

Issue 2- Summer 2014

# *Dee-Light*

A newsletter for the Catholic Communities on Deeside



Features: How Accurate are the Gospels?  
Deeside Church History  
Apostleship of the Sea News  
Plus lots more....



## Contents

Page 3 - Gospels

Page 4 - Church History

Page 5 - Cold Comfort

Page 6 - Book Group

Page 7 - Apostleship of  
the Sea

Page 8 - Parish News

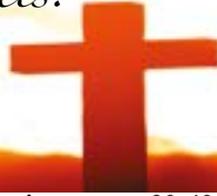
# Editorial

Welcome to the second edition of *Dee-Light*, the 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). The first edition was well received and has led to the submission of interesting material such as the article on the accuracy of the gospels.

Sadly, we report that Pam Reynolds who was interviewed for the first edition of *Dee-Light*, died in June. We know that Pam was pleased to be able to tell her story and are glad that her fascinating life and her cheerful, caring demeanor were made known to our readers. RIP Pam.

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)

# *How Accurate are the Gospels?*



In academic circles it is often held that the Gospels were written some 30-40 years after the death and resurrection of Jesus. For non-believers this raises a question of ‘how can we be sure that they are accurate?’ Given such a long time between the events and the writing of the Gospels a ‘Chinese Whispers’ effect is often assumed. However, recent scholarship and evidence now suggests that the Gospels were written down shortly after the events took place; thus enhancing the likelihood of their accuracy.

In 1994 Carsten Thiede, a papyrologist in Germany, announced his findings concerning three papyrus scraps belonging to Magdalen College, Oxford. The scraps contain phrases from chapter 26 of Matthew’s Gospel. Previously, the scraps had been dated as coming from the end of the second century and therefore were thought uninteresting and were forgotten. But Thiede, literally taking a fresh look by using a newly invented high-power microscope, concluded that the dating was faulty. He said the scraps were written no later than the year 60 AD. As *The Times* reported, this finding ‘provides the first material evidence that the Gospel according to St Matthew is an eyewitness account written by contemporaries of Christ’.

That it should be Matthew’s Gospel is particularly intriguing since Matthew was a tax collector and had the ability to write in shorthand. Jesus was addressed as ‘Rabbuni’ which means that he had a scribe who followed him and wrote down what he said whilst he was actually speaking. Under Scots law this is powerful evidence.

Further evidence comes from Jean Carmignac, a translator of the Dead Sea Scrolls and an expert in Hebrew language. The Gospels are often criticised for the poor, clumsy standard of Greek writing. Carmignac translated the Gospel of Mark ‘backwards’ from Greek into Hebrew and was astonished at what he found. He discovered the Greek translator of Mark had slavishly kept to the Hebrew word order and grammar... (and this being) true, then we have Gospels written by eyewitnesses at a very early date.

Furthermore, Claude Tresmontant, a member of the university at the Sorbonne, wrote *The Hebrew Christ* and came to the conclusion that all four Gospels were written in Hebrew first and then translated. Hebrew Matthew was written shortly after the Resurrection, followed within a few years by a Greek translation. Hebrew John was written by 36 CE, and then also quickly translated. Luke came next, being written between 40 and 60 CE, and Mark probably came last.

As Catholics our confidence in the Gospels is based on our understanding that the writers were inspired by the Holy Spirit; but non-believers are of a different mind. Hopefully, the above points will help you to engage with them and demonstrate that we have sound reasons – by their worldly standards – for accepting the authenticity of the Gospels.

## *Deeside Church History*

The church in Ballater was built in 1905. It is dedicated to St Nathalan who was apparently a native of Deeside and said to be of noble birth from one of the local Pictish tribes.



