

The Grapevine



The Magazine of Saint Magnus Cathedral Congregation

WORSHIP AT THE CATHEDRAL THIS SUMMER

Services are held in St. Magnus Cathedral every Sunday at 11.15 am.

Sunday 22nd June.

Festival service: music by the Cathedral choir and the Scottish Chamber Orchestra

Sunday 3rd August.

Celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Communion

Sunday 24th August

Anniversary service to mark the 850th anniversary of the death of St. Rognvald

Sunday 7th September

Sacrament of Holy Communion: Science Festival service

GRAPEVINE

The magazine of St Magnus Cathedral Summer Edition 2008

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EDITORIAL

In this year, when we celebrate 850 years since the death of St Rognvald, founder of the Cathedral in which we are privileged to worship, it seems right that this edition of the Grapevine should focus on him, the Cathedral and the St Magnus Centre.

Not one of us was around when the Cathedral was built, new members join us each year, and we welcome hundreds of visitors annually to the Cathedral and the Centre. This Grapevine tells some of the story of Rognvald and his building of the Cathedral. It also tells the story of a much later vision - the St Magnus Centre - an enterprise that needed the support of the whole community.

I hope, for those of you who have heard the first story so often and lived the second; that this magazine will still hold something new. For all who come to Orkney to worship with us and marvel at the beauty of our great Cathedral, I hope it offers a glimpse of more than just a marvellous building.

Material for the Autumn Edition of the Grapevine should reach the Editor, Sally Heddle or the Minister Revd. Fraser Macnaughton no later than July 27th



Taking part in an online discussion on the future of the Church recently, we got involved in this following anecdote as an illustration of the dangers to the church in the west if it follows the course of the Swiss watch makers.....

If people would have been asked in 1968 which nation would dominate the world in watch making during the 1990s and into the twenty-first century the answer would have been uniform: Switzerland. Why? Because Switzerland had dominated the world of watch making for the previous sixty years.

The Swiss made the best watches in the world and were committed to constant refinement of their expertise. It was the Swiss who came forward with the minute hand and the second hand. They led the world in discovering better ways to manufacture the gears, bearings, and mainsprings of watches. They even led the way in waterproofing techniques and self-winding models. By 1968, the Swiss made 65 percent of all watches sold in the world and laid claim to as much as 90 percent of the profits.

By 1980, however, they had laid off thousands of watchmakers and controlled less than 10 percent of the world market. Their profit domination dropped to less than 20 percent. Between 1979 and 1981, fifty thousand of the sixty-two thousand Swiss watchmakers lost their jobs. Why? The Swiss had refused to consider a new development - the Quartz movement - ironically, invented by a Swiss. Because it had no mainspring or knob, it was rejected. It was too much of a paradigm shift for them to embrace. Seiko, on the other hand, accepted it and, along with a few other companies, became the leader in the watch industry.

The lesson of the Swiss watchmakers is profound. A past that was so secure, so profitable, so dominant was destroyed by people's unwillingness to consider the future. It was more than not being able to make predictions-it was an inability to re-think how they did business. Past success had blinded them to the importance of seeing the implications of the changing world and to admit that past accomplishment was no guarantee of future success.

Substitute Swiss watchmakers for the church; and it is not hard to see the similarity.

We ignore it at our peril.

Fraser Macnaughton

Our older members may like to know that the wife of Rev G Arthur Fryer, Minister of the Cathedral from 1937-1954, died on 29 March this year. Mrs Fryer died in New Zealand to where she and her husband had emigrated and they are survived by their daughter Ann to whom we extend our condolences.

KIRKWALL FLOWER ARRANGEMENT CLUB - PRESENTS



Our Cathedral: the Wonder and Glory of the North

Over the years, the annual display of floral arrangements in the Cathedral has been a popular feature of the St Magnus Fair. Although there will not be a Fair as such this year, the Flower Club will be putting on their usual display as part of the programme of events to commemorate the founder of the Cathedral, Earl Rognvald.

Then, what better theme to choose for their display than the Cathedral itself. For the first time, a major part of the display is based in the St Rognvald Chapel depicting aspects of Rognvald's life and the founding of the Cathedral. Other parts will focus on our Norwegian heritage, on the Cathedral building itself, on the part the Cathedral plays in the life of the Orkney community today and on the role of the Friends of St Magnus.

The event takes place, as advertised, from Wednesday 13 August to Sunday 17 August.

The Kirkwall Flower Arrangement Club is grateful for the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund in part-funding this event.

Kali Kohlsson - St Rognvald

When Orkney was under Norwegian rule, Udal law was the system of government. This meant that from time to time, when an Earl had two sons, both inherited equal shares of the Earldom and each ruled part of it. This often led to enmity and strife. On the 16th April 1116, Earl Magnus was treacherously led to his death by his cousin Earl Haakon - a death that Magnus accepted with humility and dignity. A cult formed around Magnus, attesting to many miracles. Magnus was declared a saint in about 1135.

