



**Fowlis Wester**



The Church of Scotland



**Madderty**

# Parish Magazine

November  
2022



**Monzie**



**Gask**

# Mid Strathearn Church of Scotland

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**Locum Minister: Rev. Bob Milne Tel: 07803 609 387**

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## Locum's Letter

Dear Friends

When does the season of Christmas begin?

It does feel strange writing this before the start of November with Hallowe'en, Remembrance and St Andrew's Day still to come before we even get near Advent never mind Christmas but for many Christmas begins long before even October. Not just the shops who seem to think that what we really want to buy when the schools break up for summer holidays is Christmas cards and other paraphernalia. It is not just the shops. I have a Facebook friend who every year on midsummers day posts the number of days till Christmas (186 if you are interested) she then gives a countdown in weeks until November when it becomes days and hours in December.

According to some sections of the press Christmas really starts when the John Lewis Christmas advert is first aired apparently that usually happens on first Friday in November.

Conversely one could ask when does Christmas end? I remember several years ago when we lived in a fishing village on the Moray coast calling in to our neighbours mid-afternoon on Christmas Day and his greeting was "Well that's it over for another year"! Again commercialism raises its head and a nephew of ours who worked for a large DIY chain had to leave the family fun at 5:30 one Christmas evening to go into the store as the staff had to prepare it ready for the Boxing Day sale starting at 8am the next day.

Long gone, if they ever existed, are the days when Christmas extended over twelve days of feasting and celebrating until Epiphany on 6th January. Yet why stop celebrating then? After all after Epiphany we quickly come to Lent which leads to the great glory that is Easter Day. A few weeks (seven and a day hence its name) we can again celebrate with the festival of Pentecost. One of the great things about Christianity, and there are a great many great things, is that we are never far from a Festival.

Christmas has though, in the West at least, become the greatest of them all and whilst it could be argued for and against it being the most important what does it matter? Celebrate the coming of the Christ child, but don't stop there, why not...

Worship the babe of Bethlehem  
Walk with the man of Galilee  
Suffer with the condemned of Golgatha  
Rejoice and rise with the Risen Lord of Gethsemane

You know it makes sense

With love and a prayer for God's Blessing. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

Bob Milne  
Locum Minister



## **Sunday Services**

At the moment we are holding one church service each week.  
We rotate round our church buildings, a different church each week - service time is 11.00 am

Information on where our church services will be held and when can be found on our website

[www.midstrathearnchurch.org](http://www.midstrathearnchurch.org)

## Services

### December

Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> December – Church Service at Monzie Church 11.00 am.

Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> December – Church Service at Findo Gask Church 11.00 am.

Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> December – Church Service at Fowlis Wester Church 11.00 am.

Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> December - Carol Service at Findo Gask Church 4.00 pm.  
Donations of baby clothes (0-12m) supporting Blytheswood Care Maternity Boxes would be gratefully received.

Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> December – Watchnight Service at Monzie Church 11.15pm.

Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> December – Christmas Day Service at Madderty Church 11.00am.

### January

Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023 – New Year's Day Church Service at Monzie Church at 11.00am (inc. Communion).

## COMMUNION IN MID STRATHEARN

For information on when we are holding any Communion Services please refer to our website - [www.midstrathearnchurch.org](http://www.midstrathearnchurch.org)

Come if you'd like to, come if you're able to and come as you are to share the Lord's Supper with other Christians in Strathearn when you can.

Whatever your denomination, or none, all are welcome.

## Perth Presbytery

Dear Friends

I little thought, when I took on the role of Interim Moderator at Mid Strathearn Church in June 2019, that I would still be here three years later. After the success of Rev. David Denniston's time here as your Interim Minister, I know that the congregation was looking forward to attracting a new minister to the enlarged parish, taking in Gask along with Fowlis Wester, Madderty and Monzie. My role was to temporarily stand in, 'moderating' the Kirk Session meetings and making sure worship continued each week. However, a number of events have conspired against us, one of which was the Covid epidemic which closed all churches in Scotland, not just our four! But just as impact-ful was the decision made by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 2020 to suspend all vacancy procedures, as they looked to trim the number of ministries throughout Scotland to fit the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, when congregations were generally dwindling in number and the Kirk could not realistically afford to have so many ministers. This is why there has been no movement in the last two years to recruit a new minister; as I write, we are awaiting the final report outlining our Presbytery Mission Plan; it looks likely that we will be working more closely with our neighbouring parishes of Crieff and Comrie, and consideration has to be given to how many buildings we actually need to keep open.

