

# Floods upon the Dry Ground

## God working among fisherfolk

‘I will pour water upon Him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour My Spirit upon thy seed and My blessing upon thine offspring.’ Isaiah 44:3

Jackie Ritchie

Originally Published 1983 by Peterhead Offset Printers.

Jackie Ritchie was born of fisherfolk parents in the North East of Scotland. His father and mother were converted in the spiritual awakening described in this book.

Jackie went to sea in the old steam drifters and later sailed in motor boats. While standing idly one day near the Cross Keys at Peterhead Harbour, he heard some workers from the Faith Mission along with Tom Paterson of the Deep Sea Mission preach the Gospel he knew so well from his early days. He was convicted of his need and later that night went along to the Mission in Charlotte Street, where these men were preaching. A few days later, on the 15th of September, 1954, he gave his heart to Christ, while in his late teens. In 1958 he left the fishing, attended the Faith Mission Bible School in Edinburgh and worked for a few years as a Pilgrim in the Faith Mission. As an independent evangelist, he travelled throughout Britain, including Ulster and Southern Ireland.

He lived with his wife and two daughters in the Northern Highlands of Scotland. He died in 2004.

# **Floods upon the Dry Ground**

by  
**Jackie Ritchie**

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This is the text of the book  
**“Floods upon the Dry Ground” by Jackie Ritchie,**  
presented in this form by  
Graeme Young from whom this and other resources on  
revivals in the North East of Scotland are available.

It is hoped that making this important account available,  
now that the book is no longer in print, will be in  
accordance with the wishes of the author’s family, and I  
would be happy to hear from them to ensure that this is  
the case.

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## Introduction

The 1921 spiritual awakening amongst the fisherfolk of Scotland had a tremendous influence, and many lives were changed because of a response to simple Gospel preaching under the anointing of God's Holy Spirit.

Little has been left in record about this move of God, so after great conviction of heart I felt such a record should be left as 'a remembrance', just as the stones were left for a testimony for future generations in Joshua's day to mark the opening of the Jordan for the Children of Israel, as told in Joshua chapter 4 verse 6.

This spiritual awakening has a special place in my heart because it was then that both my parents were converted, which meant that I had one of the greatest privileges anyone can ever have, that of being brought up in a Christian home.

As I have travelled the length of Scotland obtaining as much first hand information as possible, I have met with nothing but encouragement to put on record the things seen and heard.

It has been my purpose to keep this account within a six month period, September 1921 to February 1922, although it was felt that I should include the **Portsoy** revival of 1923 which had a direct link with the move of God in 1921.

In compiling such an account of this vital period in the history of evangelism it has not been possible for me to mention everyone who was involved.

As a young Christian I used to listen spellbound to my parents recounting events which took place during the 1921 revival. This created a deep impression on my mind for to hear my late father tell in the only way he could of how he was saved in the engine room of a herring-drifter eight miles from the Haisboro' lightship was something I shall never forget.

When God moved, He was His own publicity agent, so when it was "noised abroad" people came from far and near to hear the wonders of a God Who proved that He was still on the throne.

We trust as you read this little book, the events described within have been authenticated by the witnesses involved, your heart will be gripped, and you will be led to cry out, "Do it again Lord."

*Once more Lord,  
Once more Lord  
As in the days of yore,  
On this dear land Thy Spirit pour  
Set Scotland now on fire.*

**Jackie Ritchie (1983)**

## Chapter 1

# FISHERFOLK

Fisherfolk have always been a unique breed of people. Living constantly in the shadow of a tragedy, a wife or a mother as she bids farewell to her loved ones leaving for a fishing trip has the secret fear that she may never see them again. The fatality rate is very high in comparison with other industries.

Around the beginning of the century, the fishermen usually lived in parts of their towns near the seafront. Houses were made of granite and often had wooden floors. In the living room would be the range-fire with a stool extending across the whole front of the range. Built into one wall would be the "Box-bed", which was a bed with three sides covered in, hence the name. This arrangement made the resting place warm and comfortable. At the rear of the dwelling was the part which contained the wash-tub and wringer. Nets were often mended in the garret upstairs or in some cases in an outhouse. In fine days during the summer, mending would be done outside.

Some of the fishermen used lines to catch fish. These lines were baited with mussels which were gathered from the seashore at a place known as the scaup. This was mainly the task of the females, while the male members went to sea. Whenever they reached a suitable age, the females would learn to mend nets, go to the scaup for mussels, to sheel and bait the lines.

The staple diet of fishermen was plain foods, consisting of porridge and soups, with vegetable broth a speciality. Saturday dinner was salt herring and tattie time. The herring would be cured in a small barrel at the summer season with another barrel cured at the East Anglian fishing. Also on their menu would be dried fish, either ling or tusk. These fish would be cleaned, split down the front, salted and dried on the rocks.

In some cases church attendance was regular, each family going to their respective church. Every household had its own seat in the place of worship and parents would really feel proud going to church as a whole family. For church, the men would wear dark navy suits, while the women wore dresses down to the calves of their legs. After the service, especially during the summer, the family would go for a short walk, but whenever they arrived home their Sunday clothes were exchanged for more casual dress. The Sunday clothes were also the attire worn at funerals, which were occasions of great mourning. When a disaster took place at sea, it would be a time of deep sorrow; whole communities lamented the loss of an individual or an entire crew.

Weddings amongst fisherfolk were times of rejoicing. In the earlier part of this century, a young fisherman usually chose for his bride a lass from a 'fisher' family, knowing that she would have a first-hand idea of the hardships he faced. Another reason being that she would have learned to mend nets - a great asset to any fisherman who owned gear.

Sea-going men wore thick underwear, often knitted at home. Their trousers would be made of a strong material, which gave them the name of "Hairback Troosers". The home knitted "Faroe Jersies" were famous and kept them warm in low temperatures.

Oilskins which stretched down to the knees had high necks. On every head was perched the well known "Sou-wester", which had a small peak at the front and a longer one at the back. Sea boots to the thighs were essential. Women when gutting the herring wore an oilskin frock known as a "Quite", this reached almost to the ankles. Rubber boots were supplied by the employer who was a curer. The head was covered by a scarf. Each of the fingers would have "Cloots" tied around it for protection from the sharp knives used to gut. These women worked at an astonishing speed.

A herring drifter crew consisted of 9 or 10 men including skipper-mate, five deckhands, cook and two engineers known as the "black squad". Life on deck was very hard. Seventy or eighty nets had to be pulled in all kinds of weather. It would be very difficult to get the nets aboard if the wind changed direction after the nets were laid. When the nets were on board, if the catch was reasonable, the nets had to be "red up" - that is cleaned. This was a task that was performed with extreme caution, as it was undertaken when the drifter was steaming at top speed towards port in order to obtain the highest price for the fish. Since the deck crew were paid on a share basis, every minute counted in getting the catch ready for sale. In charge of the engine room was the "driver" who kept the steam engine going full speed. The fireman was kept very busy stoking the boiler with coal. During hauling operations, if the catch was good, the engineer could "scum" the herring that dropped out of the nets. In doing so he earned what was known as "stoker", which was shared between himself, the fireman and the cook. The fireman also took his turn out of the engine room during the time the boat was fishing. His task was to coil the leader rope on to which the nets were tied. This was a very monotonous job, lasting hours on end and it took place in a small locker room in the fore part of the vessel. Cooking for nine or ten men was no easy task. As the nets were hauled in the cook's job was to pull in the "sol-rope" which was the lower part of the net. After the nets were aboard the crew had to be fed. Every second morning he would clean three dozen fresh herring and fry them for breakfast. Cooking was done in the galley on a coal-fired stove and space was limited. Three of the crew members were paid a weekly wage. The engineer received around £1 10s (£1.50), the fireman around £1 5s (£1.25) and the same for the cook. On top of this was the sum received for the herring mentioned before which provided these three men with "stoker".

The 1914-18 war had just finished and men were coming home to their ordinary way of life. Fishermen were returning from the Royal Naval Reserve Patrol to take up their work which had been interrupted by the call to arms.

Steam drifters were replacing the sailing boats, some of which had been fitted with engines. Mechanical propulsion brought increased mobility and men travelled long distances following the herring around Britain. As the fish moved round the coasts, the boats were based at the most convenient port.

For a few months during the first part of the year the most frequented port was Stornoway on the Isle of Lewis, off the west coast of Scotland. This was not a popular season and often produced mixed results. From April to June or July the herring would be "swimming" in the North, so the boats were based in the Shetlands at Baltasound or Lerwick. This was a very important season attracting boats from all the fishing towns, including English ports. Many land based fish curing firms came to

Shetland, employing women from all over Scotland and even as far as Ireland to gut and pack the lovely large fish. There was also a base at Stronsay in Orkney. The months of June till September saw the fish move to an area which could be reached by boats from Wick, the Moray Firth ports, Fraserburgh and Peterhead. In the autumn a large contingent went to East Anglia, to the ports of Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft. Some haddock line boats worked locally during the winter with a few bigger boats going to the "great lines" fishing for cod, ling, tusk, skate and halibut. Often the fishing season was a failure due to bad markets and lack of herring.

It was among the fisher-folk living and working in such conditions and circumstances that God moved in power during the later months of 1921.

