

ISSUE 57 - SPRING 2020
FREE

Stramash

The Orwell and Portmoak Quarterly Parish Magazine

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Dear Friends,

The old phrase ‘betwixt and between’ has just come to have a new resonance for us all in this country. A few hours ago (*as I write*) we woke up to find ourselves in exactly that situation, having now officially left the European Union. We haven’t been here for nearly half a century and some readers at least will never have known life except as citizens of the EU. The times they are a’ changing.

Reports of gatherings up and down the country to mark our departure show clearly how divided we remain

on this issue, and what contrasting emotions our departure has evoked. Exuberant parties of celebration in some places were matched by wake-like gatherings in others. For some, this is an exciting moment of great progress in our national life; for others, there has been an overwhelming feeling of sadness and loss for what’s past, and of apprehension about what the future might hold.

And we really are ‘betwixt and between’, for although we are out of the EU, we remain for the rest of this year in a strange transition period, when the future shape of our relationship with the EU will be decided. Intense negotiations lie ahead and it is not clear what that future relationship will look like.

Our political situation is a reminder that life is made up of a series of endings and beginnings, transitions from one state or set of circumstances to another. This is as true for us as individuals as it is for institutions and nations. Willy-nilly, we are caught up in ceaseless change. We find ourselves regularly in what has been called ‘*the limbo of liminality*’, that in-between state before crossing the threshold (*limen is Latin for threshold*) and becoming something else. This is just the way life is. Children become adults, pregnant mums become mothers, ageing ministers become retired has-beens!

Each rite of passage has within it a moment of the ‘*not yet ended*’ and the ‘*not yet begun*’. Not infrequently, this betwixt and between phase creates a certain level of anxiety about what lies ahead, together with sense of excitement about the prospect of new beginnings.

No doubt the transition period lying ahead for our nation will not be wholly bad – or wholly good.



Life is usually more grey than black and white. We can but hope that we will at least see an end to the coarseness that has entered our public discourse during the last few years, with greater calmness, self-control and mutual respect among our politicians. Instead of polarizing arguments, we want to see our leaders work together to make our nation a place where all can flourish and the weakest and most vulnerable are cared for. Is this too much to ask for?

A theme running through the Bible is that every ending is accompanied by the presence of new hope. This hope brings joy. The Christian faith is essentially all about the hope and joy so conspicuous by their absence from contemporary culture. Woody Allan quipped that ‘*hope for the future has become a thing of the past*’. Christian hope, however, is not a blind optimism but the quiet confidence that, because the God who has revealed himself in Jesus is there, all shall ultimately be made right.

This hope has been a light which down the ages has guided countless folk through life’s uncertainties and perplexities. It has the same transformative power today for all who are willing to embrace it. As CS Lewis said of this ultimate hope, ‘*There are far, far better things ahead than any we have left behind.*’

Yours sincerely,

Angus Morrison
Very Rev Dr Angus Morrison

COVER PHOTO: Doug Carrie

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Brian's Memorial Service

On the first of February this year, a large number of people, from as far south as London and Oxford, gathered in the beautiful Cleish Parish Church to remember and give thanks for the life of Brian Ogilvie who had passed away on the 7th of December 2019.

Regular readers of this Parish Magazine will recall the countless articles penned by Brian for these pages over many years. These ranged widely, from theology to book reviews to café reviews. They were always stimulating, often thought-provoking, and not infrequently laced with his distinctive brand of humour.

It was typical of Brian that he had prepared his own memorial service in great detail. The extent of the detail caused a headache or two to those who were charged with organizing and leading it, but in the event all went well. The congregational singing of the five hymns Brian had chosen was superb. He had also prepared introductions for each of them and these were read by five friends from the Fossoway Men's Breakfast at which Brian had been a regular attender.

We sang the great hymn, *'Here is love, vast as the ocean'*, known as the *'love song'* of the 1904 Welsh Revival. On Brian's instruction, before singing it, we heard a verse sung in Welsh over the sound system. My impression was that the Cleish congregation did an even better job!

In the eulogy, among much else, we heard of Brian's early life of poverty in Dundee, the academic achievements in chemistry and mathematics of this lad o' pairts, his love for the brilliant young lady, with an Oxford doctorate, who came to Grove Academy as his Head of Department in 1973, sporting, to Brian's initial surprise, a Girls' Crusader badge, and his subsequent marriage to Moira in 1974.

We learned how their careers took them from Dundee to London and

on to Summer Fields in Oxford, where Brian wrote a bestselling mathematics textbook for prep schools. We heard how Brian was the only man ever to be interviewed for the post of Head at St George's School for girls in Edinburgh. He loved to tell that story, adding with a wry smile, *'Sadly, I didn't crack the glass ceiling!'*

Three areas of interest and close involvement gave Brian enormous pleasure and fulfilment. The first was his joining the Dorothy L. Sayers Society, of which he became a devoted Treasurer for many years. We heard an appreciation from the Society's Dr Geraldine Perriam of Brian's valued work and friendship in that context.

Secondly, Brian heard and responded to the call to service in the church. He initially became a Reader in the United Reformed Church. This enabled him to move directly into the role within the Church of Scotland, on his and Moira's return to Kinnesswood. He served the parish of Cleish and Fossoway under three ministers, the Revs David McLeod, Joanne Foster and Elisabeth Stenhouse, each of whom he held in high regard. From Joanne, at the service we heard memories of this period of Brian's much appreciated service. Elisabeth offered a most appropriate prayer of thanksgiving.

As already mentioned, the third sphere of engagement which gave Brian much pleasure - and others enrichment - was his regular and much valued contributions to Stramash. Ruary MacLeod, the editor, comments: -

"Brian was a most intelligent, loyal, diligent and enthusiastic contributor of articles to the magazine over much of



its life. He was almost always the first to respond positively to my quarterly pleas for submission of 'pieces' for the next issue. I could be sure of receiving from Brian a rich variety of most interesting, informative and amusing anecdotes. He was a good friend who will be sorely missed by me and by his many reader 'fans' who eagerly awaited the pleasure of 'devouring his pieces' when published in Stramash and of heading off immediately to try out Brian's latest, recommended eating-place!"

