

# *Saltcoats St Cuthbert's Church Magazine*



## St Cuthbert's Embroidery

This was designed and worked by ladies of the congregation, namely: Mrs. Marjory Muir, Mrs. Joy Armstrong, Mrs. Ellen McCallum, Miss Jean Grier & Mrs. Florence Fulton. It comprises three panels with borders and was completed between November 1990 and March 1992. The work is of real professional standard. In the centre panel is St Cuthbert, with the Coat of Arms of the Bishop of Lindisfarne and a pictorial representation of St Cuthbert's Church, Saltcoats forming the two side panels.

## March 2021

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## ***From the Minister***

Dear friends,

The last time we were in our church building for worship was Christmas Eve. Lockdown restrictions have kept us out of the building since then, but we have been able to worship online as well as following other services on the internet, television and radio.

We are now approaching another significant date in the Christian calendar – Easter - the most important festival of the Christian year, the celebration of our Lord's resurrection from the dead following His crucifixion.

We are still awaiting confirmation from the Scottish Government about whether churches will be able to open for Easter Sunday services, the day before the date already given for places of worship to re-open as part of the easing of country-wide restrictions. Synagogues are also awaiting confirmation if restrictions can be lifted for Passover celebrations.

I would encourage you to check the St. Cuthbert's website or to phone your elder or myself for any updates on whether our building will indeed be open on 4<sup>th</sup> April. Even if we are allowed to do so, it sounds like the number attending will be very restricted, maybe only 20, so any who wish to attend would need to call the church booking number.

**07538 209 161**

This will be open during the week before in order to reserve a place.

However, even if we open for worship on Easter Sunday, it is unlikely that we will be able to sustain a weekly service until we are allowed to increase numbers to 50.

As you know from previous communications, we are indebted to the teams of three volunteers who ensure that the building is COVID-19 secure each week by spending a morning cleaning and disinfecting every surface including our many pews and ledges, doors and handles, tables and lecterns, as well as the floor. To do this every week for just 20 of us to meet together, a number which includes the organist, stewards and minister, is difficult to sustain.

Let us hope that the rollout of the vaccine and its effectiveness in reducing the severity and transmission of the virus will enable us to make progress, though slowly, back to 'normal' gatherings for worship.

I know many people have shared with me how much they are looking forward to singing again in church, as well as having a good blether in the hall over a cup of tea or coffee after the service!

We look forward with hope to worshipping together again – remembering that every Sunday is a mini celebration of the day on which the women and men who followed Jesus were blessed to see Him risen again! We thank God for the good news of the resurrection of Jesus Christ affirmed on Easter Sunday and repeated every Sunday of the year!

Christ is risen!

*With every blessing,*

*Sarah.*

## **The Day of the Resurrection as described in Matthew chapter 28 in the Good News Bible**

After the Sabbath, as Sunday morning was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. Suddenly there was a violent earthquake; an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, rolled the stone away, and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid that they trembled and became like dead men.

The angel spoke to the women. "You must not be afraid," he said. "I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has been raised, just as he said. Come here and see the place where he was lying. Go quickly now, and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from death, and now he is going to Galilee ahead of you; there you will see him!' Remember what I have told you."

So they left the tomb in a hurry, afraid and yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples.

Suddenly Jesus met them and said, "Peace be with you." They came up to him, took hold of his feet, and worshipped him. "Do not be afraid," Jesus said to them. "Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me."

### **A History of St. Cuthbert**

In 1929, on the Union of the Churches, requiring churches in the new Ardrossan Presbytery to be renamed, St Cuthbert's was suggested by Rev. David Daniel Rees, as he had previously been an assistant at St Cuthbert's Edinburgh and 'liked the name'. St Cuthbert has no links with the parish.

The naming of the Edinburgh church disappears into the mists of time – certainly earlier than the 12<sup>th</sup> century. One theory is that St Cuthbert may have sheltered in a hollow below the castle rock during his travels.

I need to take you back to Iona and St Columba in the year AD 563. Columba and twelve companions came to the island from Ireland and from this new settlement, missionaries were sent out across Britain and Europe – restoring the message and joy of the Christian faith to an otherwise mainly pagan landscape.

You will note that I said restoring rather than introducing because Christianity had been in Britain since Roman times and British missionaries, including St Patrick, took the faith to the Emerald Isle. As Roman influence diminished, Britain, particularly parts of England, was infiltrated by other races who had more pagan beliefs – and so the Christian faith got somewhat side-lined by the general population.

