



The CONTACT MAGAZINE of St. Peter's with St. Mary and Leonard

Rector: The Revd. Canon Christine Fraser

September 2025



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- ***Is anyone else brave enough to share their Faith and Life Journey for a future issue of Contact?***

Who's Who at St. Peter's

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////////////////////////////////////

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<i>Vestry Secretary:</i>	<i>Maria Page</i>	<i>200989</i>
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Worship at St Peter's

Sunday's 9.15 am Sung Eucharist (SPB}
10.30 am Sung Eucharist (1982 Liturgy)
Wednesdays 10:00 am Said Eucharist (1982 Liturgy)

We meet in the conviction that in Jesus Christ we see the character and passion of God. We gather to learn to see the world as Jesus sees it, to begin to see the image of God in one another and in our community. Our worship is in response to the invitation of God, our mission is to reflect the generosity of God in our town, and to seek the footfalls of the Spirit of God.

(Courtesy: All Saints Church, Evesham, Worcestershire)

HALLS FOR HIRE AND BOOKINGS

We welcome people/groups to hire our church, halls and rooms. Ask Andrea for a leaflet, details of charges and equipment available. **We are Open for Bookings.**



The Church Hall and Meeting Room are now connected to the Internet with full WiFi access. Please check with Christiine, George, or Andrea for further information.

PREMISES ARE LET OUT IN SESSIONS OF 4 HOURS:-



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SESSION 3	1800 - 2200

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SMALL MEETING ROOM:	£20 PER SESSION	CAPACITY 12

A Booking Form with full details is available for download from the website: www.stpeterskirkcaldy.co.uk

For further information please contact Andrea Ladyka:

Email: bookings@stpeterskirkcaldy.co.uk Mobile: 07740 910221

Introducing your new Editor

Firstly, I wish to record my very grateful thanks to Jeeta Ouston for all her time and assistance to facilitate as smooth a handover as possible. Unfortunately, through no fault of hers, it has proved necessary to reproduce the format from scratch. So please accept my apologies if things look slightly different. Rest assured it is my intention to maintain the very high standard and ethos that I have inherited from Richard and Jeeta. I now look forward to working with you all to achieve equal success. You will find the extraordinary details of 'My Faith and Life Journey' as an appendix at the very end, which I hope and pray may bring encouragement to those of you who may be struggling with the challenges and pitfalls of life. I promise you that hereafter this magazine will **not** be about me!

Graham Kingsley-Rowe (GKR)

Next Edition: Please submit articles for the next, Advent & Christmas, CONTACT to me no later than Sunday 9th November. GKR

Email: kingsley-rowe@hotmail.co.uk 07813 822758

Rectors Letter

Dear Friends

We all love singing the familiar hymns; 'We plough the fields and scatter' was sung as a child with great gusto without much thought to its true meaning. For someone, like me, a complete born and raised 'townie'; 'Harvest' is a sort of alien concept. As I've just said when I was growing up it was something we sang about at School and then ignored it for the rest of my adolescence and early adult life. It was only really when I moved into the agricultural sector that I began to realise the importance of Harvest, through the customer and suppliers I dealt with. The growing season was accompanied by much anguish; "Will the crops have a good yield this year?" "Has there not been enough (or too much) sun and rain this year?" "Can I get the harvest gathered before the weather turns bad?" These were all questions I heard over and over again.

Even then in my re-discovery of this festival attending or indeed participating in 'Harvest' was sort of only associated with 'our daily bread' and not much more. It all seemed to be focused on the wheat-sheaf loaf placed on the altar. It took me quite a long time to realise that; 'Harvest' is so much more than giving thanks for the grain crop being cut before the Autumn rains can spoil it. Even today, we have to challenge ourselves to push the boundaries of what we naturally associate as harvest to include all food production on land and sea and all who work to produce that food as well.

What is 'harvest'? What does it mean today? And is it still something we need to be conscious of each year, especially as we now live in a global economy and world where harvest occurs at different times and in different ways?

The simple answer to those questions is YES! Yes! Yes! Even more so today, do we need to stop and give thanks for all we have.

When you next look at a plate of food try and remember where each ingredient came from. I am reminded of a lunch I had recently which included

sea bass from Turkey

broccoli from Norfolk

peas and beans from East Anglia and Kenya

tomatoes from Spain

One plate of food had travelled a very international route to find its way to my plate. All of it was seasonal to whence it came but not necessarily seasonal to Scotland. So much of what we eat is similar. At home I try to cook and use seasonal produce from Scotland but at times in the year there is only so many root vegetables or salmon one can routinely eat day after day without calling in variety from around the globe.

Without produce from around the globe and the skills and labour of people from different countries and cultures our diets would be 'same-y' and boring. Although harvests occur at different times in different places it is really important that at least once a year we stop, reflect and give thanks to God for all, that the many harvests of the world give to us. In that stopping and giving thanks we also need to remember to give thanks for those who grew and produced the harvest for us in the first place and to work out if we have exploited them in any way. Did I pay a fair price for what I ate? Did the farmer get well paid for their efforts?

It might seem trivial to us in the developed north of the world but we do take too much for granted at the expense of those who are basically subsistence farmers providing goods for us that they could not afford even to taste. And, now in great Britain we are also beginning to see some of the negative effects on our own farmers and seafarers and the empty shelves in our supermarkets. Fresh produce cannot now always be guaranteed to be available when we need or want it.

