

CHURCH NEWS — JULY & AUGUST, 2021

THE SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH

A Member of the Anglican Communion



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Sunday Services (Holy Communion):

St Michael's = 9.45am

St John's = 11.30am

On-line resources can be found at:

Sunday Worship from St. John's is currently being live-streamed.

For details please contact St. John's Secretary or visit the church website

SEC Eucharist each Sunday at 11am www.scotland.anglican.org/broadcast-sunday-worship



Words from Steve

Today I have been busy with my weekly typesetting and printing routine. I often wonder about the density of words that we use at our typical Sunday morning service. To the outsider, it must seem like a veritable linguistic avalanche. It makes me think of those times when I've been in bed with the flu and have had Radio 4 on for the whole day.... No matter how wonderful it is, after a few hours it's all really too much to take in. I wonder if, ironically, the difficulty in articulating the mystery of faith (the impossibility of putting the divine into words) makes us over-compensate with a tumbling cascade of inadequate language.

The idea of putting into words, and therefore systematising our belief is relatively recent. The Reformation was a movement that was made possible by the powers of the printing press. Luther himself described printing as "God's highest and extremist act of grace, whereby the business of the gospel is driven forward." This brought about a change in the whole nature of religious knowledge whereby it became locked on the page, creating the possibility of faith as something that can be "deposited". It was arguably a psychological breakthrough of the first order. It embedded the Word itself deeply in the manufacturing process and made it into a kind of commodity. For the worshipping community, the understanding of what happens at the Eucharist was transformed into an emphasis on how words affect the hearer, rather than an external, embodied event. The availability of printed texts shifted the believer's focus to the words themselves, written or preached, and away from other non-verbal symbolism.

As a practitioner, I'm particularly interested in ritual that isn't necessarily limited to language. Our physical presence before God is about a great deal more. God who made us is to be found in the whole 'sensorium' of human experience, after all. The incalculable panoply of colour, light, shadow, tone, music, acoustic, silence, and texture that surrounds us – cries out with wonder about the God who loves us.

As in the past, there is discussion just now about opening our church buildings during the week, to offer them as quiet places of sanctuary, providing exhibition or performance space, and developing our gardens as places of beauty and inspiration for passers-by. I hope we can take these ideas forward soon, as restrictions begin to ease. Reviewing of a piece of performance art, the poet W.B. Yeats once wrote, "*It is still true that the Deity gives us, according to his promise, not his thoughts or his convictions – but his flesh and blood. We only believe in those thoughts which have been conceived not in the brain but in the whole body.*"

Grace and Peace to you, Steve

CHURCH NEWS

ST JOHN'S SUMMER FAIR:

We are planning to hold this outdoor event on **Saturday July 31st from 2-4pm in the Great House Gardens**, and we hope all that can will come along to support this — we will be following Government guidelines on safe distancing and hygiene.

We are currently seeking helpers to gauge which of the usual stalls we can safely run, so if you are free to help on the day (or to set up) please get in touch with anyone on the Events Group - Janet Bulloch, Jane Forbes, David Andrews, Anne-Marie Smout, Elizabeth Riches or Liz Rogers — or email lizr2009@hotmail.co.uk Tel. 01333 311588.

Donations of books, bric-a-brac, plants etc can be brought to Church for onward storage and will be most welcome. Tickets for the Prize Raffle will be available to sell shortly — Vouchers have been purchased this year to show our support for local businesses after a difficult year. This is a popular local event and we hope to bring back happy times for all.

All we need now is good weather! (Cancellation if wet, or rule changes prohibit).

— Liz Rogers

BUTLERS ON THE MOVE:



Throughout June, Steve and Anne have been moving their household effects from their temporary accommodation in Charles Street, where they have been for the last twelve months, to the Great House within the Priory precinct which has been re-established as Clergy accommodation.

The Great House has had some minor re-modelling done in order for it to become one unit again while Steve and Anne have been rolling up their sleeves to do the decorating. We send very warm wishes to them both as they settle in to their new 'on site' home!



Heavy Plant Crossing....

Family members were drafted in to help and Anne found a novel way of getting a rather large plant across town!



GOD'S GRANDEUR

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.

It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;

It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil

Crushed. Why do men then now not reckon his rod?

Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;

And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;

And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil

Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;

There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;

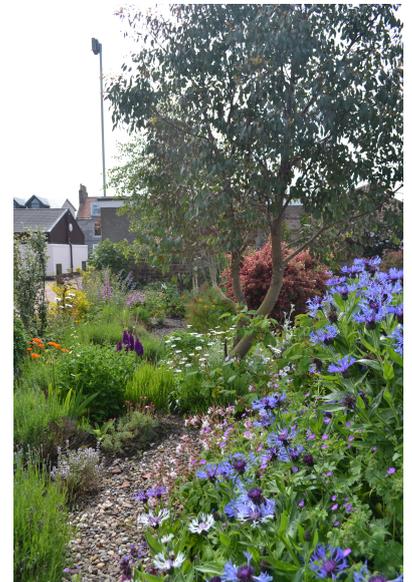
And though the last lights off the black West went

Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs —

Because the Holy Ghost over the bent

World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

— Gerard Manly Hopkins (1844-1889)



Gerard Manley Hopkins, born in Stratford, was the eldest of nine children. His father founded a marine insurance firm, served for a time as Hawaiian consul-general in London and also served as a churchwarden at St John-at-Hampstead. His mother was the daughter of a London physician who loved music, literature and the novels of Dickens while both parents were deeply religious. Hopkins had intended to be a painter and had been taught sketching by his maternal aunt while his great-uncle, Richard James Lane, was a professional artist. Hopkins continued to sketch throughout his life, being inspired by John Ruskin and the Pre-Raphaelites. He became a skilled draughtsman and many of his siblings were to shine in similar ways — in music, religion and the creative arts — while only one, John, went in to their father's insurance firm.

While at Balliol College, Oxford, Hopkins became a keen socialite and prolific poet, forging a lifelong friendship with Robert Bridges; later also with Christina Rossetti. But soon Hopkins seems to have turned his back on his brush with Society and even included poetry in a list of things to give up for Lent, burning his poetry and not returning to it for seven years. He converted to Catholicism, a decision which estranged him from his family, and consulted with John Henry Newman who received him into the R.C. Church in 1866, then two years later deciding to become a Jesuit.

Hopkins trained at Manresa House, Roehampton and St Beuno's College near St Asaph in North Wales, and taught at a number of establishments including back at Roehampton, plus London, Oxford, Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow, Sheffield and Stonyhurst College, Lancs. In 1884 Hopkins became a professor of Greek and Latin at University College, Dublin and it was in Dublin that he served out the rest of his life; through these years becoming disappointed, reclusive and melancholic, his despondency exacerbated by the political situation of Dublin at that time and compounded by his estrangement from his family. Hopkins died of typhoid fever in 1889 at the age of 44.

Hopkins wrote *God's Grandeur* in 1877, not long before his ordination. The sentiment the poem illustrates seems to resonate with the environmental situation of today's world.

IS THIS THE WAY TO BALMERINO?

— *Janis Irvine*

On a sunny afternoon early in June the wider world beckoned and so we took one of those rare outings that were then allowed in today's new world of permissions. Fife was giving of its very best; hawthorn hedges were just coming in to bloom, beech boughs gently swayed with their new green finery, various grasses, interspersed with red campion and frothy angelica, danced by the roadsides. Above, the sky was Summer blue, dotted with gently gliding puff balls of fluffy clouds — the whole scene capped by the trill of birds singing as if each tiny being was delighting in the scene.

We motored North along less-travelled roads, each adjacent field adding to the package of delights: newly-planted orchards in serried rows, nibbling sheep with their skittish new-white offspring, scattered herds of cows — some of the belted variety, others a deep conker brown — farmers making use of the long, light-filled hours and builders doing catch-up, working on new extensions or new builds. Then, as we drew nearer our goal, there was the odd glimpse of a sparkling Tay through the tree canopy and we noticed the fields had grown smaller, each now heavily enclosed by exuberant mounds of hawthorn, here fully adorned in white blossom and showing a more relaxed style than the close-clipped angular hedging we had passed earlier. We were now travelling gently down narrow lanes, past white-washed cottages with cottage gardens filled with London Pride, lilac, peonies and lupins, over ancient stone bridges and beside murmuring burns. Somehow we seemed to have stepped back forty years in to another, picture-book world redolent of slow living and afternoon teas. The air was quiet, gentle conversation could be heard over garden hedges and an open gate invited us to enter. We had found our way to Balmerino and reached our destination.