The island of Iona seems remote today. But it was at the centre of the life of the Irish Church, as it was easily accessible by boat from mainland Ireland and Scotland. Iona became an internationally renowned centre of spirituality, learning and art.

Next, I'd like to introduce you to the kingdom of Northumbria. It was a medieval Anglian kingdom in what is now Northern England and south-east Scotland. The name derives from the Old English Northan-hymbre meaning "the people or province north of the Humber", which reflects the approximate southern limit to the kingdom's territory, the Humber Estuary. The political heartlands of Bernicia were the areas around Bamburgh and Lindisfarne. King Ida of Bernicia's grandson Æthelfrith was the first ruler to unite the two polities under his rule.

The situation was very volatile and Æthelfrith was killed in battle (616AD), his children fled into exile and some of these children found their way to what is now South-West Scotland. Here they

met the Irish monks of Iona and accepted the Christian faith. Oswald, the second son, grew up determined to re-gain the throne of Northumbria and to let the pagans among his people hear about Christianity.

In 633 he fought a successful battle and established himself as king, choosing Bamburgh, a natural outcrop of rock on the North-East coast, as his main fortress. He then invited the monks of Iona to send a mission and eventually Aidan arrived with 12 other monks and chose to settle on the island the English had renamed Lindisfarne.

The first monk from Iona who came, Colmán, was combative in temperament. He dismissed the local people as “obstinate and barbarous” and in less than a year went back to Iona. Aidan, who was sent on a second mission the following year, felt Colmán had been too harsh, and decided on a simpler approach. He became firm friends with King Oswald, whom he had known in Iona. Aidan also used Oswald, who had become bilingual during his time on Iona, as his interpreter and soon became bilingual himself, bringing the gospel everywhere he went, to rich and poor alike. He founded a monastery and school for twelve young boys on the island of Lindisfarne. It was within sight of the King’s castle at Bamburgh. Aidan also encouraged women in the religious life and was friend and spiritual director to the abbess Hilda at Whitby. This was a monastery in the Celtic style, with men and women living separately in small houses, but worshipping together in church. Strongly opposed to slavery, Aidan spent much time and effort in ransoming slaves and sending them home. When he died at Bamburgh Castle in 651, he was initially buried on Lindisfarne but later some of his bones were taken back to Iona.

The Venerable Bede, in his Ecclesiastical History of the English People, portrays Aidan as a teacher with a passionate love of goodness, tempered with humility, warmth and gentleness.

Now to Cuthbert! At last, you say! He was born around 633 in Dunbar, on the Berwickshire coast, believed to a family of some wealth. You will recall that Dunbar was part of the Northumbrian kingdom. It seems he had an unremarkable childhood, albeit a privileged one. He was fostered to a family, near Melrose and while there had a religious experience which changed his outlook.

The story is told that on the night Aidan died Cuthbert was guarding some sheep and had a vision of the soul of Aidan being carried to heaven by angels. He immediately took himself to the monastery and Melrose and asked for entry. He was a keen and devoted novice and as his religious life developed and his personal qualities grew, he gained a reputation for having miraculous spiritual gifts. He served some of his time at Ripon (Yorkshire) but returned to the motherhouse at Melrose. Unfortunately, the plague hit the monastery, many of the monks succumbing including Cuthbert. He survived but it left him with a lifelong weakness. His friend, Boisil, the prior, was not so fortunate and died. Cuthbert was appointed as his replacement.

It was in this new role that he started his major work as a travelling evangelist, taking the Christian message to places others would not venture. He gained a reputation as a skilful and persuasive teacher and there are many stories of his gifts of prophecy, affinity with the animal kingdom, driving out demons and even changing the wind!

After Aidan’s death he was succeeded by other monks from Iona. There was some wrangling going on in the church at the time – when Easter should be celebrated, whether monks should have a full or partial tonsure and a myriad of other niggles all of which caused a rift between the Celtic and Roman churches and many of the Irish monks returned home. Cuthbert was invited by the new Abbot of Lindisfarne to join him and become prior there, in part because of his reputation as a peacemaker, evangelist and holy man. His role as prior continued for 12 years, very busy at times as he travelled throughout the region, but he did take time for retreat too.