So we really do need to pray for the Harvest.

To pray with thanksgiving for the good gifts that God gives us. To pray for the future food production and producers in this country and around the globe. And, to pray for an equal sharing of the world's resources so that no one goes hungry or watches their children starve before them, especially when they are the people ensuring that we don't starve.

It is always worth remembering that the world is precariously balanced and that we might not always be as all right as we think we are. You might remember the film; 'The Day after Tomorrow', here the Northern Hemisphere countries get wiped out by a new ice age the survivors are ultimately rescued by welcoming countries south of the equator, whose climate remains warm and able to grow crops but the world has changed for millennia to come!

I believe that our cry today should simply be:

'Thank you, God!'

Thank you for all the good gifts around us and for all the things you give us to make our lives happy and healthy. Never take the Harvest for granted and hold in prayer all those for whom harvest is a hope rather than a reality. All those who are facing a bleak future with a failed harvest or a poor one and ask God how we can support those in need who are so often those who produce the things we need and use.

"All good gifts around us are sent from Heaven above, then thank the Lord,

O thank the Lord, for all his love."

Blessings

Christine



From The Rectory St James the Least of All

My dear Nephew Darren

So, your church does not bother with hymnbooks but uses one of those hideous screens which are invariably strategically placed to obscure the altar. I suppose I am not bothered, as wherever you placed it in your converted cinema, it could never spoil its architectural aesthetics.

In my fortunately limited experience of such devices, they provide the projectionist with endless opportunities for showing the wrong hymn, or the right hymn but wrong verse, or the right hymn and right verse, but all upside down. In any case, the turnover from one verse to the next always takes place some milliseconds after that verse has started. This means that the congregation, having been silenced for lack of words, is then faced with the challenge of singing two lines at double time.

When we decided to move from *Hymns More Ancient* to *Hymns Slightly Less Ancient* some years ago, our Sunday attempts to 'make a joyful noise unto the Lord' threatened to get lost in the noise of battle.

Colonel Wainwright was happy so long as we continued fighting good fights and urging Christian soldiers onwards. Very keen on smiting is the Colonel; under his command, the Midianites wouldn't have stood a chance. The men

wanted the hymns they remembered from school, the ladies wanted those they had sung at their weddings, and no one would consider anything that dropped 'thine's or 'wouldst's. Then a vicious rumour started that the new hymnbook might even offer hymns written in the last 50 years. At this, timetables were consulted for bus services to the next village (and church).

Eventually we reached the perfect solution: we did nothing. Instead, Miss Simpson was charged with buying yards of sticky backed plastic and repairing the current books. But there was still a crisis to come: her young (and radical) niece decided to add a note in the front of every copy. It suggested that if the page for the hymn you wanted was missing, then you could share with the person sitting next to you. Of course, no one has done that yet; it would be an experience almost as traumatic as being invited to pass the peace.

And so, we struggle on with our *Hymns More Ancient*, whenever we can find the words. Harmony reigns once again.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

Thoughts for Harvest

One Of my friends told me this story about her mother who lived to a ripe old age. Her mother had her funeral arrangements set down so that when "The Lord called her", she had everything in place. One of her requests was that the hymn "We plough the fields and scatter" had to be sung at the service – no matter what time of year she died – she loved the words and the tune so much. I can assure you that her wish was honoured.

When you read the words, you realise that the hymn is appropriate for any season

“All good gifts around us

Are sent from Heaven above

O, thank the Lord

O. thank the Kord

For all his Love”

A Harvest Prayer

God of all creation, we thank you provide us with the plentiful fruits of your Harvest. Too often we take for granted that daily nourishment by the basics of food and water when, for so many in our world, this is a daily struggle for survival. You have nourished us by your Love and empowered us with your Holy Spirit, but more than this you have given talents to each and every one of us. Help us now and always to use generously for the benefit of those less fortunate than ourselves, these manifold gifts bestowed upon us. By this we pray that, just as we harvest your bounty for ourselves, others will harvest the fruits of our endeavours.

We ask this in the name of your son or Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Maria



Who was the best Businessman in the Bible?

Noah Because he managed to float a Company while the rest of the World was in Liquidation!

Fife Forum

Fife Forum is a Voluntary Sector Advice & Information Agency which aims to provide information, signposting & guidance to support the needs of individual older people and adults throughout Fife. Additionally, they aim to support the local engagement and participation of older people on the issues which matter or impact them and in cases help them to be heard with the support of advocacy in hospital or residential settings.

Fife Forum provides the following:

Elderly Forums (Action Groups)

User Panels (Action Groups)

Local Area CO-ordination

Advocacy

Kimberley Reid is the Support and Development Worker who co-ordinates and makes start-up groups for the over 65's. These groups are for making older peoples voices heard on matters that matter to them. We have had previous talks by Fife Health and Social Care about local strategies, Exercise groups, local interest companies and whatever the group wants to hear more of, Kimberley can make arrangements for speakers.

The Forums were established to give an inclusive, respectful and a warm place where anyone over the age of 65.

If you want to come along and see if the group is for you, the group meets at St Peters Church the second Tuesday of every month at 2pm.

