

Issue 1 - Spring 2014

# *Dee-Light*

A newsletter for the Catholic Communities on Deeside



Features: Deeside Parish News  
Ikelenge Update  
History of Deeside churches  
Alpha Course



Page 3 - A word from  
Father Chris

Page 4 - Alpha Course

Page 5 - Deeside Church  
History

Page 6 - Interview with  
Pam Reynolds

Page 7 - Ikelenge Update

Page 8 - Parish News

## *Editorial*

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Welcome to the first edition of Dee-Light, a quarterly newsletter for the catholic communities on Deeside - St Andrew's (Braemar), St Nathalan's (Ballater), St Margaret's (Aboyne) and St Columba's (Banchory). Dee-Light hopes to encourage the separate churches to feel as if they are one whilst retaining their distinct identities and spirits. The plan is to have regular features including some history of the churches, a biography of a parishioner and news of charitable activities and events as they arise.

If you have any queries regarding the newsletter or would like to submit material for subsequent issues then please contact the Editor, Lawrence Ross, at [hhl.ross@btinternet.com](mailto:hhl.ross@btinternet.com)

# *A Word From Father Chris*



*The Dee Light is intended to celebrate the life of our communities and there is much to celebrate.*

*In St Andrew's, we have a small but faithful congregation and faithfulness is the seed of life. Visitors from around the world find an open church and a warm welcome. For their interest, a large display case will shortly show some of the history and treasures of the parish.*

*In St Nathalan's, the community has nurtured the faith of children who now, as teenagers, are actively involved in the liturgy as servers and readers. Their faith is a witness to others in Ballater. Recently, I baptised a friend of one of the young people. See the later article on Youth Alpha.*

*Just a few years ago, the congregation of St Margaret's was so small the church might have closed. The dozen children who now come to the children's liturgy, three new ministers of the eucharist, the recent parenting course and the evolving music group would have seemed but a dream back then.*

*In St Columba's, Banchory, a new group has formed to support the life of the parish; 'The Lighthouse' has been reinvigorated by parents working together to encourage their children's faith; children now read at Mass, clearly and confidently; the Seniors of the parish can now meet together each month for lunch in the Parish Centre; a new group meets for 'Lectio Divina', a way of reading scripture recommended by Pope Francis; the Prayer Group will celebrate its 20th anniversary with Mass on 29th April; Sr Helen Bamber visited and encouraged us in prayer.*

*The Sisters of St Cecelia, recently arrived in Elgin, have visited all our parishes and inspired us with their faith and enthusiasm.*

*And now, a big thank you to all those who week by week so willingly bless the life of our communities through faithful, loving service, pastoral care and administration.*

*Finally, a very big thank you, to Lawrence Ross who has undertaken to edit the Dee Light and Mary Clare Bain who has brought her talents in graphics to assist in its production.*

# ALPHA COURSE

When Joshua was baptised in St Nathalan's recently, it was wonderful to see his joy. Baptism brought him a great sense of belonging to the Church and a thirst to know more. So, along with his friend Pavel, who is a reader and altar server, we began a Youth Alpha course.

In his recent letter, 'Evangelii Gaudium', Pope Francis says "I invite Christians everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them .....The Lord does not disappoint those who take this risk; whenever we take a step towards Jesus, we find he is already there, waiting for us with open arms". I have found that the Alpha Course, whether used with adults or young people, enables this encounter.

The material used in the course is constantly being developed and improved and the new Youth Film series is superbly produced. It has been filmed in a variety of countries and places including Jerusalem. The presentation by two talented young adults is animated, challenging and both serious and humorous. You can get a taste of it by googling 'Youth Alpha Youth Film Series', watching the film clip and reading the interviews with the presenters.

Cardinal Andre Vingt Trois the Archbishop of Paris, encourages the parishes in his Archdiocese to run the course - "Christ didn't gather his disciples to improve their condition as fishermen on the Lake of Tiberias or their practice of the Commandments. He called them to become witnesses of the Good News which concerns everyone and the Alpha Course is one of the most wonderful ways of sharing faith with others".

A couple of other teenagers have joined the group and, as I watch the young people engrossed in the film, listening and laughing and hear their questions and discussions, it is clear the films are communicating Good News.

## COMMENTS ON THE COURSE SO FAR?

"It's not boring" said with some surprise. Clearly not what was expected?