Brian was a unique person of many talents. He had a deep interest in and concern for people, from the pupils he taught in school to the parishioners he served through the church. It was impossible not to warm to him. We shall all miss him greatly, especially of course Moira and his family. We can be thankful, however, that his suffering is over, that we have many bright memories to sustain us and that we can look to a future irradiated with the hope of the Gospel. As Dorothy L. Sayers' friend, CS Lewis, once famously roared across a busy Oxford street, to a friend departing for the States: *'Christians never say Goodbye!'*

Moira wishes to convey her warm appreciation for all the support offered to her during Brian's illness and the many expressions of sympathy following his passing, and for all who attended the Memorial Service in Cleish Church.

ANGUS MORRISON





Memorable Quotes from Dorothy L. Sayers

Dorothy L. Sayers (1893 – 1957) was a writer of detective fiction, poetry and plays, besides being a devoted student of classical and modern languages. She is most widely remembered as author of the crime mysteries that feature the aristocratic amateur sleuth, Lord Peter Wimsey. These books still have an enthusiastic readership. So does her idiosyncratic translation

for Penguin Books of Dante's Divine Comedy, which she regarded as her best work. Less well known, unfortunately, are her remarkable theological writings such as *Creed or Chaos?* She was offered a Lambeth doctor of divinity by the Archbishop of Canterbury but she turned it down on the (*highly questionable*) grounds that she was not a 'proper' theologian. A.M.

'Wherever you find a great man, you will find a great mother or a great wife standing behind him -- or so they used to say. It would be interesting to know how many great women have had great fathers and husbands behind them.'

'A marriage of two independent and equally irritable intelligences seems to me reckless to the point of insanity.'

'We've got to laugh or break our hearts in this damnable world.'

'Facts are like cows. If you look them in the face long enough, they generally run away.'

'In the world it is called Tolerance, but in hell it is called Despair... the sin that believes in nothing, cares for nothing, seeks to know nothing, interferes with nothing, enjoys nothing, hates nothing, finds purpose in nothing, lives for nothing, and remains alive because there is nothing for which it will die.'



Oasis Ladies Group will meet at Portmoak Church New Room at 10.15am on the following dates:

**March 27th – Craft Morning
April 24th – Speaker – Wilma Carragher
May 29th – Craft Morning**

Everyone will be most welcome to come along to any meeting.

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28th March – Orwell Church Hall

25th April – Portmoak Village Hall

30th May – Orwell Church Hall

We hope to see you there!

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Tuesday 17th March
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Volunteer of the Year Award

Karena Jarvie



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Forum



Scottish Fair Trade Awards honour local Fair Trade campaigner

Fair Trade supporters gathered at Scotmid's headquarters in Edinburgh on Monday 18th November to celebrate the 2019 Scottish Fair Trade Awards.

The Scottish Fair Trade Awards recognise the individuals, groups and organisations who work locally to support and promote Fair Trade in Scotland, and thereby make a tangible difference to the lives of the people in the Global South who grow our food and make the products that we use every day.

Karena Jarvie from Kinross-shire won Volunteer of the Year 2019 for her work in communicating the benefits of Fair Trade, promoting and selling Traidcraft goods and building support for Scottish-based Fair Trade businesses such as Bala Sport and Just Trading Scotland.



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Karena acknowledged her gratitude to all the many people in Kinross-shire who support Fairtrade and buy Traidcraft goods. A selection of those goods is always available from the Church Office in South Street, Milnathort during the usual Office opening hours.

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* CLOSED CHRISTMAS DAY *

Out in the Elements

Malcolm Guite is a poet, singer-songwriter, academic and Anglican cleric. He has a particular interest in the intersection of religion and the arts. This poem is about a walk he took in this season of spring. He writes:

'It's about walking on a wild wet windy early spring day, but as you will see, it's also about the four elements within and around us and also, perhaps a little meditation on those hints in Paul that in Christ's redemption and renewal of humanity will also be the redemption, in and through us, of all nature, that the creation waits with eager longing for glory, hidden in us, in us to be revealed. Anyway, I hope you enjoy it.'



*I crunch the gravel on my ravelled walks
And clabber with my boots in the wet clay
For I myself am clay that breathes and talks
Articulated earth, I move and pray
Alive at once to walk and be the way.
The root beneath, the branch above the tree
These hedges bright with blossom, white with May,
Everything concentrates, awaits in me
the coming of the One who sets creation free*

*Earth opens now to sudden drumming rains,
The raised and falling waters of the sea
Whose tidal pull and play is in my veins
Spilling and spreading, filling, flowing free
Whose ebb and flow is still at work in me
And in the wombing pulse of play and work
When heart beats pushed in waves of empathy
Till waters broke and bore me from the dark
And found this foundered shore and took me from the ark*

*As rain recedes I pause to fill my pipe
And kindle fire that flickers into light
And lights the leaf all curled and cured and ripe
Within a burr-starred bowl. How fierce and bright
It glows against the cold. And I delight*

*In taste and fragrance, watching wisps of grey
And graceful smoke in their brief flight,
As sun breaks from the clouds and lights my way
I feel the fire that makes the light that makes the day*

*Now air is all astir in breaks and blasts,
The last grey rags of cloud are blown aside
The hedgerows hush and rustle in the gusts
As clean winds whistle round me. Far and wide
Bent grasses and frail flowers lean aside
I breathe the world in with this brimming breeze
That tugs at me and eddies at my side
Quickens and flickers through the tangled trees
And breathes me back to life and brings me to my knees*

*Akin to every creature I will learn
From each and all the meaning of my birth
I love the dust to which I will return
The subtle substance of my mother earth,
From water born by fire fathered forth,
An index and epitome of nature,
I sum and summon all the world is worth,
And breathing now His elemental air
I find the One within, without, and everywhere.*

Hail the Holy Dusters

**The house of God welcomes all who cross its doors
But it is the Holy Dusters who clean the pews and floors.**

**The minister may preach his sermons, the organist play the tunes
But it is the Holy Dusters who wield the pans and brooms.**

**The devil of dirt is excluded when the noble brigade go through,
The work may be humble and lowly but so were the fishermen too.**

**Then offer a prayer of thanksgiving for those behind the scene
Who give their love in labour that God's house may be clean.**

Anon (Alt.)