Kimberley can be contacted on the details below

kimberley@fifeforum.org.uk

01592 643743 or 07769320682

www.fifeforum.org.uk

Kimberley Reid

Support and Development Worker

Fife Forum

Fraser Buildings

Millie Street

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Fife KY1 2N

Three Cathedrals

I was fortunate to visit three English Cathedrals this Summer. The first on a visit to my cousin in Norfolk was to Norwich Cathedral. The building is over 900 years old and as we walked in a cat followed us. We asked if it was OK and the lady at the office said , “Oh, yes, it is ours.” The stained glass is lovely and so was the vaulted roof. It was a very bright building being built of white stone. As we made our way up towards the front of the cathedral we found the cat, sitting on the edge of the beautifully carved pulpit having a wash and brush up. Further along we found two chapels one of which contained the grave of Edith Cavell a first world war nurse. As you walk around the cloister

you see a labyrinth but our destination was the refectory café for coffee and cake.

My second and third Cathedrals were on my recent visit to Liverpool. From our base in the Albert Dock we walked up to the enormous red sandstone building of the Anglican Cathedral. Surprisingly this quite modern building finished in 1978 after 74 years in the making is the largest in Britain and the fifth largest in the world was not to my liking. I found the inside very dark and austere although it has the tallest gothic arches in the world and some lovely stained glass.

Our next Cathedral just half a mile away is “The Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King” which is a round building up a rather large flight of steps, (a good workout indeed). As you enter the first word you utter is Wow! It is very bright, stained glass around in various colours, the pews are light coloured wood and they surround the altar. The local nickname for this 1960’s building is “Paddy’s Wigwam” or “The Mersey Funnel”. The part you see as you walk up to the building looks like a crown on top of it and it is made of different colours of stained glass. This Roman Catholic Cathedral, although older than the Anglican one was my favourite owing to the brightness. But it cannot come before my favourite of all my visited Cathedrals which is Salisbury which was much visited when I lived in the South of England.

Jill Harris

If, like Jill and I, you are a lover of Cathedral’s stained glass, then a visit to Chester Cathedral is a must for its medieval glass and to Coventry Cathedral for its contemporary glass.

GKR



Who was the World's first Tennis Player?

Joseph, who served in the Courts of Pharoah!



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General Synod 2025

The General Synod of our Church was held from Thursday 6 to Saturday 8 June and as is usual, was held at St Paul and St Geroge's Episcopal Church in Edinburgh.

Proceedings began on Thursday with the opening Eucharist with all 7 Bishops present including the newly consecrated Bishop of Glasgow and the return of Bishop Anne after the difficulties in the Aberdeen Diocese.

After coffee, Synod got down to business sessions on ethical investment and members were asked to consider the political position in the USA affecting share values etc.

The College of Bishops and the Standing Committee also presented a joint session on plans for a Provincial Strategy (I'm sure we will be hearing much more about this in the future as the province works on ways to hep all diocese and congregations).

Later in the day was a presentation by the Provincial Youth Committee which is always very interesting.

On Friday morning we heard a superb presentation about the 1700th anniversary of the Nicæan Creed. The Rev Canon Professor Charlotte Methuen lead the interactive session which was very informative. It is truly amazing that the Nicæan Creed that we recite at every Eucharist was created so long ago.

Later in the morning there was much discussion and clarification on the Canon which details the process for electing bishops..... and we were reminded that this will be needed later this year as Bishp John of Edinburgh will retire in August.

Friday was a very busy day with updates from the Provisional Mission Board and the Legacy of Slavery Working Group and also a presentation on Charity Governance (this is OSCR for those familiar with dealing with Trusts).

Other discussions included a new liturgy for blessing of a marriage and we also discussed the inclusion of Eric Liddell, in the liturgical calendar for his extensive missionary work in China (rather than his running on the sands at St Andrews to the theme from 'Chariots of Fire')

The Final session on Friday considered the St Ninian Declaration which is a friendship between the SEC and the Roman Catholic Church and this motion was passed.

On Saturday there was a presentation about the history of Assisted Dying which I found very moving and thought provoking

The final motion was seeking to affirm the place of transgender, non binary and gender non-conforming people within the life of the SEC and this was unanimously passed.

I attended the Synod Dinner, a very jolly affair, with very good company and food. I was delighted to speak to our own Bishop David Chillingworth and his wife Allison. You know it's eight years since he retired and I was amused when he asked me if I still have the MX5 and was dismayed when I told him it was sold!! He sends his good wishes to us all in St Peter's

Ps if you are on Facebook please look up the SEC site for photos and videos from the Synod.

Shirley Mann, Lay Rep and Gen Synod Member August 2025

My part in the search for a new Bishop of Edinburgh

In June of last year Bishop Ian invited me to be a lay member of the Provincial Panel for Episcopal Elections, a post I would hold for four years and I agreed.

Just over a year from that date I was contacted by Andrew Swift, Bishop of Brechin with an invitation to join the panel which will choose the candidates for the forthcoming Election to the See of Edinburgh.

This means I will be very busy over the next few months – in fact if all goes to plan, the consecration of the Bishop Elect will not take place till May 2026

My diary therefore is starting to fill many dates of meetings in Edinburgh – the first one being Saturday 6 September all day. Yes very, very busy but interesting and a little exciting, I think.

