

# *Cushnie & Tough Church* *The News*



*Autumn 2015*

*Number 56*

*“We aim to be a strong Christian witness to all in this community as a worshipping, caring, welcoming and united church in the strength of God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.”*

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## *From the Manse*

### **REFUGEES – PROBLEM OR PEOPLE**

Thousands of boat people from Syria and Afghanistan have set up camps in the popular Greek island of Kos. Refugees from war-torn Afghanistan and Syria have taken shelter under arcades on the seafront in Kos town as they wait to receive security clearance for onward travel to mainland Greece.



As holiday-makers relax on sun loungers on the beach, just a yards away scores of refugees are sleeping on cardboard boxes. Barefoot toddlers in filthy clothes play among debris while men sit staring out to sea as they plan the next stage of their journey to Athens and the rest of Europe. Young mothers change their babies and wash their children's clothes in the sea, sharing the promenade with tourists who sit uncomfortably on the beachfront. Groups of young men squat together under the shade of the tree looking on while holiday-makers queue for ice-cream. Others sit outside restaurant watching the tourists eat.

Greeks are donating what they can. One elderly man hands a breastfeeding mother in a headscarf 10 euros. 'For the baby', he said. But the Greeks are facing their own economic crisis, the refugees' arrival adds to their difficulties. As one resident says, 'This island is already in trouble. The people are kind - they give the refugees blankets but they have very little for themselves. You cannot share what you don't have.'

### **WHY ARE PEOPLE LEAVING SYRIA?**

The conflict in Syria is now in its fifth year. It has driven more than four million people to seek sanctuary in neighbouring countries. Most of the refugees are in Turkey, Lebanon, Iraq, Jordan, Egypt and other parts of north Africa. In addition there are 8 million people who have been forced from their homes and are still within Syria. Almost half the country's people are either refugees or internally displaced. Worsening conditions are driving growing numbers towards Europe and further afield, but the overwhelming majority remain in the region, hoping that the conflict will end and that they will be able to return to their homes.

## **REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS ARE NO NEW PHENOMENON**

There are many people in the Bible who left their homes either because they were looking for a better life or because they had to flee for their lives

Here are some of them:

Abraham, Jacob, Naomi and Ruth, Ezra and the Jews, Nehemiah, Moses, Joseph, David, Elijah, Jonah, Samaritans, Jews who fled from Egypt with Moses, Jews who escaped to Egypt with Jeremiah, Jews taken as captives to Assyria, Jews taken as captives to Babylon, Daniel and his friends, Ezekiel, Esther, Mary and Joseph with the baby Jesus, the early Christians such as Barnabas, Paul, and John.

In our own history there are many people who are migrants or refugees. For example, there are people who have moved from this country to find a better life. People have settled in countries such as the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Africa, Europe, and countries where there is work in the oil industry. Others have come in to work, for example white and black Africans, Asians, West Indians, Irish, Europeans.

There have also been people who have been exiles or refugees, for example people driven from their homes in the Highland Clearances, Jews escaping the Nazis, Europeans escaping communism, and Asians who were expelled from east Africa, as well as more recent refugees from various countries.

## **WHO ARE THE REFUGEES TODAY?**

Here are three examples of people fleeing the violence in Syria:

Sani Saleh, an IT teacher from Damascus, who I want to come to the UK because he knows many people here and speaks English.

Ihab Hilal, an optician from Aleppo, who was hounded by ISIS after carrying out first aid on injured people.

Jihad Naif, a dentist, who had fled the ISIS stronghold of Raqqa after his cousin was beheaded by the militant Islamists.

These are all people who would make a positive contribution to our society were they allowed into the UK.

## **THE CALAIS SITUATION**

Things have come to a head because in April refugees were moved from squats in Calais to a site 5 miles from the city. It is a former rubbish dump with no electricity or water – the French are trying to put pressure on people to move on.

The situation in Calais has been caused by the French attitude to the refugees. In France just offering to help an undocumented refugee or migrant can result in a fine of £20,000 and up to 5 years in prison. This has discouraged charities and individuals from giving out food and other essentials. The refugees are desperate. No wonder that they are trying to cross into Britain.

## **BRITISH RESPONSE**

The government response has been very negative. David Cameron has called them a “swarm heading for Britain”. Philip Hammond, the Foreign Secretary, “a marauding threat to Europe”. This sort of language stirs up fear and stokes the hysteria instead of calming it. And it is gross exaggeration of the facts.

