



St John the Baptist Scottish Episcopal Church Perth

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August and September 2026

Editorial

After a dismal June we have had a warm, sometimes very warm, July which has brought on the crops. Combined harvesters are beginning their work, some weeks earlier than usual. Our warmth has been manageable, though forest fires have broken out in the Cairngorms. Down south, however, the heatwave has been severe. Cities naturally absorb heat, but buildings have not been designed to meet the challenges posed by climate change. Quite apart from that, there are many other troubles in the world. In our Intercessions we pray for peace and an end to conflict. A glance at the newspapers will show how far away is achieving that goal.

Earlier this year St John's was left a significant amount of money in a legacy, and it is the legal duty of the Vestry as Trustees to determine how to use it. There seem to be four areas to be considered: financial management, major projects, housekeeping and outreach. If the money is invested, then the income earned should be sufficient for many purposes. Any building that is 175 years old requires regular maintenance and obviously work will need to be done on the exterior and roof. By 'housekeeping' is meant improvements to the facilities of the Church, the Threshold and the Rectory. Lastly, there is scope for St John's to support local charities. Overall, the aim should be to ensure that the church has resources to provide for congregations in the years ahead. We must be very grateful for the gift we have received to maintain and enhance worship at St John's. Managing the money will be an onerous task and will require a lot of hard thought and planning. It will take time. Prayers for wisdom and guidance for the Vestry would not come amiss!

The Editor takes this opportunity to thank all the regular contributors to *Quest* and for the photographs that have been sent in, whether of events in the Church, the Perthshire countryside or seasonal flowers. From time to time people have contributed ideas, anecdotes and stories of their own experiences, not necessarily connected to the Church. All these make

Quest more interesting reading and I hope that others too will be moved to share their stories with us.

David Willington

Weekly Services

Sunday 8.30 a.m. Holy Communion

Sunday 10.30 a.m. Sung Eucharist

Every third Sunday there will be prayers for healing

Thursday 11.00 a.m. Communion, coffee and a chance to chat

Special Services

27th September 10.30 a.m. Harvest Festival

Cover Picture: *Cistus landifer*, Patricia Noel-Paton



Chinese peony

Canna – Ancient Piety

Canna – Eilean Chanaidh – is the northernmost of the Inner Hebrides and has the best harbour. The adjacent island, Sanday, is linked to it by a bridge. It is six and a half miles east to west, and a mile and a half north to south. The geology is interesting: the rocks are basalt with hexagonal pillars, like Staffa or the Giants Causeway in Northern Ireland. It is surrounded by cliffs, though there is a considerable area of lower ground round the harbour, and there are two other areas of low ground by the sea, used for grazing. Access to them is steep. There are three small bathing beaches, one of them with black sand.

There are remains of neolithic occupation, hut circles, field walls, pottery and two souterrains, but more substantial remains date from early Christian times. The monastery on Iona was founded by St Columba in 563 and from there monastic settlements spread among the Western Isles. Columba was reported to have visited Canna and for a time had a retreat there. There is an early monastic site on the south west coast of Canna at *Sgorr nam Ban-naomha* (Hill of the Holy Women). This is assumed to be a nunnery. It is inaccessible by land, except for a dangerous descent by rope, at the foot of a cliff. There is an enclosing wall, with the remains of structures inside, now covered with grass. The inhabitants must have been supplied by sea, since there is no room for cultivation; eggs and shell-fish may have supplemented their diet. Three stone slabs marked with a cross have been found there.

There is another religious site on Canna at *A'Chill* near the harbour, on cultivatable land. Chill or Cille is a Gaelic word for church. There is still a remarkable free-standing Celtic cross on a slight rise. The carving illustrates the Adoration of the Magi, a horseman and animal scenes. In the same area and in the adjacent graveyard there were other carved stone slabs. The outlines of the original church or monastery were overlaid by a village in the Middle Ages. Very little trace of that, too, remains.