"The presenters are so casual and modern. It helped me understand more."

"Enjoyed it. Helped me understand religion better."

"Funny. Really good programme. It describes everyday life in a different way."

Alleluia for Alpha!!

# *Deeside Church History*



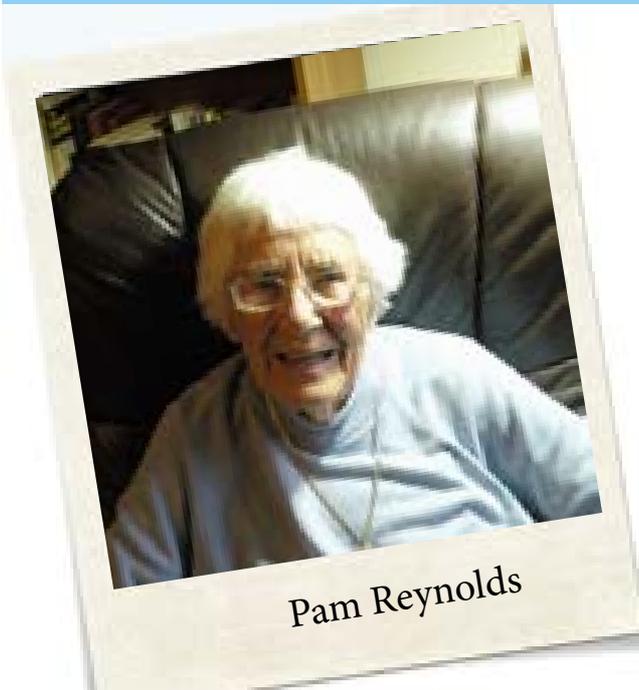
Dee-Light intends to provide a little bit of the history of the Deeside churches. Initial research shows that the parishes as we know them today were established between 1839 (Braemar) and 1931 (Banchory). However, Braemar in particular has a much longer history and can lay solid claim to having not only the oldest of the current buildings but also the oldest place of worship on Deeside.

Within the walls of Braemar's churchyard, now overbuilt by the Farquharson mausoleum, is the site of the first church in Scotland to be dedicated to St Andrew. It lies in the 'meadow of the two islands' (Doldnahancha) where the Cluny river sweeps round to join the Dee. This first church was built by Angus MacFergus, King of the Picts 731-761. Fast forward over a thousand years to November 1837 and the arrival in Braemar of Fr Walter Lovi. He had been priest at Keith for ten years where he built the present church. His appointment to Braemar was made not only to replace the ailing and ageing

Fr McEachan but also to build a new church to replace the existing one that was too small for the increased congregation. (At the end of the previous century, there were 118 'whole Catholic families' and 44 'families partly Catholic' in the Parish of Braemar). A lot of the site preparation was done by the parishioners as described by Fr Lovi who wrote: 'I turned the whole congregation out to work – men, women and children. There were fifty labourers one day. I worked myself from six to six and kept up spirits by sport and fun. The work is now completed'. (Note to Fr Chris – don't get any ideas!!)

This new church was opened in 1839 and whilst there have been alterations since then the substance of it is what we have today – a place of worship in continuation of that first dedicated to St Andrew some 1,250 years ago.

## *Interview With Banchory Parishioner Pam Reynolds*



Pam Reynolds is a parishioner of St Columba's in Banchory. She is ninety years old in June of this year.

Pam came to live in Banchory in 2004 when she was eighty. She moved here to be near her oldest sister's son. She has many relatives all over the world and she likes living near family and friends.

Pam was born in Naini Tal in India. She was the youngest of three girls. Her father was a Pharmacist. Her elder sisters were sent to England to be educated but she stayed at home and was taught by her Mother daily in the garden. She could read by the age of four and when she was seven years old she went to school in the mountains and boarded there Monday to Friday.

When Pam was twelve years old her father retired and she came back to England, where she met up with her sisters again and was sent to a Convent school to be educated. Then at the age of eighteen she became a Roman Catholic and went on to do Nurse Training in Devon and the Midwifery Training in London and Bristol. After that she joined the Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries and Pam did her Missionary Training in America for two years.