The reality is that these are frightened refugees who have already been traumatized by the experiences they are fleeing from. They are human beings in desperate straits and in desperate circumstances and we should have compassion on them. The majority of the 3,000 people in Calais are refugees from Syria, Eritrea, Sudan, and Afghanistan. They have not gathered to invade Britain or Europe but because they feared for their lives and were willing to risk everything in search of safety.

Britain has had a proud tradition of providing refuge to people fleeing war and persecution but far from being swamped by refugees we are not pulling our weight. Since the crisis began in Syria 5 years ago Britain has only taken 2% of Europe’s Syrian refugee claims, a mere 6,000 people (1,200 / year). This is a very small number compared for example to Germany who have taken 15 times as many and Sweden 10 times as many as we have.

The idea that refugees are in Britain to sponge off the state does not stand up to scrutiny. Far from leeching off Britain refugees can provide a significant

economic benefit. Research estimates that non-EU migrants made a net contribution of £5 billion to the economy in the past 10 years. EU migrants also contributed £20 billion. That's a total of £25 billion.

### **WHAT DOES THE BIBLE HAVE TO SAY?**

Of the many examples that could be quoted, the one that may be the most well known is Jesus story of the Good Samaritan, found in Luke 10:25-37.

This is a story of a Samaritan helping a Jew who had been attacked by robbers and left for dead. The Jews and Samaritans were enemies – they were a different nationality and religion. Two Jews had seen the man who had been attacked and passed on without helping. Their reaction was controlled by fear.

But the Samaritan saw the injured man, a human being who needed help, and he was filled with pity. He put himself in danger – he could also have been attacked by robbers. And he gave of his time and money to help. “He poured oil and wine on the Jew’s wounds and bandaged them; then he put the man on his own animal and took him to an inn, where he took care of him. He gave innkeeper two silver coins and said, “When I come back I will pay you whatever else you spend on him.”

### **WHAT CAN WE DO?**

- Find out more about the people who are refugees and what is happening in the countries they have come from
- Pray for them
- Support charities that are helping refugees – charities such as Tear Fund, Open Doors, Barnabas, Mercy Corps, the Red Cross
- Write to your MP asking that Britain do more to help the refugees.

We need to look on the refugees as people – people who need our help just now, but also people who can make a positive contribution to our society. There are many examples of people who came to our country as refugees in the past and have given back far more than they have received.

At the end of the story of the Good Samaritan Jesus asked, “Who acted like a neighbour to the man attacked by robbers?” and the answer was, “The one who was kind to him”. Jesus then said, “You go and do the same”.

And this is his word for us today – “You go and do the same”.

*Rosemary Legge*

### FICKLE FAITHFULNESS

I was thinking of going to church, just the other day,  
But something else kept cropping up and I couldn't get away,  
But I thought to myself, as I sipped a cup of tea,  
There'll be plenty other people there, they won't miss me.

The Sunday before, the weather wasn't good  
So I didn't go to church, although I knew I should,  
But I said to myself, much too easily,  
There'll be plenty other people there, they won't miss me.

There's so much to do on Sundays and, although I really care,  
I must admit, when it comes to the bit, I'm very seldom there,  
But I keep saying to myself, wherever I may be,  
There'll be plenty other people there, they won't miss me.

If other people do the same, such a pity it will be,  
They'll close the churches we hold dear, just you wait and see.  
And I'll keep saying to myself, though tragic it may be,  
Lots of others didn't go they can't blame me.

Can they?

*Don Patience*

## *From the Editor* by Gary Lee Tolley

I think sometimes people think being a Christian is a complicated thing. But, when it comes down to it, most importantly we need to remember that Jesus is our friend – and friendship shouldn't be a complicated thing. Recently I read the following poem and I thought how perfectly simple a relationship with Jesus is and should be.

A Minister passing through his church  
In the middle of the day,  
Decided to pause by the altar  
To see who come to pray.  
Just then the back door opened,  
And a man came down the aisle,  
The minister frowned as he saw the man  
Hadn't shaved in a while.  
His shirt was torn and shabby,  
And his coat was worn and frayed,  
The man knelt down and bowed his head,  
Then rose and walked away.

