

CHURCH NEWS — FEBRUARY 2021

THE SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH

A Member of the Anglican Communion

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**Sunday Worship for both churches is currently being held
at 10.30am (via Zoom)**

For details please contact St. John's Secretary.

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

Will life as we know it change for ever? Some reflections from Steve Butler

Two waves of thought (of note) have come my way today. Firstly the government have confirmed that the existing restrictions are to be extended for at least another month. No-one will be surprised, and probably, most of us are beyond disappointment. Secondly, I have spent the whole day with clergy colleagues from across the Diocese, at our 2021 Clergy Conference – a curtailed and virtual gathering, of course. Today, our guest speaker was Richard Tiplady, Director of Mixed Mode Training at the Scottish Episcopal Institute. We were invited to enter into conversation about the nature of church and ministry in a time of Covid, about leadership in times of uncertainty, and about whether contemporary thinking about ‘pioneer ministry – learning and experimentation’ might help us look ahead to challenges facing us as a church. One of the day’s sub-titles was ‘How to lead when you don’t know where you’re going’..... which seemed a bit close to the bone.

It is certainly one element of our current dilemma, that we find it harder now to know where all this is going. We hope, of course, that the stupendous efforts to vaccinate whole populations will enable some return to a more familiar way of life before too long. At the same time we probably all know that things will never be quite the same again. The authors of one of the journal articles, offered to us today, argue that we should think of this time not as a blizzard, nor even as the onset of winter, but as a mini-Ice Age. The initial experience of lockdown and the run-up to Easter probably felt like surviving a blizzard. We have hunkered down into ‘winter’ and are perhaps now looking forward to the first shoots of ‘spring’. But what if we are about to enter a mini-Ice Age? In other words, is everything going to be a bit different for quite a long time? Is our experience of all of this, perhaps going to compel us to leave behind some aspects of life that we wouldn’t otherwise have done – and that we unexpectedly realise are easy to let go of? Perhaps we are being forced into making changes that we should have made long ago.

Certainly in our practice as a Christian worshipping community we have had to accept unexpected limitations on our traditional practice. Now we find ourselves exiled from our treasured sanctuaries once more, and doing our best to maintain our commitment to honouring God and to being God’s people at prayer, in the virtual realm. It’s frustrating for me that as your priest, I am not able to be alongside you in everyday ways, as we journey in faith together. Gathering on Zoom, or watching back on YouTube, isn’t available to everyone, or to everyone’s taste. However, my experience of online worship last year, about which I was initially sceptical, was that, true to form, the work of the Spirit is not to be restricted – even if *we* are. For all that it is a ‘half-life’ form of meeting, very definitely seeing through a glass darkly, it was remarkable how often people spoke about how encouraged and enriched they were to ‘be together’ on a Sunday morning. In its own way, the technology makes it possible to gather as the community of Christ, to join our voices in the familiar words with which we come into God’s presence, to hear the scripture read, to say our prayers for the world and for each other – and to share the peace of Christ. There’s even a chance to catch up with friends, and maybe meet those we don’t know, at the virtual ‘coffee-time’ after the service. All of this takes getting used to – but it’s amazing how quickly that can happen. We hope it won’t be for too long, but it’s true that great things are often discovered in unexpected circumstances. ‘The wind blows,’ said Jesus to Nicodemus, ‘but you can’t see where it’s coming from, or to where it is going’.

We might just find that there are things we learn about ourselves and our faith in these days, that wouldn’t otherwise have occurred to us. Beyond our commitment to worship, this may well be a time when we can be open to reviewing who we are and to get ready for what God wants from us in the future, in a world that is in such increasing need.

May God give us grace and peace in the days and weeks ahead.

Steve

A Life’s Work – continuing the story of Bobby Dickson’s most interesting life as a Sheriff

One of the tasks which was part of my work and which did cause me a great deal of anxiety was the frequent occasions when I had to decide on what was in the best interests of a child or when parents separated.

Before I became a part-time sheriff in 1982, (my full-time appointment came in 1986), children usually went with mum while dad had access rights. There was no law or rule which said this but because fewer women worked, it was generally thought that children, especially younger ones, were better staying with their mothers. Fathers who had not been married to the mother had even less chance of “keeping the wean”.

Ideas moved forward in the 1980s but still a child was regarded as something to be bargained over by adults and it was not until legislation spelt out to everybody that the welfare of the child was paramount that there was a complete sea change in how the courts dealt with the regular clashes between parents. Dads whose name was on the birth certificate could seek custody or access (known as Residence and Contact) and if they could prove that they were the dad, they could apply to a court to obtain such a privilege.

