived back at Reswallie, to a tea which immediately undid all the good calorie savings which we had clocked up. For the 60 or so hungry walkers the cakes were absolutely delicious and plentiful. The walk's fame has spread much wider than St. John's – lots of friends from around Angus had come along to enjoy the afternoon. Looking back again in the records, the first walk attracted 23 people – the walk grows and grows.

Very many thanks to Caroline and Hughie for their hospitality, and Fay and her team for the wonderful finale, most gratefully received. There was an opportunity to donate funds for Marie Curie and for St. John's. £800 was raised of which £200 has come to St. John's.

Where do pets come from?

It is reported that the following edition of the Book of Genesis was discovered in the Dead Sea Scrolls. If authentic, it would shed light on the question, "Where do pets come from?"

'And Adam said, "Lord, when I was in the garden, you walked with me every day. Now I do not see you anymore. I am lonesome here and it is difficult for me to remember how much you love me."

And God said, "No problem! I will create a companion for you that will be with you forever and who will be a reflection of my love for you, so that you will know I love you, even when you cannot see me. Regardless of how selfish and childish and unlovable you may be, this new companion will accept you as you are and will love you as I do, in spite of yourself."

And God created a new animal to be a companion for Adam. And it was a good animal. And God was pleased.

And the new animal was pleased to be with Adam and wagged his tail. And Adam said, "But Lord, I have already named all the animals in the Kingdom and all the good names are taken and I cannot think of a name for this new animal."

And God said, "No problem! Because I have created this new animal to be a reflection of my love for you, his name will be a reflection of my own name, and you will call him **Dog**."

And Dog lived with Adam and was a companion to him and loved him. And Adam was comforted. And God was pleased. And Dog was content and wagged his tail.

After a while, it came to pass that Adam's guardian angel came to the Lord and said, "Lord, Adam has become filled with pride. He struts and preens like a peacock and he believes he is worthy of adoration. Dog has indeed taught him that he is loved, but no one has taught him humility."

And the Lord said, "No problem! I will create for him a companion who will be with him forever and who will see him as he is. The companion will remind him of his limitations, so he will know that he is not always worthy of adoration."

And God created **Cat** to be a companion to Adam. And Cat would not obey Adam.

And when Adam gazed into Cat's eyes, he was reminded that he was not the supreme being. And Adam learned humility.

And God was pleased. And Adam was greatly improved.

And Cat did not care one way or the other.

As during this month several dogs took part in a church activity, perhaps this is a suitable moment to point out the spiritual side of the species –however those of us who have dogs, specially terriers, may find that this attribute is not always on show!

Forthcoming Events

Saturday May 19th

Spring Coffee Morning

St John's Halls, Green St 10am – 12 noon

Wednesday June 20th Annual Pitlochry Outing Matinee 2 p.m.

'The Rise & Fall of Little Voice' by Jim Cartwright

Thursday July 5th **Picnic at Auchmithie and Boat Trip around Bell Rock**

Saturday July 14th **Institution of the Revd. Elaine Garman at 1pm**

SPRING COFFEE MORNING: Saturday May 19th

Here we are again! Time for looking out some suitable Tombola Prizes (**unwrapped** please); Gift Stall items; dust off the recipe books to decide what delicious goodies to bake, and dig out the home made preserves from the pantry, for the Cake & produce stall. There will also be the Craft Stall for those adept with the needle and the Bottle Stall. **Any other suggestions would be welcomed!**

Please give any donations of goods etc. to Fay or bring them along to the Halls on the **morning of Friday 18th between 10am and 2pm.**

Offers of help to set up on the Friday or serve etc. on the day will be appreciated.

PITLOCHRY OUTING: Matinée 2pm Wednesday June 20th 2018 The Rise and Fall of Little Voice by Jim Cartwright

“It’s like at the races when you have found yourself a little nag that no one’s noticed but you know you’re onto a certainty and you’re feeling, this is it! She is the one.”

The format and timings will be the same as last year. The coach will **leave Letham at 10.30am** (so please be in the square by 10am); then **Academy Street, Forfar** at approx **10.45am** and will then proceed, via **Meigle**, to Pitlochry where we will have plenty of time to enjoy picnics or use the restaurant facilities and enjoy the surroundings before the performance starts at 2pm.

PICNIC AT AUCHMITHIE AND BOAT TRIP AROUND BELL ROCK:

There is a proposed visit to the Bell Rock lighthouse starting from Arbroath Harbour at 1-1.30 p.m. followed by a picnic at Auchmithie on Thursday 5th July.