He built a rough dwelling for himself of one of the Inner Farne where he could better commune with God and the island birds, but that didn't prevent his later elevation to bishop. His area of responsibility was large even by today's standards, travelling as far west as Carlisle, north to Edinburgh and south to Whitby, mostly on foot. He pursued this punishing schedule for 2 years, teaching all the while, often in the open air, prophesying, healing and living frugally so providing a good example. He was now 52 years old and exhausted so decided to retire to his beloved island telling the monks that he would not return but asking that his body should be buried on near his hermitage in a sarcophagus and special cloths he had hidden previously. The new abbot persuaded him that it would be better if he was returned to Lindisfarne, and grudgingly Cuthbert agreed, on the understanding that he was buried in the church itself.

Some 11 years later it was decided to dig up his remains, wash his bones and put them somewhere they could be seen and venerated. To everyone's surprise, when the sarcophagus was opened, they found Cuthbert's body still intact, so they washed the body, dressed it in new clothing and elevated it within the church for people to see. This place became one of the most visited shrines in Europe ... and one of the richest!

Then the Vikings invaded! The monks decided to leave Lindisfarne and take Cuthbert's body, Aidan's relics and King Oswald's head and transport them to a safer place. The monks travelled all over the north of Northumbria, evading capture and finally settling in Chester-Le-Street (county Durham). Unfortunately, there was a subsequent Viking uprising and the remains were again uplifted and moved to Ripon and then back towards Chester-Le-Street. The story goes that their cart got stuck in the mud and the monks heard a voice saying, 'take the body of the saint to Dunholm'. The remains were laid in a church. But now it was 995 so these artefacts had been on the move for well over 300 years. One journey more!

On 11 August 1093, the foundations stones of Durham (no longer Dunholm) cathedral were laid and by 1104 the building was sufficiently complete for Cuthbert's coffin to be taken into the apse. The monks inspected Cuthbert's body and saw that it remained incorrupt.

There are two significant dates that relate to Saint Cuthbert. 20 March, the date he died, and 4 September, the date his body was translated to Durham Cathedral, where it remains a place of pilgrimage to this day. As our church is named after this saint, maybe we should adopt a day to celebrate his life and ministry? 20 March usually falls during Lent, a time of reflection and renewal, so perhaps worth considering.

*Extracts from a talk by Bea Nicholson to St. Cuthbert's Guild in 2019*

Approaching Easter and current trading difficulties in COVID brought to mind this from Bible Ballads (2003) by Rev. N. M. Bowman O.St.J., MA, B.D.

“These ballads are so called to remind us that they are not Bible stories in the traditional moralising sense, but try to portray characters and events as they might have appeared to ordinary and not necessarily religious people. My hope is that this approach will make it easier for readers in our own secular age to realise that the bible is still relevant, and encourage them to read the Scriptures for themselves”

*Norman M. Bowman*

## **CATERERS' COMPLAINT** Mark 6: 30-44 Jesus feeds the five thousand

The gavel rapped, the chairman spoke "Let's have some order please"  
In a few minutes most were still and you could hear with ease.

"My friends," says he, "I think you know the trouble that we're in  
The weekend's bye, our busiest time, but where's our custom been?"

"What's happened to our regulars? The trade was non-existent;  
Is there a boycott of our shops? Turnover's not consistent."

"With what for years and years has been the normal for the season  
The worst is nobody I know, can tell what is the reason.

Our shelves are full of loaves unsold, the fish already stink  
Are all the folk here in a fast? just what are we to think?"

"We've heard about a desert feed" said someone no one knew  
"Who catered for all that I ask, that is, if it is true?"

"The local fishermen don't know their sales are down as well  
But where DID all that food come from, can't anybody tell?"

A timid voice said "Chairman please, yon thing was planned real good;  
The folks were made to sit in rows while others served the food."

"Aye food!" an interruption came; "but whaur did it come frae?  
And who paid for it may I ask?" but nobody could say.

"What was the gathering about? Political? Religious?  
And why held in that lonely place? the whole thing sounds suspicious."

"I think it had to do with John, first jailed and then beheaded.  
The people would have followed him; by Herod he was dreaded."

"The folks are ready to revolt they're looking for another  
To carry on where John left off, and that may be the bother."

"A chap from Galilee is here: they say he can do wonders...  
They may have put their hopes in him, that would explain the numbers.

"Up to five thousand have been fed according to my sources....  
But that don't tell us what we want - the source of loaves and fishes"-

"Whoe'er it was," a trader said, "They were no friend of ours.  
There's nae competing with free food or with uncanny powers."

"If this goes on we'll not be long in business for a living;  
Folks winna buy if they get bread from someone freely giving."

