

# Avoch Linked with Fortrose and Rosemarkie Church of Scotland

Quarterly Newsletter Issue 13 September 2022

## *Fun on Rosemarkie Beach - William Mather*

*The following verses opened a series of summer sermons under the title Jesus at the Seaside, following Mark's use of the phrase "sea of Galilee" for the setting of Jesus' initial ministry: now briefly summarised over the next few pages.*

### **Sermon 1: Jesus calls the first disciples – "follow me" means whole-hearted commitment**



#### **Mark 1:16-20**

*16 As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. 17 "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." 18 At once they left their nets and followed him. 19 When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. 20 Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.*

Here we see how Jesus's words lay hold on people's lives and show his interest in their whole-hearted commitment – a right that takes priority even over the claims of family. The negative sense of "fishing for men" in Old Testament in verses such as Jeremiah 16:16 or Amos 4:2 is transformed into a compulsion to follow Jesus – that goes on from the time of the New Testament right through to the present day.

That sense of "being called" echoes through many texts such as Proverbs 1:24, Isaiah 42:6, Romans 9:11, I Peter 2:21. Discipleship comes into being through the call of Jesus. It is a call to follow, to call others but also a call to commitment. What kind of disciples are we? As Stott says, "Genuine discipleship is whole-hearted discipleship ..." He concludes with a challenge for all of us who are called to follow Jesus today:

"My concern is that we who claim to be disciples of the Lord Jesus do not provoke him to say to us – why do you call me Lord, and do not do what I say? (Luke 6:46). We are not to be like fish floating with the stream but, rather, to swim against the stream even against the cultural mainstream." (J. Stott, *The Radical Disciple*, IVP: 2010).

## **Sermon 2 : Jesus calls Levi and eats with sinners –is he welcome at our table?**

### **Mark 2:13-16**

*13 Once again Jesus went out beside the lake. A large crowd came to him, and he began to teach them. 14 As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax collector's booth. 'Follow me,' Jesus told him, and Levi got up and followed him. 15 While Jesus was having dinner at Levi's house, many tax collectors and sinners were eating with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. 16 When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw him eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they asked his disciples: 'Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?'*

We are back near the seashore and a large crowd has come to hear Jesus. Jesus sees the crowds as sheep without a shepherd and has compassion on them (see Mark 6:34). He begins to teach about the kingdom of God. Levi, sitting at the tax collector's booth is addressed by Jesus: "Follow me." At Jesus' word, Levi immediately leaves his tax booth and follows Jesus.

In Judea and Samaria, tax collectors gathering money for the Roman treasury were seen as greedy – hence the general disapproval of the wider society. However, Jesus liked to engage with lots of different people including outsiders or those on the margins and so went to dinner at Levi's house where Mark tells us he dined with "many tax collectors and sinners."

The Pharisees, serious about their faith though often in a legalistic way, questioned why Jesus dined with 'sinners' – understood as those who flaunt the religious code (though most of those at the dinner would have probably also have been deemed 'sinners' by ordinary folk).

Jesus defends his right to associate with those not seen as 'respectable.' "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." The righteous allowed the gospel to pass by - as Anderson notes, "religiously, they had arrived already ...". He goes on: "For Jesus to refuse to have dealings with the disreputable would be as absurd as for a doctor to refuse to have to do with the sick; he has come on purpose to call sinners and the disreputable people he is associating with are obvious members of that class."

**(H. Anderson, The Gospel of Mark, Oliphants: 1976).**

Coming back to the present day, two questions remain: Is Jesus welcome at our table? Are 'the crowd' welcome at our table?



## **Sermon 3: Jesus calls the twelve – to be with him and to be sent out**

### **Mark 3:13-19**

*13 Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. 14 He appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach 15 and to have authority to drive out demons. 16 These are the twelve he appointed: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); 17 James son of Zebedee and his brother John (to them he gave the name Boanerges, which means ‘sons of thunder’), 18 Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot 19 and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.*

Here, Jesus withdraws from the towns and synagogues to continue his ministry in the open air by the Sea of Galilee, but the press of the crowd makes him climb into Simon’s boat, put out a little from shore and teach the people from the boat. The crowd had come to listen but were also, doubtless, drawn by his power to heal and deal with “impure spirits.”

This passage is about the call and appointment of the twelve apostles. They are to be with him and sent out to continue his mission to Jewish people and beyond. Peter is the rock, the foundation for this group despite his character - his choice perhaps best seen as “a mystery of divine election” – the ‘everyman’ in Jesus’s list. James and John, he refers to as ‘the Sons of Thunder’: think of their outbursts in the gospels. Then there is Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

The church can easily relate to a list that begins with Peter who denied Jesus and ends with Judas, who betrayed him – we are reminded that discipleship does not mean instant perfection nor a journey devoid of trials and struggles. Rather, discipleship means to be with Jesus and, just like the first disciples, not to be an introverted group, detached, and apart from the world. Instead, to be a disciple means, to be sent out, to proclaim the good news and to be ambassadors for Christ in word and deed.

## **Sermon 4: Jesus calms the storm –and stirs the faith of the disciples**

### **Mark 4:35 - 41**

*35 That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, ‘Let us go over to the other side.’ 36 Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. 37 A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. 38 Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, ‘Teacher, don’t you care if we drown?’ 39 He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, ‘Quiet! Be still!’ Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. 40 He said to his disciples, ‘Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?’ 41 They were terrified and asked each other, ‘Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!’*

Jesus often went to the Eastern shore of Galilee, to retreat. However, the Sea of Galilee is subject to unexpected squalls as the wind funnels through the hills that surround. In Mark 4, a severe storm comes out of nowhere as Jesus sleeps on the cushion in the stern of the boat. The disciples are terrified and wake Jesus saying, ‘Teacher, don’t you care if we drown?’