## Chapter 2

### GOD'S INSTRUMENTS

This was a time of spiritual declension. Yet in the mending lofts, on the boats and along the quays there were those who had a hunger for God. Days and nights were spent in prayer before the Throne of Grace. God had moved upon the hearts of these people who had little education and whose material means were limited, but who were "farben" with Him. They knew the way into God's presence and took time to wait upon the Lord. In a few years time it was proved that, 'They that wait upon the Lord ..... shall mount up with wings as eagles'. (Isaiah 40 v 31) These men 'whose hearts the Lord had touched', had received a vision and were willing to wait upon God until the vision became a reality. Tremendous things had already taken place a few years previous when 'times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord' were experienced in Wales during the revival in 1904. Coal miners were converted in their thousands and whole villages were moved for God. Much more was accomplished in one night than men had tried to do in many years. On that occasion a humble man called Evan Roberts was used by God.

Men were being prepared for the coming days. One of these was the Rev. A. Douglas Brown, a Baptist minister from **London** and son of one of C.H. Spurgeon's workers during the time when Spurgeon was minister at the Metropolitan Tabernacle in **London**. Douglas had this to say, "My father's life was a constant and sacred inspiration to me, not only during my early life, but in the later years until he fell asleep in Jesus. Whatever blessing has come to other lives through my ministry and evangelistic work, I owe, under God, to the inspiration, advice and example of one who by his fidelity to the truth and loyalty to Christ, awakened in my heart the Calvary passion for souls." There is no doubt that Douglas had been reared in the principles of revival through the personal life and teaching of his father.

As he ministered to his congregation week after week, this shy man, although he had an experience of salvation, remained aloof from his people. One day he received a new touch from God. He left his pulpit, came down and walked among his congregation. Everyone received a handshake and when he confessed his lack of concern, tears of repentance and rejoicing followed. What a day it was when amidst all the ritual, God broke a man at His feet. Douglas's ministry was revolutionised, blessing crowned it from that day. He experienced what Jesus said in John 12verse 24, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." The transformation that took place that day was to be the means of Douglas Brown going into places and situations he would never have thought possible, not even in his wildest dreams. He was to become one of the great evangelists of the 1920s. The godly Rev. J. Stuart Holden of St. Paul's, Portman Square, London had this to say of him, "He is a teacher sent from God. His words have a power of penetration whether they be spoken or in the printed page. His subject is always Christ, and hence the Divine authentication of his words; and that has made him amongst the most successful evangelists of our day."

It was in February 1921 that Douglas Brown came into that great experience and fully surrendered his life to God. On the last Sunday of February 1921, ninety six people came forward for Christ in the evening service at his church. Within four days he

found himself in **Lowestoft** where God saved many souls at meetings conducted in London Road Baptist Church. In the Annual Report of the Faith Mission magazine "Bright Words" of July 1921, the record states, "Spiritual blessing has arisen in the East of England. 'All East Anglia is on fire for God' is a statement made by the Rev. A. Douglas Brown who is being principally used in this remarkable movement which started at **Lowestoft**, and has since extended to **Ipswich, Yarmouth** and other places."

Douglas Brown was to be one of the key instruments in the hand of God when He moved later that year among the fisher-folks. How wonderful to realise that God's methods are men.

Away at the other end of Britain in a fishing town called **Wick**, in Caithness, God was preparing another servant who was going to be used. God takes the most unlikely people to do His work.

He took David to defeat the enemies of Israel in the valley of Elah. Elijah the Tishbite was called to stand on Mount Carmel against the prophets of Baal. A humble fisherman called Peter was to be His instrument on the day of Pentecost. When God chose Jock Troup for His work, He was following the pattern He had established in Scripture. "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the things which are mighty." (1 Corinthians 1 verse 7).

Jock Troup, whose name was to become famous in many places in the days to come, was born in Morayshire in 1896. He came with his parents to Caithness as a boy. Wick was then the premier herring port in Scotland. The economy of the town depended on the harvest of the "Silver Darlings", as the herring were called. Jock's parents were well known in **Wick**, his father for his skill in playing the mandolin, while Mrs. Troup owned a pie and tea shop in the main street.

When Jock left school he went to train as a "cooper" with the firm of Fleet in their curing yard on the Pulteney side of **Wick**. This type of work was very hard and required long hours. Whenever the young apprentice was free he began to pursue pleasure. At work he became a very skilled cooper.

War clouds were gathering over Britain and soon the 1914-18 conflict would commence. Jock was called up and joined the Royal Naval Patrol Service. He became a crew member of the steam drifter, Strombo which was based outside **Dublin** at a place called Kingston. The crew was made up of godless men who spent much time gambling.

When ashore, Jock attended Gospel meetings on a Sunday night in **Dublin** Y.M.C.A. where a Mr. & Mrs. West were in charge who were keen soul winners for Jesus. One Sunday night after Mr. West preached, Jock said, "I think I'll get converted." Although this was spoken in a light manner, the prayers of some friends in **Wick** were being answered.

The old fashioned conviction of sin was heavy upon Jock. He stopped swearing, smoking and tried to turn over a new leaf. During the long days on patrol he was restless, his darkened soul could find no peace, so he made up his mind to go and see Mrs. West when he got ashore. By this time the conviction of sin was so heavy that he



was afraid to sleep lest he wake up in hell. True to his resolve, when his patrol was finished, he went to see Mrs. West, who dealt with him from the Word of God. This seeking soul could not grasp the truth of free salvation. While he made his way back to the ship the Devil told him that he was one of the damned. Instead of going to the cabin, Jock went into the wheelhouse and prayed to God for salvation. Immediately the transaction took place and he found "A Saviour, Christ the Lord". God had got His man who was to be "a sharp instrument having teeth" in the days to come.

Jock took his stand for Christ right away. After the incident in the wheelhouse he went to the cabin where the crew were playing cards and boldly testified to salvation. Some of the crew mocked, but the One Who had saved him, stood by him. That night he went across to another ship called the "Sparkling Star" which was on the same patrol. A stalwart for Christ named Andy Duthie was her skipper and he was asleep. The new convert woke him and told what had happened. This wise Christian replied, "Son, you've made the greatest and finest decision anyone can make. You have a friend in me always."

Wherever he went the transformed man testified and sweetly sang the "Songs of Zion".

In 1919 Jock returned to his trade in **Wick**. As he made barrels for the herring industry, the locals realised that a great change had come into his life. He lived in the reality of 2 Corinthians 5 verse 11, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away: behold, all things are become new". Jock attached himself to the Salvation Army and bore a bright testimony for God in **Wick**.

While in **Aberdeen** prior to going to Yarmouth in 1921, he attended meetings in the Fishermen's mission at 200 Market Street. There he was challenged by preaching on "A clean heart" and a "Filled Life". As he longed to be his best for God, he prayed for the experience that would make him an effective witness for Christ. God answered his cry and something glorious happened there and then. Jock received such a filling of the Holy Spirit that he had to leave the meeting. Going up a "close" beside the hall, he stood alone with God and rejoiced over what was done in his life. He seldom talked about this experience because it was so sacred to him, but when he did, he spoke with great reverence. The yielded life was now on God's altar and little did he know then that God would take the willing sacrifice and use the broken but filled life for His glory. His dedicated heart could now sing,

"Thy Holy Spirit, Lord alone,  
Can deeper love inspire;  
His power alone within my soul,  
Has lit the sacred fire".

From **Thurso** on the North Caithness coast right south to **Eyemouth** in Berwickshire things had developed into a pattern. Gospel missions were conducted with a few getting saved, but nothing spectacular was taking place. Yet, at **Cairnbulg**, a fishing village not very far from **Fraserburgh** there was a "sound of a going in the mulberry trees". **Cairnbulg** was the home of some well known godly men who lived in the "secret place of the Most High". Just after the 1914-18 war one such man was Jimmy "Denley" Ritchie.

A Welshman called Pastor Fred Clarke came to conduct a series of evangelistic meetings in the winter months of 1919. These services were held in the **Cairnbulg** Gospel Hall, known locally as the "Bulgar Hall", for a fortnight. God blessed His word and about a dozen souls professed salvation. Converted at that time was a young fisher lassie whom God was to use during the "times of refreshing" in 1921. Later she would join the Faith Mission and sit under the ministry of John George Govan, its founder. She was an old woman when I met her and she told me of how the young converts, when encouraged to pray by Pastor Clarke, prayed for days and nights. This continued for months, even when Pastor Clarke had left. These requests were not to go unheard, for God was going to answer the cries of His people, who sought Him continually.

Pastor Clarke, along with Mr. George Bell, who was a Scotsman, returned in the autumn of 1921 to the same "Bulgar Hall". On this visit to **Cairnbulg**, these servants of Christ laboured with no visible results. The evangelists decided it was time to move on to fresh pastures. On the Sunday night in October 1921 when the meetings were supposed to finish, Jimmy "Denley" Ritchie came to Pastor Clarke and said, "Pastor, God has told me that blessing is going to break out here. You cannot leave." The villages around **Fraserburgh** were to feel the impact of God's Spirit from that night on. Mr. Clarke and Mr. Bell stayed among these villages for four months. Conversions were most evident amongst the 16 to 18 years age group. Young folk who attended the dance hall which was next to the Gospel hall came to disturb the meeting. One night Pastor Clarke stated. "The Devil's agents are in our midst tonight, but we are claiming them for Jesus." So many young' folk were saved the dance hall had to close. Many men and women had left **Cairnbulg** for the East Anglian fishing season when God started to move. Telegrams were sent to **Yarmouth** telling friends that some of their relations had got saved.

**Peterhead** also had its characters who were firebrands for Christ. One of these was "Petrie Shonie" Strachan. Saved during the year of the Welsh Revival in 1904, Petrie became a great witness and soul winner. Constantly called at any hour of the day or night to lead the sick and dying to Christ, this godly soul was a man who never believed in idle talk. During the 1914-18 war when in the Navy at Portsmouth, he attended a service in which the Padre failed to turn up.

