



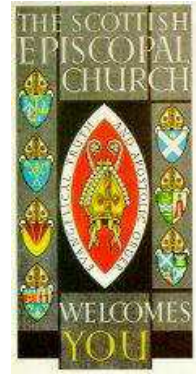
the new look

Issue 52 May 2011

£1.00

Side Chapel

An extension of prayer...



Our little Prayer Chapel had always been too small to be comfortable, and had indeed become rather cluttered over the past few years.

This was rather sad, since the chapel is being used more and more in our prayer ministry with people coming in from the street looking to light a candle, have some space, or have someone pray with them in their distress.

We needed a small extension to it, and so a portable little platform was built in

memory of George Matheson, which gives us a bit more space and comfort. (The portable bit got us around having to ask for Canon 35 approval)

However, we now want to put up some rather beautiful red velvet curtains as a backdrop to the altar and tabernacle, so we'll need Canon 35 approval after all!

Our prayer ministry is growing, as a result of this little extension, and I'm sure that George himself would be extremely pleased that it's being used more often!

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From Kenny...

During Lent, discussing the Gospel reading where Lazarus is raised from the dead, I talked a little about people who are "given their life back". There were a



few examples, like those who recover from a deep coma, those who recover almost miraculously from accidents they should never have survived, to name two,

I also talked about the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous and the thousands of people I have met there who have been given their life back and now live lives of recovery. People whose families and friends had written off as hopeless and helpless, now are living full lives in the community as upright and respected members of the community. It's nothing short of a miracle that they have been given their lives back, but that's just what has happened!

I see the same thing in the Narcotics Anonymous groups which use our hall and with whom many of us have a great rapport and respect. These men and women, cheats, thieves, liars, and all the other things they were once called, are now in recovery, building new lives, being reconciled with families and friends and those they love. It is wonderful to know these people who have been given their lives back!

It is tempting, at Easter, when we celebrate the Risen Christ, to see the Resurrection as our passport to heaven and to eternal life. Death has indeed been swallowed up in victory, and the gates of heaven have been opened for all, but the resurrection means far more to us than simply a passport to life after death, however comforting that is for us, especially if we have lost a loved one.

However, the resurrection is not just about life after death, but is a living reality for us all, on a daily basis, as we wander through life's trials, often with many a cross to bear.

The Holy Week experience with all its suffering and pain, with all its rejection, betrayal, has to be gone through before Easter morning comes, but the Easter morning experience is for us to savour and embrace in our lives as well as in death.

Who can look at the life of a recovering alcoholic or drug addict and not see that resurrection and new life

can be experienced in the here-and-now. People are given their lives back on a daily basis.

Those who lose loved ones proclaim that they will never function without their partner. They experience the dark night of the soul, but then we see them gently emerge from their grief to start living again, often very happily. It often takes time but it happens.

The depressed and suicidal live lives that seem to be mirroring the Good Friday experience, and indeed the emptiness of Holy Saturday, and yet, so very often they are given their lives back and they go on to live normally.

Every little bit of pain and suffering that we experience and overcome is a resurrection experience! We have carried many a cross and it has been lifted from us, and we have known the joy of being shot of it - the joy of a little Easter morning.

Often, of course, at the time, we might see no way out, but the promise that Easter gives us is that there is always a way out, and that the most difficult situations, however painful, can be overcome.

The hope of resurrection is for every day of your life, not just for the day of your death!

For those who are given their life back again, this is a rather dramatic experience, and it usually entails much gratitude for all that God has given them, not least the opportunity to begin again. However, Easter morning proclaims that we are all given the opportunity to begin again! For that we can all be grateful.

Have a happy and holy Easter, and may the joy of the resurrection burst through your lives in new and exciting ways!

Kenny

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Gambia Update

I want to update you on the school and our children in The Gambia.

You have all sponsored us faithfully and because of your generosity the school is doing well and at the end of each school year 30 of our children pass into the next level of education (Lower Basic) with a good knowledge of English and therefore the ability to do the best possible in the next few years.

The past year has not been an easy time at London Corner. Although we had kept the same teachers since we first started the school and we had flourished under Aunty Carr, we found that her style of teaching was not conducive to good staff relations.

She was loathe to share the teaching resources and refused to do any teaching when other members of staff were off sick or on maternity leave. Her attendance had also suffered as we learned she had another nursery school of her own near to her home and was not putting in a full morning at the school. Eventually, we decided that the role of Headmistress was a luxury that we could not afford and had to let Aunty go with 6 months pay.

We now have a Head Teacher named Sulayman who teaches as well as dealing with the administration of the school. He comes with lots of experience and has settled into the position very well. We have a teaching assistant who looks after classes when Sulayman is away on school business.

