

News from the Pews

The Newsletter of Markinch Parish Church Vol 97 February 2013



MARKINCH PARISH CHURCH



Minister:

Rev. Alex R Forsyth TD BA MTh



A warm welcome is extended to all visitors and newcomers to the community to share in the worship, work and witness of the congregation.

Church Service

Sunday 11am

www.markinchchurch.org.uk

Communion Sunday

The Minister and Kirk Session invite you to share in the celebration of

Holy Communion

on Sunday 24th February 2013 at 11.00 am.

Your Elder is _____

Contact Details _____

From The Minister - The First Word



The story goes that bestselling author, Charles Dickens, attended a meeting of the clergy that was so dull and lifeless that, out of sheer frustration with the proceedings, the great novelist suggested to the dour, sour faced ministers that they gather round a table, join hands, and attempt to commune with the living.

I have no idea if this Dickens' story is fact or fiction; however I have no difficulty in picturing the scene. I have in my time attended some horrendously sour, long winded, clergy committee meetings.

According to popular wisdom, "A committee – is a group of men and women who keep minutes and waste hours." Popular wisdom also maintains that to get something done, "a committee should consist of no more than three people, two of whom are absent."

Why is it that when Christians, especially Christian clergy gather together in committee, they speak and conduct themselves in such a way that it contradicts the central affirmations of the faith they claim to hold dear?

At the core of Christian faith and belief are the great affirmations made by Christmas and Easter, the two great holy days in the Christian calendar. Each day is kept in order to remember, teach, explain and celebrate essential Christian truths.

Christmas celebrates the affirmation of our faith that says God is not "out there," "up there," or "way back then," but that God is here, present and active in our midst, "Immanuel," God is with us, incarnate in the life of the world. This is the good news, "the good tidings of great joy to all people," proclaimed by the angels.

The good news of Easter is that at the end of the day and by the grace of God, life is more powerful than death, love lasts forever and conquers hate, and joy overcomes despair.

In light of these fundamental truths there should be no such thing as 'sour-faced Christianity' of the kind espoused by the Revd. I. M. (No Really Very) Jolly.

The joy-filled declarations of Christmas and Easter remind us that Christianity is more about celebration than censure.

Augustine, the great fourth century Christian thinker, once said that "a Christian should be an alleluia from head to toe."

Such an alleluia comes from, the deepest and highest truths about how things really are, namely that God is with us and that eternal life is stronger than death.

See you in church

Alex

Session Clerk's Report

Official Notice of Minister's Retirement

Rev. Alex Forsyth has advised Presbytery that he intends to retire on 30th January 2014. This gives them, and us, sufficient notice to plan for the future. Further communication relating to the work ahead of us to ensure the process is as smooth as possible will be published within Session business.

The planning for the meetings during 2013 has been completed and we have full and varied session meetings for the year.

In February, Alex will be conducting a bible study. This is one of the most popular meetings with members of the session and will allow us to reflect and discuss a part of the bible. Bruce Manson will be also be telling us about Markinch Heritage Group and their work with the church archaeology and building.

In May, we will receive a visit from Beryl Luke, Presbytery's trainer, who will talk and provide guidance to the session on the subject of Building 'Team Session'. This will be particularly useful to us, as the church will not run itself! We must make our committees work by using the talents of our members, or we won't be able to pay our own way. This will put us in danger of being twinned with another church in future. So, this is an important meeting as we need to show Presbytery that we can run our own affairs efficiently, with no outstanding debt. We don't want to give Presbytery any ammunition to review our status as a standalone church.

During the August meeting, we will hear from a representative from Mary's Meals, a Scottish charity providing meals to needy children in third world countries, such as Malawi. I am personally looking forward to this interesting topic. It is anticipated that we will make a donation to Mary's Meals at the end of the meeting.

The last meeting of the year in November is a planning meeting, as we need to make sure we 'have all our ducks in a row' prior to Alex's retiral in January 2014 and ensure our vacancy procedures are followed with the help of an interim moderator.