The very abruptness, retained in the text, suggests an eye-witness memory, yet reveals that Jesus's identity as the Son of God was not yet revealed to the disciples – it was still “hidden.”

“Miracles are not compelling proofs. Their true significance is recognisable only by faith. They are, as it were, chinks, in the curtain of the Son of God's hiddenness. The light let through the chinks is real light – the miracles do reveal ... Christ's glory for those who believe - and failure to discern their meaning and to respond to the summons to repentance is without excuse - but the light is not so direct as to be compelling.” (C.E.B. Cranfield, *The Gospel according to Saint Mark [Commentary]*, CUP: 1963).

The passage tells us that Jesus woke up and rebuked the wind and said to the waves: “Quiet! Be still!” causing the disciples to say, “Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!” The disciples have an inkling, at last (!), of the kingdom of God revealed in Christ Jesus.

## Fishers of Men

*On Sunday 3rd July Rev. Beattie asked me to say a few words on 'Fishers of Men'. What follows is a slightly expanded version of what I said.*

**Bob Moore**

While thinking about what I might say, I was surprised to find that, in the account of the calling of the first disciples in Matthew's gospel, Simon and Andrew were fishing from the shore. I had always assumed they had a boat.



To date I have read each gospel in isolation so this discovery made me wonder what other misconceptions I might have and, so, I was prompted to look at the accounts in the other gospels.

In Matthew 4:18-22, Simon (later called Peter) and his brother were casting their nets into the sea and James and John were mending nets in their father's boat. The account in Mark 4:16-20 tells the same story. The record in Luke 5:4-11 is preceded by the first miraculous catch of fish. Simon Peter, James, and John are specifically mentioned but not Andrew, although I like to believe he too was present.

It is noteworthy that the four initial disciples all responded to Jesus's call without hesitation. Why? Because they already knew who he was. John 15:35-51 tells us John the Baptist had identified Jesus as “The Lamb of God” to Andrew and John and that they had spent some time with Him. It is recorded that Andrew told his brother Simon, “We have found the Messiah.” I think it reasonable to assume that John also told his brother James.

Jesus called the disciples to be “fishers of men”. Warren Wiersbe in his commentary on John, *Be Transformed*, says the phrase was not coined by Jesus but had been used for years by Greek and Roman teachers. I have not checked his source but am happy to take his word for it. To be a “fisher of men” in those days meant to seek to persuade men and “catch” them with the truth. A fisherman catches a living fish and it dies. The opposite is the case with “Fishers of Men” where

the hope is that people, dead in their sin will see the truth and be brought to life in Christ.

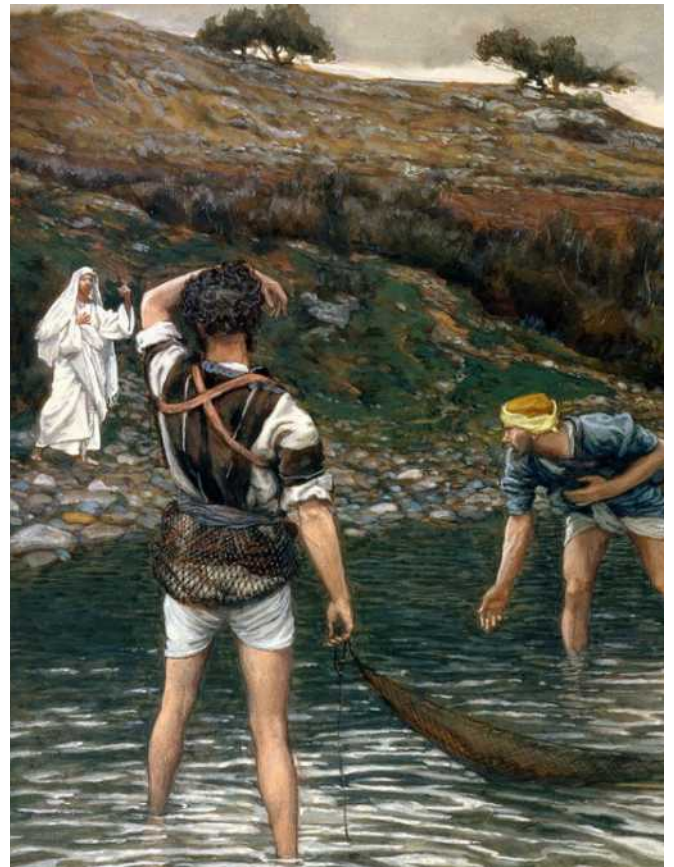
Simon Peter was an impulsive action man. So, too, were James and John, sometimes known as “The Sons of Thunder”. All four were fishermen and it is likely seven out of the twelve disciples were fishermen. I can understand why Jesus had so many fishermen in his chosen band of disciples. Fishermen are courageous and Jesus needs brave people to follow him. Fishermen are hardworking, dedicated, patient and persistent. They will not quit and they know how to cooperate with one another - all I suggest desirable characteristics in a disciple.

I find it interesting that one of the first disciples was called Simon. Jacob’s second son was named Simeon, of which Simon is a derivative. When he, Simeon, was born, his mother Leah said, "Because the LORD heard that I'm neglected, he gave me this one, too." (Genesis 29:33).

So she named him Simeon which means ‘to hear’. 'Hear' is a much more active word than listen as it implies a call to action and, true to his name, Simon responded and answered Jesus’s call. Jesus is still calling to his followers today so like Simon we should hear and respond.



**St Peter's Church on the shores of Galilee**



**The Calling of St Peter and St Andrew  
James Tissot**

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**A Thought** - for anyone who thinks that the days of Jesus in 1st century Palestine are far back in time, consider this. We have folks in our communities in their 90s who will remember, as small children, meeting people in their 90s who, in turn, as small children, would have met people in their 90s. Using that approach, it is a mere 19 or 20 generations back to 1st century Palestine - a mere blink in the scales of time.