Meanwhile, we had lost our 3 teachers, Lamin got a better paid Civil Service post, Ida went to work at a large senior school where her children were taught free of charge as part of the package and sadly Harry left to work at another school. We know that some of this had to do with Auntie's aggressive management style and we felt sad at losing good friends of London Corner. They had all gained teaching qualifications while at London Corner which we financed, so on the positive side, this has helped even more children to benefit from our charity.

Last Autumn we discussed the possibility of joining up with a project in a nearby village called Bakoteh which was being taken over by GETS (our English charity which does the day to day admin for us in The Gambia). We saw an opportunity of running the nursery school as a Sunrise Scotland initiative while allowing GETS to develop the Lower Basic part of the school. It would have given us a long term tenure in a modern building and we could have shared some of the overheads. However, when Kenny met with the

GETS trustees in Bristol it became obvious to him that they were not as well funded and organised as we had believed so decided to continue as we are for the foreseeable future rather than tie ourselves in with a project that may not develop in the direction that we had planned. However, we never say never, and if an opportunity arises to develop what we are already doing then we will take it if it benefits our children.

However, on the positive side, we now have 3 good teachers and a great and enthusiastic Head Teacher and we believe that they will stay with us long term and build relationships with the children and ourselves. We are now using an advanced curriculum, approved by the United Nations as acceptable, and lessons are planned well in advance. The new Head wants more field trips to broaden the experience of our children away from the poverty of Serrekunda, but this is a costly exercise and we can fund only the minimum at the moment.

We are now moving into the world of IT, and the Head now has a laptop to help with the school's administration. He now has a "dongle" to give him internet access, and promises us Skype conferences if we can provide this.

At the moment, however, the budget is tight! It would be wonderful to provide him with a new laptop and all the other things he would like, but with wages on the rise in The Gambia, we need to hold back monies as we will need to increase salaries quite extensively in the autumn if we are to keep our current teaching staff. There is a "wish-list of needs, which we can only look at once we have the 2011-2012 budget in place, and that can only be done because of the commitment that sponsors make on a monthly basis.

Fran Walker our secretary has been out to The Gambia in February with her husband Faye and spent time at the school and with the staff. Her report is very encouraging. See also Fran's story of Fatou Mbye elsewhere in this month's magazine!

Enjoy the photos in the middle pages of this magazine too, and with more time available to me these days, I will send out more regular, and longer, updates to all our sponsors.

Meanwhile, thank you all for your continued support, from the trustees and the children.

Linda

RATTLING THE BEADS – OR: PRAYER WITH A ROSARY

By Coincidence, two of the Blogs linked to the April Edition of Inspires on Line were dealing with the subject of the Rosary: Revd Ruth Innes and Revd John Penman. Since they are true Episcopalians, I concluded that you need not be a Roman Catholic to use a Rosary. And as I found out from the Internet's Beginners Guide to the Rosary, anyone who knows six easy prayers can pray a Rosary, but you will also need to know 'twenty mysteries' to meditate upon as you pray, since the purpose of the Rosary is to help keep in memory certain principal events (or 'mysteries') of our salvation..

A Rosary – the name comes from Latin rosarium – rose garden or garland of roses – denotes the prayer beads used to count the series of prayers that make up the rosary. The term is also used for prayer beads of other religions. This one comes from the Roman Catholic Marian devotion, and is thought to be a spiritual bouquet given to the Blessed Mother.

The Rosary we know is sometimes called the 'Dominican' Rosary to distinguish it from other Rosary like prayer circles, since the first historical reference to the Rosary is from the life of St Dominic (who died in 1221). The Rosary began as a practice by the laity to imitate the monastic Divine Office, the Liturgy of the Hours, during the course of which the monks daily prayed the 150 Psalms. The Laity- many could not read – substituted 50 or more Ave Marias for the Psalms.

The traditional prayers of the Rosary consist of a repeated sequence of prayers, which is also known as a 'Decade'. Definitions vary as to what this sequence contains, some say it starts with the Apostles Creed, followed by the Lords Prayer, then 3 Hail Marys –traditionally offered to increase Faith, Hope and Charity - .then a single 'Glory Be', sometimes followed by a 'Fatima Prayer'.

The praying of each Decade is accompanied by the meditation on one of the Mysteries of the Rosary, which recall the life of Jesus. Traditionally 15 mysteries were standardised by Pope Pius IV in the 16th century, they were the 'joyful', the sorrowful and the 'glorious' ones. Pope John Paul II added 5 more in 2002, the 'luminous' ones, bringing the number to 20.

The Fatima Prayers -, there are more than one, - are common versions of the Jesus Prayer, used by Roman Catholics instead of the latter:

"O my Jesus, forgive our sins, save us from the fires of Hell, lead our souls to Heaven, especially those in most need of Thy mercy." Amen

Then you conclude the Decade with 'Hail Holy Queen' (then you can say a few extra prayers for the Pope, or you could announce 'intentions', by which you offer the Rosary to God, or to our Lady, and ask for a 'favour' (an intercession for the sick or for the conversion of a sinner).