Outgrowing Dawkins. God for Grown Ups

Rupert Shortt (SPCK, 2019)

Our New Atheist friend, Richard Dawkins, has been at it again. His now notorious visceral hatred for all things religious, with a special quality of venom reserved for Christianity, cannot remain quiescent for long. It just has to get out there into the public domain, in the hope that as many others as possible will catch the virus. He cannot understand why so many have failed to do so. Clearly, another attempt seemed necessary.

This time, it's a book which seems clearly to be aimed at potential teenage readers. Its title, *Outgrowing God. A Beginner's Guide* wishes to convey the notion that belief in God is to be included among the childish beliefs, for example in Santa Claus and fairies, we put away on reaching mature adulthood. Belief in God is in the same category as a conviction that elves live at the bottom of your garden. It's fine to think such things during a certain stage of childhood. As adults, we have outgrown such nonsense.

Dawkins writes well and persuasively and many of his books on science are deservedly held in high regard. He is a great communicator and he hopes that skill will serve to rescue lots of young people, as they grow up, from the imbecility of belief in a creator God. Unfortunately, what many of his young readers will not realise is that when it comes to issues of faith and theology, Dawkins, quite literally, does

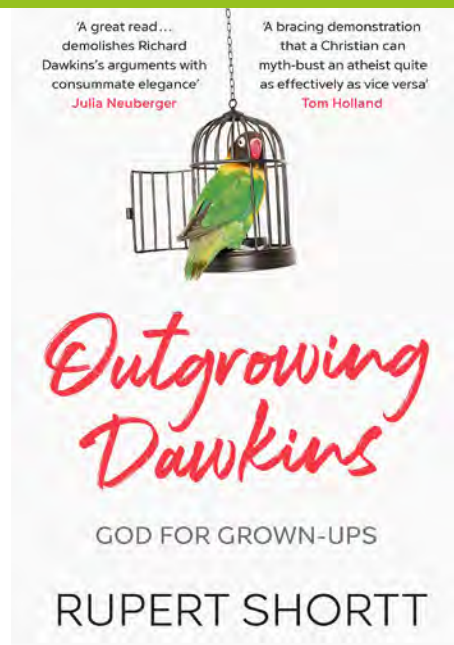
not know what he is talking about.

It was essential that this should be shown to be the case. Rupert Shortt, an academic and Religion Editor of the Times Literary Supplement has done a superb job of doing just that in his cheekily titled (*but deservedly so!*) response to Dawkins: *Outgrowing Dawkins. God for Grown Ups*.

Shortt shows Dawkins's book to be little more than a rehash of positions stated more fully in his larger, bestselling, *God Delusion*. In that book, Dawkins attacks a certain form of religion which is about as far removed as can be conceived from a mature faith. What is extraordinary is that when some of the finest thinkers of our time (*including atheists*) pointed out to Dawkins the crudity of his assaults on what were little more than 'straw men', he didn't pay them the slightest attention! It is almost incredible.

Karen Kilby puts well one of the most basic category of errors running through Dawkins' polemic: *'If God is source of all, holding everything – including time and space themselves – in being, then it follows that you cannot think of God as one more item in the universe, as one outsized actor among others, as vying for space or influence with the beings God creates.'*

In a manner, to say the least, academically irresponsible (*I hesitate to say dishonest*), Dawkins refuses to read serious theology or engage with serious theologians on theology. He reveals himself at every turn



to be as much of a fundamentalist as the religious fundamentalists he so loathes. Iain McGilchrist understandably comments, *'There is scientific fundamentalism and there is religious fundamentalism: why waste time on either?'* Shortt takes Dawkins' flimsy arguments apart with elegance and clarity.

It is so sad to see a fine mind like that of Richard Dawkins, under the impulsion of bitter prejudice, produce such intellectual rubbish, riddled with the most elementary mistakes. I hope he reads this book but suspect he won't. Maybe, one day he will manage to lose his arrogance and come to a better mind. Let's hope so for his own good and the good of us all. Meantime, we can be thankful for the work of more careful and balanced academics, like Rupert Shortt, who with minimal effort show clearly that, for now at least, this 'emperor has no clothes'.

ANGUS MORRISON

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Fifteen Down! Who is counting?

There will be many more to come!



Heaven Scent
eat ☕ drink ☕ unwind

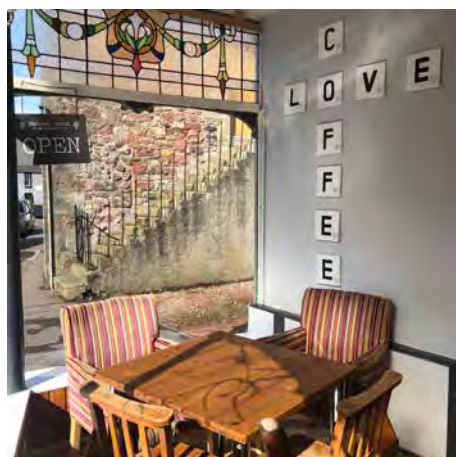


The much-loved Heaven Scent Coffee Shop in Milnathort is celebrating its 15th birthday this May.

Stramash catches up with owner Andrew D Scott to find out more.

Congratulations! 15 years is a great achievement. How are you going to celebrate?

“Many thanks – feels longer! We’ll be running special events throughout the year, competitions and prizes etc and we’ll have a birthday party weekend at the end of May with a barbecue, live music, amazing food, fun cocktails ... we’ll announce the details soon.”



What gave you the idea of opening a coffee shop?

“I’ve worked in catering and hospitality since the age of 13, a wee lad starting out as a kitchen porter. I didn’t do well at school but had the right skills and personality to work in hospitality, so studied hard at college and was a hotel General Manager at just 22. Entrepreneurial spirit runs in my family, so a few years, promotions, and countries later I bought a small café in Kinross, then the former florist shop in Milnathort. You know, I don’t even



like coffee, I’ve never ever drunk a cup, I’m 100% a tea man, but I felt that a coffee shop was what the local community needed most.”