**Contributed**



Anyone visiting a restaurant on the shores of Galilee these days is likely to be offered St Peter's fish as a particularly tasty speciality dish with links back to New Testament times.

Two thousand years ago, and for many generations afterwards, fish stocks were well sustained and an important source of protein for local communities. But in 2010, as a result of over-fishing and drought, for the first time in 5000 years, fishing was banned for two years to let stocks recover. Much of the St Peter's fish now comes from local fish farms.

In the time of Jesus, fishing prospered. The Jewish historian Josephus records more than 230 fishing boats operating at that time with the ruling governors Herod and Philip, sons of King Herod, promoting investment in the industry.

There were many species in the Sea of Galilee but the three main ones were sardines, biny (of the carp family) and musht (St Peter's fish). Musht means 'comb', a comb-like dorsal fin being a distinguishing feature of the fish. Among other species were catfish, not eaten by Jews as they did not have fins and scales and considered "unclean". (Leviticus 11:19). However, fishermen were able to sell catfish to Greek communities on the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee. The same applied to eels.

But how did musht come to be known as St Peter's fish? The answer is thought to lie in Matthew 17: 24 - 27. Peter had been challenged by the collectors of the temple tax in Capernaum as to why Jesus had not paid the tax. Jesus responded to Peter's subsequent query: 'From whom do the kings of the earth collect duty and taxes - from their own sons or from others?' 'From others,' Peter replied. 'Then the sons are exempt,' Jesus points out before adding that to avoid offence, Peter should go to the lake, open the mouth of the first fish he catches and there he will find a four drachma coin, enough to pay the tax for both of them.

But why might that fish be a musht? Well, in winter months, musht gathered in shoals in the northern part of the lake. It was a bonanza for fishermen as these decent sized fish were easily caught by hook, net, basket or even by hand. In the spring, musht mate and lay their eggs on the bottom of the lake. Unusually, after fertilisation, the parents take the eggs into a pouch in their mouths for a few weeks until they hatch. They then watch over them for a few days. But to stop their young from re-entering the mouth, the parent fish take in pebbles or even coins that have fallen in to the water. It was not unusual for small pebbles and, occasionally, coins inside musht. What would have surprised Peter was that the right coin was in the first fish that he caught! Just as Jesus had told him.

**Contributed**

***Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labour or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of those. Luke 12 : 27***



A few weeks ago, Rev Graeme Bell reminded us not to 'water the weeds' while surrounded by a wonderful range of floral arrangements.



Anne Fiddes, Sandra and Graeme Bell, as part of the Pastoral Group, were behind the initiative which was very well supported by the rest of the congregation.

At the end of the service, a small team organised the flowers in to bouquets to be distributed in the community. A great initiative!



Sandra and Anne starting to plan delivery of the floral gifts



Anne, Ethel and Bridget heading off on a delivery run

# Surrounded by History

It has been said that the names of most ministers fall quickly into oblivion after their departure from this life unless they have left something in writing to remind us of their character and preaching. During the period of over 250 years ending with the union of Fortrose and Rosemarkie Churches in 1967, Rosemarkie Church had only seven ministers. They may have left little or nothing in writing, but, with one exception, they have left their remains, as only one is not buried in Rosemarkie Churchyard.

Thus the gravestones in the churchyard and the memorials in the church itself give us, in the twenty first century, the basic facts of these ministries which can be traced to the beginning of the eighteenth century. Freda Bassindale's excellent book *Rosemarkie Connections* gives much information on these and many other families finding their permanent rest in Rosemarkie, but it might be of interest to record in one article what is known about the past ministers of Rosemarkie before the union, only four of whom preached in the building we know today.



**Rev Robert Finlay** was minister from 1709 to 1733. What is known of his ministry, especially that conducted in Fortrose, is covered in *Rosemarkie Connections* (pages 28 and 29). He was described as a true believer, a confessor of the vices of his time and a vigorous critic who would not hesitate to issue a rebuke when necessary! He is buried in the south west corner of the graveyard, his grave marked by a large table stone. The original inscription had become illegible some

one hundred years after his death on 4 December 1733, so in May 1853 the inscription was renewed by the then minister, the second Rev Alexander Wood. Unfortunately, since then the inscription has again become impossible to read, but this time, as shown above, because the stone is under at least a foot of ivy!

**Rev John Wood** was minister from 5 August 1734 to 10 November 1775. He was born in Fordyce, a village around three miles south west of Portsoy in Banffshire. On 5 April 1739 he married Ann Ogilvie who sadly died in childbirth on 27 April 1745, almost a year before the Battle of Culloden. She had previously lost two other children and left no surviving issue. Her memorial stone, in Latin, is on the wall of the vestry. It is full of superlatives - a most beloved, delightful, desired and choicest lady. The phrase translated 'alas very short' presumably relates to her lifespan and not her height! The inscription suggested that Rev John Wood would shortly follow her to the grave, but this was not to be. He lived for a further thirty years and married sixteen year old Sophia Irvine just two years after Ann's death. He died after 41 years ministry on 10 November 1775 and is buried in a walled enclosure on the south side of the church building. Sophia, some 27 years his junior, survived until 28 May 1803. A memorial stone to John and Sophia, in English and including beautiful tributes to the couple, is also on the wall of the vestry.



**Rev Alexander Wood** was minister from 10 November 1775 to 22 August 1809. He immediately succeeded his father John, having been his father's assistant in 1771. His memorial stone, a 'tribute of sincere affection and esteem', was erected by his youngest brother Andrew and can be seen on the wall of the upper room in the Church. It is a beautiful description of a gentleman who was obviously a beloved minister and a fine preacher. A marble wall plaque on the south side of the inside of the church commemorates his wife Janet Houston who died on 6 December 1829, age 76.