In the days that followed at precisely noon,  
The preacher saw this chap,  
Each time he knelt just for a moment,  
A lunch pail in his lap.  
Well, the minister's suspicions grew,  
With robbery a main fear,

He decided to stop and ask the man,  
'What are you doing here?'  
The old man said he was a factory worker  
And lunch was half an hour  
Lunchtime was his prayer time,  
For finding strength and power.  
I stay only a moment  
Because the factory's far away;  
As I kneel here talking to the Lord,  
This is kinda what I say:



'I JUST CAME BY TO TELL YOU, LORD,  
HOW HAPPY I HAVE BEEN,  
SINCE WE FOUND EACH OTHERS FRIENDSHIP  
AND YOU TOOK AWAY MY SIN.  
DON'T KNOW MUCH OF HOW TO PRAY,  
BUT I THINK ABOUT YOU EVERYDAY.  
SO, JESUS, THIS IS BEN,  
JUST CHECKING IN TODAY.'

The minister feeling foolish,  
Told Ben that it was fine.  
He told the man that he was welcome  
To pray there anytime.  
'It's time to go, and thanks,' Ben said  
As he hurried to the door.  
Then the minister knelt there at the altar,  
Which he'd never done before.  
His cold heart melted, warmed with love,  
As he met with Jesus there.  
As the tears flowed down his cheeks,  
He repeated old Ben's prayer:

'I JUST CAME by TO TELL YOU, LORD,  
HOW HAPPY I'VE BEEN,  
SINCE WE FOUND EACH OTHERS FRIENDSHIP  
AND YOU TOOK AWAY MY SIN.  
I DON'T KNOW MUCH OF HOW TO PRAY,  
BUT I THINK ABOUT YOU EVERYDAY.  
SO, JESUS, THIS IS ME,  
JUST CHECKING IN TODAY.'

Past noon one day, the minister noticed  
That old Ben hadn't come.  
As more days passed and still no Ben,  
He began to worry some.  
At the factory, he asked about him,  
Learning he was ill.

The hospital staff was worried,  
But he'd given them a thrill.

The week that Ben was with them,  
Brought changes in the ward.  
His smiles and joy contagious.  
Changed people were his reward.  
The head nurse couldn't understand  
Why Ben could be so glad,  
When no flowers, calls or cards came,  
Not a visitor he had.

The minister stayed by his bed,  
He voiced the nurse's concern:  
No friends had come to show they cared.  
He had nowhere to turn.  
Looking surprised, old Ben spoke up  
And with a winsome smile;  
'The nurse is wrong, she couldn't know,  
He's been here all the while.'  
Everyday at noon He comes here,  
A dear friend of mine, you see,  
He sits right down and takes my hand,  
Leans over and says to me:

'I JUST CAME BY TO TELL YOU, BEN,  
HOW HAPPY I HAVE BEEN,  
SINCE WE FOUND THIS FRIENDSHIP,  
AND I TOOK AWAY YOUR SIN .  
I THINK ABOUT YOU ALWAYS  
AND I LOVE TO HEAR YOU PRAY,  
AND SO BEN, THIS IS JESUS,  
JUST CHECKING IN TODAY .'

*Julie Diab*

# Knitting for Nkhoma

## **NKHOMA KNITTING NEWS**

We are seeing an increase in malnourished babies and children being admitted to hospital. It is very important to keep them warm as hypothermia can end their little lives. So we use lots of blankets with them as well as the jumpers and hats.

The harvest this year was very bad because of the floods down south. People are worried about having enough to eat. The malnourished children get better here but they are ever really out of the danger zone. It's not just because of the crop shortage but also the families don't understand what are the best ways to give their kids other kinds of things to eat. A problem that be solved for a long time. Meanwhile we do what we can to help them.

Here are some pictures of older children and babies. The two boys had become friends in the hospital and were very proud of their sweaters.

*Rebecca Morton*



## EMMS MALAWI BIKE RIDE 3<sup>rd</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> July, 2015

When EMMS (Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society) announced that this year's Malawi Bike Ride was in aid of the Nkhoma Hospital and that the ride would finish at the hospital, I decided that I would take part.

I had met David and Rebecca Morton on their furlough visits "home" to Scotland to churches in our presbytery and particularly to Methlick, my village, where Rebecca visited her distant cousin, Julie Canlis, our last minister's wife. Having also paid a brief visit to Nkhoma after the 2009 bike ride, I felt I must go back.



Also, I had become involved with Kathleen and Dave Thomson who set up FROM (Famine Relief for Orphans in Malawi) and had been collecting goods for them to send out to the needy in Malawi.