I deliberately use the word "privilege" because as I often told parents, "you do not have a right to see or have contact with your child; what you do have is the privilege of contributing to your son or daughter's upbringing if it is in the best interest of the child for you to do so". The look of fury I have seen on outraged parents, particularly fathers, when I have told them that I have no interest in either of them but only in the ultimate welfare of their son or daughter, was a hazard I faced frequently.

So what is it that gave me so much anxiety? In previous generations people used to live in a locality and if parents split up then both probably continued to stay in the same town or village. Whichever parent cared for the child, there was rarely a change of school or friends, and grandparents and other relatives were often nearby. Thus the child could see both sides of the family and the influence of both sets of grandparents still was available.

With jobs and travel becoming more widespread this became the norm far less often. If one parent moved to England or Wales a completely different education system became a factor. It was no longer possible for children to visit both grannies regularly and contact arrangements were far more difficult to achieve. Jimmy could in the past see dad on Saturdays to visit Ibrox or Celtic Park before going home to mum; now with mum living in Newcastle or dad having gone to Aberdeen, such jaunts required organisation, travel plans and suitable accommodation.

It is frequently forgotten that children are the innocent victims of a domestic breakdown but they are the ones whose whole life can be affected by a Sheriff's decision as to where they should live, which school they should go to, what contact if any they should have with "the other side" and even if the other parent was a danger, what benefits were being lost by severing contact with grandparents, cousins etc. I was always worried about how my decision could affect a child for ever. Was I sanctioning a move to a different school, education system, new friends, and thereby breaking the good links with school relations and friends which exist? How could I foresee the distant future and was I making a terrible, however well meant, mistake which could change some young person's life for ever?

The decision was mine and I usually tried to see the child or children myself. I was far more hands-on than most Sheriffs, many of whom relied on a report by a social worker or independent solicitor. I wanted to see and hear what the child said personally. I often asked them if they would like to do a drawing which I then put on my wall along with others. I was told that one dad knew almost nothing personal about his daughter. Alice drew me a picture and then asked her dad if he could guess which of 23 then available was hers. Without a second's hesitation he chose the right one. It was easy, he explained; Alice's favourite colour is pink and that one is almost solid pink. He knew his daughter far better than his wife was prepared to accept.

In order to see a child in a more relaxed atmosphere I used the services of my Golden Retriever, Berry. Most children like dogs (I checked beforehand), and Berry was ideal. Soft, friendly, amenable to tummy rubs and being fed biscuits, she let the children relax and while they fussed over her they talked freely to me and the female Sheriff Clerk whom I insisted was present because it would have been irresponsible for a man to see a child alone.

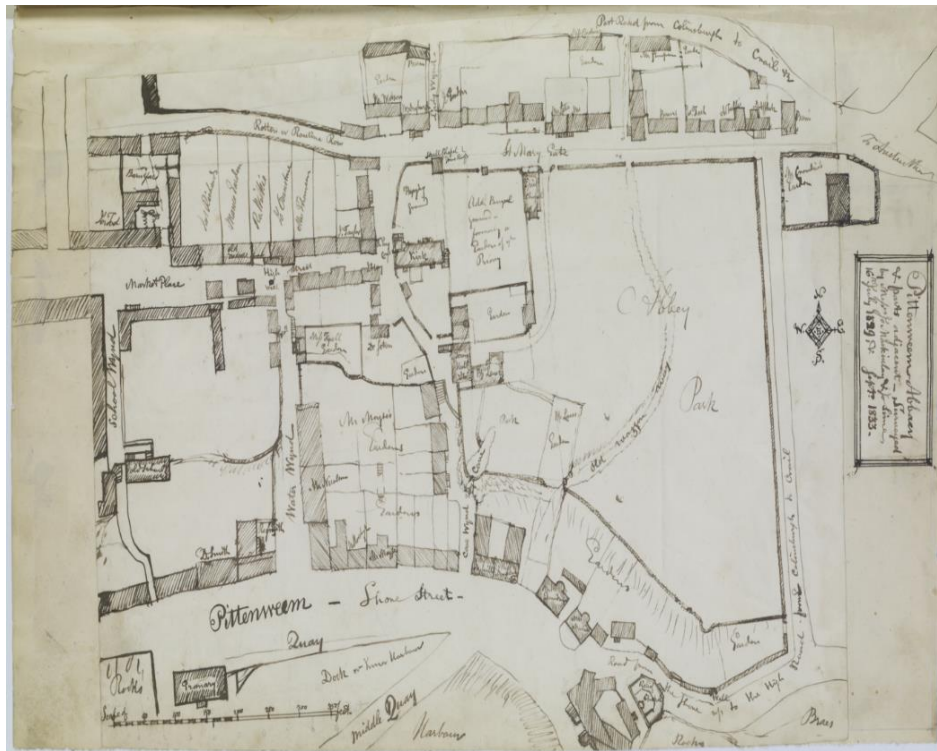
One of the good effects was that I was able to reassure the child that the decision was mine and there was no need to feel blame. Often a child felt a loyalty to the parent he or she lived with but still wanted to see the other parent. It was common knowledge that the "home" parent hated the other one, probably with good reason. and the child did not want to upset things by telling that parent that he/she wanted to see the other. By giving the assurance that I, and only I, made the decision and that both parents could shout at me as much as they wanted but that no blame could be landed on the child, I was able to relieve anxiety. If, I told the child, my decision happened to coincide with his or her wishes "Well that would be lovely."