Petrie got up and sang the hymn, "Take the Name of Jesus with you, child of sorrow and of woe". Then he preached and at the end of the service fifteen men professed salvation. He became a soldier in the Salvation Army. On one occasion the officer in charge took ill and Petrie took the service and preached on baptism by immersion even although he was not baptized himself. Later he went to the Salvation Army officer and explained how he became convicted about baptism. Soon after this he was baptized in obedience to the command of Christ. In the Army meetings on Sunday afternoons his testimony would be a real inspiration. Some of those present recounted how he would stand in the passage with his hands raised to heaven and sing, "Come hame, come hame, you're welcome noo, your faults will ne'er be seen".

His wife was baptized at the mouth of the River Ugie near **Peterhead** in the month of December when the snow was thick on the ground. Petrie was a soldier for Christ right to the end. Many bore testimony to the influence of Christ in their lives through that humble servant.

Another warrior was "Black Bill's Robbie". Converted in the "bush rope" hole of a fishing boat, he had a marvellous testimony for Christ. This rugged character once jumped off **Peterhead** breakwater in a raging storm in an attempt to rescue a man who had been washed into the water. He was fearless in his attempts to win the lost souls of men and women for Christ. Before he was converted he could neither read nor write and Petrie Shonie's wife taught him to do just that. He got a notebook and began to write all his experiences in it. As he gave his testimony he would hold up his notebook and say, "This book contains the story of my life since I got saved." His favourite song when giving his testimony in the Salvation Army meetings on Sunday afternoon was,

"Lay by your old compass,  
'Twill do you no good,  
It will never direct you the right way to God,  
Mind your helm brother sailor,  
And don't fall asleep,  
Watch and pray night and day lest you sink in the deep".

Andy Duthie was another stalwart for the Cross. He bore a bright testimony for Christ. As an old fashioned Methodist he was a great student of the teachings of John Wesley. His favourite hymn was "And can it be that I should gain an interest in the Saviour's blood". The lines which echoed his experience on conversion were,

*"My chains fell off,  
My heart was free,  
I rose, went forth  
And followed Thee".*

When he quoted these words a ring of sincerity flowed from his lips. It was to this brother that Jock Troup came in order to tell him that he had got saved. Andy proved true to his word and remained a friend of the cooper-evangelist until he went home to his reward.

It was thrilling to hear him tell about the incident aboard the Sparkling Star that night in **Kingston** harbour. Andy remained at Jock's side and encouraged him during the move of God at Yarmouth 1921, and constantly stood with him when he visited **Peterhead**. This precious brother was getting on in years when I was a young Christian, and to hear him give his testimony on a Sunday afternoon in the Salvation Army, or in the Fishermen's Mission on a Saturday evening brought blessing to my heart.

These men and others would meet for "Knee Drill" at 6.30 a.m. every Sunday morning when they would shed tears and cry to God on behalf of souls. It must have been a wonderful sight to see the seats wet with their tears as these men and women prayed for God to move. Men like "Aikie Touch" Strachan, a trophy of grace if ever there was one, constantly sought God for the lost souls of men. Is it any wonder that God moved? These people honoured the Holy Spirit.

In the autumn of 1921 a missionary from South Africa was holding meetings in a hall in Prince Street. Sensing that amongst some of God's people there was a concern for souls which he had seldom seen, this missionary went to **Glasgow** where he met the evangelist Alex Marshall. As they talked together he told Mr. Marshall, "I suggest you get to Peterhead, there is a work ripening, I am sure God is going to bless in a

definite way." The evangelist arrived in **Peterhead** and commenced a fortnight's meetings on a Sunday night. The following Thursday a real break came when three souls professed salvation. One of these was an aunt of mine who went to live in **St. Monance**, Fife, where she bore a lovely testimony for Christ during her whole lifetime.

A young fisherman who later became a prominent businessman was one of the three saved that night. He went into local council work where he took a stand for Christian principles. The third was a man who suffered a serious injury during the war. As Mr. Marshall could only stay in **Peterhead** for a fortnight, Mr. David Walker of **Aberdeen** arrived to continue the meetings. God had begun to move even before the fisherfolk went on to **East Anglia**.

In the extreme north of Scotland, **Wick** became a haven for many fishermen during the herring season. Like so many other ports, **Wick** shared in the spiritual dearth that abounded after the 1914-18 war, yet when the herring fleets gathered, and Christians joined in fellowship, **Wick** was well able to put to the forefront some godly men.

One of these soldiers of Christ was Billie Stewart who was saved before the 1914-18 war. He knew the protection of God while on a naval patrol off Shetland during the war years. His ship the 'Adequate' was sunk but the entire crew was rescued. As a Salvationist he proudly stood for the "Blood and Fire", and was a great asset during the revival.

The Baptist Church was blest by the godly, gracious life of their minister, Mr. Millard. As a caring pastor of the flock, he possessed a tremendous evangelistic thrust and constantly held campaigns using visiting evangelists. It was amongst these men that God had His diamond which was to cut deep into the Devil's ranks in the days ahead. That diamond was none other than Jock Troup.

## Chapter 3

### EAST ANGLIA 1921

The 1921 summer herring fishing was not very successful so eyes and minds were turned towards the season in **East Anglia** which centred around the ports of **Yarmouth** and **Lowestoft**. All the boats were freshly painted, nets repaired and hopes rose for a bountiful harvest of the sea. Soon places like Smith's Knoll Bank, Haisboro' Lightship, Lemon Buoy and the Scrobie would be seen. These names were everyday language to the seasoned fishermen. Young men were journeying south for the first time and looked forward to the bright lights, for some, their first taste of worldly pleasure. Little did they know that a material disaster lay ahead, yet it was to be a time that would go down in the annals of eternity as a great harvest of precious souls.

**In the Shetland Isles, Isle of Lewis, Caithness, along the Moray Coast, Banffshire fishing villages, Fraserburgh, Peterhead, Aberdeen, the East Neuk towns of Anstruther, St. Monance, Musselburgh, Port Seaton, Eyemouth and even from Southern Ireland,** women would be packing their chests to move to East Anglia. Soon to these women places like the Deans, Exemouth Road, Regent Road, the Market Stalls, the corner in King Street known as "Peterhead Corner" and "Fraserburgh Corner" would be familiar in **Yarmouth**. In **Lowestoft** there would also be many well known places where they would work and tell stories of their families back home. Truly the East Anglian fishing was a Mecca, both ports producing successful boats and fishcurers. Special trains were run from Scotland to take those concerned south for the season. What many did not realise was that their eternal destiny would be changed through God's intervention. Sailing from most of the towns that the women had left, the skippers would set their courses south. Although very interested in material prospects, the Christians also looked forward to times of fellowship in the Gospel. Many of these men would not have met since last year.

It was a season of gales and herring were scarce. Many boats failed to meet their expenses. Some braved the storms and had their nets torn. Others lay at their nets for days, waiting until the weather improved.

At this time the Rev. A. Douglas Brown was conducting meetings around East Anglia and was seeing God's blessing in a great measure. The fisherfolk from Scotland were coming to a situation which smouldered with the prospects of a spiritual awakening.

How wonderful is God's clock, it is neither fast nor slow. Just as the Spirit of God fell upon the company gathered on the day of Pentecost, so God chose to move in salvation blessing when men and women came from many parts of Scotland. God's timing was so accurate. Some of the first hand stories I have heard are really tremendous. The main instrument in the hands of God was the **Wick** cooper, Jock Troup. He may have been limited in his academic education, but he learned to be willing and obedient in God's school.

Old friends met together at weekends. The majority sought worldly entertainment. God's children met together in fellowship and drank at the wellsprings of grace. In Fish Street, to the rear of the Market Place, the Brethren met in their hall. The Baptists worshipped in their church behind Regent Road. Methodists congregated in the

Deneside Church and the Salvationists gathered in their own place beside the Town Hall.

With a burning passion for souls and a life filled with the Holy Spirit, Jock Troup accompanied by a few friends, started to have open-air meetings at the Plain Stone (Market Place), when the stalls had closed around 9 p.m. on a Saturday night. It was on the third Saturday of October 1921 that God chose to move in power. Many were thrown to the ground under conviction of sin through the preaching of the Gospel of Christ As Jock preached from the first verse of Isaiah chapter 63, "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? This that is glorious in His apparel, travelling in the greatness of His strength? I that speak in righteousness mighty to save."

A young fisherman from **Cairnbulg** went into the open air ring and started to sing,  
"It's altered now,  
It's altered now,  
The devil once had me,  
But Jesus ransomed me,  
It's altered now."

When the Holy Spirit took control, scores of hardened fishermen and fisherlassies were gripped with the fear of God. They knelt at the **Yarmouth** Cross and their burdens were lifted because of Calvary. On account of that event, many lives and communities would never be the same again. As I listened to men and women who were there on that night I realised how great was the power of God that was manifested there. One man talked to told me he was literally "Slain of the Lord" and fell to the ground. He said, "The ground around me was like a battlefield with souls crying to God for mercy." My own father was there, but he was not saved until the next week when he was aboard a herring drifter, at sea, eight miles from the Haisboro' Lightship.

We may question such happenings, but similar events occurred when Jonathan Edwards preached in Massachusetts. On that occasion men and women hung on to the pillars of the church under conviction of sin.