This was to be my 6<sup>th</sup> ride, so I knew full well what I was about to take on. After several weeks in training, I joined some 20 others, 13 of whom I knew from previous rides, to "do" some 300 miles over 6 days' biking.

As always, this proved to be another amazing adventure. I went through many emotions, had tears of despair and happiness, experienced much joy, laughter, fun and exceptional comradeship which quickly developed between members of an expedition with common goals and sharing hardships. At the daily times of morning and evening worship, prayer and singing, in which several of us were invited to take part, there was a special feeling of God's presence.

I knew He would get me up that steep hill to Dedza, the highest town in Malawi, climbing that day, negotiating hairpin bends for 10 miles, in the early afternoon heat of the blazing sun, rising some 2200m above the Great Rift Valley. Wow! What amazing views! I'd never have done it without the help and support of our leader and guide, Henk (from South Africa), our ever-smiling, inspirational encourager. Puffing and sweating, I said to him, "I think I should just go on the bus", he replied, "Do you really want to?" When I answered "No," he said, "I'll give you 10 minutes. You can do it!" And it WAS only 10 minutes to the top!! Then the pair of us whee'd down the other side with our feet off the pedals, much to the hilarity and cheers of the rest of the group. A pair of recycled teenagers growing old disgracefully! A great moment!

There were many other memorable times.....star gazing at Ntchisi Forest Lodge; beautiful sunrises over the Lake; Mike, with his guitar, entertaining the crowds of children, who, whenever we stopped, appeared from nowhere; celebrating John's birthday; biking alongside Moira (one of David Livingstone's great-great granddaughters) and singing, among other things, "Onward, Christian Soldiers" and "Keep right on to the end of the road"; my wonderful "sleeping partners", Heather and Alison, with whom I shared accommodation; toasting our success as we neared Nkhoma with champagne; riding the final half mile, with balloons flying from our helmets, to the tumultuous and incredible welcome from singing and dancing crowds at the hospital. And, of course, for me, the welcome and hugs I received from David and Rebecca. It was wonderful to be back. AND, four of us were staying with the Mortons, sharing their generous hospitality.

After a most informative, insightful and enjoyable tour of the hospital...the "best I have ever visited", we assembled, under a starlit sky, for a celebratory meal/barbeque with staff and officials. Speeches of appreciation for all our efforts were given and presentations made.

As always, I am ever grateful to those who have faithfully supported me over all the 17 years of my efforts for EMMS, now numbering 20 events. This time, together, we raised over £61,000 from our sponsorship. This will be used to help reduce the mother and child mortality rates, to ensure that more patients are treated for non-communicable or infectious diseases, and too strengthen ties with other health centres and communities in the surrounding areas.

For me this was again a time of renewal of friendships and the making of new and I feel so proud and privileged to be part of the EMMS "family", not only getting to know and love people from different cultures and circumstances, but also appreciating and visiting the hospitals to see what our monies raised is doing.

*Evelyn Cook*



## PARTNERPLAN

# David & Rebecca Morton - Malawi July 2015

c/o Nkhoma Hospital  
PO Box 48  
Nkhoma  
Malawi

<http://davidreccamorton.wordpress.com/>

Dear Family and Friends,

Nkhoma Hospital is facing a difficult financial crisis. One month ago the hospital was informed by the District Medical Officer that the District had no funds to pay what was owed on the Service Level Agreement (SLA) between the district and the hospital for services provided by Nkhoma Hospital from February through June. This amounts to 12 million Malawi Kwacha (about \$27,000). Prior to this announcement the District kept assuring us our bills would be paid, so there was no warning that there would be this defaulting of payment. The situation is complicated as the SLA programme provides free treatment to children under five and pregnant women in our catchment and referral area which has led to remarkable decreases in under five and maternal morbidity and mortality as the cost barrier to health care has been removed. Yet the hospital has incurred more than twice the cost of what it is supposed to bear, even before this defaulting. Yesterday, to meet our expenses for the rest of July, including major expenses for our staff allowances, call coverage payments, etc., the hospital used up all of its undesignated fund reserves. This means we enter August with only what we will be collecting in patient fees over the next week while facing a needed purchase of medications for the month of August of around Malawi Kwacha 8-10 million (about \$20,000). Our fee income, has risen to about Mk 4 million per week (\$8,800), but also must cover fuel, maintenance and administration costs.