Magnus had no family. In 1129, his nephew Kali Kohlsson, living in Norway, was renamed Rognvald by Sigurd, king of Norway, when he backed Kali's claim to Magnus' share of the Orkney Earldom. When Rognvald tried to further his claim in 1134, the then Earl of Orkney, Paul Haakonson refused and repelled Rognvald's first attempt. Rognvald, in trying to enlist support for his cause, vowed that if he succeeded he would build a great cathedral in honour of his uncle, the martyred Magnus

It was through the cunning of Swein Asleifson that Earl Paul was captured and probably murdered. Rognvald was thus able to rule the entire Earldom of Orkney, Shetland and Caithness as sole Earl. He kept his promise of building a cathedral in Kirkwall. The red sandstone used in its construction came from nearby Head of Holland and the yellow stone from the island of Eday. Masons from Durham were invited to Orkney to assist in the building, which began in 1137.

However, money for the project ran out. Earl Rognvald determined that his great Cathedral should not be imperilled, offered the Orkney people the opportunity to buy back their "Udal" rights to ownership of their land. The Orkney men agreed (a somewhat strange deal, as in 995 the udal rights had been restored by Earl Sigurd the Stout). Earl Rognvald received his money. As the Cathedral began to grow, he set out on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, entrusting the ruling of Orkney to a teenager, Earl Harald.

Rognvald's adventures included falling in love, in Narbonne in France, with its beautiful queen, Ermingard; invading a castle in Spain; and capturing, looting and burning a Moorish merchant ship (a dromond) - all before he reached Jerusalem. The Saga tells us he bathed in the river Jordan. He then took to horseback and rode home across Europe.

There seems to be an irreconcilable division between the apparent piety of a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and the persistent feuds and battles for power between Earls and both their followers and enemies. Treaties and promises of friendship often proved worthless. Enmity surfaced again in the Earldom. In 1158, at Calder in Caithness, Earl Rognvald was murdered by Thorbjorn, his former friend. As with Magnus, miracles were attributed to him, and he was made a saint in 1192. Above all else he kept his word in an age of deceit and turmoil.

This was a period of unrest and instability for Orkney and its people, but their great Cathedral stood partially completed by the Kirkwall shore, and two of its Earls, Magnus and Rognvald, had been made saints with their remains enshrined within. The influence and importance of Magnus, Rognvald and the Kirk continues to this day.



A 20th century statue of Rognvald, holding a model of the Cathedral as originally designed and as he knew it.

St MAGNUS CATHEDRAL

The village of Kirkwall already had a parish church when Rognvald began building his memorial to his uncle. Hence its name, *Kirkjuvagr* or Church Bay. This church was situated beside the burn in what is now St. Olaf's Wynd. The new building was to be further south on the shores of the Peerie Sea, which was then the village harbour. A jetty, workshops and houses for labourers were built by the shore. The new Cathedral, as it began to rise, must have been a magnificent sight for ships entering the harbour, as it stood close to the water's edge. According to the Okneyinga Saga, Rognvald stood and watched the sails from his ship being carried into his new kirk for winter storage.

The Cathedral has many unusual features. Although it took three hundred years to complete, it does not have such extremes of architectural styles as most English Cathedrals. It is also built directly on the base rock with no undercroft. The west end was added some three hundred years later, but as it was built out on to what had been the shore, it has tended to move. The Cathedral's vast walls are honeycombed with passages and stairs. One flight leads to the bell chamber with its three bells which are rung to call people to Sunday worship; as a curfew each evening at 8.00pm; and at funerals and times of rejoicing.

On the festival of St Lucy in 1146, St Magnus's remains were brought to their final resting place in the Cathedral. In 1241, on August the 19th - the Feast of St Rognvald - the Cathedral was rededicated to St Magnus and St Rognvald.

Because the Cathedral was privately built, it belonged to the Earl as his personal property. St Magnus Cathedral still does not belong to the Church of Scotland or the state. In 1468, Margaret, the daughter of Christian I of Denmark, was to marry James III of Scotland. Christian was unable to pay the dowry of 20,000 florins of the Rhein, so he mortgaged Orkney until he could afford to redeem the islands. That pledge has never been redeemed.

In 1486, recognising that maintenance of the Cathedral would be an ever-increasing expense; King James gave the building to the parish of Kirkwall and St Ola. When regionalisation took place in the 20th century, Orkney Islands Council became the technical owners on behalf of the population.

The Kirk and the Ship

The master mason said
'Sail to the island of Eday
And quarry blocks of yellow stone.'