The dates of the session meetings are noted below:

11th February, 13th May, 5th August and 4th November

We have also agreed the dates of our communion services this year:

24th February, 26th May, 18th August and 17th November

John G Wood
Session Clerk

Markinch Parish Church Youth Club

The Youth Club had a very successful year last year and we were glad to welcome back 27 youngsters. Some new members have joined since then. For many weeks, even months, uni-hoc (indoor hockey) has been a favourite on a Thursday night and you often have to take your life in your hands as you walk across the hall ! Snooker also causes many a challenge match with siblings playing against each other. We have begun to use the digital projector and our new DVD surround-sound home cinema system to good use by having the stage curtains closed and showing movies to the youngsters. For the girls, crafts are still popular and every week new skills are learned and improved. We are also going to see the GAMA Youth show at the end of February

As we still have a few pounds left in the bank we are hoping to invest in more sports equipment as this seems to be most popular and the youngsters come back every week to use the equipment we have.

Hopefully it won't be long till we get out into the garden again as we have not used the garden benches which were donated by B&Q Kirkcaldy.

The YC members would like to thank the congregation of Markinch Parish Church for the use of the Church Hall each week and if at any time you wish to come for a visit please pop in on a Thursday between 6.30pm and 8pm.

The youngsters would also like to thank you for your support at the Nativity play in the Church on Christmas Eve, which had many 'stand ins' on the night.

For more information about the YC please contact Tracy Thomson or Ken Wilkie.

From the Parish Register

Baptisms

02.12.12. Rosie Lauren Frew Daly
20.01.13 Hannah Louise Kroegler

Funerals

07.07.12 Georgina Mercer
08.11.12 Joe Ahern
11.11.12 John More
13.11.12 Mem Clunie
14.11.12 Ina Wyse
30.11.12 Bert Short
08.12.12 James Meiklejohn
31.12.12 David Wylie
05.01.13 Stuart Young
07.01.13 Mary Fenton
09.01.13 Margaret Suttie
12.01.13 David Stenhouse
17.01.13 David Cromar
19.01.13 Edward Ross
26.01.13 Caroline Gordon
29.01.13 Harry Gibson



Treasurer's Report

Thankyou to everyone who increased their Standing Order and WFO payments last year but our expenditure still exceeded our income by £2029.00.

The total income for 2012 was £69336.00 and expenditure was £71365.00.

Our Ministry Allocation for 2012 was £50268.20 but we only paid £36268.20 leaving a balance of £14000.00 still to pay. The amount due for Ministry Allocation for 2013 is £45897.00 plus the shortfall of £14000.00 making a total of £59897.00 to be paid.

As you can see from these figures we need your support more than ever this year.

Nancy Munro.

Treasurer.

GIFT DAY 2013

In past years, the income from the Gift Day appeal was placed in a special fund which had been set up to meet the overall cost of repairing/replacing the windows in the hall. We are still short of the estimate for the work and materials involved but with your generous donations, the monies raised from this year's Gift Day will allow us to finally reach the required target level to install windows in the church hall.

One way of maximising your donation is to sign the Gift Aid declaration on the envelope provided and members are encouraged to ensure this has been done. Remember, people who receive pension income and who pay tax on this are eligible to participate in the Gift Aid scheme. This also applies to anyone who is taxed on investment or savings balances. Help us to boost your donations and regular givings by getting a cash injection from the taxman !

If, for any reason, you are unable to hand in your donation at the Church on Sunday, it can always be sent to our treasurer, Nancy Munro, 4 Laurieston Park, Balfarg, Glenrothes, KY7 6YJ (any cheques should be made out to Markinch Parish Church)

There are now more ways you can make payments and donations to our church.

Direct Banking - Payments can be made direct to the church account using the following details. Account name: Markinch Parish Church, Sort Code: 83-22-37 and Account No: 00207524. Please put your name in the 'Reference' field so we can identify your payment

PayPal - Payments can be made to the church via PayPal using the email address *treasurer@markinchchurch.org.uk*

Church Website - www.markinchchurch.org.uk

The Sunday Bulletin, which includes the weekly intimation sheet, is available for download from the website every week so even if you are unable to attend church you can still be kept informed of what is happening in your church.

Fundraising Going Forward

Many thanks to the participants of the recent fundraising planning meeting, whether they were able to attend the event, sent ideas for events or simply offered their support for activity that were planned. Anyone can contribute to fundraising activity, whether you are good with ideas, planning or project managing, all help and support is gratefully received. Please contact me with any suggestions or activities that you would like to run. Even small events add up financially over the year. The next formal fundraising meeting will be hosted at the Manse on the 25th April 2013 at 7.30pm, everyone is welcome.