So, yes, we live in challenging times. But I have been immensely heartened by the faithfulness and commitment of our congregation and Session over these past three years; I feel we have risen to the challenge pretty well. Not only did we continue to make worship available during Covid, then re-open our buildings when we could, but we have also continued our outreach to our community, in a number of ways. Our summer barbeque and games this year in Madderty Hall was great fun; we have introduced regular 'Café Churches', a more informal way of worship designed for all ages; our 'Super Adults' afternoon tea was also much enjoyed. I want to take this opportunity of thanking everyone who make these events possible – none of this happens without a lot of preparation and thought, and Mid Strathearn Church is blessed to have so many people who are creative, hard-working, and dependable, as well as having a good sense of humour. It has been a privilege for me over the last three years to get to know you and work with you.

And I am still here! We know the months ahead will be challenging, not just in the church, but in the wider community as we face the cost of living crisis. But I hope we will continue to be steadfast in our fellowship, and look for

ways in which we can share our faith and the good news in our wider community, and offer a welcome to those who wish to know more.

With best wishes,

Marjorie Clark,  
Interim Moderator

## **Social Events**

We have had a few lovely social events this year.

In May we had a spring walk around Abercairny Loch. The weather was good to us and we spent a very interesting hour or so in beautiful scenery and also hearing a lot about local history, and seeing the wildlife including a bonus of seeing the ospreys. After the walk we enjoyed a very welcome cuppy with sandwiches and home baking.

In June we marked our Queen's Platinum Jubilee with a glass of fizz and a Jubilee cake after the service in Monzie on the Sunday. A very happy occasion.



Also in July, we had our annual barbeque with family fun games for all ages which provided great laughs both for those participating and watching! The rain did not deter us at all, with plenty space in the Hall to both eat and have the games. A good afternoon had by all.

## Harvest Thanksgiving

We celebrated our Harvest Thanksgiving this year in Madderty Church on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> September. The church was decorated with fresh produce, straw sheaths and other food donations. The church looked fantastic and was filled with the aroma of home grown apples and pears. Thank you to those who gave their time to prepare the church for this celebration! This year the beneficiary of our retiring collection was RSABI, the charity which supports people in Scottish agriculture. The charity is know as RSABI but it was founded as the Royal Scottish Agricultural Benevolent Institution in 1987. The service RSABI delivers for people in Scottish agriculture ranges from financial and emotional support to practical help and is always given with respect, understanding and confidentiality.

We were delighted to be able to send them £215 from our retiral collection. Money I am sure they were glad to receive. If you would like to find out more about this charity please go to their website [www.rsabi.org.uk](http://www.rsabi.org.uk)

Sheena Crawford  
Session Clerk





## Baptisms

3rd July 2022	Ivy Pauline Robertson	Monzie
17th July 2022	Thomas George Anderson	Fowlis Wester



## Weddings 2022

16 <sup>th</sup> July	Radu Tutunaru to Shona Hamilton	Fowlis Wester
19 <sup>th</sup> August	Alexandra Scott to Robert Drysdale	Fowlis Wester
17 <sup>th</sup> September	Luke Campbell to Hannah Rose	Gask
24 <sup>th</sup> September	Steven Hems to Abigail Connelly	Fowlis Wester



## Funerals

Mrs Beattie Wishart & Mr Sandy Wishart	May 2022 Sept. 2022
Mrs William Clark	June 2022
Mrs Shirley Shepherd	July 2022
Mr Rab Davidson	August 2022
Mrs Margaret Flockhart	August 2022
Mrs Senga Alexander	September 2022

## **Mid Strathearn Church Guild**

The meeting started with a talk by Colin Crawford about the wonderful work done at Richmond House, Crieff, and how the work has spread to include the community.

At the business meeting following, after much soul searching and sadness it was decided to disband our branch of the Guild.

The next meeting will be on Monday November 21st when the Minister will give us a talk. On Thursday 15th December we will hold the members Christmas lunch and that will be the last time we will meet as the Guild.

It is hoped that members can join with other Guilds in Perth or Crieff.

Heather Moir

## **Super Adults**

The Superadults had their afternoon tea in Madderty Hall in July. A most enjoyable afternoon filled with plenty goodies in our boxes to eat, and plenty chat with good company.