Some stories ended happily, some did not. Next month's magazine will have these stories so that you will, I hope, see how varied they were.

Town and cowl in 16th-century Pittenweem

by Anthony Lodge

Medieval Pittenweem was divided between the Lower Town, 'below the cliffs' along the Shore, and the Upper Town 'above the cliffs' along the High Street. The Lower Town was peopled by the burgh's poorer inhabitants, who made their living from the sea (fishing, coal, salt and shipping), while the Upper Town was more affluent, with landed gentry at the west end by South Loan, wealthy merchants and ship-owners around the top of Water Wynd, and people closely associated with the Augustinian priory at the east end, at the top of Cove Wynd.



The Augustinians, or Canons Regular, were not monks like the Benedictines or Cistercians, whose lives were constrained by the daily round of liturgical offices and physical labour in the fields (*orare et laborare*). They were priests who elected to live a communal, celibate life within the confines of their monastery, but with an outreach mission of pastoral care to the community. This involved not just preaching, but also the teaching (of boys) and care of the sick. Pittenweem had nine canons, so, if we count in the domestics who looked after the farm on the Abbey Field and who acted as servants within the conventual buildings, the community must have comprised about 20 persons.

There was much coming and going with the town. With their black cope and cowl the canons must have been familiar figures. The area between *Rattoun Raw* (Routine Row), *Kyrkgait* (Kirkgate) and *Coifgait* (Cove Wynd) was a sort of monastic annex. 'Master' John Millar - a 'chaplain' - lived at the east end of *Rattoun Raw* and was perhaps in charge of the priory's hospital / hostel. John Auchinleck (Affleck), a lay person, was the priory chamberlain - he looked after the accounts - and had a large house at the end of the High Street opposite the Tolbooth tower. The houses along the west side of Cove Wynd from the High Street to the west door of the Great House were peopled by the priory's women and children. The canons were bound by the rules of celibacy, but in the decades before the Reformation, these were increasingly disregarded - less, it seems, by the ordinary canons in Pittenweem than by the men at the top. Canons low down the hierarchy had little private houses adjoining the priory garden, which allowed them various creature comforts. One of them, James Murray, was disciplined for persistent verbal abuse of an un-named woman in town. The sub-prior, Patrick Anderson, who had a family in the town, acquired a plot of priory land right outside the west door in Cove Wynd to set up his son, David Rory, as a leather-tanner. But the prize has to go to the prior John Roule, natural son of an earlier prior, Andrew Forman (whose armorial panel is displayed above the font in St John's). Roule lived like a lord. He relished life at the court of James V - in Linlithgow and Falkland - and went on two royal visits to France. He furnished the Prior's Lodging like a *château*. It is pretty

certain that the sculpted wooden cabinet (pictured here) retrieved from one of the cellars and now in the National Museum was commissioned by him.

His appetite for women was insatiable. He fathered at least eight children, marrying his three daughters (Alison, Margaret and Beatrice) to local men and legitimising his sons to enable them to acquire valuable parts of the priory estate - salt-pans in particular - as these were feued out in the 1540s. His son Robert married a wealthy local heiress (Margaret Murray) with a house in the middle of Marygate. Two other sons (John and Ninian) shared a house at the intersection of the High Street and Cove Wynd. They lived cheek by jowl in Cove Wynd with a woman called Elspeth Bowsie, often visited by priory canons. Could she have been their mother? The pair eventually went into the church, re-surfacing later as canons of St Andrews.