On-going Events

Rag Bag – You can donate any clothes, towels, bed linens, shoes, curtains, bags or textiles. If you need transport for your donation, please contact Marianne on 07801 279899 to arrange an uplift.

Jigsaw Lending Library – Available in the church hall following Sunday Service at a cost of £1 per jigsaw. If you require any information about this activity please contact Meg Sankey on 07834 729420.

Church Figurines – available to purchase following Sunday Service at a cost of £19 each.

Sales Table – There are some handcraft items for sale in the church hall. Please feel free to make a donation to church funds in the dish provided for any of these items. If you would like to donate handcrafts, baking, plants, jams, chutney's etc, please place them on the sales table before any church service.

'Made in Markinch', – The Markinch Parish Church Cookbook. The second volume of this will be on sale soon at a cost of £5.

Diary Dates

12th Feb Pancake Party to be held in the church hall from 2pm to 4pm. (Details to be confirmed). For more information please contact Sandra Ewing or Linda Patterson.

8th March Rosyth Concert Band from 7.30pm in the church hall. Tickets £4 including a bowl of soup. Please bring your own drinks. Tickets from Meg Sankey or Karen Wood.

30th March Daffodil Tea to be held in the church. (Details to be confirmed). For more information please contact Jean Forsyth.

19th April Wine Tasting With a Difference to be held in the church hall at 7.30pm. (Details to be confirmed). For more information please contact Marianne Sankey.

TBC May Church Away Day (Details to be confirmed)

TBC July Church Garden Party to be hosted by the Sankey's. (Details to be confirmed).

Marianne Sankey

I'm Not Perfect - And I've Proved It.....

In a 'News From The Pews' last year, I described my experience of being in the last programme in the series of TV quiz 'Perfection', when I was told that if they produced another series, they might invite me back.

True to their word, the production company contacted me in June, asking me to be in Glasgow on the 2nd of July. I would be accommodated in the Glasgow Hilton Garden Inn Hotel for as long as I stayed on the programme, and filming would start on the 3rd.

Since they record 3 programmes a day, I decided that I might not be staying very long, but for a Fifer free board and lodging in Glasgow is not to be sneezed at.

Anyway, the rest is embarrassing history, as anyone who watched BBC1 at 3.45pm on January 2nd. (not that these details are etched in my memory!) will know. No sooner had I introduced myself on the first programme - "Hi, Nick. I'm Bryan. I'm from Newport-on-Tay. I'm a retired teacher, and this is my third game!" - then the flashing lights indicated that I had been randomly selected to play for £2,000.

Things went rapidly downhill after that. The programme specialises in statements which have a ring of truth, or sometimes are so far-fetched that they just might be true. So, for example, when presented with "Sir Isaac Newton invented cat food" - and a clock ticking my time away - I plumped for "True". Oh dear! - it's the cat flap that he's alleged to have invented.

And so it went on. In the final round my six categories had been chosen by the other three contestants, and they included "Sopranos" (TV series, not singers) "Liverpool FC", and "Nuts". I ended up scoring 3 out of 6, and walking away with a handshake from Nick Knowles.

It was some consolation that the contestant who followed me did achieve Perfection, and won £3,000. After all, if I had been successful, then his win would have been a mere £1,000 - so at least I had done somebody some good.

Then there's the fact that I proved what everyone who knows me has always said - I'm far from perfect!

Bryan Gould

Remember - This is **YOUR** newsletter !

If you have any interesting news, stories, poems etc, please hand them to Ken Wilkie or email ken.wilkie@lineone.net or call 01592 760042

The deadline for the next issue is 30th April 2013

EASTER FAYRE

We are holding an Easter Fayre on Saturday 30th March from 2 - 4pm.

There will be the following stalls:-

Baking - Moira Michie & Lydia Inglis (your favourites plus any Easter ideas).

Craft - Meg S. (Easter chicks, Easter bunnies, crosses, tea cosies etc.)

Tombola - Ian & Fatima Johnston.

Bottle - Karen Wood and Nan Melvin

Cookbook Volume 2 - Frances Liddell

Face & Nail Painting - Brogan and Jennifer Watt

Lucky Hampers - Linda Paterson

Hampers:- Gardening - Tracy Thomson

Baby - Meg Sankey

Man - Linda Paterson

Chocolate - John Sinski

Easter Tea - Jean Forsyth

Woman - Margaret Urquhart

Decorated Easter Egg Competition for children - Helen Paterson

(Judge - Lorna Reid)

Easter Bonnet Competition for adults - Helen Paterson.

