



# *Friends of Gordon Chapel* **NEWSLETTER**

www.gordonchapel.org.uk

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**August 2015**

Dear Friends

Many apologies for the delay in getting together this newsletter. A great deal has happened in Gordon Chapel to contribute to this. We have lost our editor, Professor Peter Reid who, under pressure of his work has had to relinquish the post of editor. We owe Peter a great big thankyou for all the effort he put in to make it an interesting read.

The other sad news is that Frances, our Priest, due to continuing health problems has now retired to Dunkeld. Frances and James are happy in their we wish them well.



We hope retirement and

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## **Windows of Harris Manchester College Chapel, Oxford**

The windows here might seem familiar, which is unsurprising, as they were designed by Edward Burne-Jones and made by William Morris & Co. The HM windows date from the end of both Burne-Jones' and Morris' lives.



When you see the windows 'in the flesh' they are similar to those in Gordon Chapel but are also very different. Harris Manchester is a Unitarian foundation and some of the window designs reflect this. The windows shown left are on the north

side of the chapel and depict the six days of creation.

The photo on the right shows the windows on the south side which depicts saints and prophets representing the virtues and other desirable traits



The west window below has Jesus depicted as the Good Shepherd.

Apparently the college rejected the original design for Jesus as not appropriate but there is no record of what it was!



Chris and I prefer the Gordon Chapel windows. Possibly this is because there is a lot of 'pink' in the HM windows but also because the HM windows are higher in relation to the pews and do not have as much natural light coming through them. If you are in Oxford, HM Chapel is open during office hours and for services and is certainly worth a visit. Unlike many Oxford Colleges it is accessible by car at all times and there is paid for street parking nearby.

*Gillian Hood*

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Eve Best is a member of the congregation here in Fochabers along with her husband Ted. Eve is descended from a French Huguenot family named Constant and she was born in Canterbury, Kent. She was baptised in the French church situated in the crypt of Canterbury Cathedral. She moved with her family to Hatfield in Hertfordshire just before World War 2 and she served in the Women's Land Army for two years and then joined the De-Havilland Aircraft Company and was responsible for inspecting the engine mountings of the De-Havilland 'Mosquito' aircraft. After the war she was responsible for all the records of the De-Havilland transport vehicles. She then moved to the spares department and was the librarian responsible for all the aircraft records.

*Ted Best*

## Retreat in an Angus glen

In May I spent Monday to Friday in Glen Esk at St Drostan's, Tarfside. It is the fourth Episcopal church of that name in Tarfside, and now, sadly, seldom used for the glen has become depopulated. What used to be the Priest's home is now a private house. The other buildings have been turned into a retreat centre which can take groups of up to about eighteen. There were only six or seven of us!

We had to take all our food and drink since the nearest shops are about ten miles away, in Fettercairn. Our meals were eaten on the big round table in the well equipped kitchen – good food and fellowship! We had morning and evening prayer in the living room and there is a large quiet room where we could read, study or, in Jimmy's case, paint looking out over the garden! I observed that the baby red squirrels had strawberry blonde tails! Spring starts later in the glen and daffodils were still blooming. There were baby lapwings dotting around in the grass opposite the house and very young lambs on the moorland.

St Drostan's is almost at the end of the tarred road, but there are rough tracks over the moors and into the hills. By following these and returning by the way I had come, I walked every morning and afternoon with no fear of getting lost. The first morning there was fine rain but I found St Drostan's stone, a rough hewn block carved with a quite a hunt for it atmospheric place lapwings wheeling along with the cross among the heather. I'd had two years previously! It's an with curlews calling and overhead, the sounds of Tarfside bleating of sheep.