The financial situation of the hospital always requires dependence upon our Lord to provide, now more acutely. This does not mean we have not and are not developing strategies to enable the hospital to become less reliant on outside sources of income. It is just that when such a debt piles up and then we are told it will not be covered at all, the situation becomes critical. Nkhoma Hospital is just symptomatic of the national crisis in health care funding. Although Malawi is a signatory to international agreements to designate a minimum of 15% of its national budget to health care, the new budget for financial year 2015/2016 only allocates 8% to health care. This means that government health units have shortages of drugs and supplies, non-functioning transport, and staffing issues, leading more people to seek care at Nkhoma. Also recently the World Bank has designated Malawi as the poorest country in the world with an annual GNDP per person per year at \$250. A month ago, immediately after the news, Nkhoma management sent out a strong letter to the Ministry of Health, Christian Hospital Association of Malawi, our member of parliament, and the chair of the parliamentary committee on National Health

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# PARTNERPLAN

Care, documenting all of the issues regarding the SLA non-payment, and the disastrous result stopping the programme will have on the community (the immediate effect will be maternal deaths).

This year Nkhoma Hospital celebrates its centenary. Being in existence as a rural Malawian Hospital for 100 years, is a testimony to God's grace and provision. We are depending upon that grace and provision now. Please pray:

1. That God would provide what we need to get us through next month
2. That the Malawi government/Ministry of Health will respond, pay what is owed, and set the SLA on a more just financial position so that we can continue providing the community with the life- saving care they need.
3. That hospital staff will understand and be supportive of the financial measures we will need to take, which will affect what the hospital will be able to pay them. Many of our staff, as they are often the most successful members of their extended families, are responsible for school fees and other expenses of their extended families.
4. That hospital management will be wise in its decisions, communications, discussions, etc., with all involved over these issues, and will not lose sight of the fact that this work is our Lord's ministry and we need to be faithful.

Thank you for all of your prayers, concern and help over the years,

David & Rebecca  
Nkhoma Hospital  
Malawi

# Parish Register

## Wedding:

Alan Busson and Carol Henderson on 15 August at Coull Church

## Funerals:

Died	Funeral		
13 July	23 July	Frances Cruickshank 27 Littlewood Place Alford	Aberdeen Crematorium
22 August	28 August	George (Geordie) Smith 6 George Square Inverurie (formerly Claydykes, Tornaveen)	Cushnie Church

## Handbells

We find the history of bell ringing very interesting. Here is one item printed in the Aberdeen Journal on March 30 1859.

A pleasing variety was introduced at the Peoples Concerts on Saturday and Monday evenings by the performance of several airs on handbells, by the first class of our local bell ringers. Few in this quarter have been accustomed to hear music of this description, and we may therefore state that such bells give out a peculiarly sweet and silvery tone; round and full, and judging from the specimens which were given, the performance can execute rapid music with considerable facility and appeal. "The Bluebells of Scotland" and "There's nae luck about this House" were rendered with accuracy – a few notes of harmony being combined throughout.

Hope that we would have just as good write up nowadays!

We are looking forward to the October rally at Bankfoot and hosting the Scottish Rally in Aboyne in March.

*Mary Penny*



## **Evergreens**

For our annual outing twenty three of us went to the Commercial Hotel in Tarland. We had a very nice meal and enjoyed good company and the added bonus of a lovely drive over to Tarland. Our August meeting was a Beetle Drive which was a lot of fun. On the 11<sup>th</sup> September we will be having a games afternoon followed by entertainment from Isobel Balfour. Our October meeting is on the 9<sup>th</sup> which will be a bingo session, then on the 13<sup>th</sup> November we hope to have a Bring and Buy sale followed by Reminiscence. The Christmas party this year is on 11<sup>th</sup> December with entertainment from Alastair Salter and all members. Evergreens has proved to be very popular since moving to Hamewith Court and we are most grateful to Moira (the warden) and the rest of the staff for making us so welcome.

We have kept the time of our meetings at 1.30-3.30pm except for our party when we will finish at 4pm. If anyone needs further information phone me on 62850 or Anne on 63404.

*Jean Mortimer*

## **Social Committee News**

The social committee organised a coffee morning at Tough Church vestry on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> May where we had a lovely morning catching up with friends with a nice cuppa and some home bakes. A nice time was held by all and it was great to see so many faces.