(Judge - Lorna Reid)

We are also serving teas for £2 a ticket. You will be offered Pancakes, Hot Cross Buns, Easter Cakes and Easter Biscuits. Sandra Ewan and her helpers will be serving you. Tickets will be on sale soon.

Please talk to the stall holders or those filling a hamper, to see what you can donate. It would be helpful to have your donations as soon as possible. Donations for the baking stall will be received on the morning of the fayre from 9.00am onwards. Please invite your friends. Let's try and make this a really happy afternoon.

SUMMER LUNCH

The church is hosting a 'Summer Lunch' at Balbirnie Golf Club on Saturday 8th June, 12.30pm for 1pm. The two course lunch includes tea and coffee. Cost is £16.50 including the tip. Names to Jean Forsyth with a deposit of £6.50 by Sunday March 31st and the balance of £10 to be paid by Sunday 26th May. Join us for a relaxing and enjoyable afternoon.

Markinch Amateur Operatic Society

Registered Scottish Charity SC025712

Guys and Dolls

A musical fable of Broadway based on a story and characters of Damon Runyon
Music and lyrics by FRANK LOESSER Book by JO SWERLING and ABE BURROWS

Markinch Town Hall 19th to 23rd March 2013

Tickets:- £10.00
Concessions:- Senior Citizens £8.00 Tuesday and Wednesday
Children £8.00 Tuesday to Friday

Phone booking on 01592 754537 from Monday 18th February

Tickets also at Markinch Town Hall from 11th March
(Hall Tel. 01592 611167)

Contact:- Valerie Thomson, Secretary
16 Betson Street, Markinch, KY7 6AA
or email secretary@maos.org.uk



This amateur production is presented by arrangement with JOSEF WEINBERGER LTD,
on behalf of MUSIC THEATRE INTERNATIONAL of NEW YORK.

Balbirnie Park Golf Club

MEMBERSHIPS AVAILABLE
GENTS, LADIES, YOUTHS(18-29)
& JUNIORS

FLEXIBLE PAYMENT TERMS AVAILABLE



Balbirnie Park Golf Clubhouse

MOTHERING SUNDAY 10th MARCH
Lunch served from 12.00pm - 3.00pm
Three course £10.95. Two course £8.95
Children under ten eat free



Freshly prepared soup of the day
Brussels pate with oatcakes
Egg mayonnaise

~~~~~  
*Roast beef with Yorkshire pudding*  
*Deep fried scampi*  
*Roast chicken with bacon*  
*Angus beefsteak pie*  
*Thai vegetable stir fry*

~~~~~  
Apple crumble
Toffee cheesecake
Peach melba

Mothering Sunday *High Tea*

Served from 3.30pm - 7.00pm

Beef pie
Beef casserole
Deep fried haddock in natural crumbs
Deep fried scampi
Penne pasta
Gammon ham salad

~~~~~  
*All served with chips or potatoes, vegetables or salad garnish*

~~~~~  
A selection of home baked cakes, scones, shortbread,
cream meringues
Tea and Coffee

£9.95

Call 01592 612095
for Reservations
clubhouse@balbirniegolf.com

Simply Serumptious Coffee House



Opening Times

Monday to Saturday 7.30am till 4.30pm

Sunday 10am till 4pm

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1 Waverley Road, Mitchelston Ind Est.

Kirkcaldy KY1 3NH

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easyfundraising
.org.uk

Raise funds for

Markinch Parish Church

***"What an easy way to raise funds!
We've raised over £900 so far!"***

Karen Ford, Friends of the Cavendish School



Here is how to get started

Once you are on www.easyfundraising.org.uk follow these steps to raise money for Markinch Parish Church

Click on 'Find a cause' and select Markinch Parish Church

Fill out the quick form to register your details.

Find the retailer you want to shop with.

Click to visit the retailer, then shop as you normally would.

Your donation will be shown in your easyfundraising account within 30 days.

A cheque will be sent quarterly to Markinch Parish Church.

Toys &
Games

Electronics &
Computing

Sports &
Leisure

Books, CDs
& DVDs

Jewellery &
Gifts

Clothing &
Fashion

Flights &
Holidays

Business
& Office

Home,
Garden
& DIY

Health &
Beauty

Video Games
& Consoles

Insurance

Lynn Cunningham

Chartered Accountant

Markinch & Cupar



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Contact us on

01592 612001 or 01334 657766
info@lynncunninghamca.com

Wanted - Easter Chicks

Tracy Thomson would appreciate it if you could help out by knitting a few chicks for her, which she will fill with creme eggs and sell prior to Easter to raise funds for Markinch Parish Church.