Sometimes a path cuts down a small valley made by some heather and there are sheep folds and the occasional shepherd's cottage. Or you can walk to Invermark Castle and on to Loch Lee where there is a disused cemetery with seventeenth century graves and the ruins of one of the previous Episcopal churches. A longer walk goes to the Queen's well. I met a group of youngsters one day who had walked through from Glen Tanner, an expedition for their Duke of Edinburgh award. Everywhere there is the backdrop of the hills and the peace is palpable.

from the moor into burn; grass replaces

Thursday May 15<sup>th</sup> was Ascension Day so we went to the church. I pulled the rope and rang the bell for a few minutes. It tolled out quite poignantly I thought.



It is seldom rung these days. We had hymns and readings and Canon Ruth Tait celebrated the Eucharist. There were just a few of us...where two or three are gathered together...

A 'retreat' is what each individual makes of it and Tarfside is an ideal location. The clock seems to tick more slowly, the busy trivia of life lose their importance. We are all so busy 'doing' that a retreat gives time for 'being'!

*Margaret Forsyth*

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## **ORGAN /KEYBOARD SPONSORED DAY**

Earlier in the year, Fiona spoke about arranging a sponsored organ extravaganza as a way for The Friends to raise some money for Gordon Chapel. We decided that a twelve hour attempt sounded just right but that meant we had a fair bit of. Luckily between the four of Mary and Jeff, we thought The date was set, the 6th of with our sponsor sheets we signatures and promises to hot on the trail and managed the congregation straight and mine's dismay! However whereupon Fiona and I advantage of this. Personally, how many sponsors I would few, very generous people signed my sheet. I was amazed at their generosity, especially as they all live in Banff and Macduff and have no connection to Gordon Chapel but then, people are generous and kind and sometimes surprise us! Another thing I was worried about was that people might actually come into the church and listen to me! I try to excuse the wrong notes by saying "I play all the right notes but not necessarily in the right order!" However, I did practise and each of us arranged our pieces in some kind of order. Us ladies were very impressed with Jeff's methodical preparations!



playing to do! us, myself, Fiona, we would manage. June and armed began to get sponsor. Mary was to get quite a few of away much to Fiona she did miss a few quickly took I was worried about be able to get but a from my choir

So at 9.00am the organ and keyboard extravaganza began with Mary opening the day. We had plenty of helpers to welcome people into Gordon Chapel and to offer refreshments. Some people had not set foot inside our church before and I think they must have been bowled over by the wonderful

windows, welcoming ambience and generally happy and friendly atmosphere which our church and congregation are so good at promoting! We all have very different playing styles and repertoire choices so that in itself boded well for twelve hours of playing. Mary brought her keyboard, I sang along, with Fiona some duets too, the clavinova was given a good bashing, the organ behaved, and Jeff's wife was also roped into a duet from Fiddler on the roof. A few pieces were played more than once and hopefully all the requested pieces were duly performed with a rendition of "Abide by me" bringing the day to a close at 9.00pm. What a day! We managed to raise £954 with sponsorship and donations on the day and this amount with gift aid will give an even higher total, thanks to the generosity of people and all the helpers and congregation members who were involved in such an enjoyable and productive day.

*Marion Bateman*

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### **ST. CUTHBERT'S WAY**

On hearing about the repairs needed for the rectory we thought about different ways to help with fundraising. As I am not the world's best baker or candy maker something else had to be considered. Shortly after this I was in Glasgow and attended a Women's Guild meeting the theme of which was Help for Heroes, having watched the film showing the sporting achievements of some of the amputees I was quite humbled. If these young men and women could achieve so much then I could certainly have a go. I have two feet and I can walk and so the idea was born - we would try a walk!

Where to was the next thought, some of the walks suggested were very long and extremely rugged and hilly. With a gammy knee and puffing going up stairs those walks were ruled out. St. Cuthbert's way looked a reasonable compromise. So the planning started - when would we go, did we have the correct footwear, were the midges around at that time of year, where would we stay? We contacted a walking holiday company and we had great advice from them, they did all our accommodation for us, and supplied a route map. Fantastic we thought, so of we set full of hope and enthusiasm. The family of course thought we had certainly flipped as we were quite nuts. Comments such as, you are too old, or, why were regularly heard on our phone. However we totally ignored all the comments and sailed forth.