Nathalan farmed in the district around Tullich, approximately one mile east of Ballater. It is said that on an occasion when his crops failed he blamed God. Subsequently, he was filled with remorse and determined to do penance. He bound a hand and an arm to his side using chains which he fixed with a padlock and then threw the key into the river Dee. In this fashion he decided to go to Rome and beg forgiveness of the Pope himself. In Rome, Nathalan came across a small boy selling fish. He bought one and when he gutted it he found the key to his padlock. On hearing this tale, the Pope is said to have instantly made Nathalan a bishop. Nathalan went on to evangelise the peoples of Upper Deeside during the 7th Century. He died on 8th January, 678.

Before 1905, Catholics living in the village of Ballater walked up Glengairn to Mass, to Clashendrich and, after 1868, to Candacraig further down the glen. The chapel at Clashendrich was built by Fr Lachlan Mackintosh who was parish priest for an incredible sixty four years, dying in 1846 at the age of ninety three. In 1850, the total number attending Mass from Glengairn and Corgarff exceeded three hundred. However, these numbers soon declined quite drastically, in contrast to the growth of the population of Ballater which was the result of two factors: the development of the mineral waters at Pananich and the coming of the railway in October, 1866.

By the end of the 19th century, the numbers attending Glengairn had fallen to around fifty of which only six were actually resident in Glengairn. The parish priest at the time, Fr Donald Matheson, resolved to raise the money for a new church and house to be built in Ballater. He received encouragement from a Mr John Mackintosh, formerly of Brinaloin (a farm near Crathie) who had returned from spending many years in the USA and on his death left £600 towards the cost of the new church. The total cost of the church and house was £2,200.

St Nathalan's was designed by Archibald Simpson of Edinburgh. The stone used in the construction of the church and house is local, from the Inver Quarry near Braemar.

# *Cold Comfort*

Research for the previous article on the history of St Nathalan's in Ballater unearthed some interesting facts on the material aspects of the property.

Have you ever been cold in church? Yes, of course you have – bit of a silly question that but then by way of contrast there may have been the odd occasion when the place has been boiling as a consequence of a malfunction in the heating control system or more likely the parish priest not knowing how it works! The latter is unlikely to have happened at St Nathalan's during most of the second half of the last century as, one suspects similar to many other churches up and down the country, it didn't have any heating or at least anything that was effective.

It is not clear if when the church was built in 1905 it had a heating system but certainly at some stage it had installed a hot water system not too dissimilar to that which exists today. The original system was powered by a coal fired boiler that had to be stoked every Saturday night to ensure a warm church on Sunday. However, sometime in the 1950's the boiler 'blew up' resulting in St Nathalan's having little or no heating until 1990.

A further unknown is whether or not the failure of the heating system caused the parish priest at the time to take to the drink for inner warmth but he certainly had a reputation for it. He once told a lady who was cleaning the church that he felt terribly ill. Concerned for his wellbeing, she went home for a bottle of brandy which she then gave to him - to what effect can only be imagined. However, said priest did make an attempt to rectify the heating problem. He had attended a funeral at the Kirk in Dinnet where he spied heaters mounted in the roof so he bought similar for St Nathalan's – note that there was no consultation with the laity or diocesan authority! Described by one parishioner as resembling circus trapezes the heaters were about as effective as a chocolate fireguard. In the depths of winter the water in the flower vases would freeze.

1990 was a busy year at St Nathalan's. Not only was the new heating system installed but also the church was repainted for the first time since 1928.....

.....

# *St Columba's Book Group*

The book group began in November 2013, and meets monthly on Monday evening for 1-1.5 hours. Usually there are 6-8 people present.

The reason we started was because we sometimes read books that mean something to us or change the way we think about something. It can be enlightening when we exchange thoughts with other people who have read the same book. Our book group began with this in mind with the only proviso being that the book needed to have some spiritual message or content. What have we read so far?

“Angels in My Hair” Lorna Byrne We went quickly into the world of spirituality with this autobiographical text by an Irish mystic who claims to see true story about young prisoners of war during the Second World War. It tells how Christ’s message inspires and inflames midst the direst circumstances of degradation, misery and suffering. There is a very strong message about the need to forgive those who trespass against us.