You will need:- Yellow Double Knitting Wool and Size 10 Needles 3.25 mm

1. Cast on 24 Stitches and knit 2 Rows. Increase 1 stitch at the beginning of every row until 36 stitches are on the needle.
2. Knit further two rows & Cast off 11 stitches at the beginning of the next two rows, making 14 stitches.
3. Knit 12 rows.
4. Knit 2 together across the row. Cut off wool about 12 inches long. Using a Darning needle draw through 7 Stitches. With the remainder of the wool sew the chick. Leave a space at the bottom of the chick to insert the cream egg.
5. Decorate the chick with two eyes and a beak.





www.ladyzonly.co.uk

NOW OPEN

**8am - 8pm Mon to Thurs,
8am - 6pm Fri, 10am - 1pm Sat/Sun**

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Eastfield Ind. Estate, Glenrothes, KY7 4PF

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It only takes three 30-minute Sessions a week.

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No Joining Fees

Telephone 01592 771889

Social Networking with Markinch Parish Church

We now have a Facebook page and many of us share church events and stories via our Facebook account. You can join us to find out what we have planned, view photos of events and make comment on a variety of topics.

Go to www.facebook.com and search for **Markinch Parish Church**

Church Flowers

The flower team would like a few more people to join them, either to organise the flowers for a Sunday or to help distribute the flowers as not every flower lady has transport. Contact Teresa Henderson on 01592 754892.

We also ask for names from anyone in the congregation of the elderly, sick, bereaved or anyone who they think might like a visit so that we can brighten up their Sunday's with a lovely bouquet of flowers



The Rotary Shoebox Scheme is not just for Christmas!

Originally started by North West Rotary clubs in 1994, the Rotary Shoebox Scheme was then intended to provide children of Iasi, in north-east Romania with Christmas gifts. Since then, the scheme has become a national project supported not only by Rotary clubs but also by individuals, schools, companies, churches, Inner Wheel, Rotaract & Interact etc.

Gifts are now sent out throughout the year to many different countries in Central and Eastern Europe. Toys are especially useful all year round for Birthday presents in the Orphanages, Homes and Hospitals. All age groups, including teenagers, have welcomed the boxes. We have delivered to children and teenagers in orphanages, hospitals and also to street kids. To Adults in TB and AIDS hospitals. To disadvantaged families and to women's refugees. To older folk in hostels with no supporting families. Each year we now send around 60,000 Shoeboxes or gifts.

If you or your family would like to support this extremely worthwhile cause there are a few ways you can help:

1. Collect an empty Rotary Shoebox from the Church Hall and fill it with items* for either a boy, girl or household. Return the filled box to the Church Hall.
2. Donate items* in the box in the Church Hall
3. Donate £1 to help with the cost of transportation of the boxes.

*Suggested items include – small toy, stationary, gloves, hat, socks, cards, mirror, wind up torch, sewing kit, screws & spanner set, tape measure, clothes, babywipes, bibs, the list goes on and on. No toys with batteries or food allowed.

An Easter delivery run is planned so there is still time to contribute to this cause. You can collect or return boxes from the church hall any Sunday after the service or on Thursdays at morning coffees.

Contact Tracy Thomson or John Wood for more information.

Sunday School

Do you have any young children living near you? Why not ask their parents if you can bring them along to join us in the hall on a Sunday morning? Children don't have to attend every Sunday and it would be good to see some new faces.

Surafel - Our sponsored child Thanks to all who have contributed so far this year. The new calendar/wallchart can be found in the hall. Please consider sponsoring Surafel for £1 a day by filling in one of the available days and either leaving your money in the envelope or hand it to Helen Paterson.

New Chairs For The Church Hall

Recently I was asked if I would accept a gift of hall chairs from one of our church members. This gift would be a full set of chairs for the church hall.

Only one condition - the giver wishes to remain anonymous.

It was a 'no brainer.' On behalf of all the church members I want to thank our anonymous donor for this generous and most welcome gift.