**Rev Alexander Wood** was minister from August 1815 to 8 January 1874. There was a delay of some six years between his father's death and his own induction during which time he undertook the ministerial duties unofficially. Like his grandfather John, he married after his induction. His wife, Agnes Walker, would have been one of the first brides married in the present Church which opened on 12 August 1821, her marriage to the minister being only four months later. Their portraits hang at the back of the Church. The third Wood's ministry was the longest, 64 years, including the six year period of his unofficial ministry, and assuming that he remained active after the appointments of his assistant Rev James McDowall in 1861. All three Woods are buried in the walled enclosure on the south side of the Church. Portraits of Rev Alexander Wood and his wife Agnes Walker hang on the back wall of the Church. The three generations served as ministers of Rosemarkie for a total of 140 years.

**Rev James McDowall** was ordained assistant minister and successor to the third Rev Alexander Wood on 9 May 1861 at the age of 28. He served as assistant until the pulpit became his own on the death of Rev Wood on 8 January 1874. He retired in 1908, aged 75, and died two years later on 2 August 1910. Described as 'a man greatly loved' he is buried on the east side of the Church, just outside the walled enclosure containing the Woods.

**Rev Robert Shaw Masterton** was ordained and inducted to what was to be, like his five predecessors, his only charge on 20 August 1908. Born in Lesmahagow, he was yet another Rosemarkie minister who married after his induction, but not in his own Church. He married Helen Craig in Perth in 1913. A sound protagonist of the old established Church of Scotland, he retired in 1945 and died two years later sitting in his chair in the study in his retirement home, Shandon in Rosemarkie. He is the only minister serving between 1709 and 1967 not buried in the churchyard, being, with his wife who survived him by 23 years, laid to rest in Sandymount Cemetery in Glasgow. One of the mourners attending was a relative of his wife, named Allan Mackean!

**Rev John Blake Russell** was minister from November 1946 until his death on 30 May 1967. Originally from the hamlet of Dyke, close to Brodie Castle, he was minister of Lochwinnoch West Church before his induction to Rosemarkie at the age of 51. His ministry lasted over twenty years, and with his death the sole ministry of Rosemarkie came to an end. His grave is immediately south of the entrance to the Church.

The 55 years since the union with Fortrose in 1967 have seen eight ministers of Rosemarkie Church, compared with seven in the previous 250 years. It is unlikely that any more ministers will be buried in the Churchyard.

**Jack Kernahan**

I've had a passion for islands since student days, when I made my very first sea trip, sailing north from Aberdeen to Shetland. It was certainly a voyage to remember but for the worst of reasons. The fine evening weather as the St Clair nosed her way slowly out of Aberdeen Harbour had lulled me into a false sense of security before the ship dipped and rolled past Rattray Head and out into the troubled open waters of the North Sea. I'd never felt so sick. It was the first test of my sea legs and I'd failed miserably.



My destination the next day was Fair Isle, the tiny isolated island that gives its name to a sea area in the daily radio shipping forecasts. It's well known also for the distinctive patterns used by the island women in their home knitting. To get there meant travelling by bus from Lerwick down to the southernmost tip of the Shetland mainland. At the little Grutness pier, I descended the metal ladder on to the open deck of the little, blue-painted wooden island mail boat that had known an earlier life at the fishing. After the uncomfortable heave-ho experience the night before I can't say I was looking forward to the two and a half-hour crossing, over Da Roost, the notoriously troubled stretch of water beyond Sumburgh Head. But I needn't have worried; the day was fine and the sea fairly untroubled – which was more than I could say for all my following crossings.

My passion for the natural world had drawn me north to stay for a few weeks at the island bird observatory, a ramshackle collection of wind-blasted wooden huts left by the Navy after the war. The high, plunging sea cliffs with their countless puffins and the chequer board of inland crofts provided a world of real fascination. I couldn't wait to get back the following year. The people I got to know in the small island population were warm and welcoming and it was a pleasure to be able to join them in Sunday worship at the island kirk. I used to love coming out of the weathered church door into such a breath-taking setting. The tiny scale of the strips and patches of hay and oats that were the only cultivable crofting land were dwarfed by the towering mass of Fair Isle's signature landmark, the detached, high and cliff-bound Sheep Rock with its capping of green, salt-sprayed turf. At times, when the surrounding seas were stirred into a frenzy of cliff-lashing, salt spray was driven across the face of what then seemed such a vulnerable speck of land in the vastness of the sea. But circumstances bred a firm faith among the folk in their challenging situation and regular church attendance was part and parcel of island living.



Fair Isle Cliffs - Wikipedia Dr Julian Paren

The days I spent in this isolated situation were to have a strong influence on my thinking. In fact, those Fair Isle days were to lay the foundations for what became a lifelong interest in human geography and in particular the geography of island places. It was on that sea-girt lump of rock that I first appreciated the close relationship of island dwellers to the land into which they had been born, to the sea that encircled them, and the influence of both on the way lives were lived. When storm force winds whistled round the grey stone gables of the old kirk building and the rain drops splattered against the church windows, the rising strains of “Will your anchor hold in the storms of life” did seem very apt!



As I write this, I'm looking at a ship in a bottle that shares my desk space. It's a beautiful model of that little Fair Isle mail boat on which I made the crossings all those years ago. In a local twist, it happens that it was made specially for me, just after my third island visit, by Danny Mackintosh of Avoch who was highly skilled in the art of making the models and somehow managing to get them into the bottles, masts and all. And the name of the real-life boat on which those island folk so depended? Significantly, it was called the Good Shepherd.