Next year we are thinking about having a bus trip again, either as well as, or instead of the afternoon tea. Any thoughts you may have on this will be very welcome.

Anne Cramb.

## **Mid Strathearn Prayer WhatsApp Group**

The Mid Strathearn Prayer WhatsApp was started in the very early days of covid lockdown and provides a place for people to post prayers of their own or join with the prayers of others within the group. These prayers are seen only by those in the WhatsApp group and currently there are 18 of us in the group who receive the posted prayers from each other. We pray for people and situations that matter to us both local and further afield.

If you feel you would like to join us all you need is an I-phone or an Android to download the app and a desire to pray! Please let me know and I can add you to the list. If you don't want all that technology and still have something about which you want to pray please contact me or your elder and we will post your prayer for you. God does tell us to pray so that our needs will be made known unto him.

David Cameron  
Mob: 07775 850 316

## **Open Doors**

In Spring 2020, Doors Open Day was first mentioned at a session meeting and I volunteered to host it at Madderty Kirk in September that year. Due to Covid, we had to cancel. It was, however, re-planned for this year, again in September. Fowlis Wester and Monzie also participated.

Madderty Church has a wonderfully long history, from the 7th Century AD, to the present day. I shortened it to 14 main points, drawing the information from the late Donald Moir's excellent book. I laid these out for people to pick up & read, should they be interested. (The book is still available to purchase for £5.00 from the church.)

We thought carefully about the most engaging features of Madderty Kirk and tried to cover the fact that different people are interested in different aspects. These were: the history, the stained glass windows, the beautiful pulpit fall & the origin of the font.

We felt we needed something more to make the Open Doors visit memorable; so I invited my upholstery teacher to exhibit some of her own work. She displayed a wonderfully creative compilation of items based on Wilfred Owen's 1st World War poetry. She had made an amazing tunic which she mounted on a dress-maker's model. She also laid out family artefacts and memorabilia related to the 1st World War, around the Communion table. This was also totally appropriate as it was all displayed in front of our own stained glass memorial window and brass plaque, which commemorate all those Madderty men who fought in the 1st World War, some of whom died - so have a cross beside their name.

Sue was present all day, either in the Church or the Session House, to answer questions. She also displayed other work completed by either her or members of her embroidery group. This too, was beautifully displayed and the work was extremely skillful!

On our pulpit, we have an exquisite “fall”, designed and embroidered by Heather Moir who was a member of the Embroiderers’ Guild and contributed to The Great Tapestry of Scotland! She wrote an explanation of the fall’s main aspects. These included choice of what it depicts, its Scottish origins, the chosen colours blending with the interior of the Church and lastly, its symbolism.



Finally, a school friend, Corinna Wedderburn who had been sent back from Hong Kong to be educated in the late 1950’s, visited me about 6 years ago and it transpired that her great grandfather had been the minister at the United Free Church at Madderty from 1876-1915. The Churches eventually reunited and the font, decorated with Corinna’s grandmother’s profile and name, was brought to Madderty Church.

Corinna’s grandfather was born in the Free Church manse and became a missionary in Manchuria. Corinna gave me a very interesting account of “Wedderburn’s connections with Madderty” which I can email along with any of the other stories which were on display, if someone would like to read them.

As for the day itself, it wasn’t raining! Sue MacNab very generously conducted a small upholstery group in the Session House. The participants each gave a donation to the Church, as Sue herself suggested this, rather than

asking for payment. On the open day, visitors were able to observe the upholstery class at work whilst enjoying a cuppa.

In all, we had 28 visitors to the church. Their interests varied greatly. Sheena, our Session Clerk, was there and was able to discuss and enlighten some visitors' queries. Sadly, for me, there were no child visitors. I had drawn a simple picture of the Church for child visitors to colour, should they wish. We did feel, however, that the day was a great success, considering the number & choice of local venues which were part of Open Doors.

Finally, our sincere thanks go to Sue MacNab for her exhibition, time spent on a working class display and to any others who contributed to our event.

Osla Guest.



## **Remembrance Services in Mid Strathearn**

Our Remembrance Service was held in Findo Gask Church which was beautifully decorated with Poppies crocheted/knitted by members of the congregation. Thank you to Anne Buchan and Judith James for putting together our display and to the members of the congregation who made the poppies, which were shared and displayed in our four church buildings. We are already thinking what our display for next year could be! Rev Bob Milne gave a very moving and meaningful service before travelling to Fowlis Wester and Monzie Churches to lead short Acts of Remembrance then heading to Madderty War Memorial in the afternoon.