**We must realise that when God moves, spectacular things happen.**

Services were also held in the Deneside Methodist Church and in St. George's Church. What meetings they were! It is reported that they went on for hours. One particular night stands out. Jock Troup and Douglas Brown stood in the pulpit of the Deneside Methodist Church with their arm around one another, weeping as they basked in the Divine Presence of God. The refined Baptist minister and the rough herring cooper were united and they became life-long friends. The Market Place and the Post Office were still the prime places for open air witness. One man who came from **Portgordon**, named Alex Thain, told me that he was strolling past the Market Place on a Saturday night with five of his friends when some unseen power made them pay attention to the singing. Suddenly he was left standing alone, his friends had responded to the call to follow Christ. It was a few years later until Alex was converted. At that open-air meeting, unknown to him, was the woman who was to become his wife, Agnes Cowe. As the crowd sang that lovely hymn from the Sankey Hymn book, number 466, she answered the call, took the step and has lived for Christ all her life.

*"Oh tender and sweet was the Master's voice,  
As He lovingly called to thee,  
Come over the line, it is only a step,  
I am waiting my child for thee."*

On the Monday morning work carried on as usual. Jock returned to his coopering, his friends to their fishing, but by no means was the blessing of God confined to meetings. On the Denes where most of the curing yards were and across the river at Gorleston in the yards there, the songs of Zion were sung. Far out at sea as the boats lay at their nets, the singing of men who were redeemed wafted over the waves. Whenever work was finished, meetings were held. Often due to bad weather the boats would tie up and many would gather together at all hours in different places. Meetings would often go on until three o'clock in the morning. Souls were often saved in the houses where the fisherlassies lodged. In the curing yards amidst the herring, salt, pickle and barrels there were those who came into the experience of salvation and had their souls preserved for eternity. It was common for the foreman of the curing yard to get Jock to lead his workers to Christ at all hours of the day so they could all go back to their work. The story is told that one Monday morning, (that was the day the curers would fill up the barrels which had been packed with herring previously, because the salt had melted and the fish had sunk in the barrel) that three "Heiland Quines", (lassies from the **Isle of Lewis**) failed to turn up for work and their employer went to see what was wrong. When he found them in their lodgings under deep conviction of sin, he went straight for Jock Troup who led them to Christ. They rejoiced in this great salvation and returned to their work among the herring. Conviction was everywhere; hearts were broken as souls wept over their sins.

Men were getting saved at sea aboard the herring boats. As they steamed to the fishing grounds by the Knoll Lightship and the Haisboro' Lightship, unsaved crewmen would be led to Christ by new converts. The nets were laid in the sea and as the drifters lay with their heads into the wind, big rough fishermen, who until now knew no fear, cried out in terror of being lost in hell. Engineers in the bowels of the ships looking after the coal-fired boilers were reminded of the fire of hell and the lost eternity which awaits the ungodly. They cried to God for help and found refuge in Christ. During hauling operations which took at least four hours and even sometime up to ten hours when pulling eighty nets, there were tremendous times of blessing. Many were saved as the nets were being hauled aboard. The soul concerned would just let the net go, fall on his knees and cry for salvation. What days!

Telegrams brought home news of the spiritual awakening to the ports of Scotland. Letters told of who and where their salvation took place. A telegram from a certain Bobby Ritchie read "Saved, 10 miles from Knoll Lightship, last to ring in on this ship." All the interest was in souls, no wonder a mighty harvest was reaped for God.

During the time when a **Yarmouth** fishing was at its height, it was interesting to walk along the quay, starting at the Trawl Market, past the Herring Market and continue right down past all the "posts" until you came to the Freshing Market. The visitor could not but note the different registrations appearing on the sides and funnels of the drifters. If this journey was taken on a Sunday, it would be evident that the boats tied up on the quays were all from Scotland for no Scottish skipper went to sea on that day. Every port represented had its own registration letters,

BK for the Eyemouth boats,  
KY for the East Neuk of Fife villages of St. Monance, Pittenween and Anstruther.  
Drifters from the North East of Scotland had  
PD for Peterhead,  
FR for Fraserburgh,  
BF for Banffshire towns,  
BCK for Buckie,  
INS for Lossiemouth, Hopeman, Burghead and Avoch,  
and finally WK for Wick.

At the peak of the season there would be well over 700 boats based at East Anglia. When the fishing was over they would make their way to their respective ports, thus the influence of the 1921 move of God at Yarmouth was far reaching.

On a smaller scale the events at Yarmouth could be placed on a parallel with those in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. God moved on the Day of Pentecost when people were gathered from many places and they went home with a glorious experience in their lives to be witnesses to the living Christ. Peter and John spoke the word with boldness. Signs and wonders followed the preaching of the gospel in Acts chapters 3 and 4. Further on, in Acts chapter 8, we find Philip the evangelist planting the church in Samaria and seeing a great spiritual awakening. Then suddenly he is called away south to Gaza to meet the Ethiopian eunuch who confesses Christ as Lord. Philip may have had every reason question the voice of God, but he went.

Jock Troup, while in the midst of a spiritual revival, heard God speak, and had a vision. What he saw was a man praying far north in **Fraserburgh**. This man was asking the Lord to send the evangelist He was using in Yarmouth north to where there was a great need. This man had never seen Jock, but he had heard what was happening among the fishermen. By this time the cooper-evangelist had been dismissed from his work because of the call on his time. He had never been to **Fraserburgh**, but he had no intention of being disobedient to the heavenly vision. Jock told some of his closest friends of what he had seen and of his decision to leave. They could not understand why he was going when such mighty blessing was taking place. He knew that the God Who had started the work in **Yarmouth**, would continue it. Many tried to persuade the revivalist to stay, but nothing and no one would prevent him from answering the call of the Master. The next day the evangelist left.

Meanwhile in **Yarmouth**, the move continued. In St. George's Church the mission of Douglas Brown was tremendously successful. God was using him in even greater measure. More young men were coming to the forefront of the battle. One of these was David Cordiner, who was to be used mightily in **Peterhead**.

As the season drew to a close, fishermen prepared for the voyage to their home ports. Nets were made up into individual bundles, spare and damaged nets were taken aboard from the place of storage. With the anticipation of reunion, courses were set for the North. Through the Cockle Gate, past, the Haisboro' Lightship, past the Long stones where Grace Darling became a heroine, the drifters would steam. As the armada sailed north the numbers would decrease rapidly. Once **Peterhead** was passed, those sailing for **Wick** left the others to alter course to sail up the Moray Firth.



What amazing stories these men had to tell. Sins which had haunted them for years were blotted out like a thick cloud and cast into the sea of God's' forgetfulness.

Those who worked ashore would be later in leaving **Yarmouth**. The curing yards had to be cleared up and everything made secure till the next season. As the trains left Yarmouth, it was a different kind of song that was heard and a different kind of language that was spoken. God was the centre of their conversation. It was remarkable that in many of the towns where these men and women were going with their new found joy, the blessing of God had preceded them.

## Chapter 4

### SOUTH FIRTH

The "South Firth" fishermen hailed from the fishing towns situated along the north and south coasts of the Firth of Forth. They had a herring season of their own in the winter months, but during the year they followed the herring from the North of Scotland right down to East Anglia.

Just south of the Bass Rock, on which the Scottish Covenanters were imprisoned in terrible conditions during the 16th century, lies the fishing port of **Eyemouth**. Proudly many of them sailed their boats south for the 1921 season. A goodly number of them were to hear and believe the Gospel of Christ. The impact of this was felt when the converts returned home. These after-effects were very much in evidence when Jock Troup and another evangelist returned to the town years later. As the two servants of Christ held an open-air meeting, crowds gathered around. There were some who saw for the first time the man whom God had used to bring many to a knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Between **Eyemouth** and **Edinburgh**, on the south side of the Firth of Forth, are the fishing towns of **Cockenzie**, **Port Seton**, **Musselburgh** and **Fisherow**. The breath of God's Spirit swept across the folks from these places in a tremendous way. At **Yarmouth** that year was big John James Horne of **Port Seton**. He stood six feet tall, his huge size being evident at the services in the Market Square. He became a personal friend of Jock Troup and was amongst the front liners at any meeting, whether it was inside a church or in the open air. I had the opportunity to meet John James while I was conducting some meetings in **Port Seton** and enjoyed the fellowship in his home. Abiding results can be seen in **Cockenzie** and **Port Seton** today if you visit any of the churches or meeting halls, but especially in the Mission known as "The Fishermen's Bethel." It was from around this district that a young man got saved during the early 1920's. He was to be one of Scotland's unique evangelists, leading many to Christ, a number of whom became missionaries on foreign fields. That man was none other than Charlie Main.

As with other places associated with the sea, **Musselburgh** and **Fisherow** have long known the satisfaction and hardship of earning a living from the deep. These towns were to know spiritual success during 1921. Quite a few men were saved and on returning home they set revival fires burning that are still alight today. From this area came Robert Fairnie. This man of God has done a great work for the Lord in the North East of Scotland and latterly in **Bristol**. No doubt the men who were saved in 1921 had an influence on his life.

On the north side of the Firth of Forth there are four lovely small towns each with a long association with fishing. A number of men from these places were converted at **Yarmouth**. Among them was my uncle, Alex "Hughie" Hughes. After being spoken to by God through tragedy in his family, he closed in with God's offer of mercy during the revival. His consistent Christian life was a constant rebuke to men and women. Although he did not speak publicly, his life told for Jesus. Hughie was a gentleman for God, faithful to the last; he knew his anchor gripped the Solid Rock.

An evangelical Congregational Church stands as a testimony for God, showing that men and women knew the blessing of the Lord in 1921. A Brethren Assembly meets in **St. Monance** with members attending whose parents were saved during the revival.