The RC Rosary has been adopted by other Christian Traditions , especially the Eastern Orthodox and Eastern Catholic ones. These make special use of the Jesus Prayer, which is a short 'formulaic' prayer :

"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner."

This is repeated continually as part of a personal 'ascetic' practice, and was an integral part of the 'heremitic tradition' of the East. (The Greek word HESYCHASM for it means 'to keep stillness'.) It is seen as a method of opening up of the heart and thought to be the "unceasing prayer" which St Paul advocates.

Many Protestant Churches have been using the Jesus Prayer as a 'centring or contemplative prayer'. It is thought to be more powerful because it refers to the sacred name of Jesus.

The Eastern Churches make more use of the ancient Knotted Rope or CHOTKI rather than a Rosary. This is a rope with knots instead of beads, joined together by a knotted cross. The Prayer Rope is not as fixed in form as the Rosary, it may have a variable number of knots on it and makes use of beads only as dividers between sections. There exists also an Anglican Rosary, which consists of 28 beads in groups of 7, called 'weeks', with one additional large bead before each section, so that in total there are 33 beads representing the 33 years of Jesus' life on Earth. Some Anglicans use the Jesus Prayer, but there are no Church appointed prayers or meditations in the Anglican Practice.

Now: what about Episcopalians? – Most likely they would use Anglican Practice, although Ruth Innes writes that they had 'traditional' Rosaries and also, that they were praying in unison, but not which of the Rosary Prayers they used.

Now, the Rosary has been called a "preparation for contemplation" and the prayer of the Saints. While hands and lips are occupied with the prayers, - and it can and should be prayed silently, so as not to disturb others –the mind meditates on the mysteries

of incarnation and redemption. Meditation is considered a form of prayer by which the one who prays uses his mind and imagination to consider a truth. In this way, the heart, mind and soul of the believer is occupied.

The question might well be asked, why the Rosary is being used now and more widely, even in Protestant churches. Surely, those praying it, hope to grow in holiness and in their prayer life.

Revd John Penman in his Blog knows it essentially as a means of personal devotion, a 'simple way of prayer', but when he found it defined as: "The next best and safest method, after the offering of the Eucharist, by which we can intercede for persons and causes", he felt he had to object:

"Safest? Prayer is safe? ...anything but safe!" he writes. "I value the Rosary, not because it is safe, but because it stretches me, disciplines me and liberates me. It liberates me by giving me a mantra to recite, to 'centre' me (and release my spirit to engage with Divine reality)...a mantra to focus the inner eye of the soul on God, and a sense of praying with others of the Company of the Kingdom." (words underlined by me).

Brigitte Williams..

(I used 2 Blogs from the April Edition of Inspires on Line: Ruth Innes and John Penman, also :from the Internet: Wikipedia, A Beginners Guide How to Pray the Rosary, The Holy Rosary)
With summer marriages in mind...



"HAVEN'T YOU ONE WITH A WHITE NECK?"

One plus one equals one may not be an accurate mathematical concept, but it is an accurate description of God's intention for the marriage relationship.
- Wayne Mack.

A man's children are pieces of himself, but his wife is himself. - Matthew Henry

Signs and Promises

(Mark 13:5-13, Rev 21:4,22:20)

'The one who endures to the end will be saved.'

*Earthquakes, explosions,
Tsunamis and terror,
Nation rising against nation,
Dictators destroying their own,
Floods, famine,
Families in sewer-slums,
Persecution, opposition,
And the list goes on...*

*Signs all around of a broken world,
A warning world.*

*Send your Spirit, Lord,
Bring your healing,
Your compassion,
Bring your good news
To those who must endure.
Open eyes to see beyond disasters
To the one who saves
And will wipe away all tears.*

Come Lord Jesus.

By Daphne Kitching

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St James the Least of All...

Here the elderly Anglo-Catholic Rector, Eustace, continues his correspondence to Darren, his nephew, a low-church curate recently ordained...

The Rectory

St James-the-Least

My dear Nephew Darren

On reflection, inviting your parishioners to join in our annual rose queen celebrations may not have been entirely wise. It was cheering to see that your people arrived on carnival floats, although less happy that they should be being pursued by the police trying to recover lorries temporarily liberated from your local coal merchant.

Once the procession started, your drivers did not seem to have grasped the fact that the vehicles were expected to tour the village slowly, for the benefit of spectators, instead of treating it as a competitive race, resorting to driving anti-clockwise around roundabouts in order to queue-jump. I noticed that numbers on your floats gradually diminished as they were flung off while careering round corners. Those who had a walk of several miles back home while dressed as pirates and ballerinas had my sympathy. Our tea ladies however, were less sympathetic when hay bales were spun off as your drivers demonstrated handbrake turns in the car park, felling our Women's Guild like a row of skittles.