There was a tradition in early Christianity, and in other religions such as Buddhism, of the simplicity of a solitary life in remote places, with fasting and chastity, and the denial of comfort. Islands were attractive for the ascetic life, because they were more secure and remote from worldly distractions. Thus, hermits and monks and nuns could devote themselves to worship, meditation and prayer, and respect for their holiness ensured that they would be supported by locals and visitors seeking their blessing. Today it is virtually impossible to lead such a solitary life.

My interest in Canna stems for the fact that our daughter, Margaret, is the Administrator of the island. We visit every year.

David Willington



Reflection

Is anyone happier because you passed this way?
Does anyone remember that you spoke to them today?
The day is over and its toiling time is through.
Is there anyone who is thinking warm and friendly thoughts of you?

Can you say tonight, in parting with the day that's slipping by fast,
That you helped a single person of the many that you passed?
Is a single heart rejoicing over what you did or said?
Does the man whose hopes were fading, now with courage look ahead?

Did you waste the day, or lose it? Was it well or badly spent?
Did you leave a glow of kindness, or a scar of discontent?
As you close your eyes in slumber, do you think that God will say:
'You have earned another blessing by the work you did today'?

Contributed by Raymond King

A Pearl of Wisdom

The future lies before you,
Like a sheet of driven snow.
Be careful how you tread it,
For every step will show.

contributed by Jackie Thomson.

An Outing to Pittenweem

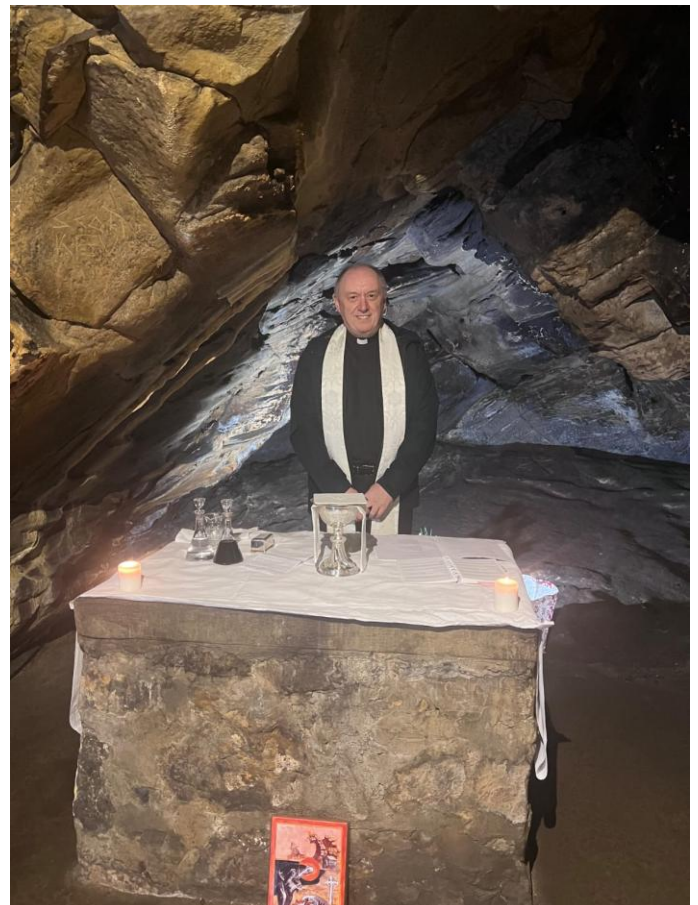
A day out of Church and into the open spaces must be one of the best ways to be together. It's like when East meets West, or those in the left-hand pews meet those on the right.

The day out to Pittenweem, meeting and sharing with our friends, who entertained us with history and tea and coffee on the lawn of the Priory, was pleasant indeed. We then visited St Fillan's Cave, some, the over 90s, wobbling, and some, the over 30s, confidently walking. We all managed to have Communion, conducted by Dean Graham, down in the depths of the earth. It seemed like being delivered from the Underworld to Heaven.