**Douglas Willis**

## Surrounded by Nature

In July Douglas led a hugely informative and entertaining guided tour of the natural world in Rosemarkie kirkyard. Much appreciated by all present.



# ‘The most important day since Saint Maelrubha landed on these shores.’



My dad (left) served with the Ross and Cromarty Constabulary on the Isle of Lewis from around 1937 until we left the island in 1949. He became the local “bobby” in Lochcarron and we moved there in the February 1949. Dad’s “beat” stretched eastwards to Achnasheen, a distance of 22 miles from Lochcarron, and to Stromeferry, Applecross and Shildaig in the other directions - a large area to cover when you consider that the Ross and Cromarty Constabulary did not provide him with as much as a pushbike in order to fulfil his duties!

In the early days the beat was covered by foot but Dad very quickly found himself a pedal cycle. Then, after several months using this means of transport, he bought himself an autocycle engine. This was a small engine that you bolted onto the front forks of a bicycle and powered the front wheel. So Dad’s pedal

power received an all-important upgrade! I don’t remember the new “arrangement” ever becoming road registered and having number plates. Perhaps I am wrong, but I still wonder if the local constable disregarded the law? But then, who was going to take him to task over given he was the only policeman for miles around?

The motorised bicycle came with a bonus. If one provided any form of motorised transport in order to carry out your police duties, then the ‘force’ would pay you a mileage allowance according to the engine size. The allowance that Dad could claim for running the Autocycle amounted to one penny farthing per mile in old money!

The Autocycle, legal or otherwise, was quickly replaced with a 1935 Jowett “twin” 8 hp saloon which Dad bought in the village of Shildaig around 1952. The allowance for the Jowett (due to its larger engine capacity) shot up to seven pence farthing per mile!

The Jowett had originally been registered in Leeds and bore the Leeds registration HUA 400. It had been dry stored on wooden blocks since before the war and, although it was in very good condition, I remember Dad having to trace some spare parts for the car’s steering mechanism etc. I also remember that the colour of the Jowett was black when it arrived in Lochcarron. Most cars of that period were black in colour. Dad bought a quantity of Valspar paint and proceeded to hand paint the car a very attractive maroon colour. The Jowett was used as our family transport until about 1958.

I had often wished for a picture of our family saloon from the fifties and around 1998 I was given several colour transparencies by George Maclennan’s son Alan. George was my first cousin and

was the son of my Uncle Don and Aunt Maggie who lived in Dingwall. George was very much into photography and had taken many colour slides around that period. One of these pictures was taken on the road to Applecross in 1955. Dad and I are in the photo (below) standing beside the maroon Jowett.



It was a hot summer day and the two cylinder Jowett began to overheat on the steep uphill road section of the “Bealach na Ba” (The Pass of the Cattle). The Jowett, although water cooled, did not have a fan and so in these conditions was always going to overheat. We made several stops on that journey to allow the old girl to cool down. (The Bealach road rises to about 2000 feet).

In the photo, Dad is in police uniform as he had to be on duty in Applecross later that day. A very important event was about to take place in Applecross as their mains electricity supply was going to be switched on for the first time! I remember hearing an old local man saying to a fellow villager, “Aye, big circus today.”

I also recall that the local MP spoke at the opening ceremony that day and informed us that this was the most important day in the history of Applecross since Saint Maelrubha had landed on these shores to build his monastery in 672AD! Following the speeches the oldest inhabitant of Applecross was asked to “switch on” the electricity supply following which he was presented with an electric kettle!

I remember watching the steamer from Stornoway call into the bay to exchange mail bags with someone who rowed out in a small boat from the village post office. This was a daily routine as it was more reliable than using the road connection with civilisation! It reminded me of earlier occasions when I sailed from our home on the Isle of Lewis to Kyle of Lochalsh with my parents and witnessed the same changeover from the ship. I have vivid memories of watching while a woman from the village was transferred from this little rowing boat, which was bobbing up and down in the waves, to the Loch Seaforth in order to catch the train from Kyle to Inverness.

Different times!

**John MacKenzie**



## The Ferintosh Burn

There are many ancient and historic places of worship in the Black Isle, but one of the most fascinating and unusual is The Burn at Ferintosh. Situated at an elevation of around 500 feet just over half a mile north of Ferintosh Free Church, the worship site is about a quarter of a mile walk uphill through a wooded area along the course of the Castle Burn and is not obviously visible from the road. The grid reference is NH581576.

The natural amphitheatre has been used for outdoor worship (right) probably since the eighteenth century. Its place in history is particularly with reference to the ministry of Rev Dr John Macdonald, DD, minister of Ferintosh from 1813 until his death in 1849, and popularly known as The Apostle of The North. It was principally used for Communion services and would attract upwards of ten thousand people, many travelling long distances to attend. Dr Macdonald's first wife died shortly after his induction and the Sunday following her death had been appointed for the celebration of Communion at The Burn. His elders suggested that in the circumstances the services should be postponed but his response was "No, no. Let not the death of my wife interfere with commemorating the death of my Saviour". His text for the service was Hosea 2:19 'I will betroth thee unto me for ever'. Few eyes were without tears as the congregation's hearts went out to their preacher.



It is difficult to imagine ten thousand people assembled in what seems such a small area, but we have an eye witness account from William Laidlaw, poet and one time steward to Sir Walter Scott. On Scott's death in 1832 he came north to live with his brother in Contin. Part of his description of The Burn was 'a dell of a long hollow, oval shaped, bordered with hazel, birch and wild roses. It seemed to have been formed for the purpose of worship'. Walking around the outside of the congregated thousands and looking down on the glen from the upper end the scene was really indescribable. There were long white communion tables and around two thirds of the congregation were women, dressed mostly in large wide muslin caps and brightly coloured plaid shawls. He could compare the singing of Gaelic psalms with 'nothing earthly'. He calculated around 9,500 people at the service.