The local police normally use the afternoon to do a little gentle point duty while drinking gallons of sweet tea; this year, the number of tickets issued for unsafe vehicles, dangerous driving and assorted tax and insurance lapses should boost our constabulary's figures for the next twelve months.

I must concede that the group who decided to make a papier mache swan for one of your floats showed great imagination. It was such a pity that they did not know a fifteen foot swan would be driven under a twelve foot bridge. The drama of its emergence, headless, was only exceeded by the following float which appeared to have a group of Brownies being savaged by a demented, bodiless, vulture.

I am sure that some of your people's offers to help this year's Princesses campaign for election for Rose Queen next year were well-meant. However, outlining systems for vote rigging and elector intimidation take a competitive spirit a little too far.

The crowning of the Rose Queen is always a high point to the afternoon, but could I point out that the "gold" crown is metal foil and the "diamond" sceptre is a piece of yellow glass. So could we please have them returned before next year?

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

Cursillo

The next meeting will be on Monday, 9th May at the usual time in the church. A good turnout is requested as we will be "entertaining" the other diocesan groups. Anyone who is interested is very welcome to attend the meeting.

Evelyn.

Parish Walk

This takes place on Saturday May 7th in Aberfoyle, Meet in the main car-park at 1.30 pm. More info from Tim or Rosemary

Christian Aid

The Lent lunches were very well attended this year, including a visit from Harriet Harman M.P. The total raised was £691.90.

Thanks to all who helped or came.

This year there will be no Christian Aid service as this coincides with the Dumbarton Churches Together Spring Festival.

Instead, there will be a Christian Aid element in the Salvation Army band concert on Friday May 13th at Riverside church.

Door-to door collection May 15-22. Would anyone who would like to help please contact Tim as two of our usual collectors will not be available this year.

Ascension Day

This year Ascension Day falls on Thursday June 2nd, and our united service with our brothers and sisters from Helensburgh and Alexandria will take place in St Mungo's at 7.30pm on that day. Kenny is preaching at this service.

Rotas for May 2011

Sunday May 1st.

11am Eucharist.

Readers: Janette Barnes & Morag O'Neill.

Intercessions: Margaret Hardie.

Chalice: Vernon Perrin & Sharon Rowatt.

Sidespersons: Ronnie Blaney & Linda Jenkinson.

Sunday May 8th.

11am Eucharist.

Readers: Sharon Rowatt & Gavin Elder.

Intercessions: Linda Macaulay.

Chalice: Maggie Wallace & Tim Rhead.

Sidespersons: Margaret Swan & Chrissie Ashman.

Sunday May 15th.

11am Eucharist.

Readers: Barbara Barnes & Yvonne McAlpine

Intercessions: Evelyn O'Neill.

Chalice: : Fran Walker & Margaret Hardie..

Sidespersons: Roberta Mailley & Vernon Perrin..

Sunday May 22nd.

11am Eucharist

Readers: David Rowatt & Evelyn O'Neill.

Intercessions: Tim Rhead

Chalice: Barbara Barnes & Janette Barnes.

Sidespersons: Tim Rhead & David Ansell.

Sunday May 29th.

11am Eucharist & Confirmation

Reader: Ghislaine Kennedy.

Chalice: Vernon Perrin & Maggie Wallace.

Sidespersons: Roberta Mailley & L. Jenkinson.

FLOWERS.

April 30th. Maggie Wallace & Moira

McGown.

May 7th. Linda Macaulay & Barbara

Barnes.

" 14th. Rosemary McLeay & Betty

Gordon.

" 21st. Linda Macaulay & Barbara

Barnes.

" 28th. Maggie Wallace & Moira McGown.

At the moment, we are rather thin on the ground for Sidespersons. This is an important duty, very often the Sidesperson is the first welcomer a visitor meets. I'm sure most of us could do this. Any volunteers welcome. Please speak to Maggie or Kenny.

Colour it Celtic

Ricky, Ghislaine & Co invite you all to the Denny Civic Theatre on Friday 6th May for Colour it Celtic, the Sequel! You all will remember the last concert, I'm sure, but this will be bigger and better and raises money for our Gambian School and Mission Aviation Fellowship. A fiver a ticket!

Vestry Meeting

The next Vestry Meeting is on May 19th at 7.30pm.

Confirmation

The Bishop is coming for a Confirmation on Sunday 29th May at 11am. If you are considering being confirmed, or have not already been confirmed, please see Kenny soon. If we can all put the date in our diaries soon, that would help! The people being confirmed need us all to be there!

CHURCHES TOGETHER SPRING FESTIVAL DATES

*13th May Salvation Army Band
Concert in Riverside.*

*21st May Ceilidh in St. Patrick's Church Hall.
Tickets available now, £6 ,from Janette or Tim.
The price includes supper!*

*22nd May Spring Praise Evening
at St. Augustine's.*

*21st June Concert by Jessica Weidman
in St. Augustine's.*

PLEASE SUPPORT THESE EVENTS.