We also held a bottle stall at the Cushnie Picnic & Games on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> June where the weather held with just an occasional spit and the day was quite warm. As well as the bottle stall we had guess the name of the bear, which was also available at Tough School Fun day, and the person who has guessed the bears name will be revealed at our coffee morning in September.

On Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> September, we are planning to have a coffee morning at Tough Vestry and we will have at the morning some Christmas catalogues to hand out in the hope that, if you wish to purchase any Christmas cards, paper etc that by doing so Cushnie & Tough church will receive the commission from the sale of these.

On Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> October, we will be having soup and sandwiches at Cushnie hall after the harvest service at Cushnie church. We hope to see you all there.

At Tough Primary School on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> November, there is to be a Christmas Fayre at which, the social committee are planning to do a bottle stall to raise money. If you can manage to come along or donate some bottles to us that would be great.

Thanks again for your continued support.

*Anne Parfitt*  
Social Committee

### **Tough School News**

What a brilliant Summer we had! Since then, Tough pupils have been enjoying back at school for Session 2015/16. This year, we have been joined by 8 new P1 pupils – Fraser, Alejandro, Charlie, Rowan, James, Sean, Ethan and Maja.

The P1s have been learning all about their numbers and shapes, alongside learning about different sounds and how they might go together to make words.

Our topics so far have included Minibeasts and Trees in P4-7 and Weather and Dinosaurs in P1-3. Plenty of outdoor learning opportunities!

We are continuing with the great work that Tough's Task Groups do – Eco Group, Road Safety Group, Rotakids, Library Group and Health Group. They organise great competitions, homework tasks and school events. Each Task Group also talks to the P1-3s and lets them know how they can help improve the school and learn more.

At the end of each term, we plan on visiting Tough Church for special services. We are looking forward to continuing the work that has already been going on at Tough Church and School to support Farm Africa and other charities.

We hope you have a wonderful Harvest time and look forward to sharing more news with you in the next newsletter.

## **A Rather Quiet Man**

To a boy of about 10 years old, as I was then, Uncle John was a mysterious figure. I knew very little about him but he has made a lasting impression on me. He seemed to flit in and out of our lives on the farm at various times throughout my early years. He was a half-brother to my Dad, Granny Legge's first son born out of wedlock before she met and married my Granda Legge. Maybe that was the reason no one talked very much about him. He was the eldest of the family and had spent most of his working life in distant parts. I gathered that he had been married but that his wife had died in childbirth.

My first impression was of a quiet, thoughtful man in a shabby old suit and a twinkle in his watery blue eyes. He didn't talk very much but I could sense that he was a kind, gentle person. I was fascinated by him. On his visits to the farm, which usually lasted only a week at most, my Father gave him jobs to do to keep him busy. I remember him rebuilding the broken down orchard wall, carefully placing the large stones and smoothing the cement between them. He seemed skilled in masonry work. At harvest time he helped to build and stack the corn sheaves on the trailer. He was getting really old and frail by that time. I remember in particular one hot afternoon, as he was riding on top of a loaded trailer as it was being driven back to the cornyard, the trailer wheel went into a rut and the trailer tipped over on its side. We all ran over to see if John was alright but found him sitting on the ground amid the sheaves laughing heartily at this experience.

His final years were spent as a lodger with my Auntie, his half-sister, in her tiny house in the country and the last time I saw him he still had that twinkle in his old blue eyes. He passed away soon after that.

It was only much later in life that I began to realise how very little I knew about this interesting person in my life.

Many of us know God as a shadowy figure like that, helping us at difficult times, but taking no part in our lives the rest of the time. That's one reason Jesus came and lived among us. He said "anyone who sees me has seen the father in heaven", simple as that. Jesus was and is the living embodiment of God. God's nature had been revealed. We can find out everything about God by getting to know Jesus.

I would really have liked to know more about Uncle John especially since my middle name is John. I'm sure he had a few stories to tell of his life in distant parts. However he just never stayed around long enough for that to happen. It's too late now.

But it's never too late for us to get to know Jesus.

PS After I had written the story I sent it to my cousin who is married to the son of the Auntie who John lived with in his last years. I wondered if she could add anything. She said John and his wife had lost two babies and after his wife died he occasionally visited another sister in Aberdeen and always brought her cherry brandy and coffee. This was during the war years. He also wore a duffle coat which he said he got from someone who owed him some money. Probably a sailor as they wore duffle coats. After the war he worked in Glasgow rebuilding bomb sites. She also sent me a letter which had me in tears. It was John's letter to his mother telling her of the loss of his "Dear Rose" and the baby. It was found amongst his possessions after he died. It was so touching and you could feel the pain in his heart as he wrote it. It was signed "Your heartbroken son, John"

I began understand a lot more about my Uncle John and why he was "a rather quiet man".