All the meetings are confidential. At previous elections – the last I attended being the election of Bishop Ian – all the candidates' names and full details were disclosed. However, now under the terms of Canon 4 'Of the Calling and Election of Bishops to Vacant Sees', (recently updated and amended) every aspect of the procedure is strictly confidential and the names of candidates under consideration will not be known until all procedures are complete and candidates interviewed, a vote taken, the successful candidate contacted and accepted and the New Bishop-Elect announced.

Therefore, please don't ask me ... "I can say nothing – just yet"

Shirley Mann, Lay Rep and Gen Synod Member August 2025

News from the Social Committee

So far this year we have organized:

Pancakes on the last Sunday before Lent

Cakes following the Mothering Sunday Service

Hot Cross Buns on Easter Sunday

Hunger Lunch for Christian Aid

Bring & Share Lunch to celebrate St Peters 50th Anniversary

We also hosted a Friday evening Cheese & Wine Quiz in May, which proved very popular. Across the evening, there was much hilarity and everybody enjoyed a variety of cheeses and savoury snacks.

Upcoming Events

Following the Harvest Festival Service on 28th September, a light lunch, to be enjoyed by all, will be served.

We have two social events planned for later in the year. The first will be the ever popular Fish & Chip Quiz, which will be held on Friday 24th October, this time with a Halloween theme. Tickets are available from members of the Social Committee.

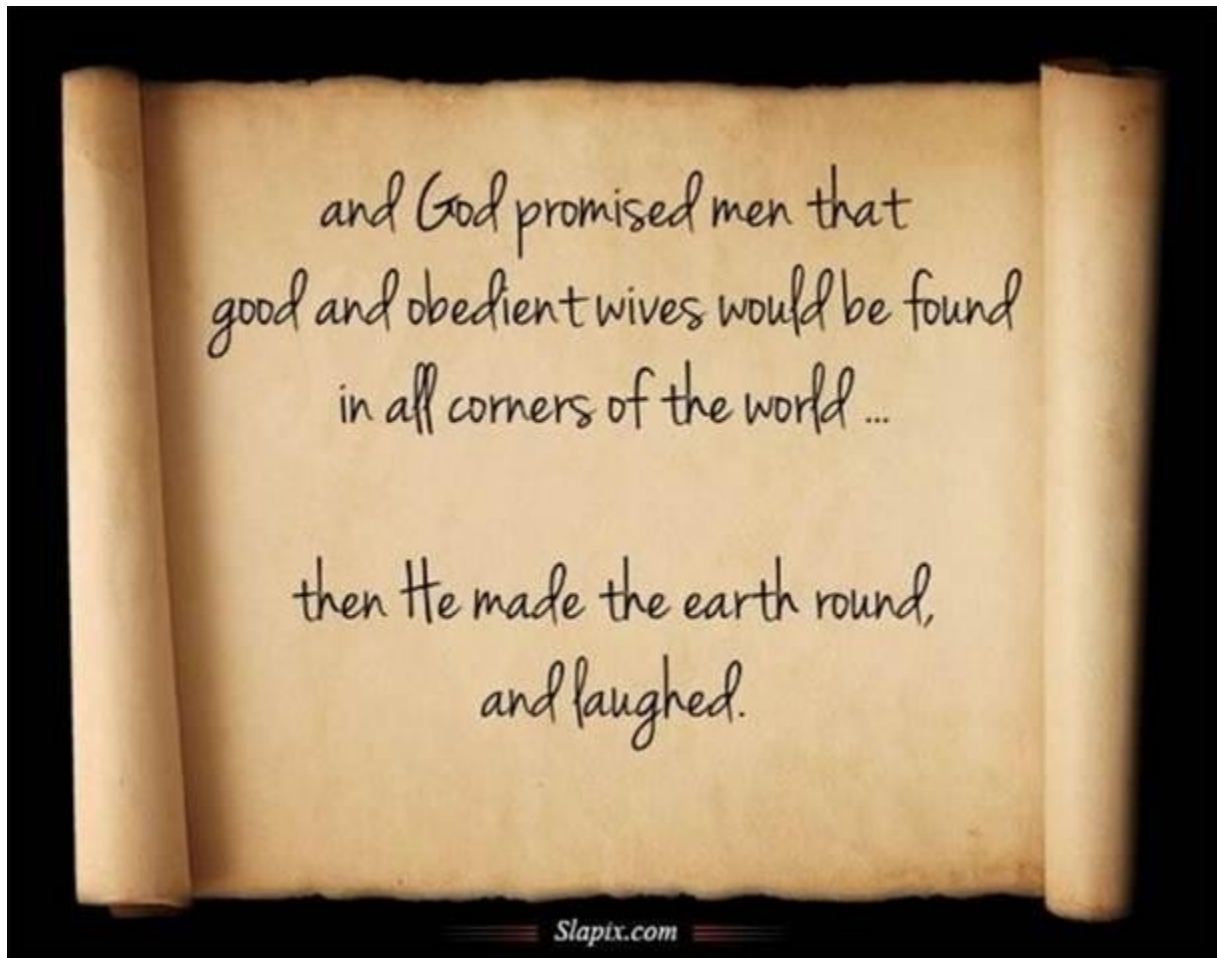
The last event of the year will be a Snowman Drive and Christmas Sing-a-Long which will be held on Saturday 6 December. We felt that at this time of year, we would try an afternoon event, as it may suit more people. Tickets available soon.