Being near to Anstruther (which the locals call Ainster), the only sensible way to finish the day was to have the world-famous fish supper.

Many thanks to the organisers and drivers from the left-hand pews who gave Elizabeth and me a lift.

Raymond King



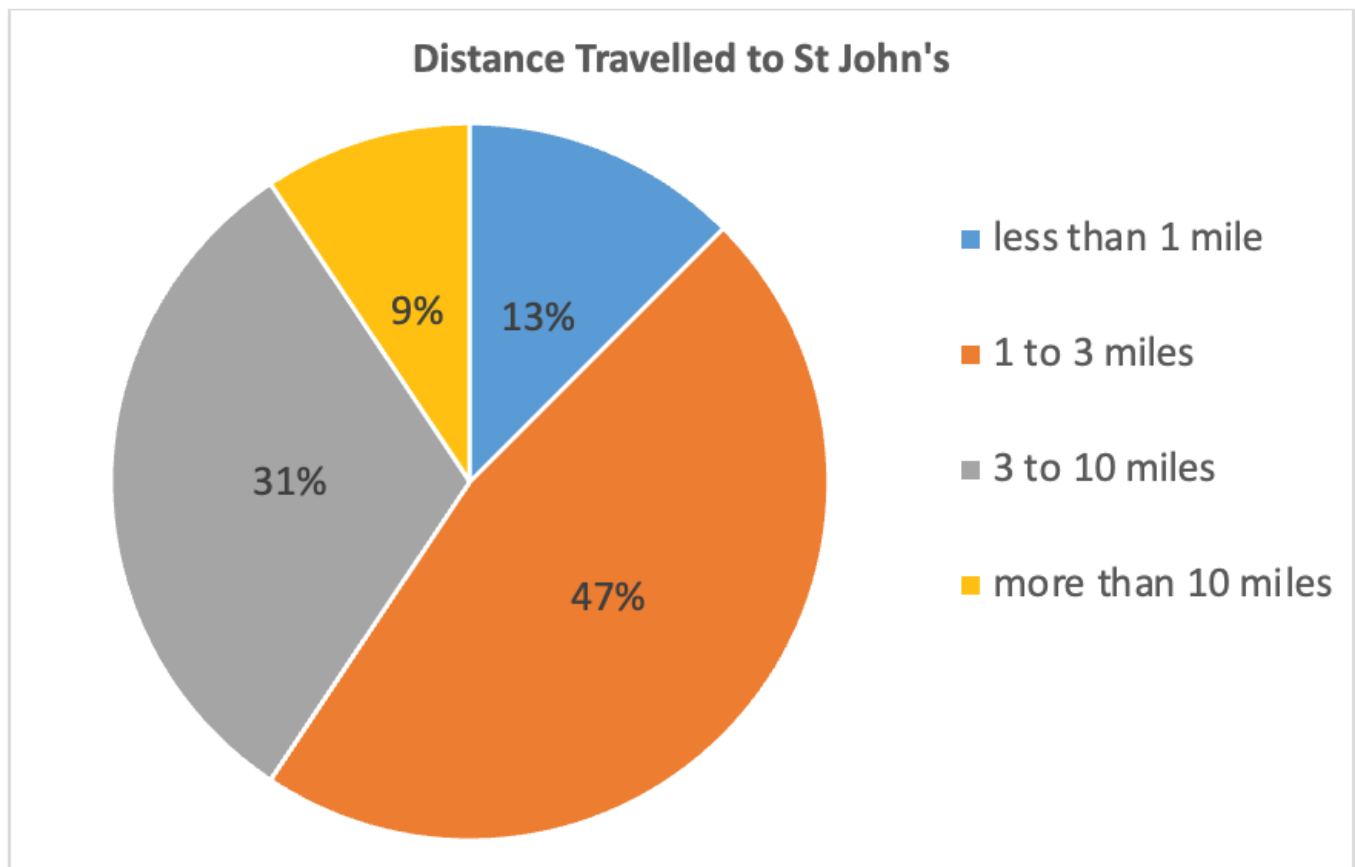
Transport Survey

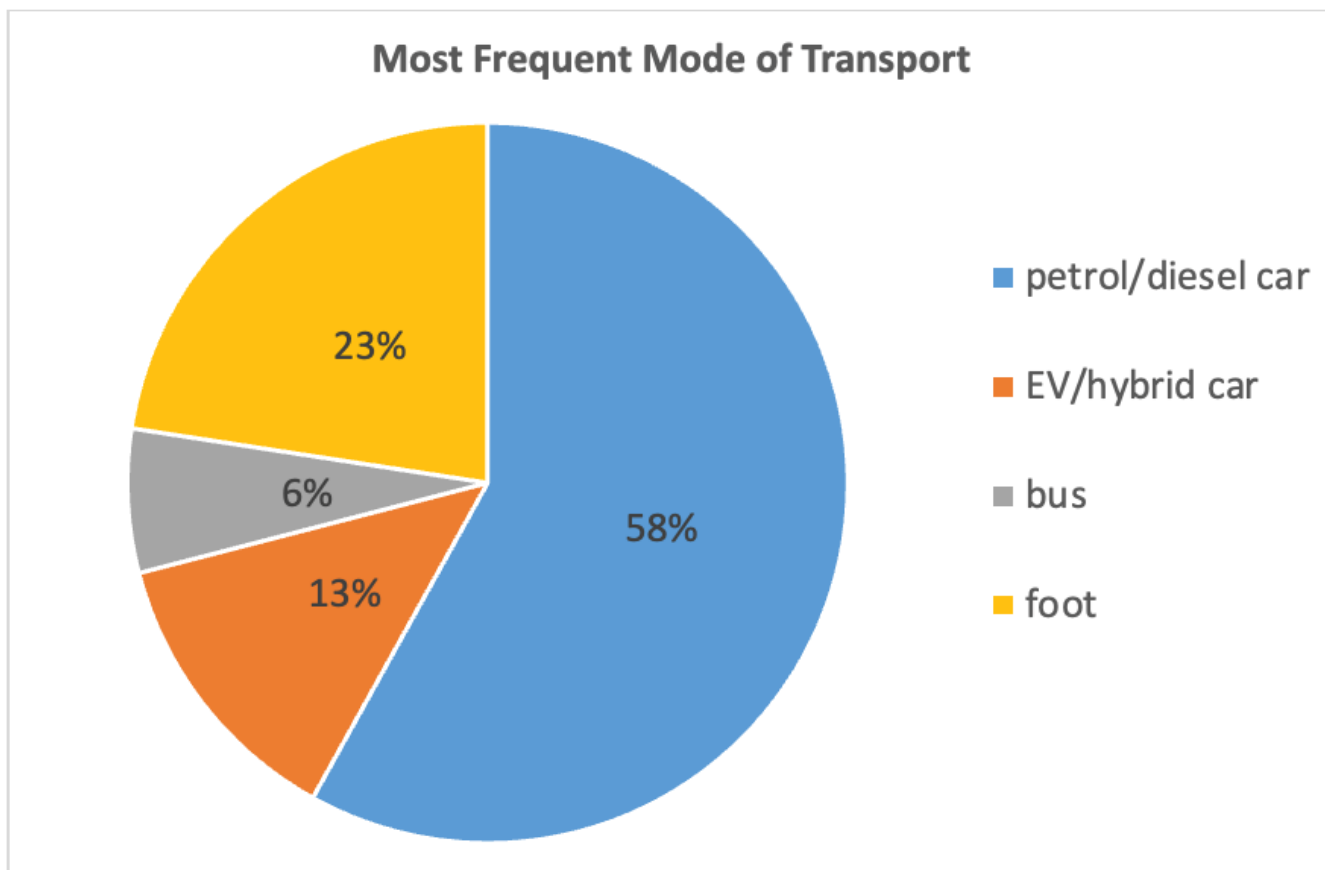
Thank you to all those who returned the questionnaire on transport - we received a total of 32 responses.