Thank you to everyone who took part in our poppy project and who attended our service and Acts of Remembrance held throughout the day and to Rev Milne for officiating.



## Cafe Church

We continue to hold these in one of our Community Halls on the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the month. We have now been to Fowlis Wester Hall, Gask Church Hall, Monzie Hall and Madderty Hall. Each Cafe Church has been well attended and enjoyed by those who have come along. Tea/Coffee is served before the service starts and again during the service. Why not come along and give it a try. Some folks have commented that they did not think it was for them but after coming along they found it enjoyable and continue to attend.

Our thanks goes to everyone who help make our Cafe Church so successful. As with most things, a lot of work goes into preparing and setting up. Thank you to everyone involved!

Sheena Crawford  
Session Clerk

All information on our church services can be found on our website <http://www.midstrathearnchurch.org>

## **Queen's Platinum Jubilee - Planting Tree for Green Canopy at Madderty Church**

On Sunday 22nd May a tree was planted at Madderty Church as part of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Harrison Bush was invited along with friends to plant the tree. The children enjoyed some Children Time which took place during our church service. They learned about different trees and what was required for a tree to grow. They then made trees from cardboard tubes and greenery. The children showed great enthusiasm for the activities, organised by Osla Guest, before congregating outside to plant a Yew Tree. Members of the congregation gathered round as the tree was planted by the children with the guidance of Jo Guest. Rev Bob Milne dedicated the tree before everyone enjoyed refreshments served by members of our Social Committee.



## **Gask**

### **Queen's Platinum Jubilee**

As reported previously, Mid Strathearn Parish has combined with Findo Gask Community Association to plant trees to mark the late Queen's platinum jubilee. This culminated more recently in a very enjoyable, if brief, dedication after the morning service at Gask. The event was blessed with some very fine weather. The local Deputy Lord Lieutenant (and member of the Association) Sue Jardine Patterson gave a short speech, thanking those involved, and Rev Bob Milne provided a simple dedication, following which there was tea and biscuits for all who had gathered, members of the

congregation and the community. Despite the dry summer, nearly all the young whips have survived, as have the four mature rowans – so many thanks to those who watered them assiduously. It was a great example of church and community partnership, making use of the church hall and grounds for the good of all.



## **Christmas Carol Concert & Gask Community Association Christmas Party**

The next combined event is to be the Christmas carol service followed by the Community Association Christmas party **Sunday 18th December at 5pm in Gask Hall**. Again, all members of either community will be most welcome at both events.

In other news, the hall has had a repaint and some repairs to its rear wall, both sprucing it up but also ensuring it remains available for some time for both the work of the church and the community. Currently it is in active use for pilates and ballet classes, and evening reeling has re-commenced. It is hoped the younger children's group will restart early next year. The opportunity was also taken to replace some planks dented by some inaccurate parking! Both the church and the hall have recently had their electrics tested and passed, with a new fuse box installed in the church.

## **This memory was reawakened by Bob Milne's sermon on the grateful Leprosy patient**

In 1973 Jim, who was training in Plastic and Reconstructive surgery, and I and our two children, Emma, 2 + yrs and Will 9 months moved to Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia, for Jim to learn more about reconstructive surgery in the field of Leprosy under the guidance of a renowned Leprosy surgeon.

The hospital at ALERT (The All Africa Rehabilitation and Training Centre) was situated on the outskirts of Addis, as befitted an institution which looked after those who were still considered to be "unclean". Round the hospital a village of the relations and children of the patients had grown up. And many of the staff, cleaners, gardeners, general house staff of the doctors lived and worked there and many of them were ex-patients, "burnt out" cases - still with the stigmata of leprosy but no longer infectious.

The compound was quite large and the hospital was at one end, nearest the village, and then, there was a central canteen and sitting room and accommodation for the students who came from throughout Africa to learn about the care of Leprosy patients.

There was a research institute, The Ari Hansen Institute, named after the Norwegian who identified the bacillus which caused Leprosy. This was staffed by Scandinavian researchers, who were involved in the drug treatment of Leprosy.