The Social Committee would welcome suggestions for future events and also appreciate feedback.

We look forward to seeing you.

Shirley, Pam, Judy and Andrea

God's Sense of Humour



GAZA

Dr. Ezzideen Shehab, a 28-year-old doctor in northern Gaza, born and raised in Jabaliya

Words written with shaking hands

This morning, on my way to the clinic, though even calling it that feels absurd now, it is more graveyard than refuge; I saw a girl. She was sixteen, no older. She was thin, with the kind of tiredness around her eyes that children should never know. In her hands, she carried a pot, a blackened metal container, steaming faintly. Inside was a thin, soupy liquid. It was mostly water, with a few pale white beans floating like little wrecks in an ocean of absence.

Behind her, her father moved through the crowd with a soldier's gaze. It was not the gaze of one trained for war, but of one forced to survive it. He was scanning faces, perhaps for danger, perhaps for hope, or perhaps for something in between.

The girl looked back once, then again. When she saw him turn away, she seized that brief moment of freedom. She dipped her fingers into the pot, scooped a few beans, and stuffed them into her mouth with the speed of guilt. Her eyes darted around as she chewed, terrified that he might see her, that he might scold her. Not because he was cruel, but because that pitiful soup was meant to feed not one child, but an entire family. Perhaps five. Perhaps ten. We no longer count mouths. Only spoons.

There was a kitchen once,
a charity. They cooked for over a thousand families every day.
They did it not for profit, and not for recognition,
but because their souls could not do otherwise.
That kitchen shut down three days ago.
Not because people stopped being hungry,

but because the shelves became empty.

The rice, the oil, the flour — everything ran out. And now the people go to the American aid centers.

Yes, of course. “Humanitarian corridors.” What a beautiful phrase. How clean, how sterile, how bureaucratically elegant. It sounds like “collateral damage” or “operation.” The Americans built them. The Israelis secured them. And forty people die at their gates every day.

Crushed. Shot. Starved. They come seeking bread and leave as corpses. Everyone knows this. Absolutely everyone. And yet they still go.

Hunger will drive a man to walk toward his own execution if there is even a shadow of rice behind the gun.

Yesterday, my friend Al-Aloul went. He is not a fighter. He is a software engineer, a quiet man.

He came back stabbed, in the neck. Six stitches. Blood soaked through his shirt.

But he smiled. “I got the box,” he said. “They did not take it.”

What kind of world is this? What kind of man smiles through blood because he has a box of flour?

This is not the war of tanks and planes. Those have become irrelevant. This is the war of hunger, the war of slow death.

Mothers fast for days, not in spiritual devotion, but because their sons must eat first.

Children stand in line for aid, not knowing if they will return alive.

Girls eat in secret, and fathers carry shame heavier than bread.

This is genocide by exhaustion, by silence, by paperwork, and by averted eyes.

Do you want to know what the modern age has made of evil?

It has made it bureaucratic.

Digitised.

Professionalised.

A genocide in which the world debates definitions while children chew air.

The child who ate those beans is more real than your opinions.
My friend who smiled through blood has more dignity than your excuses.
Gaza is not a headline. It is a mirror.
And when you look at it, what you see is the measure of your own humanity.

**You want God to speak?
Perhaps he already has.
He speaks through the silence of that girl.
Through the blood on that box.
Through the words I now write with shaking hands.
Gaza is not dying.
It is being crucified.
And we are the crowd at Golgotha.
Watching.**

Dr Ezzideen
16th June 2025



Rejoice Like a Child

To win Nobel prizes in chemistry and physics Marie Curie must have spent a lot of time in the laboratory, and there are plenty of photos showing her, test tube in hand, experimenting on something or other. But her non-scientific notes describe her love of the outdoors.

“All my life through”, she wrote, “the new sights of nature made me rejoice like a child. “

Marie Curie identified two new elements, a feat I doubt many of us will emulate. She must have been so excited with her discoveries and how these would help so many people. But it was the wonders of nature that made her “rejoice like a child” – and we can share in those discoveries.

At this season we rejoice in the harvest of the land and the sea. The harvest is gathered in, the branches are nearly bare. Are you feeling a bit dejected at the end of summer? Don't forget – nature is already planning a revival. The wild flower seeds that fell to the ground will bloom again next year. The buds forming on the bushes and trees are waiting for the kiss of the sun to open them. Bulbs are slumbering in your garden till they awaken in the Spring.

The Summer days we enjoyed so much have not gone forever. It has made preparations for a wonderful repeat performance next year. So you “rejoice like child” in the new sights of nature every day.

Maria

What is a Senior Citizen?

A Senior Citizen is one who was here before; the pill, television, frozen foods, contact lenses, credit cards ... and before man walked on the moon.

For us 'Time Sharing' meant togetherness, not holiday homes, and a 'chip' meant a piece of wood. 'Hardware' meant nuts and bolts, and 'software' wasn't even a word.

We got married first, then lived together, and thought cleavage was something that Butchers did. A 'stud' was something that fastened a collar to a shirt, and 'going all the way' meant staying on a double decker to the bus depot.

We thought that 'fast food' was what you ate in Lent; a 'Big Mac' was an oversized raincoat and 'crumpet' we had for tea. In our day 'grass' was mown, 'pot' was something you cooked in, 'coke' was kept in the coal house and a 'joint' was cooked on Sundays!