"This sort of thing has got to stop, it undermines the market;  
We'll have to put an end to it before it gets real started."

Well, end it did, but not before they caught the man behind it;  
For thirty bits of silver coin he was betrayed and ended -

Upon a Cross for criminals. The market won the day,  
For with the power of money they got Jesus out the way.

Norman Bowman, the son of a school teacher, was born in Saltcoats in 1912. He graduated in Arts and Divinity from Glasgow and began as assistant in an Edinburgh slum clearance parish before going to his first charge in Kilsyth.

During the war he served as chaplain to the forces, attached finally to the 51<sup>st</sup> Highland Division. After the war he and his wife went to the Calabar mission field in Eastern Nigeria. Sudden illness on his return home frustrated his intention to take teacher training, and after convalescence he became Minister of Bonhill Old and then of St. Mary's Edinburgh.

His desire to teach was fulfilled when appointed to the staff of Napier College Edinburgh when it opened in 1964. Thereafter he taught until he retired in one of the Edinburgh Merchant City schools.

After retiring he served for five years as executive secretary to the Scottish Priory of the Order of St. John. Between 1976 and 2000 he visited USA 27 times serving churches and making friends there. When his wife died in 1982 he retired to his birthplace and worshiped in St Cuthbert's until he died in 2012 just 4 days before his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday.

### ***Sunday Worship***

Like many of you I miss being able to worship in the company of others on a Sunday. Can I remind members and recommend some of the services available on Sunday mornings on TV and YouTube? Reflections from the Quay, BBC1; West Kilbride Parish Church streamed on YouTube at 10.30am; Songs of Praise around lunchtime as well as our own St. Cuthbert's online service. I enjoy being part of all of these. Evelyn Slater

### ***The Banana Test***

**There is a very, very tall coconut tree and there are four animals.**

**A Lion A Chimpanzee A Giraffe ...AND... A Squirrel**

**They compete to see who is the fastest to get a banana off the tree. Who do you guess will win? Your answer will reflect your personality. So think carefully . . .Try and answer within 30 seconds.**

**Got your answer? Now go down to the bottom of the next page to see the analysis. ...**

**If your answer is: Lion = you're dull. Chimpanzee = you're dense. Giraffe = you're a complete moron. Squirrel = you're hopeless.**

### ***Magazine***

Once again, in order to minimise contact during the current restrictions, this issue is being distributed by email to those whose email addresses are known. Anyone else who would be happy to receive their magazine by email or no longer wish a copy should send a request to [webmaster@saltcoats-stcuthberts.org.uk](mailto:webmaster@saltcoats-stcuthberts.org.uk) Editor

## **FUNDRAISING Two Online Opportunities**

During Covid more of us have been shopping online. Both of these sites offer a way for shoppers to generate a commission which is paid into the St Cuthbert's Church bank account at no additional cost to you.

Anyone with basic online knowledge can register and select their cause. Saltcoats St Cuthbert's Church will appear as an option when typed into the cause box for you to select. Once the selection has been made there is no need to link every time to your choice and any funds generated by purchases come to the church until you decide otherwise.



Not all companies participate but there are 4,300 retailers from which to choose. Commission rates vary from 0.1% to 4% of your spend but you must go onto the Easyfundraising site **BEFORE** placing the order for the transaction to qualify.

A few holiday companies are listed as well as John Lewis, M&S, Argos, Currys, Ebay, Suttons, Superdrug and some wine companies too! A simple search will show if the company from whom you intend to buy take part. If not, sometimes the same item can be purchased from a site that does. Small purchases with lower rates will not generate much but could mount up if more people use it.



If you sign up with AmazonSmile 0.5% of the purchase price will be donated to the church. Again Saltcoats St. Cuthbert's Church has been added to the list of accepted charities so it should appear when you register on the site.

This is a matter of personal choice, the church has nothing to do and there is the possibility of involving family and friends. These are worthwhile ways of fundraising for our church (with very little effort) particularly while other usual methods are restricted.

There are no data protection issues nor costs involved and no reason why anyone cannot become involved with both fundraising opportunities. If you are not aware of these sites please feel free to check them out.

### ***The Banana Test analysis***

**A Coconut tree doesn't have bananas. Obviously, you're stressed and overworked. You should take some time off and relax.**  
**Have two glasses of wine. (Other drinks are available) A full box of Chocolates. And a nice lunch.**

***Now hurry up and send this to someone else. They may need those glasses of wine.***