Pam worked in several countries such as South Africa, Pakistan and India before she went back to England to take her Midwifery Tutors Course in London. Her last mission was to Indonesia in 1971 and of all her missionary work this is the one she most enjoyed. She worked at first in a small hospital in Pare Pare, Sulawesi covering as a Tutor for a few years, then volunteered to go to Tanjung, Kalimantan with another Nurse/Midwife who was Dutch. Tanjung was a small village in the middle of the forest. Their mode of transport was motorbikes and they had to cover a 30 mile radius. They lived in a four roomed house, on stilts in the middle of the village, beneath which they kept hens.

There was no money in the village. When people came to the clinic, they paid with what they had eggs, fruit, vegetables, chickens, rice and occasionally half a pig. The pigs were very fat so the fat was cut up and fried into small pieces and stored in a jar, which later they had with rice for breakfast. The meat was salted and fried and put in large stone jars, covered over with the liquid fat, so no oxygen could get to it. When there were guests or feast days, the meat could be spooned up for special meals. Pam and her companion lived like the people, going to the river to bathe in a sarong, although they had water pumped up for washing and the kitchen.

Pam told us a lot of interesting stories of her time in Tanjung including one about childbirth. The village had its own ladies chosen to attend childbirth but Pam was called when

there were difficulties. Assuming a successful delivery, Pam would bathe the baby whilst the parents rolled up the mat which had been used during the birth and put it outside to be burned later. The mother then sat up on her haunches and the father poured two buckets of water over her to wash her hair and body. The mother then put on a clean skirt which was made of bark and sat on a clean mat. The father took the placenta and cord and buried them as is the local custom. He then planted a banana tree for the child.

When Pam returned to the UK she lived firstly in Devon before moving north to Scotland, her mother's home country.

Many happy returns in June Pam.

## IKELENGE UPDATE

About 8 years ago Fr Max McKeown was helping at St Columba's while we were without a parish priest and he was on home leave from Zambia. He is a Benedictine brother and was based at the seminary in Lusaka, St Boniface. Prior to that he had been a parish priest in NW Zambia where he had helped and supported the starting of a school by a couple of Indian sisters, for the deaf at Ikelenge.

He introduced us to the Scared Heart Unit for the Deaf children at Ikelenge and helped us begin to shape the ideas for the support and a visit. Since those early days, St Columba's and Upper Deeside parishes and the community in Banchory have continued to support the school in our prayers and through fund-raising (about £20,000 to date). In addition, 4 young adults from St Columba's (Rose Cassidy, Michelle McLoughlin, Douglas Simpson and Amanda Bouchet) have made three extended visits to help in the school.

Recently, we were able to finalise numbers for donations and Gift Aid and we can now send another £2,500 to the sisters, covering donations from 2012/2013 tax year. This represents parishioners regular commitments for the 'Support A Child' scheme, fund raisers and donations, e.g. the Malaysian evening. A sincere thank you on behalf of the sisters for everyone's continued support.

If you would like to sign-up for the 'Sponsor A Child Scheme' or want to know more about Ikelenge, please speake to Fr Chris, John or Adele Perry. Forms are available on the website and at the back of St Columba's.



Catholic Heritage Day for Teenagers-  
st Mary's, Blairs  
Saturday 26th April, 10:30am - 5pm  
Arrive 10:30am. Mass with Bishop  
Hugh at 11am.  
Lunch provided the parishioners  
Viste to Blairs Museum  
If you would like to go, let Fr Chris  
know:  
[Fr.Chris@deeside-catholics.org.uk](mailto:Fr.Chris@deeside-catholics.org.uk)



L to R: Editor Lawrence Ross,  
Designer Mary Clare Bain and  
Parish Preist Fr Chris

## PARISH NEWS

The Parenting Children (0-10) Course - 5 Monday evening sessions in St Columba's Parish Centre. 8pm - 10pm starting 28th of April. Register by email - [Fr.Chris@deeside-catholics.org.uk](mailto:Fr.Chris@deeside-catholics.org.uk)

Parish lunches and book group are held in St Columba's

The St Columba's Prayer group celebrated it's 20th anniversary and a new Lectio Divina group has formed - to read and reflect on the Sunday readings.

Sr Helen Bamber visited the parish and accompanied about 10 people through a week of prayer. This was life giving to those who took part and will be worth repeating.

### First Reconciliation

St Columba's - Saturday 10th May

St Margaret's - Saturday the 17th May

### First Communion

St Margaret's - Sunday 18th May

St Columba's - Sunday 25th May

St Nathalan's - Saturday 31st May