The responses confirm what might be expected from a city centre – that most people travel more than a mile to attend church and that cars are the most common form of transport. I'm sure that over time more people will move to hybrid or electric vehicles - in the UK sales of new electric cars have now overtaken sales of new petrol cars.

There are others who would use a bus if one were available, but the bus service is limited on a Sunday morning.

Some results:





The survey also highlighted that we have people ready and willing to offer lifts to those who might be in need of one. Thank you to Alison Swanney who coordinates liftsharing at St John's.

Some comments:

“Car on a Sunday, no bus to get to service on time ...”

“I am extremely grateful for my lift!”

“I mostly attend the 8.30 service where I have offered lift shares at times of need.”

Eco Group





Following the excellent presentation from Rev Fiona Smith at Christian Aid Week, St John's made a very generous donation to the Restore campaign which she had highlighted. St

John's donated £780, making almost £1000 with gift aid. You may have spotted their warm letter of thanks on the CAid notice board.

Fiona Smith invited us to sign the petition asking MPs to sign the Restore petition for debt justice. Sincere thanks to all of you who did that. I've also written to Pete Wishart, asking that he support this work by ensuring our government participates fully in debt relief negotiations with lower-income countries. He has requested an update from the relevant Minister and will be back in touch when he has heard further.

So, many thanks for your support!

You will, of course, be very aware of the tragedy which recently struck Venezuela. Two catastrophic earthquakes within seconds of each other. Buildings were reduced to rubble in minutes. The destruction was huge. Hundreds of people were killed, and the death toll continues to rise. Thousands more are injured, and the country's hospitals are under extreme pressure. Now the survivors urgently need shelter, food, water, and medical care. Venezuela was already facing a severe economic crisis before the earthquakes. The needs are now overwhelming. Our support can be a lifeline for families affected by this devastating disaster.

The Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) under whose auspices 15 organisations work jointly (*Save the children Fund* and *Islamic Relief etc*), has launched an appeal following the devastating earthquakes. The UK Government will match donations to the Venezuela Earthquake Appeal pound-for-pound up to £2 million, through its UK Aid Match scheme. We can donate online at: <https://bit.ly/4vGT90Y>

Let us remember the people of Venezuela in our prayers.

Elaine Cameron

Lectionary August and September 2026

August 2nd Pentecost 10

Genesis 32. 22-31, Romans 9. 1-5, Matthew 14. 13-21

August 9th Pentecost 11

Genesis 37. 1-4,12-28, Romans 10. 5-15, Matthew 14. 22-33

August 16th Pentecost 12

Genesis 45.1-15, Romans 11. 1-2a, 29-32, Matthew 15. (10-20)21-28

August 23rd Pentecost 13

Exodus 1.8-2.10, Romans 12.1-8, Matthew 16. 13-20

August 30th Pentecost 14

Exodus 3.1-15, Romans 12. 9-21, Matthew 16. 21-28

September 6th Pentecost 15 - Season of Creation

Exodus 12.1-14, Romans 13. 8-14, Matthew 18. 15-20

September 13th Pentecost 16

Exodus 14. 19-31, Romans 14. 1-12, Matthew 18. 21-25

September 20th Pentecost 17

Exodus 16. 2-15, Philippians 1.21-30, Matthew 20. 1-16

September 27th Pentecost 18 - Harvest Festival

Deuteronomy 26. 1-11, 2 Corinthians 9. 6-15,
Luke 17.11-19

Grandmother's Footsteps

My grandmother Mabel Edith Alt was born on 2nd July 1865 in Nagasaki ... so what? She is considered to have been the first European baby born in Japan. For 200 years or so Japan had been a warrior-led, feudal, 'closed country', isolated from the rest of the world. In 1853, gun-boat diplomacy by the United States' Commodore Matthew Perry forced Japan to open its borders. In 1858 the Tokugawa Shogunate signed the Ansei five-power Treaties which opened up a few Japanese ports to a new era of commercial, political and cultural interaction.