The Burn came into its own after the 1843 Disruption. Dr Macdonald had been travelling the Highlands explaining the situation to congregations and after the Assembly at which the Disruption took place he and his congregation were without a church and a manse.




FREE CHURCH  
DISRUPTION  
1843  
MET HERE

Services were therefore held at The Burn pending the construction of a new 'Free' Church. His text on the Sunday after the assembly was Galatians 5:1 'Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage'.

The Burn continued in regular use for services until the 1950s. Intermittent use recommenced around 1980 and Ferintosh Free Church continues to hold short services twice a year, usually around 4pm on summer Sundays, with worshippers now bringing their own garden chairs and sometimes umbrellas! The building formerly used to house chairs and other equipment still stands, in a fine state of repair. A preaching booth or tent would be attached to the gable end in earlier days but this is not used nowadays. It is a totally atmospheric and peaceful spot, steeped in spiritual history – a wonderful place to visit on a warm summer day, to sit and quietly meditate.

**Jack Kernahan**

## **Tuesday Craft Group**



Some of the ladies of the Tuesday Craft Group (left) displaying the results of their latest project.

The sampler is worked on canvas using many stitches designed for this purpose.

Sincere thanks, as before, to Sylvia Brooks for skilled tuition and great patience!



## Favourite Hymn

There was a lovely moment in Rosemarkie Church a few months ago when Warren announced the next hymn as *Let Us with a Gladsome Mind*. Downstairs, Billy Hossack looked up to the gallery to his brother, Alasdair, sitting with his wife Georgina in the family pew. Both smiled and exchanged a thumbs up. Why so? Both instantly remembered it as one of their dad, Sandy's, favourite hymns, not only sung in church but on social occasions such as Hogmanay, along with other favourites, *The Old Hundred*, *By Cool Siloam's Shady Rill* and many others.



Jean and Sandy Hossack - parents of Alasdair and Billy

### So who was John Milton?

Sing along!

Let us with a gladsome mind  
Praise the Lord, for he is kind:  
*for his mercies aye endure,  
ever faithful, ever sure.*

Let us blaze his Name abroad;  
For of gods he is the God:  
*for his .....*

He, with all-commanding might  
Filled the new-made world with light:  
*for his.....*

He his chosen race did bless  
In the wasteful wilderness:  
*for his.....*

All things living he doth feed;  
His full hand supplies their need:  
*for his .....*

Let us then with gladsome mind  
Praise the Lord, for he is kind,  
*for his.....*      **John Milton**

The 15 year old who wrote *Let Us with a Gladsome Mind* based on Psalm 136 was the same John Milton (1608 - 74) who wrote *Paradise Lost*, all 10,000+ lines of it, now considered to be one of the greatest epic poems ever written in English. *Paradise Lost* tells the story of Satan being expelled from heaven, leading to the temptation of Adam and Eve and their expulsion from the Garden of Eden. He followed it up with *Paradise Regained* which relates the New Testament story of Jesus overcoming Satan's temptations in the desert.

Milton lived in turbulent times and was active in public affairs. He was a man of deep faith, Protestant by conviction, and critical of both the Church of England and the monarchy with which - in Milton's view - the Church of England was too closely intertwined. He wrote compellingly of the need for press freedom and advocated for the availability of divorce.

John Milton went blind in 1652 and, when the monarchy was restored in 1659 he was sent to prison for his support of Oliver Cromwell only to be released by public demand. *Paradise Lost* was published shortly afterwards. But it is *Let Us with a Gladsome Mind* that has lived on in popular memory.





# Christianity and Golf

There are clear parallels between the golfing life and the Christian life....

To be a successful golfer you need the right equipment, for the different challenges which will confront you, whether it be thick rough, bunkers or lightning fast greens. Paul tells us that to be a successful Christian we need to put on the whole armour of God.

To ensure the best chance of success, a golfer's fitness, technique and preparation all help avoid the pitfalls which await him or her on the links. Likewise, we're told that we must be in a state of readiness as Christians because we know not when the Lord will return.

Golf is played according to a set of basic rules which apply throughout the golfing world and ensure clear parameters for the sport. In the same way, the Ten Commandments leave us in no doubt about God's expectations in relation to human conduct.



Golfers have a handicap, whether it be zero for the top player or 36 for the beginner. This levels the playing field for golfers of all levels of ability. Similarly, we are assured while we all have different abilities, aptitudes (and handicaps!) we are all loved equally by God.

Golfers are expected to play to the rules with clear penalties for infringement and similarly there are consequences for ourselves and others when we break God's rules.

Inevitably, golfers have bad days when nothing goes right - but each round offers a fresh start! In the same way, as Christians, we make mistakes and don't always get things right. How fortunate we are that when we confess our sins we have a forgiving God who gives US a fresh start!

Golf started with a small group of enthusiasts in Scotland and is now a worldwide sport. Christianity started with a small group of believers in Palestine and is now a worldwide religion.

And, finally, golf is a healthy sport with golfers living longer than the rest of the population . Mind you, Christianity is a clear winner here.....it offers you and me EVERLASTING LIFE.

**Douglas Simpson (including self-portrait.....)**

# Art and Life

**William Mather**

Many of us wonder if God is pleased with what we do. So it was very reassuring to have Graeme Bell remind me of Eric Liddell, the Olympic runner whose life was championed in the film 'Chariots of Fire'.

At one point Eric's devout sister chided Eric for giving so much time to running instead of Christian mission. But Eric replied: "I feel the Lord's pleasure when I run."



**Self-portrait**

God blesses us in many different ways, with many different gifts and it seems to me that if we are trusting and following him – whatever our gifting - then he will guide us to places where we are very conscious of his pleasure. For me this speaks about struggles I have so often had giving time to painting.