But reformation was coming. In 1553 John Roule was eased into early retirement at Pitlathie House (Leuchars) and in the following year, the sub-prior of St Andrews (John Winram) conducted a visitation of the priory. His report shows that, setting aside the prior himself, shortcomings in the behaviour of the Pittenweem canons was not all that bad in comparison with what was going on elsewhere (Coldingham Priory, for example). Firm recommendations were made for tightening things up, but it was all too late. In June 1559 John Knox preached fiery sermons in the East Neuk and St Andrews, catholicism was abolished and the monks were obliged to change their coats to 'other apparel'.



Slaves in Georgian Britain –

by Chris Smout

We all know that slavery was a stain on the history of the British Empire and America, but we tend to think of it as confined to the far side of the Atlantic, albeit also profiting the traders on this side as well. This turns out to be quite wrong. Simon Newman, Professor of American History at the University of Glasgow, has recently been researching the history of black slavery within eighteenth-century Britain itself, by compiling a database of advertisements in English and Scottish newspapers about runaway slaves, and also of slaves offered up for sale. His findings were published in the *English Historical Review* in November 2019.

His findings are shocking and surprising. He found a total of no fewer than 831 advertisements for runaways in Britain between 1700 and 1780, demanding their return and offering rewards, and 80 notices offering people for sale. Over 90 per cent related to black people of African origin, but a few were south Asian and one was a native American Indian. Nearly half were under eighteen, and 7 per cent were aged twelve or below. Most, but by no means all, were male. Wealthy Britons, particularly returned planters or merchants like John Glassford in Glasgow, but sometimes members of the nobility such as the Duke of Devonshire, often had a slave or two in their households. Generally these were quite young boys. It was a status symbol to have a black personal servant in livery and they frequently appeared in the background of family portraits. Sometimes planters brought over a young male to be apprenticed to some trade that would make him more valuable on return to the plantations. Visiting Americans also often brought slaves with them; even scientific celebrity and future founding father Benjamin Franklin, in 1757 brought two slave boys over to serve himself and his son, and one of them, just twelve years old, ran away.

The sale advertisements were brutally clear. They made clear, for example that imported children could be offered for sale together or separately. In 1740, Samuel Downes offered for sale in this way, in London, a 14-year-old boy and an 8-year-old girl, both 'well proportioned', the boy trained to serve at table and the girl able to do housework and use a needle. In 1766, the Edinburgh Evening Courant advertised 'to be disposed of, a negro Woman Named Peggy', born and raised in South Carolina, 'speaks good English...an exceeding good House-wench and washer and dresser, and is very tender and careful of children'. She was nineteen years old and was offered with her four-year-old son.

The circumstances under which they worked, of course, were quite different from the brutal conditions under which black slaves toiled and suffered beating and whipping in the plantations, and more akin to those of British servants and apprentices with whom they mingled. But they were still slaves, unpaid, the property of their masters, listed in inventories alongside dogs and cattle, liable to be sold at any time. Worse, they could be returned to the more dreadful conditions of the plantations at any time their masters chose, and for those who had been apprenticed in Britain it was

this prospect of imminent return that often triggered the attempts to escape. The subsequent advertisement appeared in the press, like this one dated Liverpool, 1738

“run away a Gold Coast Negro, about five foot six inches high,
with three marks down each cheek belonging to his country... and an
R branded on his left shoulder which is the plantation mark; he had on
him ...an old fustian coat with brass buttons and a green freze waistcoat,
both lined with yellow, and leather breeches. Whoever will apprehend
and send him to the next goal, and give notice to Mr Jeremiah Riley in
Liverpool, or to Mr John Boyes, at the Golden Lion in Surrey-Street in
the Strand, shall have two guineas reward and all reasonable charges.”

Eventually, of course, the courts ruled that slavery was inadmissible on British soil, but this did not come quickly or in a simple way. In England the crucial case was in 1772, in Scotland in 1778, but even later visitors from America and the West Indies sometimes brought their domestic slaves with them and returned with them still in slavery. But after about 1780, the advertisements for runaways no longer appear in the press, and a movement first to prohibit the slave trade across the Atlantic and then to abolish slavery itself gradually arose in Great Britain.

The Abolitionist movement was remarkable, and we are right to applaud it, but it is as well to be aware of the full story our own past before we criticise other people for theirs.