One Tuesday night in November 1921, a lassie about seven years old came home from the **Pittenweem** school for her dinner. Her mother sat in a chair crying. Her tears were not of sorrow, but of joy. She had just received a letter from her husband John Hughes telling her that he had been saved the previous weekend at **Yarmouth**. That lassie did not get much to eat that day, because her mother was so overwhelmed. Although only young, an impression was left on her heart and mind which she can recall with joy nearly sixty years later. When the fisherfolk returned to **Pittenweem** they brought back revival blessing with them.

Recently the Scottish Fisheries Museum was opened up in **Anstruther**. The exhibits show a fascinating history of the fishing industry. "Anster", as it is locally known, had a great page written into the annals of God's Book of Life. A number of souls from this town were converted. The move went on after the fishermen had returned from **Yarmouth**.

At **Cellardyke** the meetings were so large during the months of December 1921 and January 1922, that the only convenient place available was the Town Hall. Crowds attended the services which were conducted by local fishermen. Many responded to the forthright preaching of God's word.

## Chapter 5

### WHINNYFOLD

South of **Cruden Bay** on the Aberdeenshire coast lies the village of **Whinnyfold**. During the summer and autumn, the men of the village went to the herring fishing on the **Peterhead** boats. In the winter they took to line fishing for cod and haddock.

In the early part of the 20th century, there were a number of godly men and women who were possessed with a vision for the young people of their small community. These earnest souls prayed with "groanings which cannot be uttered" for God to move amongst them and do a lasting work of salvation. There were few opportunities afforded for simple gospel preaching, yet so anxious were these folks for fellowship that they would walk every Sunday to **Cruden Bay** in order to attend church. When the snow was very deep, the men put on their "thigh sea boots" so they could make the journey to hear the Word of God. Every Sunday evening a different minister of the district would come and conduct a service in the village hall. Even so, they felt that as yet there was no direct answer to their prayers.

When September 1921 came, a number left village to pursue the **Yarmouth** fishing, the men to sail in the drifters and the women to gut and pack the herring. At **Yarmouth** they attended the meetings conducted by Douglas Brown and Jock Troup and a few were converted. On returning home fresh interest was stirred so these "old praying saints" began to see that God was answering the cries which had ascended to His throne. The vision given to these men years earlier had tarried, now the promise of God that it would become a reality was beginning to be fulfilled. The young converts, full of zeal for Christ, claimed the village hall one Sunday a month for a straightforward gospel meeting and God began to move in power in **Whinnyfold**.

In January 1922, Davie Walker, an evangelist from Aberdeen came to **Whinnyfold** at the invitation of a young believer and preached in the village hall one Sunday night. It was obvious that there was a deep interest in eternal things, with every indication that spiritual blessing was about to take place. After that first meeting, it was arranged to hold services in a certain Alex Hay's house. God began to move in that home, the crowds being so large that every room in the house was packed, thus it was decided to take over the village hall. On the next Sunday, the few believers were in a state of expectancy, God was not going to disappoint them. Some of the young men who were accustomed to going across to **Port Errol** for a walk on Sunday had just returned. These young men had newly begun to taste worldly pleasures, but the Lord had a different plan for their lives. As they sat on a dyke outside the hall where the meeting was in progress, they were talking about anything but the good news of salvation. The Holy Spirit began to speak to their hearts. A woman who had just left the meeting came along and when she saw her son among the young men laughing light-heartedly, she approached him and rebuked him saying, "You should be at the meeting hearing about how to get saved." To her amazement the whole group got off the dyke and made for the hall. Every one of them was a big burly fisherman.

When the hall door opened, the evangelist wondered what would happen if they made a rumpus. He was a small man and known as "Wee Davie". While the meeting was

going on, the Holy Spirit took control of them. As the gospel message was preached they were all gripped by conviction of sin and every one of them was saved before the end of the service. This was remarkable as they all went on to spend their lives for Christ. One of them became a grand gospel preacher. A testimony for the Lord Jesus Christ was established soon after that Gospel Campaign and lasted well over fifty years until those saved moved to **Peterhead**. It must be recorded that many of the people mentioned had the privilege of being brought up in Christian homes. They are now bringing up their families in the same way, so the effects of the blessing that flowed at **Whinnyfold** in early 1922 are still in evidence.

## Chapter 6

### PETERHEAD

Famous even then for its prison which held in its security some of the worst criminals in the land, the town had many of its inhabitants held captive by the Devil at his will. Many a young fisherman had returned from the war godless and careless regarding his soul's eternal welfare. Yet to many of these men who had seen front line action on land and sea, **Yarmouth** 1921 would be a year when spiritual battles would be fought in their souls. Scores of **Peterhead** fishermen were saved and rejoiced in the experience of sins forgiven. Their lives were changed when spiritual debt was cancelled at the place called Calvary. In some cases whole crews of drifters were converted, either through attending Douglas Brown's services in St. George's Church or at open-air meetings held by Jock Troup. Miraculous things took place among the **Peterhead** fisher lassies as they were gutting the herring at the Denes on the sea-front. One herring curer told me it was a usual occurrence to see women crying for peace with God among the herring barrels at the **Peterhead** owned curing stations.

The prayers of men like "Petrie Shonie" Strachan, John Noble Stephen and many others were being answered by a covenant-keeping God. I have personally heard the testimonies of men and women who were redeemed at **Yarmouth** nearly sixty years ago and they are still going on for God. When the Lord moved, He saved men and women who established Christian homes, their children were led to Christ and they in turn are bringing up the grandchildren in the same way. **Peterhead** was particularly favoured as far as the salvation of souls was concerned. I am convinced that this was because godly men and women prayed in earnest. Not only were there new converts, but many who had professed salvation in former days were called to a fresh dedication in their experience.

In **Yarmouth** that year was a young man engaged as cook on the drifter Energy. David Cordiner had been saved at the age of thirteen in **Peterhead** Baptist Church through an evangelist named McGregor, but had grown cold in heart during the war years when he served as a corporal of cooks. David attended meetings conducted by Douglas Brown and Jock Troup where he was wonderfully blessed and empowered by the Holy Spirit. While cooking a meal for his shipmates, he took his cigarettes and threw them into the galley stove. He had made up his mind to be on fire for God. As he slept one night on board his ship which was moored on the river, God spoke to him clearly and told him that when he got home to **Peterhead** he had to go to Broad Street and conduct open-air meetings. David told the Lord, as Jeremiah did in Bible days, that he could not speak, but the Lord said, "Open your mouth and I will fill it". After this a hymn came to his mind, "Must I go and empty handed, must I meet my Saviour so?" He cried out that night, "I will go." Little did he realise that the vision he had received from the Lord would take him into places and situations where mighty things would be done through him. Here is an example of what God can do with a life completely given over to Him.

As the drifter Energy steamed home from **Yarmouth**, the young cook shared his vision with the mate of the vessel. In reply he was told,

"David, you will never do that, you are far too quiet."

It was midnight on a Friday when the boat arrived at **Peterhead** harbour. David could never have imagined that God had decided that he was to be a fisher of men instead of a fisherman. When he arrived home he told his godly mother of the vision. She expressed her feelings that he would never make a speaker. However, she said that she would pray for him, and he testified that her prayers held him up when he went forth to preach at the Broadgate in **Peterhead**, where he saw many souls won for Christ.

"Davie" Cordiner went forth in the name of the Lord, just as his name sake in the Valley of Elah long ago. The next day being a Saturday, he did his work cleaning out the cabin of the drifter Energy. He met some of the young men who had professed salvation and told them what he was going to do. They were asked to join him at 7 p.m. that evening at the Monument in the middle of Broad Street. About the appointed time on the way down the street, Davie met two Salvation Army lads and asked for their support. When they arrived at the Monument they found a few people had gathered to see the man who had received the vision. Amongst those standing were "Petrie Shonie" and Alex "Skelton" Summers. The meeting commenced by singing the hymn,

*"There is power in the blood of the Lamb".*

Davie had taken twelve hymn sheets printed with well-known songs which he shared around. Little did these men realise that although some of them had only been converted a few days, they were on the brink of a tremendous move of the Spirit that was going to have far reaching effects on the town of **Peterhead**.

Crowds began to gather around the small group. Very soon there was a congregation estimated at about 200, all standing spellbound listening to the cook and his friends telling of Christ's power to save. The open-air was stir in progress at 9 p.m. After that someone said that a part of the crowd had gone to the Salvation Army Hall in Chapel Street. When Davie and his friends got there the place was full. It is reported that so many came forward in answer to the appeal that the penitent form was overcrowded and extra room had to be made for the seekers. **Peterhead** Salvation Army did not delay in supporting the work of God and were prepared to make themselves available at any time to deal with troubled souls. Their hall was opened during the day for special times of prayer and praise, with gospel services being held every evening.

Open-air meetings were held nightly at the Monument in Broad Street, followed by a march to wherever a special service was being held. Salvation was now the order of the day, with souls getting saved in their homes as well as in places of worship. Large crowds would listen to preaching in the open air. On one occasion the Broad Street stance was not available, so David Cordiner decided to hold his meeting at the Drummer's Corner. It started at 7 p.m. and by 7.30p.m., Albion Street and Marischal Street were completely blocked by an eager audience. So dense was the crowd that the Police were called to assist. Davie was told that he must confine his open-air meetings to Broad Street.

One rainy night when the appeal was made, no one came forward to kneel in the centre of the open-air ring. Davie took off his coat and laid it on the ground. A woman came forward and found Christ while kneeling on his coat. Others, including "Petrie

Shonie", Bill's Robbie and Skelton's Alex followed his example and put their coats on the street. At least ninety people were converted that night beside the Monument.