Our photos this month are varied! Firstly, two from The Gambia, with our kids by the seaside on a day trip with our Chief Cook! Yes, she does like her food!

One from the Parish Day, where Jamie-Lee and Brogan made their own poster declaring, "Whenever you see a rainbow, remember that God is love!"

A picture of the little frame tacked to the bottom of our Chapel extension, and a pic of Alastair and Ian Matheson.

On this page, two pics from Frank Zhang's visit. One of him sizing himself up for a kilt in a shop in Inverary, and the other of the usual suspects up on their seats singing the Star O' Rabbie Burns during the Rectory Ceilidh.

Finally, the Walk of Witness on Good Friday as the Cross stops off at St Augustine's on it's way to the big service in the Artizan Centre.

Smile-Lines

Seize the day

Today is the oldest you've ever been, yet the youngest you'll ever be, so enjoy this day while it lasts.

Windy

Three elderly ministers, all hard of hearing, were playing golf one sunny spring morning. The Methodist minister observed, "Windy, isn't it?" "No", the Baptist pastor said, "It's Thursday." The Anglican vicar agreed: "So am I! Let's go and get a pint."

Short-staffed

Two men were working for the town council. One would dig a hole and the other would follow behind him and fill the hole in. They worked up one side of the street, then down the other, then moved on to the next street, working furiously all day without rest, one man digging a hole, the other filling it in again.

An onlooker was amazed at their hard work, but couldn't understand what they were doing. So he finally approached the hole digger, "I'm impressed by the effort you two are putting in to your work, but I don't get it - why do you dig a hole, only to have your partner follow behind and fill it up again?"

The hole digger wiped his brow and sighed, "Well, I suppose it probably looks odd because we're normally a three-person team. But today the guy who plants the trees called in sick."

Look back

Someday we'll look back on this, laugh nervously, and change the subject.

What the Bible really means....

A father was approached by his small son who told him proudly, "I know what the Bible means!" His father smiled and replied, "What do you mean, you 'know' what the Bible means? The son replied, "I do know!" "Okay," said his father. "What does the Bible mean?" "That's easy, Daddy..." the young boy replied excitedly, "It stands for 'Basic Information Before Leaving Earth.'"

Breakable

There was a very gracious lady who was posting an old family Bible to her brother in another part of the country... "Is there anything breakable in here?" asked the postal clerk. "Only the Ten Commandments," answered the lady.

Morning prayer

"Somebody has said there are only two kinds of people in the world. There are those who wake up in the morning and say, "Good morning, Lord," And there are those who wake up in the morning and say, "Good Lord, it's morning."

Money

There is the story of a minister who got up one Sunday and announced to his congregation: "I have good news and bad news. The

good news is, we have enough money to pay for our new building programme. The bad news is, it's still out there in your pockets."

What God is like

A Sunday School teacher began her lesson with a question, "Boys and girls, what do we know about God?" A hand shot up in the air. "He is an artist!" said the little boy. "Really? How do you know?" the teacher asked. "You know - Our Father, who does art in Heaven... "

What it says...

On Sunday after church, a mother asked her very young daughter what the lesson in Sunday School had been about. Her daughter answered, "Don't be scared, you'll get your quilt." Needless to say, her mother was mystified. A few days later she ran into the teacher in town, and asked for details. The teacher smiled. "It was: 'Be not afraid, your comforter is coming'."

Jubilant

After several synonyms had been given for the word jubilant, one little boy added: 'Oh I know what it means now - it's like jubilant delinquency!'

Golf

Golfer to caddy: "Why didn't you watch where my ball went?" Caddy to golfer: "I'm so sorry. Your ball doesn't usually go anywhere, and this took me completely by surprise."

Prodigal

Prodigal son - one who left his home behind, but took everything else.

Who's been good?

A father of five young children won a toy at a raffle. Back home, he called his children together to let them determine which one should have the present. "Who is the most obedient?" he asked. "Who never talks back to Mother? Who does everything she says?" Five small voices answered in unison: "You, Daddy!"

Love

Do you believe in love at first sight, or should I drive by again?

Swear

You never really learn to swear until you learn to drive!

Just pretend...

Although the married couple enjoyed their new fishing boat together, it was the husband who always took the wheel. But then he became concerned about what might happen in an emergency. So one day out on the lake he said to his wife, "Please take the wheel, dear. Pretend that I am having a heart attack. You must get the boat safely to shore and dock it." So she drove the boat to shore. Later that evening, the wife walked into the living room where her husband was watching television. She sat down next to him, switched the TV channel, and said to him, "Please go into the kitchen, dear. Pretend I'm having a heart attack and set the table, cook dinner and wash the dishes."

'Wait Till I Tell You.....'

Janette looks back at springtime in St. Auggie's and forward to the merry ,merry month of May.

PARISH DAY AMONGST THE DAFFODILS.