ERYL FOOTE

— Bobby Dickson



Eryl Foote died peacefully on 4th December in a Care Home in St Andrew's. Eryl had been Secretary of St Michael's for 29 years, a record unlikely to be surpassed. Due to Covid restrictions, the Service in the Church, and the subsequent committal at Kilconquhar, were only attended by the maximum (20) of family members. Our Priest-in-charge, Steve Butler, conducted a wonderfully uplifting service at which a tribute prepared by the family was read. The Foote family intend to have a Service of Thanksgiving once the restrictions are eased.

Eryl went to Dollar Academy where her father was a teacher. At the beginning of the War he went to France and in early June, 1940 was killed as his Section tried to join up with members of the Argylls in a determined attempt to divert the Germans away from Dunkirk. He was one of the first officers to lose his life in the Regiment. Also killed at the same time was Hamish Ross, a 2nd Lieutenant with the Argylls. In June 1939 he had been married in St John's.

Eryl completed her education in Dollar and in 1945 she started a Physiotherapy course at Bedford before meeting and marrying Bruce, a serving Army officer. Theirs was a wonderful marriage of equal partners and was blessed with three children, and later grandchildren, to whom Eryl and Bruce were devoted. A great deal of responsibility and the accompanying anxiety fell on Eryl's shoulders as Bruce was firstly involved in the Suez conflict and thereafter was in Palestine. With young toddlers she must have recollected the plight of her own mother widowed as the result of conflict. Her faith was absolute and Bruce returned safely home. Periods in occupied East Germany and other military depots followed.

The family settled in Elie and Eryl became deeply involved with many things locally. She was an active member of the WRVS, assisted at Cameron Hospital cafe, organised transport for people to attend hospital appointments, ran a dress shop in Largo, edited the magazine of the St Andrew's Flower Club — the list is endless. She was in the words of her family “a fun loving, very active Mum to whom helping others was an essential part of life”

Her own interests included ornithology, flower arranging (her skill rivalled that of Brenda Hall), painting, photography and creating beautiful greetings cards, some of which featured St Michael's. It was her dedication to St Michael's which we shall always remember with gratitude. Her 29 years encompassed 7 changes of clergy, each change involving the tasks of advertising and supervising the selection of the new incumbent. She was closely involved with the sale of the Parsonage in Elie (a decision she always regretted) and for many years she was our Lay representative on the Synod. When Peggy Curtice retired as Treasurer, Eryl volunteered Bruce for the role and for many years they were the lay backbone of St Michael's.

When Bruce died in 2015, she was naturally bereft but she continued to be involved with the Church and all who were members. She came every Sunday and as her eyesight deteriorated she used a large print copy of the 1982 Service. She knew the hymns by heart. Her faith was strong and it was appropriate that her Burial took place exactly five years after that of Bruce with whom she is now reunited. Her constant warm smile, her contribution to the lives of so many, particularly her devotion to her family and her Church, have left many wonderful memories and a deep gratitude for all she was.

May she rest in peace.

Patricia Tribble (St John's) sadly died on 7th January. She is to be cremated on 2nd February at Kirkcaldy crematorium with the service for members of the family only. However, the service will be relayed and be available for everyone to view later. Details and a reference number will be circulated to us by James Tribble, her son, as soon as he has it.
{AMS ed}

Ways of weekly offering while the church is closed - a note from the Treasurer of St John's

For those who would normally bring their offering to church on a Sunday, please remember that while the church is closed there are ways of continuing this discipline. You can either make out a cheque to 'St John's Episcopal Church: Pittenweem' and send it to me, or if you have access to online or digital banking make a direct payment to the church bank account. Your offering will still attract Gift Aid.

The Vestry of St John's is most grateful to members and friends for their continued financial support for our work in these difficult times.

Janet Bulloch (Tel: 01333 310872; E: janet.bulloch@btinternet.com; post: 31 Beacon Court, Craw's Nest Court, Anstruther, Fife, KY10 3FP)

<p>Notable Dates for February 2021</p>

<p>Tuesday 2- Presentation of the Lord Wednesday 17 – Ash Wednesday Sunday 21 – First Sunday in Lent Sunday 28 – Second Sunday in Lent (Easter Sunday is April 4th)</p>

Contributions to the Church Magazine are always welcome. Copy deadline is February 14. AMS will be the editor and can be contacted on 01333 310330 or send any contribution to anne-marie@smout.org