Heaven Scent has a very distinct look and feel. How have you achieved this?

“When I first bought Heaven Scent, it was in need of serious refurbishment, especially as I had to convert it from a florist into a coffee shop. It’s seen a number of transformations over the years, and customers seem to love the current antique style colours and quirky features. Buying the flat above was a huge coup as it meant we could expand upstairs and outside to create “The Secret Garden” and “Heaven Above”. Using a SMEG fridge instead of a normal door to access the stairs has worked brilliantly and is still a talking point almost three years later. We even won the STAR Award for innovation on the back of it!”

Where did the name come from?

“The shop I bought was called “Scent from Heaven” which I really liked but it didn’t quite fit the bill. A wee bit of jiggery pokery later and boom! Heaven Scent was born.”

What have been your highlights?

“I’m a people person, so I love recruiting, developing and nurturing young people and watching them thrive. I also love going into local schools and colleges to support with nutrition and cooking programmes, judging baking competitions and spotting some potential talent while I’m at it! Most of all, when I bought the shop, I had no kids, now my two boys very much want to be part of its future. Being invited to open a Heaven Scent in DCLG is kinda cool but I

had to pick a work highlight, it would be winning Scottish Entrepreneurial Caterer of the Year in 2016.”

And some low points

“We’ve been broken into and vandalised several times in the past few years which has been heart-breaking, but the support from the community has been outstanding. Outside of Heaven Scent, I had a business venture in Perth which didn’t work out, to

put it mildly. Again, every cloud, and it taught me enough to enable me to set up Victus Consultancy which sees me travelling around Britain like a real-life Ramsay Kitchen Nightmares meets The Restaurant Man with a little dribble of Alex Polizzi.”

What are you most proud of?

“I look around the shop and see couples, high school kids, professionals on laptops, cyclists, grandparents with their grandkids, mums with babies, locals and tourists. It’s such an amazing mix. I’m also proud of our afternoon teas as we allow customers more choice than usual, and that we have remained innovative and creative, especially when it comes to catering for customers with special dietary requirements.”

Sum up Heaven Scent in five words

“Eat, Drink, Relax, Coffee, Cake.”

Andrew D Scott is owner and MD of the ‘Heaven Scent’ brand and Victus Consultancy.



'All Creatures Great and Small'

Dick tells tales of formerly 'reigning' cats and dogs of the Crighton household

The animals we love can sometimes rule our lives if we let them, but it's so hard to resist the various and cunning ways that pets seem to have to get their own way.

Here are a few pen pictures - and photos - of pets with whom we have shared our lives from time to time over many years.

Ringo was our first dog. He was a stray who, after wandering between Kinnesswood and our place in Scotlandwell for several months, found his way to our house. He was enticed in by means of a little cat food. He lived with us for about seventeen years and enjoyed walks around the fields. Often, while out with him, he would gradually move further away from me until he thought he was out of earshot and then he would increase speed and make his own way home, leaving me to return home by myself.

Cholet, our second dog, a female, was found in Scotlandwell late one evening and, on being found, seemed to become excited whenever a car appeared. It was as if she had been dumped from a car and was looking for her owners. Despite appeals for information and notices posted, no owner came forward. She came at a time when Ringo was aging quite a lot, had put on weight and was slowing down. Well, when this new young female appeared, the old lad perked up a lot, began to slim down and lived about five more years than we'd expected him to live.

We have had cats for about fifty years up until now. Our last one, Cava, died at about sixteen years old, late last year. He was a stray who found his way into our garden. We had no dogs by that time but Cava may have known dogs in his previous home. He enjoyed meeting our neighbour's large Gordon Setters and would go out to meet them when they appeared. Cava even rubbed himself around one of the dog's legs, much to the worried looking dog's consternation, while being constrained on a tight lead.

Squeaks and Meggie came to us from the Fife Cat Shelter in Colinsburgh, as it was at the time. We visited the shelter to see if there were two cats that we could have together. On arriving we saw this beautiful fluffy female, Meg. We renamed her 'Meggie' as I frequently address my wife, Margaret as Meg. Two Megs in the house would have been too much. We decided to take Meggie and were persuaded to take a young, recently arrived male as well. We named him 'Squeaks' because of his mouse-like voice.

Squeaks and Cava were never friendly towards each other, although they never fought. For as long as Meggie was around, the two boys behaved themselves. However, after Meggie died, both males went everywhere marking "**their**" territory, which just happened to be our entire house. We had to keep closed the doors to every room. Almost the moment that Squeaks died and Cava was on his own, the marking stopped - thank goodness!

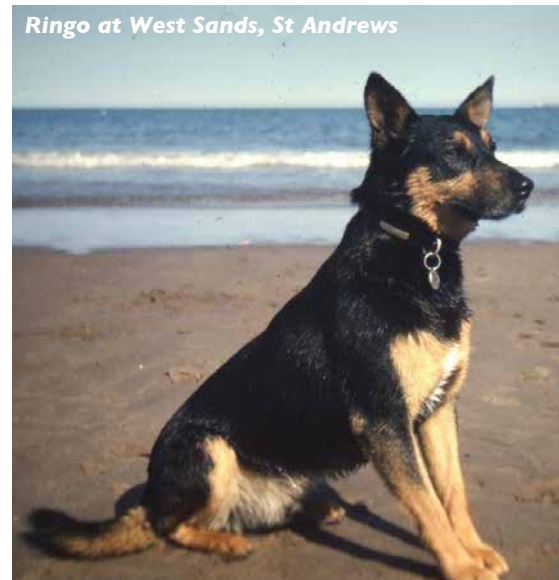
DICK CRIGHTON



Squeaks relaxing on armchair



Meggie watching something



Ringo at West Sands, St Andrews



Cholet on Mull



Cava and 'He's behind you'

Street Pastors

A personal perspective by Derek Morrison

The term ‘night economy’ may, or may not, be meaningful to you, but across the UK through-the-night trading in town and city centre pubs, clubs, restaurants, cinemas and theatres generates an estimated £70 billion. But, sadly, the night economy also often carries human hardship. Issues of addiction, homelessness, loneliness, isolation and crime are often embedded within these hours of urban darkness.