Others drove oxen to the Head of Holland
Where sandstone is red.
The lark's skein
About and about the April hill was thrown.

They did that work, the labouring Orkneymen.

Masons from Durham, strange speakers,
Squared the blocks rough-hewn. They chiselled their marks, setting
stone on stone.

And the Kirkwall villagers
Paused, and shook wondering heads, and went on.

And the kirk grew, like a lovely ship
Freighted with psalm and ceremony, blissward blown.

*

He that ordered the minster
Fluttered in a frailer ship
Across the Mediterranean
With pauses for dalliance, siege, piracy
But always Jerusalem-drawn.

*

Pillars soared up, red as fire or blood.
And in one they laid
Their martyr, Magnus: his breached bellchambered bone.

This poem by George Mackay Brown is reprinted here by kind permission of John Murray (Publishers).

SAILS IN SAINT MAGNUS

During the summer, the Cathedral will be adorned with 14 sails. The preceding extract from *The Collected Poems of George Mackay Brown* and the following ten simple descriptive lines by him, are printed here by kind permission of John Murray Publishers.

St Rognvald's Journey to Jerusalem

Rognvald's epic voyage was the inspiration for a major artistic event in the 1993 St Magnus Festival. Fourteen sails, painted by local artists, were hung in the nave of St Magnus Cathedral. Drawing their inspiration from the poet's text, each of the sails celebrated a 'station' on the great Viking pilgrimage to Jerusalem. This artistic enterprise has now acquired a musical dimension in a sequence of orchestral and choral works composed by Sir Peter Maxwell Davies for the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra.

- I Fifteen keels laid in Norway for Jerusalem-farers
- II In Kirkwall, the first red Saint Magnus stones
- III An Orkney wintering. Stone poems in Orkahowe:
'great treasure...'
- IV Bishop William: a blessing on pilgrim sails
- V Westerly gale in Biscay, salt in the bread broken
- VI The bishop's ship a small storm-tossed kirk
- VII Rognvald and Ermengarde: roses, lyrics in Narbonne
- VIII The winter burning of a Spanish castle
- IX Eindred's desertion, five sails dwindling eastward
- X A dromond taken, the torrent of molten gold

Celebrations for the 850th Anniversary of St Rognvald's death

A leaflet is available which details all the events which take place this summer. The following are only those which take place in the Cathedral or its environs:

Riders of Sea Horses

Thursday 19 June, 7.00 pm

Friday 20 June, 2.00pm and 6.00pm

Children's dance, art, music and drama spectacular

The Martyrdom of St Magnus

Wednesday 25 June, 9.00pm

Opera by Sir Peter Maxwell Davies

Faring: Rognvald's return

Friday 27 June, 7.00pm and 9.30 pm

Saturday 28 June, 7.00pm and 9.30 pm

Outdoor performance on the kirk green including an aerial performance focussing on the Cathedral

OUR CATHEDRAL: the Wonder and Glory of the North

Wednesday 13 August, 2.00pm, to Sunday 17 August, 5.00pm

Kirkwall Flower Arrangement Club commemorates the St Rognvald Anniversary with a display of floral art in the Cathedral in aid of the Cathedral Restoration Fund.

Riders of Sea Horses

Repeat of the Orkney Schools' celebratory production

Saturday 23 August, 12 noon

Rognvald 850th Commemorative Service

Sunday 24 August 11.15 am

The service will be conducted by the Cathedral Minister, Revd Fraser Macnaughton. It will include musicians from Rognvald's hometown of Grimstad in Norway, and the premiere of a specially commissioned anthem for the Cathedral Choir and organ by Gemma McGregor.

THE ST MAGNUS CENTRE

The new St Magnus Centre, which is situated in Palace Road behind the Cathedral Cemetery, arose initially out of necessity. The old hall, which is now part of the new building, was in a deplorable state and desperately in need of modernisation. At that time it was largely used for activities relating to the Cathedral congregation.

By the late 1990s the question was whether just to do up the hall or look for a more innovative solution. The Four possible options were:

- Sell the site.
- Renovate the hall.
- Add a small extension for the congregation's use.
- Develop a centre which would benefit the wider community and visitors to the Cathedral.

The last, most expensive but most imaginative option, was preferred.