The bacillus which produces leprosy, is of the same family as the TB bacillus and attacks the nerves of the extremities of the body where the temperature of the hands or feet or elbows or eyelids are colder than the more central areas of the body. The areas affected lose both their sensory and motor function. The loss of sensation means that the hands and feet especially, are prone to damage from cuts, stones, bruising which can result in infection and gradually, with the normal and abnormal wear and tear, the actual structures get worn away, fingers and toes are lost and so on. The fingers of leprosy patients can lose their function as the motor control is also damaged and it results in "claw" hands, where the individual digits are held in a claw pose and cannot be straightened; this means that the individual fingers cannot meet and form a grip so that the hand is pretty well useless. This claw hand can be operated on with tendon transplants, using unaffected (those not served by the nerves damaged by the leprosy bacillus) tendons to replace the useless

ones and the fingers can be straightened and a grip can be achieved between the straightened fingers and the thumb.

Jim also did operations on the eyelids. When the nerves to close the eyelids are affected the patient can no longer voluntarily close his eyes; this results in blindness eventually, as, if the eye cannot close with blinking, it cannot be lubricated and can be damaged by dust particles causing infection and mechanical damage. The operation involved putting a tiny weight of gold into the upper eyelid; the weight calculated to be just heavy enough to cause the lid to fall over the cornea due to the effect of gravity. The muscles to open the eyelid were not affected so the patient could open his eyes. Gold in Ethiopia was relatively cheap so this operation was a possibility. On one occasion, the patient needed the operation on both eyes and Jim, without thinking, suggested that both eyes could be done in the same operation. The patient quickly pointed out that if both eyes were done at the same time he would not be able to eat! Jim took a minute or two to work out that if one has no sensation in one's hands and cannot use one's eyes, feeding oneself becomes an impossibility!

There was also a shoe workshop on the compound of ALERT where the elephant boots were made to fit individual patients. The shoes and boots were made of old car tyres carefully cut to fit the deformed feet of the patients; they were really only a sole and raised sides - a sort of sandal tied on with strips of inner tubes of tyres cut into long laces. This was a common way of using punctured inner tubes and used on the backs of bicycles, donkeys, bundles of wood balanced on the foreheads of the women gathering firewood. I even have some holding on the attachment of my garden hose!

The main shoe workman in charge of this unit was a missionary, a young man who was converted after he was already qualified as a shoemaker and he told us that when he gave his life to Jesus, he prayed "I will do anything for you, but please not Leprosy boots". And found himself in ALERT.

Judith James

## **Gask Hall**

Gask Hall is available for hiring and if anyone would like to enquire about this please get in touch with Rebecca Mackie

# Monzie

## Open Doors

Monzie Kirk took part in this year's September event organised and publicised by Perth & Kinross Council. A total of 16 visitors came on the day, some from quite a distance. The Burne Jones stained glass windows which are one of the treasures of the Kirk were much admired. The last visitor of the day, a gentleman from East Kilbride, was able to give us an interesting detail about one of the other windows. It is in memory of James Grahame and his wife Catherine Fraser and was donated by their son, a Rev. J. Fraser Grahame, Glasgow. The window was produced by the firm of Jas. Steel & Co., W. George St., Glasgow. Our visitor seemed to be a bit of an expert and was able to tell us that this manufacturer operated almost exclusively in Glasgow and Glasgow only. Presumably the Grahames Senior were from this area and the son engaged a Glasgow firm if he was a parish minister in the City. Again, and this is pure speculation, the Rev. Grahame may have known examples of the firm's work from Glasgow. Who knows, perhaps from his own church building? One further detail our visitor was able to state with certainty - practically all the firm's work in Glasgow has been lost. Buildings have been demolished as districts have been re-developed or if they were no longer required. He reckoned our window is one of no more than only a couple that have survived.

## Organ practice

We now have two people who are using the pipe organ for practice on a weekly basis. One is a mature student and the other is a senior pupil at Morrisons. They have a tutor in Dunblane and attend lessons in the Cathedral but value being able to practice locally.

## Obituaries

### **For Sandy & Beattie...**

This year we said goodbye to a very much-loved couple Sandy & Beattie Wishart, two very special people. Sandy & Beattie were part of the heart of Madderty, they were deeply involved in all aspects of the church and the community.

Beattie was born in Glasgow in 1935 but was evacuated to this area just before the war. Sandy was born in 1939 and lived most of his childhood at East Cowdens on Abercairny Estate. Both went to Madderty School. They fell in love while very young and were soulmates for the rest of their lives. They married in 1960 and were married for 62 years, having 2 daughters Louise and Karen.