By now the denominations of the town had begun to see that the work being done was not superficial, but was a genuine move of the Holy Spirit. Consequently, doors and hearts were opened to the young evangelist. The elders of the Methodist Church offered him the use of their building. Meetings held there became a harvest of souls. The years of ploughing and sowing had paid off. A schoolmaster and a student teacher attended one of Davie's services. After the meeting the student asked the teacher what he thought of the evangelist's treatment of the King's English. The older man replied, "It does not matter in the least if his English is not accurate, the important thing is that he is getting results."

On November 27th, 1921, Mr. Alex Marshall returned to the Gospel Hall in Prince Street to conduct a series of nightly meetings. Many were saved during these special services. These converts have stood for Christ for many years.

On returning from **Yarmouth**, Alex "Soldie" Cowe told the minister of the Congregational Church, a Mr. Hanmer, of the good work that had been done among the fisherfolk. "Soldie" then asked him if he would consider making an outward appeal for souls to come forward after the service on Sunday evening. This was done and at least six made their way to the front as an indication of their desire to get right with God. As far as is known, this was never tried during the awakening in the Congregational Church. After this, the United Free Church along with the Congregational Church arranged meetings to be conducted by a Mr. John Moor. An evangelistic campaign was also held in the Baptist Church by a Rev. Gilmour. These two special efforts saw blessing in a measure, but little compared to that experienced with Davie Cordiner, who was the leader, under God.

One newspaper report concerning Davie Cordiner stated,  
"The rugged revivalist says, 'Before I went to Yarmouth I could not and would not speak in the Salvation Army meetings. Satan had me in his grip, but God did a work in me at Yarmouth one night and I rededicated me life to Christ and His service. '"  
The paper continues,  
"He spends his time visiting and telling others of Christ and His power to save, even at the Labour Exchange, where many people gather daily. One of his qualities is inspired praying."

The blessing of God continued on through December and into the New Year. Then the Fishermen's Mission opened in Charlotte Street under the leadership of Captain Andrew Cowe. Many young converts were strengthened and a goodly number professed salvation. One outstanding feature during the month of December was the march of witness. These marches were led by someone playing a musical instrument. Scores of new converts followed on singing the well known gospel songs. This unique procession would start after an open-air meeting in the Broadgate, move into Chapel Street, up Queen Street and on to Buchanhaven.

It was not all encouragement for the leaders of the work. Many were critical, others discouraged new converts and some said that it would not last, but those to whom God had entrusted the leadership of the work pressed on. There is plenty of evidence



today, in 1981, that the work done in the hearts in December 1921 has stood the test of time for sixty years.

It will be helpful to take note of what the religious leaders of Peterhead in 1921 had to say about the awakening.

The minister of the Old Parish Church, the Rev. H. D. Swan said, "I rejoice with all my heart and soul that there is a real revival of religion in our midst. I was a sympathetic listener at some of the meetings and found that the young converts were very sincere."

"Without doubt it will do lasting good," said the Rev. A. A. Diack from the West Associate Church.

"The movement ought to be welcomed. Let us thank God for it," stated the United Free Church minister, the Rev. Alex Lawrie.

"I have sat with the converts in my church and have seen the present day production of the disciples in them," said the Rev. George Walker from the Methodist Church.

*All the above quotations are reproduced from the Buchan Observer of 27th December, 1921, by kind permission of the Editor.*

## Chapter 7

### CAIRNBULG, INVERALLOCHY & ST. COMBS

At Pastor Clarke's meetings in **Cairnbulg**, God's Holy Spirit moved in a mighty way. When the fisherfolks returned from Yarmouth it was like moving from one revival fire into another. Many telegrams passed from **Yarmouth** to **Cairnbulg** telling of the conversions which had taken place. The Gospel Hall was consistently filled and glorious times of rejoicing were experienced. Saturday night was usually testimony time. As these recently converted people got up and told how and when they were saved the atmosphere was charged with the presence of God. One said, "I was saved in the wheelhouse," another, "I was saved while hauling the nets," Someone else testified that the transaction took place while he was in his bunk. The faces of those testifying were aglow with the experience they had with the living Christ.

Every Sunday morning from 6.30 to 9.30 a.m. there was a prayer meeting. It was held in a net loft above a washhouse close by the sea and known as "Mary Clarke's Joe's loftie." Heat came from a small fire and light from a paraffin lamp, but the fellowship was sweet. Ages ranged from 16 years to 60 years and the spirit of prayer was tremendous. One man who was there told me how these folks "Grasped hold of the horns of the altar binding the powers of evil in the name of Jesus." No wonder **Cairnbulg** and **Inverallochy** were moved. Evidence of this still remains.

In the afternoon on Sundays an open air meeting was held in the middle of the villages. "Shodie Love" Buchan with his wife from **St. Combs** and Jimmy "Denley" Ritchie were well to the fore. Those who knew Jimmy Ritchie thought his lovely white beard made him look like a patriarch. Leaders in the open air work were Alex May, Will "Black Sheep" Third and Bobby "Soper" Cardno. Two young lassies, Katie May and Betsie Duthie helped at these meetings in testimony and song. They later went to be workers with the Faith Mission. When the open air services were in progress almost the whole village turned out to listen. The programme consisted mainly of glowing testimonies and joyful singing.

Baptismal services were held at the "Water Froth", a burn that ran past **Cairnbulg** Castle into the open sea. Whatever the weather these young converts would be immersed according to Acts chapter 8 verses 38 and 39. Reports tell me that God blessed these meetings in a mighty way.

Hymns like *"I'm not ashamed to own my Lord"* could be heard along the sands at **St. Combs**.

A newspaper report states that out of a population of 1500, over 600 professions were recorded in a fortnight. Gambling had disappeared; tobacco and cigarettes had been destroyed. Many prominent Christian leaders visited **Cairnbulg** and **Inverallochy** to see the work of God first hand. One evangelist from the **Glasgow** area had to acknowledge that the atmosphere which prevailed was nothing short of miraculous. During the weekdays fishermen and their wives would leave their mending lofts where their nets were being repaired and go to hastily arranged meetings in the open air, to baptisms or to meet in homes. Salvation was the order of the day.

On Sundays after the prayer meeting in the mending loft the people of the villages would go to their respective churches. Some walked to the Baptist and Congregational Churches in **Fraserburgh**. Others went to **Rathen** Church and the local Church of Scotland. The Brethren met in a loft in **Inverallochy**. During the time of the awakening there was a spirit of fellowship between the different denominations. All were one in Christ Jesus.

## Chapter 8

### FRASERBURGH

What happened at **Yarmouth** was to prove that the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord.

Jock boarded a train for the North and before it had reached Crewe all those who were in his compartment were led to Christ. When he arrived at **Aberdeen**, he then transferred to the **Fraserburgh** train. At **Maud** two fisherwomen came into the carriage and sat beside Jock. They had spent the day selling their freshly caught haddock around the farmhouses in the country. Baskets were strapped across their backs to carry the fish. The evangelist was asked where he was going and what he intended to do. He replied, "I am going to **Fraserburgh** to preach," and told them how God had spoken to him. "Where are you staying?" they asked him. Jock told them that he had no idea. "Listen son, you come and stay with me," said one of the old fisherwomen. So provision was made for him even before he arrived in **Fraserburgh**.

When he had settled in and had eaten, Jock decided to go for a walk. He went down to the square in Broad Street where a crowd had gathered. Standing on the steps of the drinking fountain, he began to preach. Immediately the crowd moved around him in spite of the cold. As the rain began to fall, the preacher asked if anyone knew where a place was available for meetings.

"What about the Baptist Church?" shouted someone.

"I don't know where it is," replied Jock.

"We will soon take you there," came the answer from the crowd.

Off they went along the way, joyously singing with the evangelist. When they arrived at the Baptist Church, the Pastor with his elders were just leaving a specially convened meeting, where it had been decided to send for Jock Troup to come and conduct a gospel campaign in **Fraserburgh**. The secretary had a letter drafted ready for posting, but that letter never needed to go through a letter box. God had answered the letter before it had been sent off. To the amazement of Jock, as the group of elders left the church, amongst them stood the man God had shown him in the vision at **Yarmouth**. He had come face to face with the man who had prayed. The heart of the revivalist rose to God in gratitude for leading him step by step. As he led the singing of the old fashioned hymns, men and women began to weep their way to the cross. Blessing flowed like a river. The tide of spiritual dearth had turned and soon God's flood tide would flow.

**Fraserburgh** Baptist Church became too small. An application was made for the use of other buildings, but this was refused because the evangelist was not an ordained minister. Meetings were then held in the Congregational Church in Mid Street, with regular prayer taking place in the Baptist Church. Nightly souls were under deep conviction of sin, and after weeping their way to Christ, came to know the great experience of being "Born again". These were days of blessing which were never to be forgotten as long as the converts lived.

At **Yarmouth** some notorious characters had become Christians. When they arrived home they had the joy of not only being united with their loved ones, but in many

cases were overjoyed to find that their families had been touched by the same power of God. These wayward sons and daughters were saved through God answering the prayers of believing parents. As entire households made their way to the services, no one could doubt that the same God Who had worked in **Yarmouth** was now working in **Fraserburgh**.

There was a spirit of conviction everywhere. Souls were even being saved away from the meetings. It was reported that the message boys were whistling hymns as they delivered their errands. By now, the entire town was in the grip of the presence of God. Throughout the last week in November 1921, open-air services were held in the Saltoun Square. Many hundreds attended to hear the testimonies of young men and women, then Jock Troup preached the Gospel. Saltoun Square was the birthplace of many souls who, under deep conviction of sin, knelt on coats provided by the preachers and converts.