We are today's Senior Citizens. A hardy bunch when you think how the world has changed!

GKR

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RATE: £20 per hour including travel costs within c. 10 mile radius of Dysart.

Contact: Graham Kingsley-Rowe: 07813 822758 Email: Kingsley-rowe@hotmail.co.uk

WORD SEARCH SEPTEMBER 2025



Answers on Page 34



The Inquisitive Mind of a Child

Why are they selling Poppies, Mummy?

Selling Poppies in town today.

The Poppies child, are fowers of love

For the men who marched away

But, why have they chosen a Poppy Mummy?

Why not a beautiful Rose?

***Because, my child men fought and died,
In the fields where the Poppies grow.***

But, why are the Poppies so red Mummy?

Why are the Poppies so red?

Red is the colour of blood, my child.

The blood our Soldiers shed.

The heart of the Poppy is black, Mummy.

Why does it have to be black?

Black, my child, is the symbol of grief

For the men who never came back.

But, why Mummy are you crying so?

Your tears are giving you pain.

My tears are my fears for you, my child

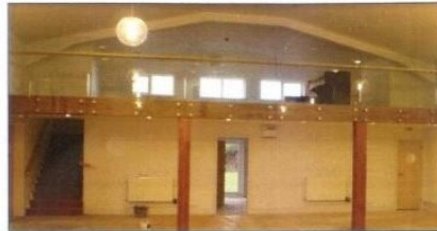
For the world is – FORGETTING AGAIN.

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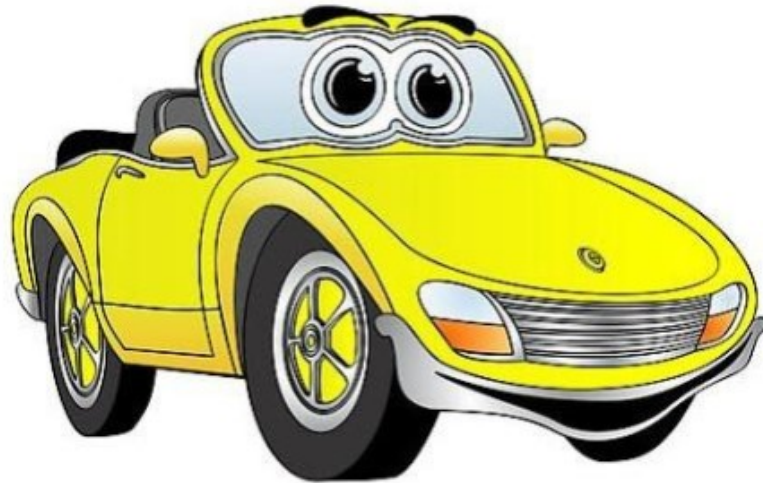


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Word Search Solution September 2025





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My Faith and Life Journey

Early Days

I was born at Invergordon and subsequently christened in the Scottish Episcopal Church at Tain. My mother would say nightly prayers and sing hymns with me. Aged just a few months, I moved to a large ramshackle house in Whitchurch in Shropshire. As Head of the 'Church Women's Guild' my mother was very active in Church affairs with responsibility for the Welfare of a series of Curates under Training. It was my role to befriend such children as the Curate might have. My mother was determined that we should gain an ecumenical perspective on life and, on a rotational basis, we would attend the Episcopal Church in Tain, The Church of Scotland in Invergordon, and the 'Wee Frees' in Alness, whose Minister's harangues would give the late Iain Paisley a run for his money.

My Father, ex Fleet Air Arm, was seriously alcoholic and suffered from what would now be recognized as severe PTSD. I was educated privately (Shrewsbury), a Crammer in Brighton and then at College in Southampton and briefly at a French Catholic University. My education was severely handicapped by extreme bullying and medical issues, including Appendicitis, Glandular Fever and Kidney repair. At Shrewsbury, I set an unexpected precedent by questioning the customary Confirmation at age 13. I received tremendous support from both my parents and the School Chaplain and with my questions answered was duly confirmed the following year. I received just ten days prior notice of a move to the New Forest (the upheaval to my life plans left me bitter for many years),

The Middle Journey

I embarked, briefly, on a career with the Epworth Press, the Methodist Publishing House. Following several Marketing roles, I established myself as a Contracts and Commercial Manager working primarily in the Defence sector, located variously in London, Manchester and South Wales.

At this time, I first became aware of homelessness, seeing the Meths Drinkers on the then Bomb Site adjacent to London's Blackfriars Station. I became involved, via St Martin's in the Fields, with the Homeless of 'Cardboard City' beneath Charing Cross Station.

It was now that I had a very frightening medical experience. I awoke in the morning with a milky fluid in my right eye and, it being en-route to my work, I took myself into A&E in Moorfields Eye Hospital. I was in Theatre within 20 minutes for emergency treatment for Toxoplasmosis and was told not only that I might lose the sight in my right eye, but, if the infection had spread to the other eye, I might become totally blind!! In the event the disease was contained with the damage halted 1mm from the cone of vision.

Somewhat desperate for work, I ended up working in Harrods throughout the Christmas and January Sales in positions throughout the Store including operating the lifts! ... "Third floor Ladies Fashions, Hats, Millinery; Going Up! ".