Officially open for trade in 1859, Nagasaki saw an influx of foreign merchants competing for access to the long-secluded country and its untold resources. In this influx was a 19-year-old Englishman named William Alt whose father had died five years previously, leaving his widow with eight children and no money. This young man who was to become my great-grandfather, left home under dire circumstances and went to sea in 1853 aged 12 in the crew of a full-rigged merchant sailing ship, *Charlotte Jane*, famous as one of the first four ships to carry migrants from England to the newly founded Colony of Canterbury, New Zealand. She was a happy ship under her inspiring Captain Russell. He in turn virtually educated this young man and four years later arranged for him to leave the ship and take a well-paid job with the Imperial Maritime Customs Service in Shanghai.

Here he learned quickly the ways of international commerce and in 1860, at the age of 19, he left Shanghai to establish himself as an independent Commission Agent in Nagasaki. There in the first list of Land renters, he won the right to rent a site in the Nagasaki Foreign Settlement, where business was conducted. His ability to speak Chinese and a growing understanding of Japanese gave him a great advantage in transacting business. A simple house and office were constructed, and he was able to employ a few 'Chinamen' and several Japanese servants.

His business now named Alt&Co. surged ahead on the wave of new Nagasaki trade and this allowed him to acquire further property and to expand the range of activities. In September 1861 the Governor of Nagasaki agreed to extend its borders to include Minamiyamate, the hillside area above the Port overlooking the long inlet of Nagasaki Harbour with its backdrop of green-clad mountains. William Alt acquired a plot in this beautiful area on which to build a fine bungalow on the lines 'architecturally' of similar houses in India. His friend Thomas Glover who came from Aberdeen also acquired a plot in Minamiyamate. Alt&Co. expanded rapidly and profitably. Now aged 24 and an accomplished businessman, in 1862 he decided to take a trip back to England to see his family after a long absence.

This was to be an auspicious journey as along the way William Alt met and fell in love with his future wife Elisabeth Christiana Earl who was travelling to Australia with her parents. It was a fleeting if profound encounter. He continued his journey to London having promised he would travel to Australia on his way back to Japan in order to claim her. This he did and they were married in Holy Trinity Church, Adelaide, on 15 September, 1864 before sailing back to Nagasaki. He was 24 years old and she was 17. My Grandmother was born ten months later in their home in Minamiyamate. Today, that particular area is a preserved Tourist attraction in Nagasaki known as Glover Gardens. It is also known to be the setting for the story on which the beautiful opera *Madame Butterfly* is based.

It largely survived the nuclear bomb blast of 1945. The geological structure of the ground and hills created a form of shelter which deflected extraordinarily the blast which destroyed virtually the whole of Nagasaki. The Alt house today is a museum, wonderfully preserved. I am proud to say that Patricia and I on a recent visit sat for a short while in the room in which my Grandmother was born 150 tumultuous years beforehand.