To see the lighthouse and Bell Rock to their best advantage, the boat will leave Arbroath at low tide and this means access will be via vertical ladder of 6 or 7 rungs. Passengers must be fit enough to negotiate the ladder.

The boat holds a maximum of 14 people and will be filled on a first come, first served basis.

The lighthouse boat trip lasts about 3 hours and the plan is to follow this with a picnic around 5pm in the afternoon for all who have been out to the lighthouse

and friends who would like to join later. It will probably be held at Auchmithie, hopefully outside, but there is indoor accommodation. The picnic will be provided by the fund raising committee. Bishop Luscombe has offered to conduct a short Eucharist in the church at Auchmithie that evening. The cost of the Bell Rock trip and picnic will be £25 and the picnic alone £5.

Because the number for the boat is limited, please phone Douglas Burt (01241 829242) to give your name.

A list for names for the picnic alone will be put up on the church noticeboard in due course.

World Day of Prayer Friday March 23rd

This was held at the East and Old Church with representatives from all the Forfar churches. Anne Hawkes represented St. John's and found it a really interesting and worthwhile experience. It was coincidental that she should represent the Chinese nationals as she was born in the 'Chinatown' of Forfar.

Tuesday Club – 13th March 2018
Hydro Power Stations by Richard Finch

Unfortunately due to ill-health, the scheduled Tuesday Club speaker, Elizabeth Montgomery-Fox was unable to join us to present her talk about Citizens Advice, so with little time to prepare Richard Finch stepped into the breach. Richard is of course a 'well kent' figure within St John's and requires no introduction, but what may or may not be known to the congregation is Richard's professional background in the Hydro industry, and so it was his passion for hydroelectric power that formed the basis for the evening's presentation.

In his introduction to the subject, Richard not only recalled his pleasure working in the industry particularly at Cruachan Power Station from 1977 until his retirement, but also introduced the social history associated with 'Hydro' in Scotland as told in a BBC2 documentary 'Hydro Days' by those who were actually involved. To hear, to see and learn about the ambition to establish the initial projects, the hardships faced by the workforce, the loss and rewards was extremely moving.

Built in the early 1900s, Blackwater Dam provided power for the growing Aluminium smelting industry and employment for 'Irish Navvys' who flocked to Scotland at a time when the construction of the English Railway and Canal systems neared completion. Lack of employment in their homeland and other hardships was the driving force for these desperate men who with little alternative crossed the mountains from Glen Coe to Kinlochleven via the Devils Staircase, a hazardous route and in snow, some perished. An account of these times can be found in '*Children of the Dead End*' and '*Navvy's Elegy*' written by Patrick MacGill who had first-hand experience working on the construction of the dam. The electricity generated also provided 'free' power (believed to be before Buckingham Palace) to the homes of the area which was included in the rent. Kinlochleven became a 'boom' town boasting more than five football teams and cinema 'talkies' before it became common place in the rest of the country. As demands grew during the '20s and '30s for the Aluminium industry, 15 miles of tunnel was drilled through Ben Nevis in order to create another dam at Fort William, and further east, Loch Ericht was dammed for general supply purposes.

The Second World War proved to be the catalyst for developing Hydroelectricity in the Scottish Highlands. Tom Johnston, Social Journalist and Historian became Secretary of State for Scotland in Churchill's coalition Government. A great visionary, Johnston had a strong belief that the waters of the Highlands should be developed for the benefit of the public and so, in 1943 (a particularly bleak period of the war) he took the opportunity to rush through Parliament the '*Hydro-Electric Development (Scotland) Act 1943*' and thus put his beliefs into action. Pre-war surveys of the area around Loch Sloy identified a good catchment area, had high rainfall, and sufficient height above sea level to establish a facility between Loch Sloy and Inveruglas on the west bank of Loch Lomond which was officially opened by the then Queen Regent in 1950.

The workforce comprised of men returning from the war from Ireland, Scottish Highlands, Poland, Ukraine and German prisoners of war. A total of twenty-one men lost their lives, comradeship was strong but Health and Safety was unknown. Hard hats did not exist and the men wore their demob soft hats which prevented the water running down their necks, but little else. Many sustained injuries notably loss of fingers. Work and poor provisions were the

order of the day, but providing those 'tunnel tigers' reached targets or broke records, the bonus systems were extremely lucrative. Money for hard work meant play was also hard; the 'tigers' dressed well - 'tuxedos, bowler hats and American- style ties were essentials, but gambling became a by-product.