Alex Forsyth



My Secret Kitchen

**Tracy Thomson would like to invite you to Balbirnie Park Golf Club
on Wednesday 27th March at 7pm
for a food tasting by 'My Secret Kitchen'.**

My Secret Kitchen is the UK's first nationwide food and drink tasting company.

*They make a fantastic selection of new and interesting food products,
which is introduced to people through tasting events.*

*Each of our products has a different story, at least five different uses
and is guaranteed to make your meals more amazing.*

**Ticket price of £5 per person
includes refreshments and food tasting.**

*For more information please contact
Tracy Thomson 07786675507*



All money raised will be donated to The Rotary Club of Glenrothes

Our Young French Visitor

Some of you may have noticed a young lady helping out in the kitchen during coffees after the service on Sunday 20th January and perhaps even spoken to her. Her name is Yasmina and she is Fatima Johnston's niece from France.

She was born in Paris and is 22 years old. She came from Montpellier where she lives with her family and also where she went to University. She has studied Business and Accountancy and finished last year with a degree.

Yasmina has decided to take a gap year in Scotland in order to study and improve her English to a higher level. Yasmina has chosen Scotland for that purpose as she loves our country and especially Edinburgh, a city she adores and has fallen in love with! After only few months she knows our capital city and its history better than Fatima does after all these years living in Scotland!!

She can't have enough of the snow and thinks it's a wonderful thing to be blessed with! She may change her mind after few years of the Scottish weather though!

When she is visiting Ian and Fatima, Yasmina loves coming to our Church where she feels very welcome and loves our Sunday service, even with her difficulties in understanding all the sermon and some old English words in our Hymns! She stills sings as loud as possible with her own special French accent.

Yasmina was very touched by all your lovely words of welcome to her and your chats in English while she was among us. She loves the friendly atmosphere in the church and in the Hall during coffee time after the service. Yasmina thanks you all for your warm welcome and for making her feel part of our extended Markinch Parish Church family.



Markinch District Community Choir

We meet on Wednesdays from 7pm - 9pm
in Markinch Parish Church Hall

Come and Sing

No auditions – everyone welcome
All ages from 14 to 114!

Contact David McCracken : Tel 01592 758149
mccracken241@btinternet.com
www.markinchdistrictcommunitychoir
Find us on Facebook

KEN YER COUNTRY

Some of you will remember Gerry Mackenzie on Radio Forth, and Radio Scotland, some thirty years ago. On his radio show, he had a phone-in competition called 'Ken Yer Country', where the questions all related to Scotland, and listeners, hopefully, phoned in with the correct answers, in order to win.

This came back to mind when, one Sunday last summer, I was in Longueval in France and went looking for the newly-erected Footballers' Memorial in the village. There was only one person walking along the main street, a lady walking her dog and she assured us that she was a local resident. I asked her where the Monument was and she said that there was no such Memorial in her town.

Not to be thwarted however, I returned to the car and drove to the local hostelry. The people there knew of the Memorial, and directed us to it, half a mile distant from where I had spoken to the local woman.

I was staying in Langemark, in Belgium, and it had recently opened a Town Walk. There are some 16 boards located around the town, telling the history of the town to people who, to make it easy, should start at 1, then proceed in numerical order through to 16, though realistically you can start anywhere en route. There is a leaflet to assist, and the whole walk takes about an hour, and measures about a mile and a half. Exercise and education at the same time.

Later in the summer of 2012, back home, someone phoned in to Kingdom FM on a morning phone-in, to ask why the Bankhead Roundabout was so named and it was several callers later before the correct explanation came about Bankhead Farm.

To me, these events highlighted how some people sometimes take their local area for granted. However, like Langemark, we also saw lots of local interest last year, with the Church Calendar of Old Markinch and people reminiscing over the pictures contained there; and the large turn-out to the Church for the guided tour on Doors Open Day.

Before Christmas, in reminiscent mood, I went back to 'the Big Brae' and 'the Wee Brae'. Sledging down 'the Big Brae' was great fun years ago with the Bow Butts serving as an escape lane. Along the road was the Gasworks, complete with gasometers. Beside them, an entrance to Markinch Golf Course. My generation could sledge there too in winter time but there was only a small hill, so it was safe, and therefore rather boring, compared to the possibilities of 'the Big Brae', with the unforgiving wall at the bottom of it.

In January, someone in Markinch asked me where these places were. The War Memorial then was on 'the Hill'. It could be a difficult trek for the Parade, from the Common to the Memorial, if Armistice Sunday was a frosty morning.