“Philomena” Martin Sixsmith Continuing the theme of forgiveness, we decided to watch the film, rather than read the book, appreciating this is may be a slightly different interpretation. The main discussion was about the role of the Church and its apparent lack of compassion for the single mothers they supported. However there is a very strong message about how both forgiveness and lack of forgiveness affects a person’s humanity.

“My healing from gambling and alcohol in Medjugorje” Arthur McCluskey, and companion volume “Dear Arthur, The Fruits of your Labour” Sylvia Hoskins. These books are the story of one man’s conversion at Medjugorje and the subsequent amazing work that was done, and is still being done, for those in great need in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Arthur’s story led us to a discussion about Mary and her role in our Church. There was also a feeling at the end of our discussion that we wanted to visit Medjugorje and to experience for ourselves that community of faith.

Our next book is by Joanna Weaver – “Having a Mary Heart in a Martha World”

If you would like to know more about the group, please contact Anna Simpson – [amsimpsons@gmail.com](mailto:amsimpsons@gmail.com)



# Apostleship of the Sea



**Jim Allison & Doug Duncan**



**Doug Duncan & Three Ukrainian Seafarers**

The Apostleship of the Sea is a Catholic charity supporting seafarers worldwide. It began in 1922 when a few women from Glasgow, members of the St Vincent de Paul society, became concerned that no one was looking after the men on the ships. They were the forgotten ones. Today, 92 years later, the Apostleship of the Sea works in 250 ports in 90 countries throughout the world. It provides practical and pastoral care to all seafarers regardless of nationality, race or belief.

As Northeast folk we realise the severe weather conditions we continually face, but many seafarers arrive in the Aberdeen port with little possessions and certainly not equipped to deal with the cold. As partners at the Aberdeen Seafarers Centre the Apostleship of the Sea provides help to these men by way of warm clothing, hats, email and internet facilities and TV and games room. Here we see Jim Allison assisting Doug Duncan prepare the clothes rack from the items provided by St Columba's Church in Banchory, and three Ukrainian seafarers stocking up for a trip to the North Sea. Doug commented that the seafarers will be delighted that a new stock has been provided. With the vast amount of vessels that arrive on our doorstep daily we are continually in need of clothing. For more detail on the Apostleship of the Sea visit [www.apostleshipofthesea.org.uk](http://www.apostleshipofthesea.org.uk)

Sr Helen Bamber who came to Banchory in the Spring and accompanied some members of the parish in prayer, will be visiting Upper Deeside at the end of September for a week to do the same.

Following the success of the Upper Deeside Youth Alpha course in Ballater this spring, Fr Chris is looking to run the same this autumn for the teenagers in Banchory. The course builds a sense of community and helps people reflect on their faith.



**Rafal Wilowska**

## PARISH NEWS

### **Top 10 finish for Rafal at world championships**

Banchory racket all-rounder Rafal Wilowski, aged 11, was the only Scottish junior playing in the 2014 Racketlon World Championships held in Guildford, England from August 21-24. He finished a very respectable 10th in the U13 boys category, facing opponents from England, Germany and Finland along the way. In a racketlon match you play your opponent consecutively at table tennis, badminton, squash and tennis, first to 21 points at each discipline. Every point counts as it's the player with the higher overall cumulative score who wins the match. You can even lose despite winning three of the four disciplines if your opponent is particularly dominant in one. Racketlon players become adept at mental maths to keep the running totals and points difference in focus throughout the match. Rafal started competing at racketlon just this year, and is the current Yorkshire Open U13 champion and the West of Ireland junior champion. After his first World Championships experience he is keen to continue improving at all four sports.

### **'Robbie reaches great heights'**

In July, Banchory parishioner Robbie Simpson won an individual silver medal at the European Mountain Running Championships. Not only was this Robbie's best ever performance but also he was the first British senior mens runner since 1993 to win any individual medal.