Married to a priest, now retired, I had long ago grown used to days out often involving a visit to a church or other ecclesiastical establishment — and this was no exception. We had come to re-visit the Abbey which we had first encountered some years before. Now, here in this hushed, tree-enclosed space with its ground cover of buttercups, forget-me-nots and gently waving grasses, we could appreciate once more the immensity of what had been a mighty Cistercian Monastery, where monks laboured and prayed. Led by their Abbot, Alan, twelve monks from Melrose had arrived in 1228 and, over time, this small community



had produced a dormitory, a refectory and a church, all built in stone and all designed for communal living where everything was shared, nothing personally owned. The community was self-supporting, growing crops and tending sheep as well as having mills in their surrounding outlying lands and, like many such communities, they even exported grain which they did from the harbour down on the banks of the Tay.

Arising in Continental Europe at Cîteaux, the Cistercian Order was one of austerity, of simplicity, a life of prayer and of labour which had been born out of the Benedictine Order but which took its ideals

a step further in its mode of being to a harsher, more stringent way of life. This concept would also be taken up centuries later with the Augustinian Order out of which there came the Premonstratensian Order that began in Prémontré in France.

Like many other religious communities, that at Balmerino changed over the coming centuries and by the C.16th the monks were keeping their own personal cash, clothes and food, while some even tended their own individual gardens. Then, with the momentous changes in Church life of the mid-fifteen hundreds, the Abbey was overthrown by Protestant reformers, the community was dispersed and the building began to go in to disrepair. However, parts of the immense range of buildings survived because of transition to a private residence around 1600.

Wandering around the large enclosed space, it is easy to appreciate the immense scale of the Abbey buildings where National Trust stone markers inform about relative areas — Chapter House, South Aisle, Nave etc. — while directly opposite the entrance, amidst the grassed carpet of yellow buttercups interspersed with blue speedwell, is a very large, simple, wooden cross which marks the spot where it is thought the Abbey's founder, Queen Ermengarde de Beaumont, was buried before the High Altar of the Abbey she founded.



The grounds also have another aspect to make visitors appreciate the passing of time for just on the far edge of the clearing visitors can see a venerable old Spanish chestnut tree which National Trust core borings, taken in 1988, dated the wood to between 400 and 435 years old thus bringing the tree's age in 2021 to roughly half a millennium. Heavily supported by iron props, its bark deeply fissured and the surrounding area now fenced off for root protection from foot impact, this characterful tree must surely have witnessed much change in its lifetime.

Balmerino, the place where the sea-grass grows (marram grass?), or simply a sea-related place — whatever its derivation, Balmerino, and our drive through the Fife countryside, had given us an afternoon of many delights filled with the exuberant early-Summer bounty of Nature as well as reminding us of the rich heritage of the Christian religion.

**'The Church is the only organisation that does not exist for itself,
but for those who live outside of it'**

— *William Temple*

A FEW FEET IN DIAMETER

If the Earth were only a few feet in diameter, floating a few feet above a field somewhere, people would come from everywhere to marvel at it. People would walk around it, marvelling at its big pools of water, its little pools and the water flowing between the pools. People would marvel at the bumps on it, and the holes in it, and they would marvel at the very thin layer of gas surrounding it and the water suspended in the gas. The people would marvel at all the creatures walking around the surface of the ball, and at the creatures in the water.

The people would declare it as sacred because it was the only one, and they would protect it so that it would not be hurt. The ball would be the greatest wonder known, and people would come to pray to it, to be healed, to gain knowledge, to know beauty and to wonder how it could be. People would love it, and defend it with their lives; their own roundness could be nothing without it.

If the earth were only a few feet in diameter.

— *From Coyote Point Museum for Environmental Education*

ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS YOU MAY HAVE MISSED



The United Nations Secretary General, António Guterres, has said "2021 must be the year to reconcile humanity with nature".

The National Trust is to plant circles of blossom trees in towns and cities throughout England, Wales and Northern Ireland in the next 5 years. The first, in London, will commemorate those lost to Covid-19 but the idea is a response to the growing interest in Nature as a result of the pandemic.

On a similar theme, the RSPB has joined up with Barratt Homes Scotland in launching their new project, "**Nature on Your Doorstep**" which is designed to inspire people to turn outdoor spaces into places for wildlife. With 7 out of 8 households having access to a garden, developing each little space could make a huge difference to birds and insects as well as small mammals. For advice and inspiration visit: www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/nature-on-your-doorstep.

And, again, Wildlife Trusts, the National Trust, Horticultural Trades Association and the RHS have backed a new Government campaign launched on 5th June (World Environment Day) to encourage the public to **plant trees and flowers and to restore community spaces**.

Halogen Bulb Sales are to be banned from September and high-energy fluorescent lights will follow soon after under UK Government climate plans.