We arrived in our first stop in Melrose and saw people everywhere with packs on their backs which really cheered us up as we were not the only mad people around. Morning one the first hurdle was to find where we actually started. Our instructions were a bit vague at that point but we did eventually find the route. After staggering up some 150 steps (there was a bench at every 50<sup>th</sup> step!) we

emerged on the hillside of the Eildon hills. What a fantastic scene was behind us, you could see for miles. Upwards and onwards we went over the hills and heading for Jedburgh for a welcome bed. We had met some people in Melrose who were doing the same walk and we were all staying at the same place where we could have a chat about the walk ahead. Day two we were on the road to a place called Morebattle, again the weather was kind and we walked along in lovely sunshine although glad of the shade offered by some stretches of woodland. Where we stayed in Morebattle was next door to an old abandoned church. This building had a very chequered history as it had last been used for a depot for lorries, but was now being turned into a coffee shop and craft centre. It had been renamed the St. Cuthbert's centre which was rather nice. Still in Scotland we set off for Kirk Yetholm and a welcome meal and hot shower. Our luck had to change and we woke to grey skies and a light drizzle. Undaunted we set off again, as this would be our third day we felt like old hands. However, although there had been hills along the way, this was going to be a bigger struggle than we thought. At this point the start of the route joins with the end of the Pennine Way and the hills were much bigger and steeper. As the only company we had were sheep you could see how people can become disoriented. The one thought in my mind was that I would make it and then I realised the words of psalm 121 were the perfect walking song. As we approached the border with England each step was a slog. Yes there is an actual border crossing, a wall and a fence with a gate to pass through. At this point we met a lone walker coming the other way who warned us about a dangerous forest we would have to go through. Harry Potter and the DARK DARK woods sprang to mind. After crossing the border we did eventually come to the forest which was a small conifer plantation. We came to the conclusion that the man who warned us had probably never seen a forest or a plantation before. We were now in England and the countryside looked much the same on both sides, hills, moorland and forestry. We did not have much further to go so onwards we went heading to a town called Wooler. According to our maps the next day we would pass the cave where the



monks had sheltered fleeing from the Vikings. The actual cave is more like an overhang than a cave. As the surrounding countryside was mostly moorland it must have been a relief to find some place to shelter. As we proceeded we topped a rise and there before us was the sea and in the distance the Holy Isle. It was a defining moment as we knew we were nearly

there, we had one more night on the road and we had accomplished what we set out to do. At this point we met up with our previous companions from

Melrose. They had passed a group of hymn singing pilgrims on the road however we neither saw nor heard the other group. We did meet several groups going in the other direction who were following other saints walks. Our last day dawned bright and sunny - Holy Isle here we come. Watching the buildings become clearer was amazing. I don't know about John but I certainly got a wonderful feeling of peace as we got closer. Maybe it was the thought of not walking the next day! We stayed at the abbey that night right beside the ruins and we had a good wander around even managing the evening service. Holy Island is one of the most peaceful places I have ever been to and I would recommend a visit. Thank you all for your support and good wishes it was really appreciated. We raised the wonderful figure of £417.00 pounds so a great big THANK YOU.



*Myra Murphy*



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The Friends of Gordon Chapel Draw took place on the 19<sup>th</sup> July and the lucky recipients were:

- |      |                           |
|------|---------------------------|
| £100 | Janet Mackay.             |
| £75  | Miss Emily Gordon Lennox. |
| £50  | Mrs Katherine Barnes.     |
| £25  | Mrs Prue Wilson.          |

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# Gordon Chapel

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**We would appreciate items from Friends for inclusion in the next newsletter. Please send to: Brenda Shepherd 2 Elsher Close, Lhanbryde, Elgin. IV30 8FA or email: [brenda02@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:brenda02@tiscali.co.uk).**