April 3rd brought Mothering Sunday, buckets of daffodils and our Parish Day. The date was a bad choice for deep and meaningful thinking but the Rev'd Anne Tomlinson did her best to enthuse those remaining after family lunches had taken their toll and others had given warning that they would have to leave early. Shakespeare wrote of *'the uncertain glory of an April day'* and that best described it for me.

Our past glories were revisited and highlighted on the flip chart and just when we were feeling good about ourselves we hit the 'uncertain'. How would we manage our future in conjunction with the Bishop's new strategy for growth? Aye, the missing were indeed missed for there is so much to do if progress is to be made. We, members of the Parish that's got everything - restoration, new Hall, renovated Prayer Chapel, new Rectory, 'A' List Rector, beautiful congregation, scintillating magazine etc. etc. - have now got to move on.

Question of the day was 'how do we put more new bums on seats?'. So the Vestry has been motivated and a group set up to explore ideas - and what's more scary - our success or otherwise will be monitored. Challenging times indeed - but let's have the next Parish Day in November!

NEVER MIND THE WEDDING - WHEN'S THE 'BOTTLIN'?

On April 29th the world will stop to view the Royal Wedding. Guests will be observed arriving early in all their finery, the much hyped wedding dress will be eagerly scrutinised, and Kate's hairstyle will be studied in minute detail. Her Mammy may by then have found a frock that pleases her and St. Auggie's viewers might just catch a glimpse of Ghislaine moving amongst the crowds flogging tickets for 'Colour It Celtic!' She's unlikely to miss such an opportunity!

And you may be lucky enough to live in a street with a street party - all that bunting, cheering and midges! The majority of us will simply be gathered round the telly with a few pals to enjoy a wee refreshment and watch out for the splendid hats and a wide range of fascinators, many of which would be more apt on a circus pony. TBag O'Neill has offered to make a big pot of lentil soup for the occasion. *'Naw, Sand-ra, that's no couth enough fur a thing like that*

- it hus tae be salmon sannies and champagne!' So be it.

In 1981 when Prince William's parents got married, DPT revealed what happened prior to such big events with a comedy sketch entitled 'Lady Di's Bottlin'. Who knows what a 'bottlin' is? Well, it's the Hen Night when the girls from the bride's work come round under the leadership of a 'Big Ina' - the work organiser, union rep. and general mouthpiece.

Back in the days when Dumbarton High Street was a thriving thoroughfare there were lots of people out enjoying themselves. The blushing bride would be transported through the streets, sometimes by wheelbarrow, dressed in an elaborate hat and festooned with ribbons. Her hand maidens would be carrying the 'chanty' (chamber-pot for overseas readers) that contained a candle and salt for fertility.

At various stages on the journey the entourage would stop and the bride-to-be would jump over the 'chanty' three times as her pals sang raucously and banged loudly with pots and pans. The more nimble would seek out a selection of unsuspecting men and drag them back to the ceremony to kiss the bride and put some money in her 'chanty' for luck. Will Kate be lucky enough to have a 'bottlin'? Will she be seen emerging from the Goring (5 Star) Hotel to brighten up the streets of Belgravia? And who'll be leading the singing? *'Hard up, Tin can. Kate Middleton's goat a man. We-eh!'*

Her Majesty would, of course, be able to view the entire proceedings from her wee balcony at Buckingham Palace. So, Kate, if you need a Big Ina to organise things - I know *jist the wumman!*

THE SHOW OF PRESENTS.

This relic of past pre marital ritual seems to no longer be with us but it was rife during the '50s and '60s when I was of an age to be a bridesmaid. Who remembers the excitement of the Show of Presents? It all started halfway through the engagement when the whole house was redecorated and a bedroom set aside to become an Aladdin's Cave of household goodies. Presents would be displayed along with their little cards and invitations would be sent to all female family and friends detailing when the viewings would be held. Men were not invited to a Show of Presents - they were encouraged to stay out of the house until it was all over.

The potential bride and her bridesmaid guided the guests round the display describing the gift and the

giver. *'This teapot's from her Auntie Jeannie in the Vale'* Gasps of admiration and awe! *'Aw that's really lovely, so it is'* Wait till they get outside then it's *'Wis that aw' she goat frae hur - miserable auld skinflint!*

The guided tour of the display would end in a feast of scrumptious home baking and a small refreshment. *'Great wee night - see you'se at the wedding!'* Today the custom is regarded as old fashioned. Brides-to-be much prefer a co-ordinated gift list from a large store to which you can e-mail your choice and have it delivered direct to her house.

SCOTLAND THE BRAVE

When Kenny and Linda were entertaining Frank, a young man from the USA recently, they organised a ceilidh at the rectory. It was on 9th April - a beautiful day with Scotland looking at its best. Oh, they made sure their guest saw Glasgow and the Three Lochs before subjecting him to a daud of culture from the usual suspects of St. Aug's. Poor Frank must have been terribly confused when a haggis was produced, awaiting address, together with a large kitchen knife. Oh, and *'the great chieftain o'the pudden race'* had been mashed up in a glass bowl by Linda before being paraded in to the sound of the bagpipes from Ghislaine's mobile phone. A 'sort of one she'd made earlier'.