They were very involved in the Church (Sandy was an elder for 51 years), the Guild (Beattie a member for many years when it was the Women's Guild), the Village Hall, the Rural, etc. They were both caring and thoughtful people. Sandy's quick wit and Beattie's gentle nature were an asset in all aspects of church life.

In recent years Sandy was an active part of the Church's DIY ("Drop in Youth") group, and spent many nights of laughter and good chat in the Hall, and also went on many outings with the young folk. Sandy brought a different viewpoint and a wealth of knowledge to the group. His involvement was deeply valued and respected, not only by the other leaders, but by the young folk, who thoroughly enjoyed his company and sense of humour. Sandy loved his game of football with the youngsters which became a regular feature of the evenings and one which they all looked forward to.

Football also featured as an important aspect of Sandy's life in the form of his beloved St Johnstone, he was an avid and faithful supporter and season ticket holder for many years.

Family was hugely important to Sandy and Beattie. They adored their girls, their grandchildren and their great grandchildren, often recounting amusing tales of what they had been up to. Beattie's baking was enjoyed by all the family (her church family too) especially her famous delicious chocolate cake.

After Sandy retired from farming at Tuchethill on Dollerie Estate, where he kept Tony Murray right, they moved to Crieff where life took a completely different direction and they ran a very popular video shop, becoming well

known and popular with Crieff folks too. But their hearts remained in Madderty and they continued to support the Church and the Community, touching and influencing the lives of so many people of all ages that they came in contact with.

It is perhaps fitting that they died only 4 months apart, Beattie on 7<sup>th</sup> May and Sandy on 7<sup>th</sup> September, and are now together again forever.

Sandy and Beattie, you are both greatly missed.

### **Robert McAra Davidson**

"He was a real character," "one of a kind," "we won't see his like again." All these things have been said about Robbie/Bob/Rab Davidson. And with his big handlebar mustache, trilby hat and ever present supply of snuff he was not easily missed or forgotten. I was only tempted the once by his offer of trying out the snuff but once was enough. Never again.

My earliest memory of Robbie is from the early 1970's when I was in my early teens. At that time, there was a big social event held annually at Ochertyre House known as "The Herd's Ball," hosted by the late Sir William Murray. It was a popular event in the local agricultural community and invitations were much sought after. Robbie was always an enthusiastic participant if perhaps a little lacking in finesse where the dancing was concerned.

He was born on 3/7/43 at Parkneuk, Innerpeffray, Crieff, the son of Robert and Mitchell Davidson. The family farmed at West Lochlane Crieff before moving to Carse of Trowan in 1947.

Others more informed than me have written and spoken of his role in the Highland pony world, his Highland Show "adventures", the Flambeaux at Comrie, carpet bowls at Monzievairst Hall, the running of the Hall as a committee member and life at Carse of Trowan. And when he sold up he told me how pleased he was that "the boys" ie Thomas and Glen Muirhead had got the place.

He very seldom missed a Monzie Sunday at the Kirk and latterly spoke very matter of factually about his illness. But Robbie didn't just go to the Kirk, it was a social event as well, a chance to meet folk, get news and pass news on. He was very much part of the church and took a great interest in everything.

I don't think there was ever a Sunday where he didn't have things to say or something to comment on. However when I saw him at Kirk on 3/7/22 I realised his treatment wasn't going too well and he died in Perth Royal Infirmary on 22/8/22.

His final journey to Monzie Kirk was done in considerable style, a beautiful heather decorated cart drawn by two magnificent Clydesdales and led by Neil Bremner on the pipes. A packed congregation heard a service taken by the Rev. Eleanor Muir during which his friend, the author Polly Pullar, delivered a very fulsome and witty eulogy. Afterwards he was interred in the quiet and peace of the graveyard in the pleasant afternoon sunshine.

I always felt if you were "in" with Robbie then you were there for life and he was kindness itself. I count myself fortunate to have been part of the in crowd and to have had the privilege of knowing him. He leaves a big gap in the life of Monzie Kirk and all who knew him.

### **George Alexander Florence**

George died in Ninewells Hospital on 18/2/22 after a long illness. Born in 1939 at the home of his grandparents in Cambus O' May, Aberdeenshire. His first home was a wee cottage just outside Ballater with neither water or electricity.

Not long after starting school, while crossing the road after coming off the school bus George was hit by a car and badly injured. He suffered a fractured skull and was operated on using the kitchen table by a Dr Middleton, the local GP, who was also the Queen's doctor when she was at Balmoral. He lived to tell the tale and felt that every year he was spared after that was a bonus.