Ben Fogle has backed a project calling on everyone who can to **pick up 5 pieces of litter** every time a visit to a beach is made. With so many people drawn to beaches, especially during the Summer, a collective movement like this could make an enormous difference and so help protect the health of our seas. It is perhaps ironic that the pandemic has encouraged more people than ever to visit our coasts while in the same period our seas have been even more polluted by discarded face masks.

A book of facts we cannot ignore, '**How to Save Our Planet**' by **Prof. Mark Maslin** (Penguin Life £7.99) plus, crucially, ways to make a difference, is newly released. Facts such as: 'Since the beginning of civilisation we have cut down three trillion trees, more than half the trees on Earth' or 'We have created more than 170,000 synthetic mineral-like substances such as plastics, concrete, steel, ceramics and artificial drugs' or 'We make more than 300 million tonnes of plastic per year, equivalent in weight to 1 billion African elephants or every person on Earth.' Just the sort of book for young people to get their teeth into (or pub games fanatics!).

Last month the more reflective amongst you might have wondered why there were a few Scots words tacked on to the end of the newsletter. There they were, interesting in their own right but oddly placed and without explanation. This is where my plans did indeed 'gang awry' for in putting the newsletter together I found there was a little too much content and so kept one article back for the next issue. Editors are meant to check and check again the article was removed but a relevant answer section was not! It was meant as a light-hearted 'tail end' and, as you have already had the answers, you will have no trouble with the words used in the 'children's first reading primer' style at the end. Apologies!

How well do you know your Scots language? If from somewhere other than Scotland, this question might produce some hesitancy but even if Scotland has been your adopted country for a number of years, the local patois may not be quite the same as that of another region i.e. Lowland, Highland, Island or even neighbouring county. Different parts of Scotland will have produced their own words down through the centuries, or at least corruptions of the same words, just as surnames have been corrupted, depending on who wrote them down in a time when not everyone could read or write. The scribe for a baptism record, for instance, would have to listen to a father as his name was given and write it as they thought it to be — and so there may be three, four, even nine or ten different spellings for the same name. This has lead many a family researcher down the wrong path or to a dead end, simply because an ancestor's name had been phonetically written down in records. I have found this with one of my own family names, 'Urquhart'. You can see how easily this might be corrupted!

As the child of Fife parents but raised in Tasmania, I grew up hearing and understanding the spoken word of my parents but, without even realising it, listened to the language used by my school friends and subconsciously refrained from using my 'mother' tongue in their hearing and, as I grew older with most of my conversation based away from home, simply dropped using it altogether.

So it was a delight recently to be lent a book by Elizabeth Riches who herself has strong Scottish family connections. This book "*100 Favourite Scots Words*", edited by Pauline Cairns Speitel, lists a number of words I grew up with and has given me an understanding not only of their derivation, often ancient, but also of their common usage which, in some cases, continues to this day. And now, returning to my original question, here are some sentences to test *your* knowledge of a few of the words I have revisited or learnt afresh. See how you get on with the following words in italics.

I was fair *black affronted* to overhear one of my children using words that were not allowed in the house.

Oh how lovely it was to be home again to sit down in my *baffies*, with a warming cup of tea and the newspapers to read.

I had heard through the grape vine that the young woman was a *bejant* at St Andrews.

One of my children always had a *boorach* of a bedroom.

My father liked to remind me that he had been *dux* of his school and encouraged me to be the same.

When I did something my mother disapproved of she would generally say "Dinna be sae *glaiokit!*!"

I would love to wander down at the edge of the woods along the *haugh* looking for wildflowers.

They told me they often went down to the water looking for *partans*, and some were often big enough to take home for dinner.

People said the lad was a *numpty* but I found him to be great with practical tasks.

Every winter my coat would get its *pawkies* inserted and, with a pair of laced shoes and woollen socks, I would be set for the cold season.

How did you fare? Some of these words are still in fairly common usage today while others not so. Of course you had the answers in the June newsletter so by now you'll know exactly what each word means! And you might even use them when the occasion arises!

*Giver of life and all good gifts;
Grant us also wisdom to use only what we need;
Courage to trust your bounty;
Imagination to preserve our resources;
Determination to deny frivolous excess;
And inspiration to sustain through temptation.*
— *Patricia Winters*



Contributions to the Church Newsletter are always welcome and generally invited for the 15th of the month. The next issue will be for September when the Editor will be **Anne-Marie Smout** who can be contacted at: anne-marie@smout.org