

Fond memories of Canon Harry Gilbert Grey Rorison M.A.



Canon Harry G Rorison resided with his sister Edith at **Downfield Cottage** on the eastern edge of **Westmuir Village**. By the 1950s Canon Rorison did not enjoy the best of health. Perhaps the combination of arthritis and war-time injuries restricted him physically but he was not a man to be deterred. Every day he would be seen walking along the **Main Road** with a coat slung over his shoulder and dressed in his favourite tweed jacket and plus-fours, thick woollen socks and enormous brogue shoes. His gait was awkward. He would walk in the centre of the roadway apparently dependent upon his tall walking stick. **Traffic would slowly work its way around Canon Rorison**. Thankfully there was much less traffic in the 1950s and most drivers knew him so would slowly and respectfully drive around him if he had been unaware of their approach.

Canon Rorison was born on **30 August 1879**, the son of **Rev. Vincent Lewis Rorison** and **Mrs Edith Rorison**. Harry was a student of **Keeble College Oxford** and **Wells Theological**

College. His first charge (1902 – 1904) was as **Curate at St Andrew's, Wells Street, London**. In 1904, at the age of twenty-five he embarked upon a whole new way of life by joining the **Royal Navy**. He became a **naval Chaplain** and saw both peace time and war time service. His sister **Edith** presented him with a **silver napkin ring** and **engraved on the ring** (see picture) are the **names of the ships he served on**.

eg. **HMS Minerva** 1904-6, **Cornwallis** 1907-9, **Implacable** 1909-11, **Vulcan** 1911, **Leviathan** 1913, **Endymion** 1913, **Thesius** 1913, **Edgar** 1913, **Victory** 1914, **Queen Elizabeth**, **Hercules** 1917, **Depot Royal Marines** 1919, **HMS Hawkins** 1921, **Vivid** 1923, **Defiant** 1927.



The **family home** for Canon Rorison's parents and sister Edith was in **Scotland** so it was perhaps inevitable that after Navy life Harry would also head north. Always a **keen walker**, the **Angus** area offered plenty scope for Harry to walk the **hills** and **corries** of these **beautiful glens**.



The **Very Rev. Vincent Lewis Rorison**, Harry's **father**, was an **Anglican priest**. Born in 1851 and educated at **Trinity College Glenalmond** and the **University of Aberdeen**, Vincent was ordained in 1874 he was **Chaplain to the Bishop of Aberdeen** after which he became **Rector of St John's Forfar**, before being appointed **Provost of St Ninian's Cathedral, Perth** in 1885, a post he held for 16 years. His final appointment was as **Dean of the Scottish Episcopal Diocese of St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane**. He died in August 1910.

The **Dundee Courier** made reference to **Canon Rorison** in 1941

There was a **fatal motorcycle accident** on August 7, 1941, involving a member of the Newfoundland Overseas Forestry Unit in Angus (January 12). **John Brushet** (the Newfoundlander who died) was cycling near his base at the camp at **Ben Screavie, in Glen Moy**, when he was in collision with a motor car driven by a fellow Newfoundlander (**Joshua Godwin**) from the same camp.

"John Brushet's coffin was draped with the Union Jack and the funeral service was conducted in St Mary's by the Rev Harry Rorison. A large number of his fellow workers from the camp attended."

The camp was at **Cornlennie** (on the road from **Glen Moy** over to **Horniehaugh** and **Scallywell**). The Newfoundlanders stayed in wooden huts during the war and were employed to cut timber. After the war, **Will Lamont** (a rabbit trapper), locally known as **Rabbity Will**, lived in one of the huts.

Anne Bowes-Lyon



During his time at **Glamis Castle** he would have lived through some dramatic times when for example a daughter of the house (**Queen Mother**) was widowed and her daughter became Queen. In his role as Castle Chaplain he **officiated at a number of special events such as a Royal wedding at Glamis in 1950** when **Anne Bowes-Lyon** (niece of the late Queen mother) married **Prince George of Denmark**.



Queen Mother & King
George VI

Both Canon Rorison and his sister Edith were frequent visitors to the **Westmuir village shoppie** and **Edith** would always be accompanied by their beloved **Smuttie**, an endearing **black Scottie dog**. Smuttie had quite a reputation, not having the sweetest of temperaments and being inclined to **snap and bite when least expected**. A character of a 'family pet' and certainly a great companion to Harry's sister. **Edith**, sadly had a cleft palate and one wonders how different her life might have been had she been born a few decades later when a relatively simple medical procedure was discovered to rectify that. She had a lovely nature but conversation was difficult both for her and for the listener.



Some of the cottages, in Main Road in Westmuir, that Canon Rorison would have walked past.

There were **few houses in that stretch of the Main Road at Westmuir in the 1950s** yet it seemed to attract a cluster of interesting people. The **Berry Growers** were always entertaining and in some ways the backbone of the village. They **provided enough employment** especially for mum's and school children to provide good extra income and all on 'home ground'. No need to travel further afield. There will be people in the village even yet who can recall **Bert MacDonald, Bunnie and Bob Couper, George Smith** and perhaps even **Dave Lawson. Gairn** (The **White House**) was the home of a **Mr Lyell** who was a member of the **Tate and Lyell sugar company**. The lovely house of '**Carraig**' was occupied by **Ingles Karwowska** who had been a **professional Ballet Dancer in London** in her younger days. Later in the 1950s this became the home of **Stuart McGugan** one of the first people featured in '**Past and Present**' in the **Westmuir Village Website**. Stuart became an **Actor of TV and screen** and **now lives in London**. Where nowadays there is the well known **Alpine Plant Nursery**, the house and gardens there were the home of **Mr Bob Hood** who had strong connections with the **Lord Roberts workshop for the blind in Dundee** and who would meet the **Queen Mother** regularly on her **annual visits to the Workshops**.