Then there was Stobcross itself, guarding it seemed, the entrance to the Town from the Star. Five years ago, in a Cupar secondary school, a girl pupil joined my first-year register class from Star Primary, and her and I were the only 2 out of 30 in the room who had ever heard of Star - ken yer country indeed.

There were the three large Church buildings, Balbirnie, Brunton or St. Marks, and St. Drostan's, in Markinch back then.

The old primary school was beside John Dixon Park, and a new Secondary School had been built beside the Town Offices, and the Common.

At the primary we learned phrases such as 'Markinch, Leslie, Leven, Guardbridge, Inverkeithing', and their importance; and poetry such as 'Ye ken yersel, by the queer-like smell, the next stop.....' wisnae Markinch, but it might be the smell of 'the Stell' from nearby, instead of linoleum. I know 'Don't be vague, ask for Haig' but John Haig did use Cameron Brig whisky as well in their bottling plant, so the smell could be local.

We sometimes went cycling up to the Lawhead, because the woods there had a big hole in the ground which meant we had our own 'Wall of Death'. This on ordinary bicycles, as mountain bikes were still unheard of. Now, there is a barbed wire fence, to prevent such fun, and fallen trees and branches.

If you wanted a long cycle climb you focussed on the Canaan Hill, as the Lomonds were too far away, but coming downhill again was worth the effort of the climb. If you thought the bike suspension was good, you could go for the 39 steps en route to Coaltown. Health and safety considerations would render it unusable now, even for a BMX. We did not know then that the 'Thirty-Nine Steps' was a John Buchan novel, albeit a different set of steps also.

From Coaltown we could cycle via the old pit to Thornton Station. You could get to see more steam locomotives at Thornton than at Markinch in those days if you liked trainspotting. Mind you, there were still trains then from Markinch to Dixons, Tullis Russell and Leslie. There was even a siding into the Cooperative for the coal train to deliver its cargo.

There was the Institute as well, with a variety of leisure facilities, where older people could, for example, play badminton, or snooker, or read the daily papers. The Institute now serves a different, but in some ways similar, purpose in the Community.

I often now travel on a Stagecoach, which does not follow the exact route taken by the original stagecoach, but that is progress. When I look at my ticket, I often discover that I have boarded the Stagecoach at Bowsens!

There are so many other parts of Markinch that could be mentioned, but hopefully this is enough for the present time. Indeed, maybe sometime in the future, Markinch will have a Town Walk, with numbered boards located around the town, so that locals and visitors alike can enjoy a casual walk and learn more about the Town, past and present. Education and exercise at the same time.

Ken Markinch (aka Harry Gould)

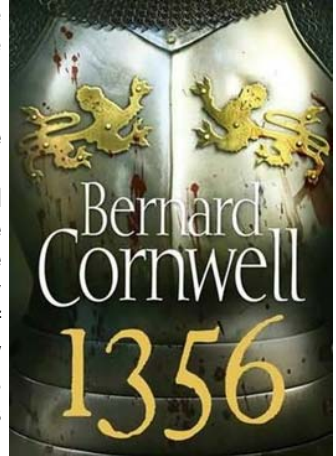
If you can remember any stories about these places or you can think of some more places and names around Markinch, please let us know.

Book Review by Grant Taylor

'1356' by Bernard Cornwell

After a long gap, author Bernard Cornwell re-introduces us to the characters from his "Grail Quest" trilogy.

As the title suggests, this is set in 1356 during the Hundred Years War when the English had the upper hand in France. Archer Thomas of Hookton, now Sir Thomas, leads his band of Hellequin through France, before being charged by the Duke of Northampton to find La Malice - the sword of St. Peter. Churchmen are also after it so Thomas and his men are involved in a game of cat and mouse with various bad guys until things come to the crunch when Thomas is with the heavily out-numbered English army at the battle of Poitiers. On the way he makes his share of new enemies and friends and we're treated to glimpses of glimpses characters from Thomas' previous bloody jaunts around France.



It's hard to fault the author when on ground as familiar and well researched as this and it is a very entertaining book. Elements are slightly cut short as the story pushes towards Poitiers, but this remains classic Cornwell. Having said that, I detected a slight change in style, there is more swearing and character banter than usual and some very light humour at times. No complaints but it did feel slightly different.