After a few years the family moved in to Ballater where George spent a very happy childhood, fishing in the Dee, climbing Craigendarroch, playing tennis, cricket and football. He was a member of the minister's eleven cricket team, the highlight being playing at Balmoral Castle.

He waved his flag with his classmates at Ballater Station when the Royal Train arrived, he was a member of the Air Force Cadets who formed a guard of honour at Crathie Church when the Royal Party attended. After the war the Duke of Edinburgh inspected the Cadets and George always remembered

the Duke stopping to speak to him and asking "What did your father do in the war?"

After leaving Ballater School George travelled by train to Aberdeen Trades College to take a course covering all aspects of the building trade. He did well and on completion was offered a job by a well known building company in Aberdeen. However before he could start his employment his father accepted a job as manager of Balgowan Sawmill near Perth owned by the firm of Peter McAinsh Limited. The family had to move to Perthshire and George had no option but to leave his beloved Deeside. His father had arranged for him to start an apprenticeship as a joiner with the same company so it was goodbye to Ballater to start a new phase in his life. At the time he was adamant that he would return to Deeside as soon as he could.

That did not happen however as fate stepped in and in January 1965 at the marriage of a friend he met Jean. They married in Monzie Kirk in February 1967. With George's skills, help from his colleagues and some professional help they built a wee house in the garden of Jean's mother's cottage at Milton of Cultoquhey. They loved the situation and this was where they lived all their married life.

George remained with the firm of Peter McAinsh Limited in various positions until the company ceased trading in 1984. He then entered a new phase in his life. He joined the firm of Brownlee ( later to become Jewsons) in Montrose. The plan was that the family would move to Montrose. This did not take place and instead they bought a small flat in the town and George travelled to Montrose on a Monday morning and home again on a Friday night. This worked well. He enjoyed the work and his time there and made good friends. After retirement the wee flat was kept on and many happy holidays were spent there often taking the grandchildren who enjoyed the seaside, the bird sanctuary and the meals out.

After retirement George and Jean enjoyed coach holidays in both Britain and on the Continent. Their special holiday to celebrate his retirement was to Canada where his father had worked as a young man and where he had always wanted to visit.

While he was able he liked nothing better than pottering in his shed making things out of wood with the radio playing in the background. When he became less able he enjoyed reading, listening to music, doing crosswords, puzzle books and jigsaws.

George was a quiet, modest man devoted to his family. His five grandchildren were a great pleasure to him and he enjoyed nothing more than spending time with them. His youngest granddaughter arrived when the others were a bit older. George looked on her as his wee bonus spending many happy hours with her.

He loved Monzie Kirk - standing at the door welcoming people as they arrived, carrying in the bible and sitting in the family pew enjoying the service. He served as an elder for over thirty years and felt it was a privilege to do so. Some of his handiwork can be seen in the Kirk - the cabinet which holds old minute books at the front was crafted by George as were the flower holders on the side window ledges. At Kirk Coffee Mornings he enjoyed being in charge of the bookstall as he was an avid reader.

For the last few years of his life George did not enjoy the best of health. He had his first "turn" with his heart in January 2012 and was grateful for the time he had after that. A replacement hip operation in 2017 greatly improved his mobility and quality of life.

He had good neighbours at the Milton and was very appreciative of their help when he became less able. During his last year George spent a lot of time in hospital but was very patient and never complained.

He was admitted to Perth Royal Infirmary 9/2/22, transferred to Ninewells on 15/2/22 where he sadly died on 18/2/22.

Rev. Milne said that everyone he had spoken to after George died described him as "a true gentleman " and this was reflected in the many cards and letters of condolence received by Jean and the family. He was a quiet and unassuming man with a deep faith who is sorely missed.



## **Dates for your Diary**

**Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> Dec**

We will be having a Cake & Candy stall at Madderty Hall's Christmas Fayre. Please do come along and see us there!

Details of venues and times will be placed on our church website ([www.midstrathearnchurch.org](http://www.midstrathearnchurch.org))

## **Mid Strathearn Website**

[www.midstrathearnchurch.org](http://www.midstrathearnchurch.org)

We are always looking to keep the website up to date so if you have any updates or news please send it to Colin Crawford by email - [webmaster@midstrathearnchurch.org](mailto:webmaster@midstrathearnchurch.org)