The brief chat with Graeme came in July at a 'Summer Special' in Rosemarkie Church where I had had the privilege of sharing both the struggles and the joys of painting. The theme was 'Art and Life' starting with Jesus' words in John 10 v 10 "I have come that you may have life and have it to the full". I was thinking how visual art is one way of expressing this fulness of life.

This was a Powerpoint presentation with about 70 images of personal work with paintings ranging from Africa to Rosemarkie Beach. The latter happened last year as a project to learn better how to paint both sea and people.

Also included were landscapes, dolphins, flowers, portraits and some more obvious biblical imagery from the crucifixion to the washing of feet.





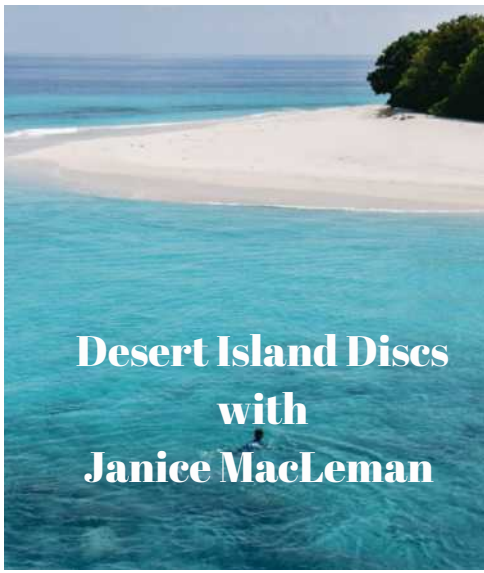
Thinking about portraits of children the words of Jesus are particularly apt: “Whoever humbles themselves like this child is the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes a little child like this welcomes me”, Matthew 18:4-5.

Such words have an echo in the thinking of the late great American artist and lecturer, Robert Henri who wrote: “If you paint children you must have no patronizing attitude towards them. Whoever approaches a child without humility, wonderment or infinite respect misses in his judgement...and loses an opportunity for a marvellous response.” (Robert Henri, Art Spirit, p235).

Through all such thinking are the words of Paul in Ephesians 2:10 where he says “We are God’s workmanship created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

For ‘workmanship’ the Greek word is also ‘poem’ or perhaps ‘art-work’. This is an encouragement that we are all special beyond words. So whatever our gifting, God wants us to live and work in such a way that we know his pleasure and blessing.





**Desert Island Discs  
with  
Janice MacLeman**

My first choice is *Eine Kleine Nacht Musik* by Mozart (right). This was the first piece of live classical music I had ever heard. When I was in second year in Fortrose Academy we got a new music teacher (the late Colvin Greig) who was like a breath of fresh air. He took a group of us to an orchestral concert and this was the piece played.



My next choice is *Distant Drums* by Jim Reeves (left). When I was a teenager a group of us used to meet in Tommy Coral's cafe on Rosemarkie seafront. This was to listen to the jukebox which we thought was very 'with it'!

My choice of hymn is *What a Friend We Have in Jesus*. If you are marooned on a desert island what better friend could you have? You can chat with him night or day and He always listens to you.

My final choice is *The Dark Island* sung by Calum Kennedy (right). My husband was such a fan of Scottish music and this was his all time favourite. Our house was always filled with Scottish dance music until the three boys grew a bit older and found Status Quo!

My choice of book is *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*. This may sound like a bit of a swot but I feel it covers such a lot - tragedy, romance, comedy, history and so much more.

My luxury item would be a very large book of cryptic crosswords and, of course, some pens.





## “Out of the Ashes” Film and Cricket Tea

Last Saturday, we set off to a Summer Special: the film “Out of the Ashes” about C.T. Studd, cricketer and missionary, to be followed by a cricket tea. Leah helped set it up, putting out juice and the urn for tea and coffee.

Friends came from Avoch, Fortrose and Rosemarkie and the local Free Church of Scotland. The film was a bit unusual – it was an award-winning “docudrama” featuring both cricket and mission. It was about Charles.

Charles Thomas Studd, a famous cricketer, who gave up his cricketing career to spread the word about Jesus in China and India and Africa. Andrew Harrison, a very good reporter, introduced the locations where CT Studd had lived and interviewed people about his life. Studd played against Australia on the first test that led to the label “the Ashes” and his name is inscribed in a poem on the famous Urn. Andrew went to Lord’s Cricket Ground and interviewed the President of the MCC about the early Ashes contests with Australia. John Holden-White, the actor who played Studd was excellent. He was filmed playing cricket in Victorian dress and talked about Christian faith in a personal way, making sense of key events in Studd’s life by “acting them out.”

The other surprising thing about the film was this - “There was Warren in it!” as our little sister Hannah put it. “Doc” (the minister), was interviewed (right) in a college garden by Andrew about mission and the culture in China - the clips of the food stalls in China certainly looked “exotic” ... He went on to talk about the China Inland Mission’s vision and the dangers faced by missionaries such as CT Studd when they went up rivers like the Yangtze, in boats, to reach out to people in Inland China.



The film mentioned CT Studd’s family life. Although happily married to Priscilla, with four daughters, in later life, the parents did not see each other for almost ten years as he was in Africa and she was helping people in Europe and America get involved in mission! The film ended with an interview about WEC - the current name of the organisation that Studd had started - still encouraging Christians to engage in mission. Hannah liked the music in the film.

And then there was the “Cricket Tea.” Leah went from setter-up to waitress, helping to serve a lovely spread. We also met Aileen and Bob and chatted to Hannah who has the same name as our sister. The film was inspiring – it made us think about doing the kind of things that CT Studd did – though not necessarily in the same countries. Leah’s comment sums it up: “The food was yummy – I would do this again!”

