

CHURCH OF ABERDOUR – WOMAN'S GUILD – 1936-1986

Now in its fiftieth year, the function of Aberdour Woman's Guild has changed little over the half century as far as its main aim – that being to support the church at home and abroad. However fifty years could not pass without significant changes and the two most obvious are the drop in light entertainment possibly brought by the advent of television and the summer 'bus trips' perhaps because many families now own a car.

Aberdour Woman's Guild was formed in 1936 by Mrs Bennie, housekeeper to the minister, the Rev W. Potter. Mrs Bennie took the role of president and between twenty and thirty ladies joined initially, paying a subscription of 1/-. Meetings, as they still are today, were held in the school on the first Thursday of the month. In the very first minute, it was noted that a legacy of £50 was received from the estate of the late Mrs Fowlie, and this money bought the individual communion cups for the church. Sadly Rev Potter died that same year and Mrs Bennie's post was subsequently filled by the new minister's wife, Mrs Adams.

Then came the Second World War and the post of President changed with great regularity. However, the Guild continued to attract members and worked hard during the war years to raise funds for charities other than the church. Very many concerts and plays were performed by neighbouring churches and drama groups. In 1943 one play performed included in the cast a young lad who was to return to the village many years later and is now our own minister the Rev Charles Birnie. Those who benefited from these concerts included the soldiers, sailors and airman of the village who were given the princely sum of 2/- on return from active service.

Summer outings and trips to the theatre were also the order of the day. Burns Suppers were popular each year but on several occasions had to be cancelled at the last minute due to stormy weather, leaving the ladies with big pots of neeps and tatties to share with their neighbours.

It was towards the end of 1953 that a big change occurred within the church. Pennan, along with the mother church of Aberdour, were to be linked with Tyrie and the new minister the Rev W. Menzies Hannah and Mrs Hannah were to live in Tyrie Manse. In spite of the linkage, the two guilds continued to function separately with Mrs Hannah at the helm of both. She is remembered today as an extremely hard-working lady, engineering on one occasion, a grand sale of work for much needed renovations to the church. This sale raised a total of £506 and the church enjoyed a facelift and a new beautiful red carpet. This was in 1957 and the secretary at the time was Nurse Linda Gatt of Pennan who was to return as a guest speaker eighteen years later to tell of her recent visit to Buckingham Palace where she received an M.B.E. from Her Majesty the Queen for services to health and nursing.

During the sixties and seventies, the Guild remained solid, continuing to raise funds for overseas missions as well as its own church.

Who knows what the next fifty years will have in store, but there is little doubt that ladies of the Guild will continue their mission work at home and abroad in much the same way as Mrs Bennie envisaged fifty years ago.

Taken from the 1887-1987, Buchan East Presbyterial Council, Church of Scotland Woman's Guild Centenary Year Book.

Aberdour Guild is still going today but is now known as the Guild and can include men and woman. Unfortunately Aberdour does not have any male members. There are about 12 members of the Guild today and they still meet in the school on the first Thursday of the month from October to March with the exception of January when it may fall on the second Thursday depending on when the school opens after the Christmas and New Year holiday. The Guild still supports projects at home and abroad as well as supporting Aberdour Church. The current President is Mrs Sheila Duguid who also happens to be Treasurer for the Church.

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