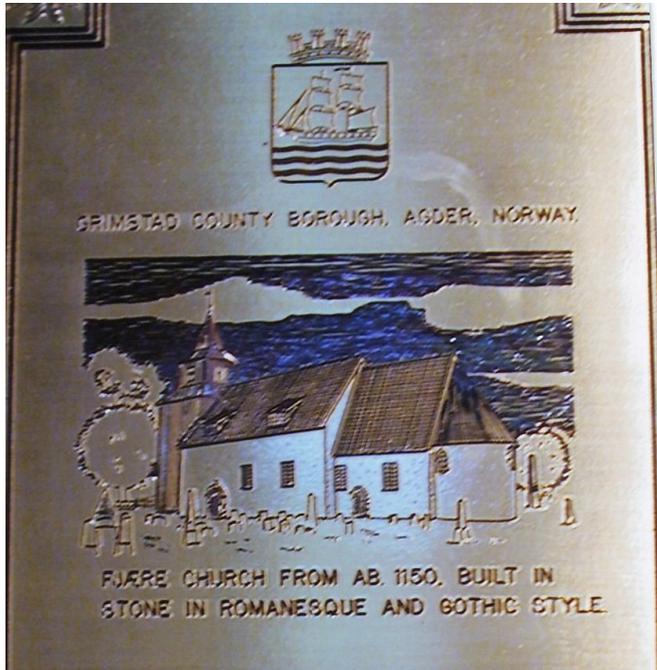
The generosity of a church member then made it possible for an architectural competition to be funded. This offered not only publicity but also a wider choice of design. The winning design was by a young architect from Ayrshire, Gordon Fleming. It offered an imaginative use of space and light with spectacular views of the Cathedral. A library was included in the architect's remit, but it would require extra fund raising. However, a generous gift from Norway enabled the room to be constructed with the best Norwegian timber and slate. The magnificent stained glass window was donated by Brigadier SP Robertson in memory of his wife, Elsa.

The Friends of St Magnus Cathedral were closely associated with the project and helped fund the Friends' Room and video. There, visitors can watch and hear the story of the martyrdom of Earl Magnus and the building of the Cathedral by Earl Rognvald.



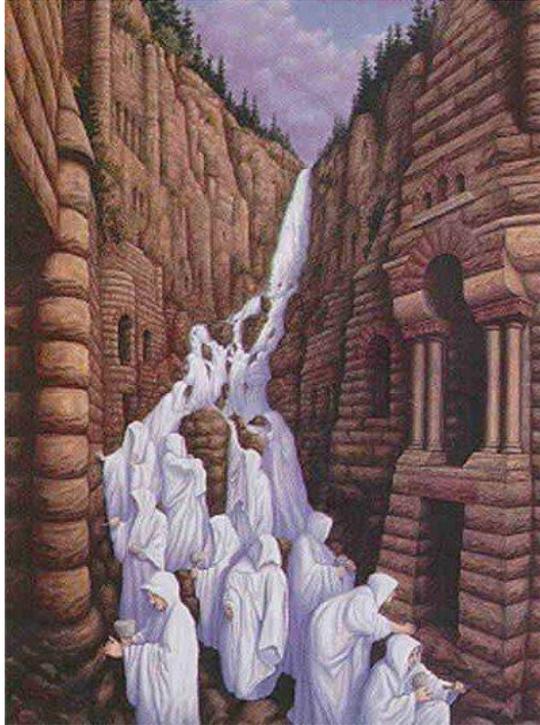
The building was opened in 2001 by Crown Prince Haakon Magnus of Norway. It has been highly acclaimed, winning a Civic Trust, a Laura Grimond Heritage award and an award from the Glasgow Institute of Architects.

Through the vision of the Minister, Kirk Session and congregation of St Magnus Cathedral, the old hall has been transformed into a centre of vitality and beauty. Because it was seen primarily as a place of service to the community, it was initially budgeted to run at a loss - but the support from the local community has meant that it has run at a profit from its inception. It is a place to which local people and visitors return. It offers rooms for training, a quiet library, a hall for parties, an area in which to sit down and enjoy a cup of coffee, and the opportunity to meet the staff and volunteers who are always present to greet visitors. Training courses, musical activities, painting and conversation over coffee: all these now take place in the St Magnus Centre. It is truly a centre, which feeds body, mind and soul.



This is taken from a plaque in St Magnus Cathedral. It illustrates the Faere Church in Grimstad, Norway, which was built through the generosity of Earl Rognvald. It is situated only 2 kilometres from the estate where Rognvald was born. The Christmas tree given annually to the Cathedral each year comes from the forest of Grimstad where Rognvald played as a boy. The plaque was presented to the Cathedral on the 850th anniversary of the foundation of the Cathedral in honour of Rognvald and his father, who oversaw the building of this great Church.

The illustration in the last Grapevine showed a design high up on an arch in the south transept. It is one of the last remnants of mediaeval painting, which once adorned much of this building.



HOW MANY PEOPLE?



PRAYER

Holy God,
Source of our Being,
Ground of our life,
we sense your glory
and your pain.
We search for you in books and debate
and find you in our relationships
with neighbours,
and enemies,
and strangers...