Despite opposition and hardships including loss of communities through flooded valleys, the Hydro industry gradually spread further north and east until the 1960s when '*white heat of technology*' was favoured. Loch Foyers and Cruachan (the hollow mountain, the 'jewel in the crown') storage pump schemes were sadly the end of an era as the war against nationalisation raged, and nuclear, coal, north sea oil and gas energy sources gained momentum.....or is it? Global warming has created an opportunity for these 'hydro days' to be revisited. They may return again!

After Evelyn's vote of thanks and midst much chatter about what we had seen and heard, the refreshments were much enjoyed. Thanks to all concerned.

Linda Robbie

Tuesday Club – 10th April 2018

Chris Longmuir – Author

It was time for something different at the April meeting of the Tuesday Club when Evelyn introduced our guest speaker Chris Longmuir. Chris who lives in Montrose worked 19 years prior to retirement in Social work, latterly with Angus Council as the Assistant Principal Officer for Adoption and Fostering, but from early childhood, Chris's great passion has been the written word. Because of her lack of confidence in herself, following her dream of becoming a writer seemed a step to far, but in mid-life Chris gained an Open University degree, later a post graduate qualification from Dundee University and more recently a qualification in criminology.

Her writing career began with short stories in 1990, the first of which was published in '*The Peoples Friend*' in 1991. Publications in '*My Weekly*', '*Dark Horizons*', '*Scottish Memories*' and others would follow including a regular contribution to '*The Highlander*', a USA magazine. Chris attended classes in Angus which involve writing a chapter a week, read to the class and critiqued by fellow classmates. So compelling were Chris's stories that the class could hardly wait for the next chapter. Gaining confidence in herself, her first Novel, a historical Saga was written in 1997 but was not accepted for publication and as Chris put it, 'was put in the bottom drawer'. For a while this seemed to be the pattern, the bottom drawer gaining most, but this determined lady had no intention of giving up. Around this time two further Historical Novels entered Chris's mind but remained there as reading habits were changing, so she turned to crime!

Set in 1919, her first book in this genre '*The Death Game*' involved a former suffragette Kirsty Campbell, Dundee's first WPC (one of two in Scotland, four were appointed to England). Another for that bottom drawer despite being second in the Scottish Association of Writers (SAW) Pitlochry Trophy competition 2000 and one of twenty winners of the international Crème del la Crime competition for new unpublished crime writers. Unscathed, a new tact was employed – contemporary crime - so '*Night Watcher*' and DS Bill Murphy was born and the following year (2001) another SAW winner to be consigned to the bottom drawer. '*Dead Wood*' was the next in the Dundee Crime series winning SAW in 2008 and later announced

winner of the Dundee International Book Prize in 2009. A large cash prize and publishing deal accompanied this and though the 'break-through' book for Chris, life as a crime novelist was not easy as publishing difficulties remained.

Books in the traditional format were seen by many as the preferred option but Kindle was gaining popularity, as was Amazon, so this was the next move for Chris. The third book in the Dundee Crime series, *'Missing Believed Dead'* was the first to be produced on Kindle.

Writing, as we heard, takes stamina, determination, research and belief in yourself and Chris really does bear witness to that. After 30 years of writing she is the author of seven novels and two non-fiction books. Spending an evening with the dark side of life was truly fascinating and compelling and those bottom drawer books deservedly count themselves in the number on the bookshelves.

Evelyn gave the vote of thanks and then we all enjoyed a little more than 'food for thought'. Many thanks to all involved.

Linda Robbie

A bit of a cautionary tale?

The Man in the Hat

At the beginning of a church service, a stranger wearing a large hat came and sat in a front pew.

A man in the pew behind suggested to him that he should take off his hat.

"No, I prefer to keep it on", came the reply.

A sidesman then approached him with the same request, only to receive the reply "I have every right to keep my hat on and I intend to do so."

Even at the Communion rail, the unknown man kept his hat on.

After the service, the minister approached the man and said, "It has been a great pleasure to have you worship with us this morning and I very much hope you will join us every Sunday. However, it is the custom for men to remove their hats in church".

The man replied "Thank you very much, I enjoyed today's service and will come again. In fact, I've been coming for six months but today is the first time anybody has spoken to me!"

There will be a small break with normal custom for the next magazine in that the June edition will be a double one – June/July rather than the normal July/August. I hope that will not inconvenience anyone.