After listening politely to the address and being assured by Betty Gordon that we didn't understand it either, Frank ate our national dish, liberally sprinkled with our national drink and survived. Then it was more singing, more laughter and climbing onto the furniture for 'The Star o' Rabbie Burns' before the neighbours could get to sleep at Helenslee Cres that night. Frank met the rest of St. Augs at the Eucharist the following Sunday morning and Caitlin made sure that he met some members of the younger generation of Scots who didn't speak to their meals before consuming them!

EXTERMINATE THEM!

Now we've got a scientist looking into the minds of the Daleks to see why they scare us so much and what makes them so evil. Has he nothing better to do? It's just a story - a great story - one I've enjoyed since actually being cast as a Dalek in an A.Y.P A Variety Show sometime in the 1960s. There I was, along with a boy called William Boyle, encased in two washing machine boxes from the store and other scary embellishments, menacingly appearing on stage in St. Auggie's old hall to the strains of the still familiar music.

We had been rehearsing for weeks. Speaking loudly through our noses we uttered 'exterminate, exter-

minate' and were given a great big cheer. Nobody left in terror - the tea had not been served! And the Daleks are still with us - can't wait for the new series!

DON'T FORGET THE MORNING DEW.

It's free, it's available and it's coming to a patch of grass near you on 1st May. So forget the Botox, the expensive beauty creams, the wrinkle fillers and the facial massages. Go for May Dew on Sunday 1st before you come to Church - wash your fizzog liberally in it and your beauty for the coming year will be guaranteed. Just get out there before the dog does!

THE VOTING GAME

Why is it when the Politicians have every communications device known to man i.e. Laptops, Mobiles, iPads, Twitter, Blogs, Facebook, TV debates and Party Political Broadcasts do they still need two wee men going round the town with a ladder fixing posters to all the available lamp posts? Who reads them? They don't actually give a meaningful message - it's all so repetitive! Perhaps, the race for Holyrood is getting a bit like 'Britain's Got Talent' and people are switching off in droves. Performing dogs are having more success these days!

THE FRIENDS' AGM

Yes, it's that time of year again when the new season of Friends is being considered. So come along on Sunday 15th May and have your say, vote out an exec member and enjoy a wee refreshment. There may be news of a summer visit to Shieldinch and perhaps lunch at the Ship. Don't miss it - starts after Church at 12.30pm.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU'RE BUSY ON THE 6TH MAY?

The only place to be on that date is the Civic Theatre with Ghislaine, Ricky, Stuart and Graham for the sequel to 'Colour It Celtic'. There will be singing, dancing, a variety of music and the World Premiere appearance of the Christian Allsorts Choir. A sick line is required for any St. Auggie's people who are not planning to be there! You have been warned!

HERE COMES SUMMER!

And April brought us a taste of summer. We're looking forward to a whole lot more so get your holidays organised before the June magazine hits the pews. Back next month.

Janette

VINES,, VISION AND VITALITY:: A CONGREGATIONAL DAY

(From Revd Anne Tomlinson)

It was good to be invited back to see where you had got to since my last visit in December 2009; to celebrate the 'footsteps' made on the journey and to discern where God was calling you to go next. Thank you for all your warm and generous hospitality – for the privilege of preaching at your Mothering Sunday service and sharing fellowship round the altar, and then enjoying lunch with you in your hall. Thank you also for those beautiful Fair Trade roses – simply glorious. In what follows, I simply offer you the flip-chart jottings back, now typed up, and a few extra comments.

Session 1: Taking stock and pruning

In the first session, I asked to hear about developments since last time, grouped under the five heading you had set yourselves. These were many and various, so be encouraged.

WELCOME: encourage all members to feel responsible for welcoming, noticing and following up people attending church, and work on forming a renewed Welcoming Team

- those giving out books now face people as they enter church; the table has been turned around and this is much more welcoming.
- Friends of St A's keen to tell the meeting how 'at home' they feel; numbers attending events have gone up in past year
- rectory parties – great hospitality!
- parish magazines have gone to other congregations seeking inspiration regarding communication
- Passover Meal increasingly popular; includes washing of hands
- flowers distributed on street after Mothering Sunday - could we give cards in future saying that they are from the church?
- Rock Church uses our premises now

PASTORAL CARE: train people in the art of pastoral visiting, and for some, offer training in prayer ministry.

- 8 people went on Pastoral Care course, and have used their skills on an individual basis since

- much unseen pastoral care goes on in congregation
- Prayer Group formed in S's home and Holy Communion offered there
- birthday cards sent out to those associated with church
- but who falls through the cracks? It is still possible to be anonymous in St Augustine's; could we have a photo board?. Does Pastoral Care need to be more formalised to ensure even coverage ?