In October 2019, I joined the staff team at Edinburgh Street Pastors on a short-term contract. A Christian charity, Street Pastors began in London in 2003 under the leadership of a church Pastor called Les Isaac. 18 volunteers began patrolling the troubled streets of Brixton, offering non-judgmental listening, unconditional caring and practical help to anyone they met. The initial scepticism of the Local Authority and the Police turned to enthusiastic support as records showed reductions in crime in the areas patrolled by Street Pastors. It is a remarkable measure of the effectiveness of this work that there are now 12,000 trained volunteer Street Pastors across the UK, working in 300 towns and cities with full Local Authority and Police support. That number rises to 20,000 when Prayer Pastors, management teams and trustees are added.

Edinburgh Street Pastors began city centre weekend night patrols with 12 volunteers in June 2009. The original

12 volunteers have today become 51, drawn from 37 churches across the city. In total, 110 volunteers have patrolled the city centre since then. Thousands of meaningful personal interactions occur on the streets every year. Street Pastors are given 50 hours of training in topics such as listening skills, mental health, alcohol and drug awareness and youth culture, while remaining focussed on demonstrating the love of Christ to the homeless, to the party goers and revellers from pubs and night clubs and to anyone in need, whatever form it takes.

Practically, that may mean giving hot drinks, blankets and warm woollens to someone sitting freezing on a pavement, or directing a vulnerable young runaway girl, far from home, to a night shelter. It could mean listening to a nightclub manager sharing his personal worries, or helping a drunk, distressed and lost man to find his way home – real examples from recent patrols. Prayer, if appropriate, will form part of the care offered. So may the gift of a Bible. We often have the opportunity to share our Christian faith as a result of the care we offer and the relationships that develop from that. The good news of Jesus Christ is at the heart of what we do. He promises, **“Whoever comes to me I will never drive away.”** Street Pastors aim to embody that commitment in personal, practical and spiritual ways.

A Street Pastor’s main responsibility is to care. Delivering that care

effectively means working not only with local authorities but, very importantly, with the remarkable network of church and charity facilities within the city that provide food and shelter, or that can address more complex needs such as addiction problems, mental health issues or debt.

Our patrols are in the city centre from 11pm to 4am. Currently, six teams patrol in Edinburgh each Friday night and on two Saturday nights each month. More volunteers are being recruited to enable us to patrol every Saturday night and as a result, a seventh team is almost ready to begin operating.

Are you interested in joining this work?

Street Pastors work in Edinburgh, in Perth and in surrounding areas, including Dunfermline. This is an exciting opportunity to work with volunteers from all over the world and from many different Christian denominations. We learn from each other and work together as Street Pastors sharing one common purpose to bring the love of Jesus onto the streets.

Our training takes place twice per year, in February/March and October/November. If you are interested in joining us, please contact the Recruitment and Training Administrator by email at edinburghsp.training@gmail.com or call **07523 26906**.

DEREK MORRISON



George Thompson VC: Courage never equalled

To mark 75 years since the posthumous award of a Victoria Cross to Kinross-shire lad Flight-Sergeant George Thompson, Kinross (Marshall) Museum has mounted a special anniversary display telling his story. David Munro here describes his early days in Portmoak Parish and his heroic action during an RAF bombing raid over Germany on 1st January 1945.

Born 100 years ago on 23rd October 1920 in Borestane Cottage in the Perthshire parish of Trinity Gask, George Thompson was the son of a ploughman, James Thompson, who later relocated to Kinrosswood in Kinross-shire to work on Parkhouse Farm.

George's early schooling was at Portmoak Primary School in Scotlandwell and in 1935-36 he completed his formal education at Kinross Public School.

George Thompson left school at the age of 14 to serve an apprenticeship in David Sands' grocery shop in Kinross where, after four years, he qualified as a certified grocer. His real interest, however, was in *"tinkering with wireless sets"* and at the age of 20 he enlisted as a Royal Air Force ground wireless operator.

Below left: Wreath laid at the foot of the Bishopshire War Memorial 75 years after George Thompson's death on 23rd January 1945. Below Right: Inscription on the Bishopshire War Memorial.



No.9 Bomber Squadron logo

In 1943, after a spell in the Middle East, George Thompson was relocated to Bardney in Lincolnshire with a posting to No. 9 Squadron RAF Volunteer Reserve Bomber Command, the oldest dedicated bomber squadron in the Royal Air Force. It was there that George met bomber pilot F H Denton who was to describe him as *"the best wireless operator I have ever known – always right on top of his job in the air."*

It was on 1st January 1945 that a flight of Lancaster Bombers made a daring daylight raid on the Dortmund–Ems Canal in the industrial heart of Germany's Ruhr valley. After releasing bombs on target, the plane on which Flight-Sergeant George Thompson was the wireless operator was hit by anti-aircraft fire. Most of the nose compartment was shot away, gaping holes were torn in the fuselage and one engine was ablaze.

Through flames and exploding ammunition, George Thompson made his way to the mid-turret where he pulled the gunner to safety from his seat extinguishing his burning clothing with his bare hands. Despite his own severe injuries George then made his way to the rear of the aircraft where he again extricated a helpless gunner, beating out flames in the process.