Much to enjoy here and I certainly did. I found 1356 to be an absolutely cracking piece of historical fiction. I very much enjoyed the Grail Quest series of a few years ago and this was very much a continuation in the same vein.

The Markinch Parish Church Cookbook

Volume 2 of the Church Cookbook will be available soon, priced at £5. Copies will be available from Jean Forsyth. Many thanks to all who sent in recipes, suggested a title and helped to produce this 'gem of a book.'



Church Hall Bookings

Anyone enquiring about booking the church hall should contact Karen Wood on 01592 750327 or collect a booking form from the notice board in the church hall.

Book Review by Rev Alex Forsyth

'Live From Downing Street' by Nick Robinson

A book from my Christmas collection.

Nick Robinson is the BBC's chief Political Editor. His book tells the captivating inside story of the relationship between politics and television reporting, between those who wield power and those whose job it is to tell us what they are doing and why.

In 2013 our politicians expect to be on camera and facing aggressive, searching questions from the TV reporters and presenters. Everything they say and do is instantly broadcast and dissected on the 24-hour rolling news channels, and YouTube and Twitter.

It wasn't always this way! Nick Robinson's, Live from Downing Street guides the reader through the fascinating struggle, and the hard-fought battles, for the right to inform the 'People' about their Parliament's plans and policies, debates and decisions.

There was a time when Parliament jailed reporters who dared to tell the electorate what their MPs had discussed. Broadcasters were banned by law from debating or discussing anything newsworthy. Reporters were not allowed to cover elections.

Eventually that censorship ended and ever since the two sides, MP's and media, have been in constant conflict.

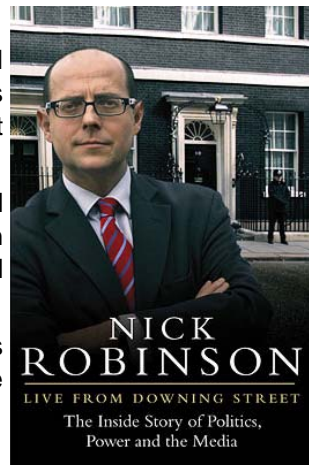
Nick Robinson guides his readers through chicanery of our elected representatives from Walpole to Wilson, to Thatcher and Blair.

He notes the emergence of the significant movers and shakers, players and personalities from radio and television: the Dimblebys, Day, Frost, Walden, Paxman and Humphrys.

Nick Robinson provides his readers with a colourful and personal account of what life is like as the BBC's Political Editor – a role once described as 'the most important job in British political journalism'.

Intermingled with perceptive insights and entertaining anecdotes, his book reveals his own position on the controversial issue of so-called impartial reporting.

Live from Downing Street is an absorbing book. It is well written by a man uniquely placed to inform the long-suffering electorate of this country.



Our Presbytery Elder's report

Since last September, I have been our parish's Presbytery Elder, a role which involves attending monthly meetings in Kirkcaldy along with Alex, and ministers and elders from all the other parishes in Kirkcaldy Presbytery.

While the agendas may sometimes seem dry and routine, the meetings are anything but, with different viewpoints being freely, and at times passionately, expressed.

The business is also often interspersed with addresses from invited speakers. Those whom I have heard include youth workers Gwyneth Duff, of GROW, and Chris Beattie, of KART, Kathy Galloway, head of Christian Aid Scotland, and Rev. Andrew Philp, the Church's education representative on Fife Council.

The meetings take place in a spirit of fellowship which helps remind us that we are a church united, and that the concerns of one parish are the concerns of all.

Bryan Gould

Visiting The Elderly In Local Care Homes

As many of you know there are visits made to Markinch Church Members who reside in Care Homes around Fife. Please could you let me know of all members known to in Care Homes as I feel sure that not all are on our list. I would also be grateful for any ideas you may have that would fill a care need in the local community.

Contact Meg Sankey: Home: 01592 749633 or Mobile: 07834729420



Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland
Fundraising

I have registered to do the 11km Loch Leven Walkathon on Sunday March 24th and would ask if anyone would like to sponsor me please? I will have a sponsor sheet in the hall after the Sunday Services prior to this date and for anyone who may prefer to sponsor me on line I have a page on the Justgiving website which enables any money to be sent straight to the Charity.

The web address is www.justgiving.com/Alison-Taylor10

I have had tremendous support from this charity over the past months and would love to raise some money to enable them to continue to help others who are in need of assistance. Thanking you in anticipation.

Alison Taylor

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