In 1974 I got married and commenced my Defence career with the Plessey co. moving to Hatfield Heath in Essex. There I became a Member of a Parochial Church Council for the first time. Workwise, I had an interesting encounter with MI6. I was working on a Contract for the Egyptian Navy and had a temporary assistant (supposedly Security Cleared) working for me for three months. On her final day we went to the Pub where I innocently asked her "What are your future plans?" to receive the reply "Oh, I'm returning to Israel where my husband is a Fighter Pilot". I literally choked on my beer! All hell broke loose when I duly reported it, but the horse had bolted with lots of Egyptian information: Ilford being a centre for the Jewish community, Mossad (Israel's Security Service), had successfully infiltrated her.

My first son Peter was born in 1976 during the hottest and driest Essex summer (then) on record. We were within 24 hours of having to fetch water from a standpipe! Even the Pub ran dry as there was no water for brewing or soft drinks!

I moved to the company's new factory in Newport, South Wales and went to live in Monmouth. I was heavily involved supporting the Falklands conflict of 1982. For the only time in my life, I worked a 36 hour shift; helping to strip major Systems on the production line to obtain component spares. I also had my first serious encounter with the Health & Safety Executive when I witnessed the main securing bolt to the forks on a Fork Lift Truck sheer and literally part the hair of a colleague before embedding itself in the wall; an inch lower would have been fatal. Being a manufacturing unit, however, brought an unusual benefit. We had to have a full-time Nurse on site who was granted, annually, a bottle of Brandy for medicinal purposes. Come New Year, she would invite her friends to consume this. Senior Management couldn't prevent one's medical appointment with the Nurse!

Amidst all this excitement, my second son Andrew was born in 1980. When only a few months old, he became seriously ill with a virus that has permanently damaged his immune system and which required the challenge of a lactose free diet. (product labelling was in its infancy then). Living in Monmouth we tried both the Church in Wales (Episcopalian) and the Church of Wales (Presbyterian) but found that neither quite met our needs. So, we crossed into Herefordshire to a small Church that was part of a Team Ministry. I became Treasurer, also having responsibility for the Church fabric and Churchyard upkeep.

It was at this time, 1983, that I thought I felt a calling to do God's work full-time. However, following discussions with the Team Rector and interviews with the Director of Ordinands and the Bishop of Hereford, it was mutually agreed that my calling was in a Lay, rather than an Ordained, capacity. I therefore continued to be actively engaged in Church and Community life with an emphasis upon supporting Clergy and looking after their welfare.

1984/5 Meanwhile, having watched Plessey's factory develop from 200 people to over 2000, my further career prospects were limited. I therefore trawled the jobs market and took a job with Ferranti, not least because Edinburgh's Medics gave the best opportunity to sort Andrew's medical problems. I began worshipping at Davidson's Mains before buying a house in Greenbank and

worshipping at the local Church of Scotland and then an Episcopal Church at Morningside.

1986/95 By now I was working on a £multi-million project, (the forerunner of Drones) only for the project to be lost to competition. Almost immediately, I was head-hunted to join YARD (originally Yarrow's R&D Department) in Glasgow. Commuting to Glasgow from Edinburgh's Greenbank while working very long hours proved too much (I had become something of a workaholic) and we resolved to move somewhere nearer Glasgow. We ended up buying a canal-side property on the edge of the former shale mining village (then) of Winchburgh.. For me, the new home was a chance to enjoy the countryside with my two black Labradors and to restore a large garden which had been a mini garden-centre. Sadly, my wife did not share my vision and, as subsequently emerged, was never happy there.

A highlight of my time at YARD, was the first Gulf War. We were given 10 days to turn a Casualty Evacuation Simulator for the Royal Army Medical Corps into an operational unit and operate it in the War Zone. My challenge was to create a set of Terms and Conditions to protect my 4 colleagues, whose Company Pension and Health Insurance rights became invalid.

I worked extensively with International Armed Services and Contractors and spent time in-country with co-contractors in Canada and the USA. A further highlight was successfully acting as a Consultant for the Peruvian Navy in a highly sensitive dispute requiring my negotiating directly with the Dutch Minister of Finance, a Shipyard Manager, a Trade Union Rep, and a Shipbuilder.

Yard was then taken over by British Aerospace and as Divisional Contracts Manager for a new "Engineering" Division, I was tasked with taking Defence Technology into the wider commercial engineering sector. I got involved with the likes of UKAEA at Sellafield, the CAA's Air Traffic Controllers at Prestwick and Swanwick and with Fire Safety Engineering in Aberdeen post Piper Alpha.

However in 1995 the entire Division was made Redundant. I was a major contributor to a Management Buy-out plan which failed when British Aerospace said "Sorry, your plan will only deliver 3.8% profit on the bottom line. We can earn more in the Bank" – how times change! In many ways, I never recovered from this blow to my career ambitions.

During this time, I lead something of a charmed life: emerging unhurt from a serious car accident on the A1 having cried aloud "O God Help me" as I lost control whilst taking evasive action, then passing through Lockerbie on the morning of the Pan Am aircraft atrocity, then being in a pub in Covent Garden a few days before colleagues were hurt by an IRA bomb, and finally being in Warrington Town Centre a week before the IRA atrocity there!