Forty minutes after being hit, the crippled Lancaster crash landed in

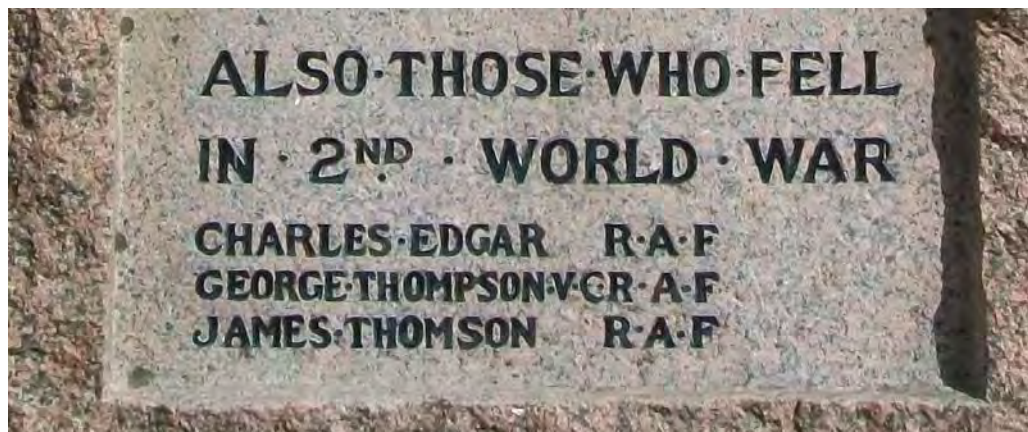


Flight-Sergeant George Thompson VC

Holland near the North Brabant town of Heesch. The crew were quickly taken to hospital in Eindhoven from where George Thompson was taken on to Brussels suffering from severe burns and frostbite. On 23rd January, just over three weeks after the crash landing, George died of pneumonia. He was buried in Brussels Town Cemetery and a month later, on 20th February 1945, he was awarded a posthumous Victoria Cross for conspicuous bravery.

Flight-Sergeant George Thompson VC is remembered on war memorials in Portmoak and Orwell parishes and special commemorative plaques are to be found locally in Portmoak Primary School and Kinross High School. His name is also to be found on street names in Kinross and in Heesch where Thompsonstraat was created in 1995. George Thompson's medals are on show in the Royal Air Force Room at Edinburgh Castle for all to see.

"His courage has never been equalled and never surpassed."



Milnathort Primary School

We are well into the swing of Term 3 at Milnathort Primary School and Nursery, our busiest and longest school term heading towards Spring, some lighter mornings and evenings and hopefully some warmer weather. We always have lots to share and there is never a dull moment or a quiet day in the diary for our learners and staff!

We continue to work in partnership with the Modern Languages department at Kinross High School and many of our children benefit from weekly Mandarin lessons which are stimulating, interactive and produce some of the most wonderful art and craft to decorate our corridors.

We have lots of opportunities for children to lead learning, including very active Reading, Digital and Sports committees. Children in the Reading Committee take responsibility for organising a whole host of events, from character themed discos, storytelling sessions with members of the community and story themed drama presentations. We are proud to be a literacy rich school with lots of followers on Twitter pinching some of our **“MPS Loves Reading”** ideas.

The Sports Committee children are kept busy with a full timetable of sporting clubs and activities on offer throughout the week. In addition to taster sessions such as Judo from the local community, we run weekly netball, dance, yoga, ball skills, rugby, cross country running, playground games and badminton, with football practice blocks each term before competing in festival events. We

currently have an extremely successful netball team competing in a Perth and Kinross league who are unbeaten at time of writing! Digital Leaders continue to keep our Digital Schools Award alive, and are regularly in classes delivering digital lessons alongside, and sometimes enlightening, our staff.

Our Nursery has experienced some transformations over the last year with a lot of work on the indoor environment with a Closing the Communication Gap theme, making it inviting and conducive to teaching the core communication skills: listening and talking. Another literacy rich corner of our establishment, the Nursery has a simply enchanting fairy-tale like story corner with furniture fashioned from donated cable reels, again from our local community.

Children in Nursery are currently benefiting from a huge investment in **“Adventures with Alice”** staff training – where themes of curiosity, creativity, connection and language development are the basis of our provocations for learning. Our next big project is a total refit of the bathroom area, due to take place during the Easter holidays.

We are lucky to have had a huge uptake in parents, carers and members of our community to support our Family Learning times on Tuesday afternoons this term. Extra adults have been invaluable in supporting the delivery of science lessons for groups of P1-P3 children, and Masterclasses for the upper school which look at life skills and career education - Skills for Learning, Life and Work across our school!



We have many regular volunteers who help-out in school and so I will close by extending an invitation for anyone who would like to contribute to our learning and teaching community. Whether it be an expertise or skill you already possess, or a desire to help with a club or library duty, please do contact us and we will offer a warm welcome.

**LAURA KNOYLE, DHT
Milnathort Primary School**





Portmoak Primary School

60th Birthday Celebrations

There has been much excitement afoot at Portmoak Primary School over the last few weeks as we prepared to celebrate our 60th birthday. The school for the parish was previously situated in Scotlandwell and opened in its present location in Kinnesswood in April 1960.

The learning of each class this term has focussed on one of the decades that Portmoak Primary School has been open, with our youngest pupils learning about the 'Swingin' Sixties'. They recreated iconic Beatles album covers, danced to 'Let's Twist Again', looked at toys and games from the 1960s and watched children's TV programmes – their favourite was 'Bill and Ben, The Flowerpot Men'! Their learning culminated in a musical extravaganza on 10th February where every class performed a song and dance from the decade and shared some of the big news headlines. Mr Buchan, from Kinnesswood Garage, was a pupil at Portmoak Primary in 1960 and so we were delighted that he was able to join us for our celebrations and to cut the cake alongside one of our PI pupils. It was fantastic to hear our 110 pupils and 120 guests sing 'Happy Birthday' to

our special wee school which, as our house captains said, is a place that brings out the best in every person, is a place where we support and encourage each other, and is a fun and enjoyable place to learn.

Our second celebration took the form of a 1960s school day. There were lots of new rules and routines for the children to learn, and activities throughout the day included dictation, handwriting, atlas work, maths sums on the board and **NO TECHNOLOGY!** Other differences to the school day included:

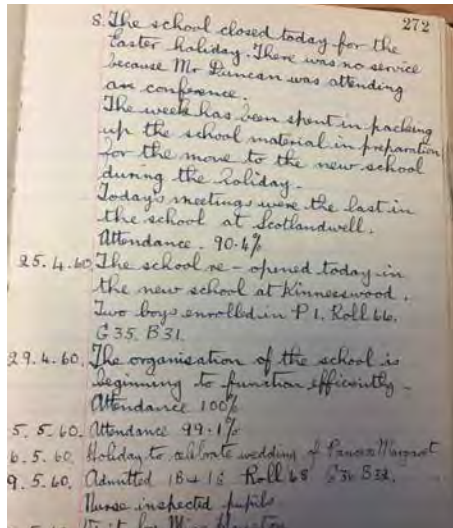
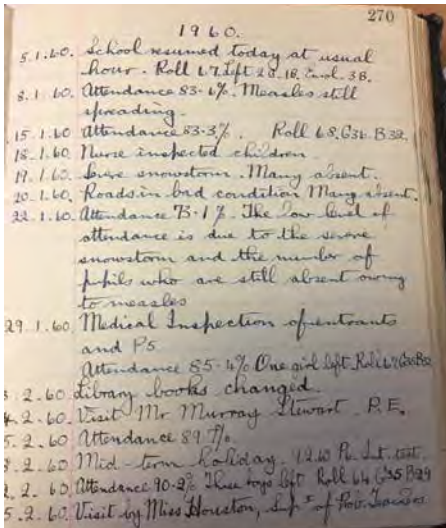
- During assembly, pupils sang 'God Save The Queen' and recited the Lord's Prayer.
- Before eating their lunch, everybody's hands were inspected to ensure they were clean enough to be served.
- Mrs Livitt, our school cook, put on a very special 1960s lunch of mince cobbler and iced sponge with pink custard – yum!
- Mr Ainsworth, our PE teacher, had a special 1960s gym lesson in store for the pupils, which focussed on fitness and exercises.

- At the end of a snowy break time, all staff came out to greet the children with a 'Let's Twist Again' flashmob, to which everyone joined in. It was a real sight to see, 120 children and staff 'twisting' in the snow!

All the children spoke very positively about the day and had lots of fun.

At the time of writing this article, we are looking forward to our third and final celebration which takes place on 20th February – our 'Dance Through The Decades' family disco featuring lots of familiar cult dances such as the 70s 'Bus Stop Line Dance', Whigfield's 'Saturday Night' and the 'Rock the Boat' song.

Happy Birthday Portmoak Primary School!!!
PAULA WOODS
Acting Headteacher



The World's Tallest Bridge

Readers may not have known or heard previously of this notable structure and how it came about, as here narrated by James Barr.

I'm straying from Stramash's territory but I'm aiming to raise awareness of a relatively unknown historic landmark.

As the Kingdoms of Scotland and England grew into the forms with which we are familiar, by what land routes was strategic access achieved? An army moving down south into England or northwards into Scotland had to cross the Border close to the North or the Irish seas. Even today, it's the choice of travelling via Carlisle or taking the Newcastle road.



For a large force, going the western route meant crossing the boggy mud flats of the Solway. Taking the eastern route gave two options. Crossing the Border over the Lammermuirs via the old Roman Hospital at Soutra led straight to the seat of power, Edinburgh. The ground was firm but the hills could prove difficult in bad or winter weather. The coast road became favoured; it was simple

to follow; heavy supplies could be carried by sea and offloaded at ports along the way.

There was one physical obstacle, a deep gully, the Pass of Pease, a bottleneck just south of Cockburnspath, a small town that was the doorway into rich agricultural lands and ports. This area has undergone name changes and reorganisations, today it's called East Lothian.

East Lothian was then a natural passageway for armies. That same agricultural land created huge wealth for those who possessed the acreages and who then built castles and fortifications to retain that wealth. Threats to their wealth came from armies, English or Scottish, Border Reivers and feuds. This area was for over 2,000 years one of the most fought over in the British Isles.

Battles fought there include Athelstaneford 832, Dunbar 1296, Pinkie 1547, Dunbar again 1650 and Prestonpans 1745. There are over 30 Castles and Towers and Roman Forts aplenty, as well as ancient forts such as North Berwick Law. The most impressive, Traprain Law, had been used for some 1,500 years until power passed to the Roman legions.



Earlier, I mentioned a deep Gully, the Pass of Pease, and so now we come to the historic landmark. This ravine became a defensible site. On occasions, defenders dug trenches both in and on the lips of this wooded ravine and only fierce fighting secured passage. Oliver Cromwell described it as a place "where 10 men to hinder are better than 40 to make their way".

By 1783, the road had become an important highway and, with considerable lobbying from military concerns, a bridge was built and opened in 1786. At 300ft long, 16ft wide and 130ft high, it was recognised as 'the tallest bridge in the world'. The bridge carried the A1107 public road over the Pease Burn to Cockburnspath and beyond.

Today it's by-passed by the A1, passing a short distance away, with a turning to the bridge. It is now used mainly by farming traffic and cars going to the caravan site on the beach. It really is a sight to behold. Take a look the next time you pass by on the A1.

JAMES BARR

Orwell & Portmoak Parish Church of Scotland

Church Office 29 South Street, Milnathort, KY13 9XA

Office Hours: Monday to Friday, 10am until 12noon

Phone: 01577 861200

E-mail: orwellandportmoakchurch@gmail.com

Website: www.orwellportmoakchurch.org.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/OrwellAndPortmoakChurch

Minister: The Very Rev Dr Angus Morrison

Church Services on Sunday morning

Portmoak - 10am; Orwell - 11.30am

(other than All-Age Joint Service at 10.30am on the first Sunday of each month)

Please see Page 17 for details of Services over the Spring Season.

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KYTHE



DYNAMIC CHRISTIAN YOUTH WORK



Dynamic Christian Youth Work in Kinross-shire

Stramash has visited the KYTHE Hub beside the Health Centre on the Muirs to catch up with Senior Youth Worker, Barry Dougall, and to learn about the breadth of initiatives this small charitable organisation is undertaking to reach out to our young folk in Kinross-shire and surrounding areas.

The Hub itself has been in a state of flux recently, with lots of renovations going on to change it from its previous existence as a shop to a welcoming meeting place for young people.

Barry is supported by part-time Youth Worker Gillian Shackleton, together with volunteers, a strong management team and a Board of Trustees. Orwell and Portmoak Parish Church, along with some of the other local churches, financially supports KYTHE, recognising its value in our community.

To give a flavour of the groups on offer, SupaClubs run at Kinross and Milnathort Primary Schools, TalkBack is held at Kinross Centre, a Fitness Club takes place at the High School, and Chill'n'Chat meets at the Hub. Lots of other fun activities take place too – drop-ins and Altitude youth clubs in the Hub and Crook of

Devon Village Hall, Band Camp and Holiday Club.