The Baptist and Congregational Churches were throwing their whole weight behind this move of God and at the end of the day there was a marked increase in membership as many of the new converts attached themselves to these churches.

A group of young fishermen prided themselves in being known as the "Dirty Dozen". When they were gloriously saved, a tremendous impact was made on the town. A report of the scenes following some of these services said that many young people were parading the streets calling upon the name of the Lord.

It was obvious that God's channel was Jock Troup. This humble servant of the Lord said nothing new about the Gospel, but it seems that he uttered the good news of salvation with such a force and conviction that it reached the hearts of the people. Jock was wholly yielded to the work. There was no sadness or fear in his message, the services being characterised by joyful singing. Meetings were held every hour of the day, with prayer sessions lasting into the night. On Sunday the evangelist was in great demand, no wonder he became so exhausted that a doctor told him that he would have to rest, otherwise he would kill himself.

Many prominent men from the religious and secular world came to **Fraserburgh** to witness the amazing scenes. Some criticised the work, saying it was because of the poor fishing, or that it only appealed to simple fisherfolk. Others declared that it was mostly emotional and would not stand. There were those who had to admit that some supernatural power was in evidence. One man in particular, Mr. D. P. Thompson, a student from **Glasgow** University, declared it to be a work of God. He threw his lot in with the meetings. No doubt it was the influence of those early days that made D. P. Thompson the man he was in later years, a prominent evangelist with the Church of Scotland.

On the 20th December, Jock addressed a packed Congregational Church, stating that the work had grown so much that the building was too small. During the week the meetings would be held in the Parish Church which seated 1200. The Church Session had kindly granted the use of their church, even declaring that they would pay the heating bills.

Jock announced that during the next fortnight he and Willie Bruce would be leaving **Fraserburgh** for an unknown destination, and that God was leading them. "The move would be greater yet" he declared, and told the people that the Rev. Douglas Brown of London would be coming to help in the meetings. He spoke to his audience in a confident manner, "Douglas Brown is a small man, but he has both his hands on God's Altar." The Baptist minister had been active in **Yarmouth** for he had conducted 350 meetings in 3 months.

As the year drew to a close, Jock received a request to come to **Dundee**. Ever sensitive to the Master's call, he decided that he must go immediately. During a farewell service in the Congregational Church which was filled to capacity, he heard tributes to the work which God had done through him. Rev. W. Gilmour of the Baptist Church said, "A man came to Fraserburgh whose name was Jock Troup, and the fisherfolks would never forget by recollection and prayer."

Many wept tears of joy because through his ministry they had found a purpose for living. Crowds thronged the railway station at **Fraserburgh** and sang as the revivalist left with his companion. As the train moved out of the station, the huge crowd sang, "God be with you till we meet again."

What a scene, the like of which has never been witnessed, before or since. It was the first of many visits to **Fraserburgh** Jock was to make, the last being in 1953 to attend the burial service for the victims of the Fraserburgh lifeboat disaster. One of the men lost then was a dear friend of his, a Mr. Duthie, the engineer. He had been saved in the awakening in 1921. On such a sad occasion, Jock sang, as only he could sing,

*"In the sweet by and by,  
We shall meet on that beautiful shore."*

Those who were there, including my parents, testified that it was the finest they had ever heard the revivalist sing.

A **Fraserburgh** fisherman named Willie Bruce was Jock's chum, even before Willie Bruce was converted. During the daytime they worked together, but at night they went their separate ways. Bruce was quiet, reserved young man, but when God saved him, this expert dancer and roller-skater became a lion for Christ, declaring His Gospel with great boldness. At the height of the revival in **Yarmouth**, Willie said to Jock in prophetic terms,

"Jock, after this year you are not bound for **Wick** this time, it's the **Broch**." (*the local name for Fraserburgh*)

## Chapter 9

### GAMRIE

The rugged coast of Banffshire has stood many a storm. Exposed to winds of nearly 180° of the compass, the cliffs on the east of the county stand vertical to the sea. Villages such as **Gardenstown** and **Pennan** look as though they have been hewn out of the cliff face.

**Pennan** and **Gardenstown**, the latter locally known as **Gamrie**, have been the homes of many well-known fishermen. They were experts in driftnet fishing, especially in the lochs of Scotland. Traditionally the men from these two villages based their boats at **Lowestoft** during the East Anglian season.

As the folks left their comfortable homes in the two villages, little did they realise that many of them would return two months later as "new creatures in Christ", putting their trust in the Blest Rock of Ages. **Lowestoft** was to know showers of blessing in a rich harvest of souls amongst the **Pennan** and **Gamrie** people.

London Road Baptist Church was the main venue for the revival meetings. Rev. A. Douglas Brown was the leader, but one of the prominent features in this move of the Lord was the deep conviction of sin. The story is told of a **Gamrie** fisherman who left a meeting deeply moved. As he made his way past the railway station, across Waverly Bridge to his boat, he could hold out no longer against the Spirit of God. He put his head in his hands, leaned against the bridge, looked into the waters of the Waverly Dock and committed his life into the hands of Jesus. Instantly he knew forgiveness and the Spirit of God witnessed with his spirit that he was a child of God.

One night, as Douglas Brown preached on the left water pot, from John chapter 4, the Holy Spirit moved through the building, many fell prostrate before under mighty conviction. A number of **Pennan** and **Gamrie** men were saved that night. In my possession is that sermon which was preached. I treasure it very much.

Another characteristic of the **Lowestoft** revival was the number who were also baptized by immersion. This took place at the sea front before large crowds. These young converts were not ashamed to own their Lord.

After the herring season ended, the inhabitants of **Gamrie** and **Pennan** eagerly awaited the return of their loved ones. No one could argue against the changed lives of hardened drunkards who had been transformed by sovereign grace.

Wise old men who had known the power of Christ in their lives for many years gathered the young converts together for fellowship in a building called "Castle Grant". This three-storied building was owned by a man called Francis Wiseman, or "Fish Francie" as he was named. It had been used mainly as a net store. Precious times of blessing were experienced in the middle storey. Crowds would sit on herring nets drinking in the words of life. Young converts were taught the Word of God, while hardened sinners found salvation to be the answer to their long search for peace. "Fish France", in giving his testimony would say,

"I used to be like the boaties in the harbour tied fore and aft, but now I am loosed in Jesus. It all happened when I was converted."

A leading part in these meetings was taken by a man called "Soldie" Watt of the steam drifter Gowan Bank. Another of the stalwarts was Willie "Shippie" West. His grandson, Alex Jack, tells in a gospel leaflet the story of "Shippie" crossing to Shetland one stormy night when the steamer struck a rock. As a fisherman he knew the danger they were in, so he made his way along the passenger deck towards the lifeboats and there he saw a lady sitting there quite composed. Going across to her he said, "What a night to be on a rock." Quickly she replied, "It is grand to be on The Rock on a night like this." "Shippie" knew exactly what she meant as he had experienced the truth of Isaiah chapter 32, verse 2. "A man shall be as a hiding place from the wind, and as a covert from the tempest." Earlier in life he realised that in the gathering storms of time there was only one safe refuge - Jesus Christ.

There were also some light moments in Castle Grant. One night as the meeting progressed, a bag of potatoes burst and scattered all over the floor. As the crowd picked them up, someone started to sing, "What a gathering".

Today, after almost 60 years, the effects of the revival are still visible in the Church of Scotland, which is outstanding in its evangelical testimony, and a thriving Brethren Assembly.



## Chapter 10

### CULLEN, PORTKNOCKIE & FINDOCHTY

Fishing had for decades been the only source of financial income for the Banffshire towns of **Cullen**, **Portknockie** and **Findochty**. The inhabitants of these places were closely knit; they rejoiced together in happy times and sorrowed together in times of disaster.

Many left at the annual exodus for the East Anglian fishing, indeed, whole families made the journey south in order to either catch, gut or pack the silver darlings. Children of school age were taught in schools at **Yarmouth** or **Lowestoft**, while those under five would be left in the care of friends or grandparents.

These three towns were to know a rich harvest, far beyond that which had been thought possible. Whole families were converted to Christ, even before they returned north. When they did arrive in their respective towns, the blessings received at **Yarmouth** did not subside, but flowed on and spread into the neighbouring villages and district.

The Christians of **Cullen**, some who had been revived and others just saved, were to play a prominent part in the move of the Holy Spirit in **Portsoy** in 1923. When Captain William Leed and Lieutenant A. E. Towne, the Salvation Army officers at **Cullen** decided to go to **Portsoy** for meetings in March 1923, they were supported by a loyal band of Christians on fire for God, from **Cullen**. These folks were willing to cycle even in winter weather in order to tell their neighbouring townfolks of the One Who is mighty and strong to save. No wonder **Portsoy**, **Sandend** and other villages were moved by revival blessing and many were saved.

There were others who unashamedly blazed the trail for God, because wherever the men of **Portknockie** went in pursuit of their calling as fishermen, they would fearlessly and fervently proclaim by life and lip that Christ is the answer.

One of the well-known characters around the Banffshire fishing villages at that time was a fisherman from **Portknockie** called John Innes. Saved at the turn of the century, John was tall, of erect bearing, and could often be seen standing alone at some street corner, holding forth the word of life. His preaching took its character from his way of life and was invariably interspersed with quaint witticisms. Preaching in the days when radio was in its infancy, he would say, "I'm always tuned in to glory."