**Out of the Ashes: C.T. Studd Cricketer & Missionary. Dir. Gary Wilkinson (CTA, 2017).**

**[Joel and Leah with Hannah – as reported to our correspondent]**

## And They Did Walk (Nearly) 9000 Miles

*You may remember the article in the last newsletter about a virtual walk from Fortrose to Malawi. It has been completed in record time. Organiser, Alastair Nelson, takes up the story.*

A few years ago, if someone had suggested walking 8898 miles to Malawi I would have laughed at the idea. But with the wonders of the internet and the help of 14 others it was possible to do it without leaving UK, let alone the Black Isle.

Raising money for *Linda's Fund*, we set off on 1st February to walk the distance by combining everyone's mileage and we completed the distance on 1st July which was an average of roughly 600 miles each or 4 miles a day every day. Some people managed almost 3 times the average. However, it was set up as a challenge, not a competition!



The route once in Europe followed almost exactly the route that Linda and I travelled in 1979 when we drove from UK to Baghdad where we lived for 3 years.

We walked - virtually - through France, Germany, Austria, Croatia, Greece, Turkey, Syria and Jordan passing well known sites like Paris, Munich, Istanbul, Cappadocia, Damascus and Petra and that was roughly only the half way point! Once in Egypt we crossed the Suez Canal, passed the Pyramids and then followed the Nile south into Sudan and Ethiopia.

From Sudan we stayed in the Rift Valley through the Masi Mara and Serengeti before entering the north of Malawi. From there it was still another 550 miles south to Mulanje Mission and Fortrose Academy partner school.

Money raised so far is about £3000. It provides bursaries for students to undertake vocational training at colleges. Most of the students have to

live away from home to go to college. The annual cost of accommodation and fees of about £350 a student, although much less than UK, is equivalent to over a year's salary and therefore out of reach for the vast majority families who attend the school.

We have now given 32 students the opportunity to study and most have gone on to get employment or use their skills to start businesses in the area. Two examples:-

Loveness studied hairdressing for 1 year and, with further help of £50 for hairdryers, set up a local business. Louis studied electrical installation for 3 years and now has a full time job in a factory in the capital city Lilongwe.

A current student, Two, who is studying motor mechanics wrote to us in July:

*Hie sir, I hope you are fine. And am also fine here. Thank you for the greatest job that you have been doing upon my studies and the love being shown to me since I started my level one in automobile mechanics. It has been a hard time to make it from level one to level 3 but i do thank God for his grace, mercy and favour in all the time. Pass my greeting to the whole Linda's Fund team.*

It is very rewarding to hear back from students and I am sure that Linda would be very humbled by all the support given to the Fund over the years both from so many individuals and also Fortrose Academy. We can only make small changes but they all can add up to make a big difference.

The virtual walk was great fun and encouraged us all to keep walking. Maybe next year we can virtually climb Everest as the next challenge?! More information about Linda's Fund and how to support it can be found on the charity website at: [www.lindasfund.org.uk](http://www.lindasfund.org.uk)



Classrooms at Mulanje School



Can anyone suggest a suitable name for this 'flower' that kept appearing in the background as photos of the floral displays were taken in Rosemarkie Church last month?



If you like this cartoon, please check out:  
[www.facebook.com/derektheclericsquirkyworld](http://www.facebook.com/derektheclericsquirkyworld)  
and [www.andyrobb.co.uk](http://www.andyrobb.co.uk)

## Can you find 25 books of the Bible in the paragraph below?

With thanks to Sandra Bell who spotted this challenge in a church magazine. Sandra has kindly offered a bar of chocolate as a prize. Please send all responses to [calummacsween76@gmail.com](mailto:calummacsween76@gmail.com)

**To help you get started the first two books are highlighted. Only 23 to find!**

This is a **most** remarkable puzzle. Someone found it in the seat pocket on a flight from Los Angeles to Honolulu, keeping himself occupied for hours. One man from Illinois worked on this while fishing from his johnboat. Roy Clark studied it while playing his banjo, Elaine Vinets mentioned it in her column once. One woman judges the job to be so involving, she brews a cup of tea to calm her nerves. There will be some names that are really easy to spot, that's a fact. Some people will soon find themselves in a jam especially since the book names are not necessarily capitalized. The truth is, from answers we get, we are forced to admit it usually takes a Minister or scholar to see some of them at the worst. Something in our genes is responsible for the difficulty we have. Those able to find all of them will hear great lamentations from those who have to be shown. One revelation may help: books like Timothy and Samuel may occur without their numbers. And punctuation or spaces in the middle are normal. A chipper attitude will help you compete. Remember, there are 25 books of the Bible lurking somewhere in this paragraph.

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### What is NORMAL?

Wherever we look, people are still talking about getting back to normal. But what is normal? For me, it's normal to cram as much into my day as possible, to try and enjoy people around me and hopefully make at least one person happy every day.

Last week, someone said 'You look harassed - that's not normal for you.' Well, yes, something had happened and I let my guard down - I wasn't my usual carefree self. But I was glad someone had noticed and helped me get me Back to Normal - well, my normal at least!

How many people out there do we know and sometimes think, *they're not themselves today* but say nothing? And, yet, maybe a gentle word, knowing that someone has noticed and cares enough to say, could make all the difference to that person. How many people do we pass each day who won't let on how they are feeling because they think no one is actually interested. God gave us ears to listen and a heart to understand. Let us use them, along with a smile, and make that our NORMAL. **Anne Fiddes**

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As always, I am hugely indebted and grateful to all our many contributors without whom there would be no newsletter for us to enjoy. Please continue to submit articles, or ideas for articles, over the next few months. The deadline for the December issue will be November 1st. But it is always a bonus to have articles in long before the deadline!

Thank you

Calum

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