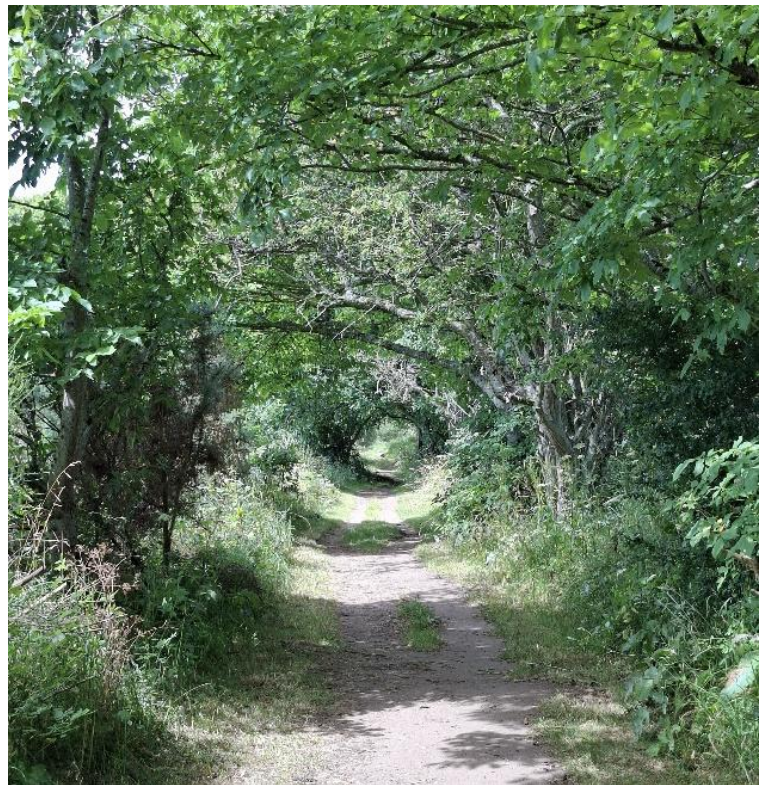
Ranald Noel-Paton



All these signets survived as I saw all seven of them fairly recently in the pond at the South Inch pretty much full grown. The nest was in the reeds visible from the walkway crossing the reed bed area of the pond.



Pathway to Bluebell Woods



Shelley Marsh

Treasurer's Update

The tasks which have previously been carried out by the Treasurer for St John's are now shared between two people. Ian Barrington is the official treasurer, and I (Cath Bodrell) have taken on a 'bookkeeper' role.

It is an evolving picture as the division of the role is a new way of working for St John's. But in broad terms:

- Ian has responsibility for legal matters – insurance policies, investments, annual OSCAR returns etc.
- I (Cath) deal with invoices, paying in weekly offerings, monthly balancing of the accounts etc.

If you have an invoice which needs to be paid or require reimbursement for a purchase made for the church, then this can come directly to me either via the tray in the church office or by email.

There are two trays in the office – one labelled "Treasurer" and the other "Cath".

And there are two email addresses:

- treasurer@episcopal-perth.org.uk
- bookkeeper@episcopal-perth.org.uk

Or of course you can speak to us. 😊

Unconscious Humour

Don't let worry kill you off. Let the Church help.

Barbara remains in hospital and needs blood transfusions. She is also having trouble sleeping and has requested tapes of the Rector's sermons.

During the absence of our Rector, we enjoyed the rare privilege of hearing a good sermon when JF Stubbs took over the pulpit.

The Rector will preach his farewell sermon after which the choir will sing 'Break forth into joy'.

The ladies of the Church have cast off clothing of every kind. They can be seen in the Hall on Friday afternoon.

Miss Charlene Madson sang 'I will not pass this way again', giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.

Contributed by Raymond King

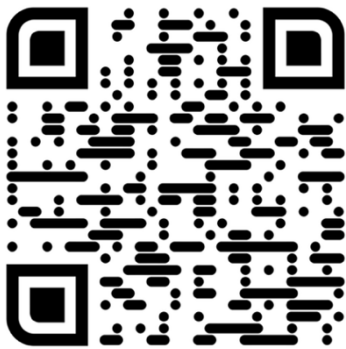


From the Editor

Thanks very much for everyone's contributions to this issue. All entries to the editor, David Willington dwillington@hotmail.com for our October and November issue by **Sunday 20th September**.

**Just a reminder that there is a tin at the back of the Church
if you wish to donate towards the costs of
producing *Quest*.**

Helpful QR Codes



St John's website



St John's Facebook page

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Retired Assistant Clergy	Rt Rev. Bruce Cameron Rev. Canon Shelley Marsh Rev. Canon Alan Tilson		
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