*Bill Legge*

## Why go to Church?

Every Sunday many people do go to church while others are sleeping or engaged in other weekend activities. Since our weekends are limited, should we really spend part of it in church? I thought we could look at some of the popular reasons for **not** going to church.

**Excuse No 1:** *Church is boring - "It is repetitive, predictable and meaningless. I would rather sleep in as I work hard all week and I deserve it!"*

**Answer:** Yes, Church can be repetitive - but so also is life. The days of our lives are structured around cycles of work, eating, family and recreation times. Any of these activities can become boring if we don't strive to find something interesting or enjoyable about them.

Sunday morning at church is a time to make new friends and renew old ones; to learn about the Bible and share problems - as well as to thank God for another week of life.

The objective in going to church is to seek to build our relationship with God and others. Church worship is all about the encounter with God and with others who can change who we are.

**Excuse No 2:** *Why bother going to church when all they want is money!?*

**Answer:** If you choose to get involved in any kind of group, be it the PTA, Boy's Brigade or whatever, it will cost you - both in time and money. It is true that, if you didn't get involved in anything, you would have maximum control of your time and money. However, you will miss friendships and opportunities to be a good influence in the lives of others.

Each of us decides where to spend our time and money. Each of us will either invest it in some useful purpose or waste it on the pleasures of the moment. In Matthew 6:19-20 Jesus tells us there is an eternal investment that will not fade, nor rust, nor decay when we do good works that show our love for God and others.

We do not really control our life. We cannot guarantee we will be alive the next week, or day or even hour. Human life is a gift from God and He controls us. God made us as individuals, each of us unique. Therefore, who we are, when and where we are born, how long we live, etc., are all great gifts from God.

So is it really unreasonable for God to ask for a small portion of our life and time to acknowledge Him.

**Excuse No 3:** *People who go to church are a bunch of hypocrites!*

**Answer:** Churchgoers who pretend to be good for a few hours on Sunday morning are certainly just like everyone else the rest of the week! A common misunderstanding about church is that it should somehow make us better people.

However, it should not be the action of going to church, but the encounter with God and others there that changes our lives for the better. Some people who go to church unfortunately perhaps do not seem to understand this. They do not seek to have life changing experiences through their worship and church activities.

Christians are humans who believe that Jesus is God and that He has made us acceptable to Himself by paying the ultimate penalty for our sins on the cross (Romans 6:23). What makes Christians unique is not our outward appearance, but what God has done on the inside, by changing our soul and mind.

**Excuse No 4:** *Church is unnecessary since private prayer and Bible study can be done without others.*

**Answer:** The Bible says in Hebrews 10:24-25 that believers must not keep apart from other believers.

Remember we are frequently influenced and become like the people we associate with. So, by getting together, common beliefs are affirmed and ways to overcome problems can be shared. We need the comfort and companionship of others and this we can get through regular attendance at church.

**So Why Go To Church?** - God designed the church as a place where our spiritual leaders and our friends and colleagues could watch out for our welfare, just as a good shepherd guards his sheep.

Regular contact with other Christians can keep us sharp and well tuned.

We go to church because that is where we can hear the word of God explained and applied to our life, to see how God works in other people's lives, and importantly, to experience the friendship of others.

*Ron Ferguson*

## *Health Related Transport*

Do you know anyone with transport issues? Do you or your family, clients, neighbours or friends struggle to access Health and Social Care services because of transport issues?

In the Grampian area a range of organisations are working together to help make it easier for people to access transport information.

THInC provides advice for residents in Grampian on the transport options available to them for Health and Social Care appointments. If people can use public transport we can provide information on bus and/or train services. If not we signpost people to transport providers that best suit their needs. **Please note we are not a transport booking service.**

THInC is funded by NHS Grampian, Nestrans, Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray Councils. The project is being delivered within the remit of the Grampian-wide Health and Transport Action Plan.