These clubs are complemented by one-to-one pupil support. We are all too aware of the pressures young people have in their lives and of the importance of good mental health. A young person's emotional or spiritual journey rarely follows a straight trajectory with an end point clearly and neatly following on from a start point, and this is the skill of a professional Youth Worker to actively listen and respond to the individual's needs at a time and in a way that meets their needs. Equally, it is recognising when a person may need greater support and so acting as a signpost to professional help.

Barry works closely with other organisations and individuals who support the work of KYTHE. He explains - **“We need to be able to measure what we do, but the number of contacts (which has grown 2.5 fold in the past year) does not demonstrate the qualitative aspects of our work, so KYTHE is using a database to capture these key elements of our interactions”.**

The scope of potential outreach is boundless, but all initiatives thrive on the energy and commitment of

volunteers. Barry urges members of Orwell and Portmoak Parish Church and of the wider community to consider whether they could support KYTHE by volunteering their time and skills - **“This is a great way to serve your community by seeing young people flourish; and I particularly ask men to consider if they could get involved”.**

In conclusion, Barry emphasizes - **“Importantly, and underlining everything, is that we are trying to show the love of Christ in all that we do. Your prayer support is always welcomed.”**

Please contact Barry by email at

barry@kythe.org.uk

or visit the KYTHE website at -

www.kythe.org.uk

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日本と世界 文化と生活

Lorna's Update

It's been lovely to have the chance to meet some of you while I have been back in Scotland. Unfortunately, the time was all too short and I am due to return to Japan on 26th March. That is also the day that the Olympic Torch Relay begins, taking the torch round all 47 prefectures in Japan before finishing in Tokyo in July.

The theme which has been chosen for the Torch Relay is *"Hope Lights our Way"*. You may think that the people in Japan have many reasons to be hopeful. They live in a beautiful country, with good education, trains that run on time, clean streets and a high level of safety.

Yet surveys regularly show that Japanese people do not have much hope for their future. A recent survey of 18-year-olds in 9 different countries showed that Japanese young people had the least hope that things would improve and the least

sense that they could do anything to help bring about any change.

Japan is a demographic time bomb. Last year, there were half a million more deaths in Japan than births. That means that the population of Japan is decreasing at nearly the rate of one person per minute. Since life expectancy is long, the ratio of working people to retirees is also decreasing, leading to a crisis in the pension system and in paying for medical care.

There is a rise in a phenomenon known as *"lifelong singles"*. By the age of 50, 1 in 4 Japanese men and 1 in 7 women have never been married. Some restaurants and karaoke bars are now actively catering for solo customers. The number of single person households has risen by 40% in the past 20 years. An increasing number of elderly people are also dying alone, sometimes only found by neighbours weeks or months later. Well over 1 million people (*mainly men*) have also withdrawn from society and are known as *"hikikomori"* or *"shut-ins"*.

Perhaps, these are some of the reasons why so many Japanese young people don't feel hopeful about the future. So, the theme of the Torch Relay is a very appropriate one and



Japanese bible

hosting the Olympics may well bring some hope, at least to some people in Japan.

However, any hope given by the Olympics is unlikely to last beyond the summer, when all the athletes and spectators have packed up and gone home. What Japan needs is eternal hope. As Christians, that is the hope that we have in the gospel of Jesus. In a conversation Jesus had with a woman at a well, he said, *"Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."* (John 4:13-14).

We long that many more Japanese people may come to know this wonderful hope which lasts forever.

LORNA FERGUSON

Prayer Corner

Spring Diary Dates

* Supported by Kinross-shire Churches Together

March

- Sun 1st **Joint All-age Service**
Portmoak Church – 10.30am
- Frid 6th ***World Day of Prayer Services**
Kinross Centre at 2pm & Cleish P.C. at 7pm
- Sun 8th **Communion Services**
Portmoak Church – 10am
Orwell Church – 11.30am
- Tue 17th **Guild Charity Meal**
Orwell Church Hall – 7pm
- Sat 28th **Messy Church**
Orwell Church Hall – 4-6pm

April

- Sun 5th **Palm Sunday Joint All-age Service**
Orwell Church/Hall – 10.30am
- *Walk of Witness**
St Paul's SE Church to Kinross P. Church – starts 2.30pm
- Mon 6th ***Stations of the Cross**
St James' RC Church – 7pm
- Thu 9th ***Maundy Thursday Communion Service**
Portmoak Church – 7.30pm
- Fri 10th ***Good Friday Family Activities**
Kinross Parish Church – 10.30am – 12.30pm
***Good Friday Service** – Kinross Parish Church - 7.30pm
- Sun 12th ***Lochside Service**
Kirkgate Park – 7.30am & breakfast at Kirklands Hotel
- Easter Services**
Portmoak Church – 10.00am; Orwell Church/Hall - 11.30am
- *Easter Songs of Praise**
Fossoway Parish Church – 6.30pm
- Sat 25th **Messy Church**
Portmoak Village Hall – 4-6pm

May

- Sun 3rd **Joint All-age Service**
Portmoak Church - 10.30am
- Sat 30th **Messy Church**
Orwell Church Hall – 4-6pm
- Sun 31st **Pentecost Joint Service**
Loch Leven Community Campus - 11.00am

No Services at Portmoak or Orwell Churches

O God, our loving and merciful Father in heaven,
We thank you that you so loved the world that
You gave your only Son for us and for all mankind.
We thank you for Jesus Christ, our blessed Lord,
That he was obedient unto death, even death on the Cross,
That he loved us and gave himself for us.

Greater love has no man than this,
That he lay down his life for his friends.
Help us never to forget the love of Him
Who laid down his life for us.
Help us, in the Cross, to see the wonder of love
And to surrender for ever to it.

O Lord Jesus Christ, who did conquer death
And rose from the dead and who is alive for evermore,
Help us never to forget your risen presence with us.
Let us be certain that there is nothing in time or eternity
Which can separate us from you, so that in your presence
we may meet life bravely and death without fear.

Hear these our prayers, for your Love's sake.
AMEN

William Barclay (Alt.)

**Below: From Portmoak Primary School's
60th birthday celebrations. See page 13**



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