After a period of unemployment I obtained a role as Contracts Manager with Yarrow's. Unfortunately, after about 3 months the Project Director instructed me to use my personal contacts to obtain confidential data on a competitor's tender. When I refused and told him that my career was built upon my Integrity and he replied; "I leave my Integrity at Home" it was obvious I couldn't continue to work with him. Next, I worked for Scottish Power's subsidiary Scottish Telecom (subsequently renamed Thus plc). An interesting challenge was creating Contracts for state-of-the-art technology in circumstances where suppliers, were often also key customers. A fun moment came when the Queen visited Scottish Power's new HQ on the Broomielaw. Several Staff had to stand in the front of the glass lift in order to protect Her Majesty's modesty from the rest of us seated in the Atrium!

1998 I took a year out to oversee the complete rebuild of the home in Winchburgh, wrongly believing that this would resolve strains in the family relationships, after which I found it difficult to obtain work. I undertook various short-term roles and, by complete contrast, took one grading Self-Catering accommodation for the Scottish Tourist Board, primarily on Arran.

The Latter Phase

1999 – 2000 It was during this time that my personal life began to go seriously wrong. My wife's Uncle had agreed to fund both my boys' education at Loretto until they were 18. All went well until, without warning, he announced that he couldn't pay the bill! The trauma for my wife and the boys was intense as I sought ways to mitigate the damage. With a certain inevitability, she left me in 1998 followed by a painful Divorce in 2000. Out of love for her, I sought a quick settlement, but it left me financially ruined and homeless at a time when I was also unemployed. Church friends came to my rescue and I had temporary accommodation in an unheated gatehouse in January, but thanks be to God, I wasn't on the street!

During my time in Winchburgh, I worshipped at the Church of Scotland. As a local Scout Leader, I had brought the new Minister and the Catholic Priest together to dedicate a new flag. They became the best of friends, whereas the previous Minister would have nothing to do with the Catholics. However, we chose to move our allegiance to St Thomas' (then) Episcopal Church in Glasgow Road, Corstophine. Here I worked with youth groups and for several years helped with the Care Van, Night Shelters and a Rehabilitation Centre in Leith run by Bethany Christian Trust and Edinburgh City Mission.

2000 – 2002 I fled south to London to give myself space to rebuild my life, at first leasing and then buying an Apartment in Grays in Essex. I took a more junior role as a Contracts Officer for Alcatel Submarine Networks learning much about laying fibre-optic cables on the ocean floor (and how vulnerable they can be to ship's anchor damage!). Once again, the spectre of Redundancy reared its ugly head.

My Faith was sustained at this time by worship variously at St Martin's in the Fields, and St Paul's and Southwark Cathedrals.

2003 – 2005 I took a fixed term contracts in the Rail sector before securing a Commercial Manager's role with Network Rail working variously at Milton Keynes and Nuneaton. At Network Rail's written request, I took on a six-month lease of a

property in Nuneaton, only for the Project Director ten days later to require me to move to Milton Keynes! I was not prepared to be treated like that and resigned, having got Network Rail HQ to pay compensation to my landlord.

It was at this time that I had another miraculous escape, travelling through Aldgate Tube Station twenty minutes before the 7/7 bomb exploded there!!

2006 – 2007 I first worked on a one-year contract for Magnox Electric on the Decommissioning of Bradwell Nuclear Power Station in Essex, before working as a Consultant on projects for Metronet and Transport for London.

2008 – 2010 I worked in Network Rail's HQ as a Commercial Adviser, Planning and Regulation primarily working on the Thameslink Project. (the bureaucracy was mind blowing!) Meanwhile, during my time in Grays, I became heavily involved with Grays Thurrock Team Ministry as a Parochial Church Council Member, Youth Group leader and as a Synod Representative for Chelmsford Diocese.

2011 – 2013 I finally got the chance to move back to Scotland, albeit on a vastly reduced salary, to work for SSE in Perth on the Substations element of the Beaulieu – Denny Powerline project. I had originally intended to work until I was 70 in November 2016, but having gone on holiday to Peter, Laura and Angus in Adelaide, I lost my motivation. I felt that my experience of the world of commerce spanning 48 years was enough and duly Retired! In 2011 I had to sell off my Essex Apartment to repay the mortgage, which left me with minimal Capital, forcing me to live in rented accommodation.

November 2015 my happy Retirement was shaken by Prostate Cancer surgery. After a long fight, I have survived thus far and am now leading a very busy and fully active life and ... am back where I began in the Scottish Episcopal Church!!

The Present

September 2024, after a contented period on my own in Perth, I seriously broke my ankle. I was taken in by a lovely lady whom I had met in Burntisland, ending up bowled over and walking down the aisle again! Alas, strenuous efforts to reconcile differences of lifestyle and attitudes to in lovely sheltered accommodation in Dysart . But, adding to my pain, neither of my sons, now variously in Adelaide and Lanark (together with each of their sons) refuse to have any contact with me, although I've committed no crime. Very happily, my Daughter-in-Law, husband, two Granddaughters and a Great-grandson in Ayrshire remain close and very supportiive. The old adage of: ' You can choose your friends daily life have failed and we are now seeking divorce by mutual consent this November. Having moved out of her home I have been very fortunate to be housed by the Council but not your family' runs true.

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