For more information on the Health and Transport Action Plan please visit: <http://tinyurl.com/meyyhs3>

**For more information or transport advice please call 01224 665568 or email [travel@thinc-hub.org](mailto:travel@thinc-hub.org). Lines are open 9.00 to 4.30pm Monday to Friday.**

*Osaru Siminiatalayi*

**Transport Advice Officer (THInC)  
Aberdeenshire Council  
Woodhill House  
01224 665568**



## Poor Hamish

What a racket they were making. Running all around the garden, singing and dancing in the moonlight. They woke me up and when I looked out of the window I saw them. Twenty or thirty at least and of course, Spike, the ginger Tom, from down the road, the ringleader. He was telling them all about the little dog at the Manse who thinks he owns the whole



neighbourhood. Boasting about the fact that it's Spike who's really the boss.

The neighbourhood pussycats were having a party in my back garden at 3 o'clock in the morning and I wasn't going to put up with it. I started to bark. That's the only way I have to attract the masters attention. So I barked and barked until a grumpy person in a dressing gown and slippers appeared and asked what the noise was all about. I made it clear that I wanted to get out into the garden however as soon as I got there I was surprised to find that it was empty. All was perfectly still and quiet. Then I noticed that my legs were all wobbly, I had a sore tummy and I felt ill. It must have been something I ate. That was the start of a week of feeling under the weather. I had obviously been having a bad dream because of the pain. Dreaming of partying pussycats.

My masters always get up if they hear me in the night. There was one time when I was given a worming tablet and it gave me a very sore tummy. I cried and cried until one of them got up and lay down on the floor to sleep beside me and gave me a cuddle and so I felt better.

I don't usually have bad dreams when I'm ill. My first ever visit to a vet was when I had my first set of inoculations. I remember the nice Irish vet who gave me a biscuit afterwards. Later, while still a puppy, I discovered that it's not really a good idea to stick your nose into the front entrance of a beehive. I was stung near the eye and on other sensitive places and had to see the vet again. He gave me a cuddle, an injection and some more biscuits. Visiting the vet has its advantages.

Another time, I was staying with a friend in Glasgow while the masters were on holiday; I was ill and had to spend a couple of nights in a pet hospital. That was a costly affair and the masters had a big bill waiting for them when they came back.

Then there was the time when I partially tore a claw out and had to have it completely removed. A bit like you having a nail pulled out (ouch!). As she tugged out my claw with a pliers the young lady vet said “Oh he’s so good, not a whimper out of him”. Actually I was whimpering on the inside, just not letting it out. I have to keep up my reputation as a Border Terrier; that of a tough, fearless little dog. After that I walked with a limp for a few weeks. The vet put a bandage on my foot which I managed to remove within hours. Dogs along with many other animals need to lick their wounds. Saliva has antimicrobial healing properties and also helps with blood clotting. I’m sure you like to lick a cut finger.

I was taken to the vet once more because my eyes were red and sore and I was sneezing. I have always sneezed now and then, it’s normal for me, but I was given drops for my eyes. We had some fun, with the drops going all over the place except in my eyes.

After my latest stomach upset I was given probiotic paste. It said on the tube that it was irresistible to dogs. I was supposed to sit obediently while someone squirted some paste into my mouth. All I can say is that the dogs they tested the stuff on had absolutely no sense of taste at all. When the vet tried giving it to me she ended up with more on her hands than in my mouth. At home they tried spreading it on a biscuit. I just tossed the biscuit around on the floor until the paste came off and then ate the biscuit. Then they tried holding the biscuit so I just had to eat it in the end, if I was to get the biscuit. However, it did the trick and after a week I was my old self again.

I feel lucky to have masters who love me and want me to be a healthy happy dog. If I didn’t feel loved and cared for then all the vets in the world wouldn’t make me better. And when I’m ill I need even more love. We were all made to love one another, that’s what makes life worth living.

Now after all that about love I’m sure there’s a question you’d like to ask me. Do I love pussycats? Why of course I do; life would be so boring without Spike to chase now and then.



# Church of Scotland

## Cushnie & Tough Parish Church

### Forthcoming Services

**Weekly Services**      Tough Church      10.00am  
   Cushnie Church      11.30am

1st Sunday of month joint service at Cushnie Church 10.00am

### Special Services

#### Harvest Thanksgiving

25 October      Cushnie Church      10.00am

Joint Service followed by Soup and Sandwich Lunch

Retiring Offering for Practical Action

#### Communion Service

1 November      Tough Church      10.00am

Retiring Offering for Church Funds

#### Remembrance Sunday

8 November      Tough Church      10.00am

Cushnie Church      11.30am

Retiring Offering for Lady Haig Fund