WORKING WITH YOUTH THROUGH MUSIC: set up a youth praise band in the Hall; a 'Fresh Expression' congregation. There is a lot of musical talent around – but it is hard for teenagers to get up for 11am on a Sunday; so are there other times for worship with them?

- great asset; welcome happens through music
- Music Group has grown and now includes young people
- concert for Gambia held
- doors of church are open during week and G available for praying with people
- grouped with 8 churches in the locality; helping other churches improve their musical range; happy to do this for diocese
- care taken to ensure that music is suitable for season/theme/readings and known to folk; congregational singing practices happen

(cont over..)

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AUDIT OF TIME and TALENTS: collate an index of all the gifts, talents, experience, knowledge, availability of everyone associated with the congregation so that you know who you have and what is possible. This could be part of a stewardship campaign, but with stewardship being seen as something wider than just money

- questionnaire not very successful
- conflict emerged when this was tried; how can we be honest and yet kind?
- need for forgiveness

LINKAGE WITH USER-GROUPS: organise a service-users forum, perhaps with a fair in the church/hall at some point, and invite reps from each group to share what they do with the congregation. You have:

- held an Open Day/Community Fair one lovely summer's day at which all hall users were invited to have a stall. Raised £750 and the church's profile; local MP attended
- held a Christmas Party to which 'Circle' families and carers came – and then followed that by a Carol Service in church
- hall blinds generally kept open so that what goes on in the hall can be seen from outside
- the Users' Forum proved impractical but there is now a link person for most groups
- Narcotics Anonymous were warmly welcomed and given keys to hall after one week; felt trusted
- some user groups came and spoke about their work in the sermon slot, plus offering a display .

Again I want to stress .. this amount of development needs to be celebrated! Congratulations.

Session 2: Preparing the soil

In this session, I introduced the Diocesan Growth Strategy and listened to your responses. The overall sense was of it being welcomed – especially the fact that an external facilitator would work with you. Kenny stressed the fact that it was about involving *everyone* in the responsibilities of engagement in mission, and that the Bishop and Dean would visit annually in order to hear the *congregation's* mission story. Comments received were as follows:

- was it about numbers? (yes, this is vital if we are to survive - but that is not the only indicator of health being measured)
- outside facilitator useful
- daunted
- ecumenical aspect welcomed

Session 3: Planting the new vines

In this session, I listed the issues which had come up in Session 1 and we addressed some of them.

1. Work on integration:
2. Reach out to new populations:
3. Staff yourselves for growth:
4. Be a generous resource to other charges.
5. Be 'real' with one another:

In conclusion, I want to commend you for the willing way you engaged in this process on Sunday and for giving up an afternoon to work in this way together. I commit to continuing to keep you in my prayers as you address the issues listed above with energy and commitment. May you continue to keep in mind God's assurance of love as you prune the dead wood, prepare the soil and harvest the grapes - and abide in that love.

If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love.



"We seem to get a much bigger turnout whenever the Bishop visits."

Pete McMartin: a living memorial

Many of you will remember a stalwart of this congregation – Peter McMartin, who died a few years ago. One of his joys in his later years was his sponsorship of a young girl, Fatou, who he was eventually able to meet in 2004 when he, I and Kenny’s dad, Jack, went out to The Gambia for a visit.

Fatou was one of the first children to receive educational support through what was to become Dumbarton Gambia Education Association. At the age of about 4 she showed she was bright, but paying for nursery school education for her was a challenge for her family, as their income was very low.



Fatou with her mum and sister (hiding)

Through nursery school, paid for by Pete, Fatou shone, got a place at lower basic school and still continues to be top of her class. She is now supported by Pete’s family in memory of their father and for two years now I have had the delight of visiting her in her compound and giving her their birthday present.

Fatou is now in grade 8 and is planning to move to upper basic school. I think she will be one of the

first in the large extended family in her compound to have achieved this. It was wonderful to see the impact her education was having on her. She was confidently translating our conversations into English for her mum and telling us that she did her homework in school, before she came home (where facilities and peace for studying are sadly lacking) to do her share of the “housework”. Her family are proud of her as I’m sure Pete is as he looks down on us in this world. What a memorial.



Receiving her birthday present - a solemn occasion !! watched by the children in her compound.

PS The Dumbarton Gambia Education Association no longer sponsors individuals, but each year 30 children from very poor families get the educational foundations they need to enter main stream education, having attended London Corner Nursery School for 3 years. If you are interested in supporting more children like Fatou, please contact Kenny, Linda, Fran or any of the committee.

(Fatou Mbye is one of our greatest success stories and Peter was so proud of her success. I was totally shocked by the poverty in her compound, possibly the worst I’ve seen in The Gambia, and yet from this has risen a shining star! It costs so little to help us reciprocate this success with our other children. Please help if you can! - Ed)

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