The words of the song he frequently sang revealed how this man of God saw the journey of life as a voyage at sea, and how one needed Jesus as a pilot. Those who heard him sing said that he sang with conviction and the passion that only a soul burdened for others could sing. This is his song:-

*"Ye sons of the main that sail o'er the flood  
Whose sins like a mountain, have reached unto God,  
Remember the short voyage of life soon will end,  
And so, brother sailor, make Jesus your friend.*

*Look astern on your life, see your way marked by sin,  
See what dangers your vessel and cargo are in,  
If the hard rocks of death should grate on your keel,  
Can you say with assurance, your soul will be well?*

*Lay by your old compass, it will do you no good,  
It ne'er can direct you the right way to God,  
Mind your helm, brother sailor and don't fall asleep,  
Or your vessel and cargo will sink in the deep.*

*There are treacherous shoals then on every hand,  
On the voyage of life, to that happy land,  
Consult your chart and compass every day,  
And your vessel will sail safely on all the way.*

*With the Pilot on board, we can sail right along,  
Through calms and through storms till we reach our blest home,  
Then come unto Jesus, my dear sinner friend,  
For remember the short voyage of life will soon end."*

A few miles west of **Portknockie** is the town known locally as "**Finichy**". Around the first two decades of the 20th century **Findochty** contained some tremendous men and women of God.

One such was James Campbell, a Sergeant-major in the local Salvation Army Corps. James preached in his sea-boots in Church Street, warning souls to "flee from the wrath to come". He later took a bad stroke which immobilized him, but he was prayed for, got marvellously healed, then visited every home in the town and district. His prayer life was tremendous.

Another was James "Callie" Campbell. Some of his family did not enjoy a full measure of health, but this only drove those saintly souls nearer to the Christ they loved. He proved God in these circumstances, because his faith in Christ was as deep as the sea that he sailed in search of a modest living for his family.

One man who was always rejoicing in his Saviour was George Flett. Known locally as "Sailor", he played his cornet in the Salvation Army meetings. He is reputed to have played his instrument to the glory of God in every port he visited as a fisherman. His one-man, plus God, open air meetings were well listened to. What a character for Jesus, Finlay Flett was. With his boat, "Brae Flett", he moved to **Wick**, taking his whole family with him, and proved his worth as a Salvationist.

It was a privilege of mine to know another stalwart of these days of revival. I met Bill Bruce while I was conducting a Gospel Campaign in a tent at **Buckie** in 1964. Immediately a great friendship was forged between us. The sweetness of the fellowship in his home with his dear wife "Lass" will live with me for a long time. As I sat and drank in the stories of triumphs for the Cross, my heart would just cry, "Lord, do it again." These few men along with others stood for the truths of the Gospel even before 1921. No wonder **Findochty** was especially blest when God moved amongst the fisher folks.

The weekend after the drifters had sailed for East Anglia, a Salvation Army Officer along with a mother and her young lassie walked up the hill after the meeting in the Salvation Army Hall. Then the captain remarked that there were only eleven or twelve in the service due to the fishing and lack of interest in spiritual things. Suddenly the three stopped in their tracks as they realised the situation. They fell on their knees and began to pray, crying upon God to do something. Soon their hearts were at rest as they were assured that something great was on the way. As they arose from their knees that Sunday night, souls belonging to their beloved town were finding Jesus Christ as their Saviour, hundreds of miles away in **Yarmouth** and **Lowestoft**. Nearly sixty years later the sacredness of that moment dawned upon me as I listened to the young lassie, now an old woman tell me the story.

During that next week, letters and telegrams began to arrive at **Findochty**, telling of the blessing flowing at **Yarmouth**. Some of the most unlikely characters were being saved there. But things were happening here at home. Women were converted at the wash-tub, in the shops and in the mending lofts. By the next weekend there was a large improvement in the attendance at the meeting house. When the folks returned from the fishing, the difference was remarkable. Homes were united in Christ, wayward families saved and set free.

The record states that as the men walked from **Buckie** to **Findochty**, a distance of two or three miles, the songs of their pilgrimage to heaven were sung all the way. One of the most notable features of the move of God in **Findochty** was that nearly every afternoon of the winter of 1921-22, groups of newly saved souls would leave the town and go into the neighbouring villages and preach the Gospel of Christ with remarkable results.

The abiding fruit of these few months are still evident, with another generation experiencing the same Christ as Saviour today in "**Finichy**".

## Chapter 11

### BURGHEAD & HOPEMAN

Snugly situated at the top of the Moray Firth are the fishing villages of **Burghead** and **Hopeman**.

Boats belonging to these ports proudly display the Inverness registration. This is also the registration of boats from **Avoch** and the Black Isle. Many from these three villages were greatly blest by the revival. Their hearts burned with the fire of God as they sailed home along the Moray Firth.

There were impressive scenes at **Hopeman** and **Burghead** as the men returned from **Yarmouth**, and likewise among the women as they made their journey home by train and bus. Eyewitnesses at the harbour state that what they saw and heard was fantastic. As the boats waited for the tide to allow them to enter the port, songs of a new experience that had taken place in many hearts wafted across the water. The tide of God's blessing was about to flow into and through these villages. Sceptics were able to see with their own eyes drunkards who had been saved, and self-righteous souls who had relied on their works had taken their stand as guilty sinners. Now, all rejoiced in the knowledge of salvation by grace alone. Broken homes had been mended and that all through the work of Christ on the Cross at Calvary. Truly this song could be sung in these villages:-

*"The broken strands of life can all be mended,  
By the dear hand of Christ my Lord."*

A service was held in a hall at **Hopeman** on the first Sunday of December, 1921, when a large crowd attended. There about twenty men and women came forward in answer to the appeal. On the Monday five or six responded to the altar call. God was working.

An open-air meeting held one Tuesday in December drew a large audience. After this a march of witness moved along Harbour Street when well known hymns were sung. As new converts walked alongside stalwarts, a deep impression was made on many hearts as the question, "Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?" rang through the town. "Yes I'm washed in the blood of the Lamb," echoed through the air, and **Hopeman** witnessed the power of the risen Christ in the hearts of men.

In an interview a fisherman convert revealed this amazing story.

"I attended a meeting in **Yarmouth** which lasted four hours. The Rev. Douglas Brown preached that night and the presence of God was overpowering. I saw men and women openly weeping over their sins. There were about two hundred converts that night. It was the best four hours I ever spent, but best of all, I went back the next night and was saved."

**Burghead** was not moved to the same depth that **Hopeman** was. Nevertheless, the revival was hailed with great enthusiasm. A middle aged convert was asked what he thought of the revival.

"I believe God is working. The meetings are creating a great impression. People are locking their doors and leaving the mending lofts. They are making for the meetings

to hear the young fishermen speak. Some people are sceptical, but just look at the drunkards who have been converted. It is evident that they have met the Master, and the joy expressed on their faces show it is a work of the Lord."

An estimate given at the time of the revival stated that there were well over one hundred converts who were genuinely saved.

## Chapter 12

### WICK

The well-known Pilgrim Preachers arrived in **Wick** at the beginning of October 1921 and started holding meetings in the Baptist Church, where the Rev. Millard ministered the Word faithfully every Sunday. Full of zeal for God, the evangelists held open air meetings at the foot of the cliff at the south end of the bridge. By their fearless proclamation of the Gospel and with bright singing, souls were drawn to the meetings in the Baptist Church, where fifteen or sixteen, mainly young people, professed salvation. God had begun to move in **Wick**.

Away in **Yarmouth** God was moving among the **Wick** fishermen. Around six were converted, some of them notorious characters. Among these men were Don Rosie and John Flett, both of the motor drifter, Brae Flett. One man relates how he walked from **Gorleston** to **Yarmouth**. As he walked slowly up King Street with no intention of going to any gospel meeting, for he had no interest in eternal things, he heard singing coming from St. George's Church, where the Rev. Douglas Brown was conducting services. A power outside himself drew him into the church. When the appeal was made he responded by making his way to the front. He fell on his knees and was saved although no one spoke to him personally, because so many had come forward. This man walked back to his boat, the Mizpah, which was moored at **Gorleston** and told his skipper who was the well-known Salvationist, Billie Stewart. Billie took him down to the forecandle where the motor drifters had steam boilers to drive their capstans, prayed and sang the hymn,

"At the cross, at the cross, where I first saw the Light".

There in the dark part of the fishing boat the assurance of salvation entered that man's soul. The next day, which was a Sunday, the man was taken along to the Salvation Army in **Yarmouth** by Billie Stewart and Skipper Flett of the Brae Flett where there was much rejoicing over this man's conversion.

As the fishermen of **Wick** returned home, the converts were alive for God. On Friday the 23rd November 1921, all these men attended the meeting held by the Pilgrim Preachers in the **Wick** Baptist Church. That night Billie Stewart sang the hymn,

*"Ho! ev'ry one that is thirsty in spirit,  
Ho! ev'ry one that is weary and sad;  
Come to the fountain, there's fullness in Jesus,  
All that you're longing for; come and be glad.*

*'I will pour water on him that is thirsty,  
I will pour floods upon the dry ground;  
Open your hearts for the gift I am bringing;  
While you are seeking Me, I will be found.'*

It is reported that the atmosphere was charged with the power of the Holy Spirit and in the meeting some precious souls found Christ. After the service Billie gathered all the young converts together and said,

"Boys, I'm a Salvationist, I'll be going to the Salvation Army tomorrow night. If you want to come, meet me outside the Army Hall at 7 o'clock."

Captain Reid and Lieutenant Long were the officers in charge at **Wick** and they had a real burden for souls. At that Saturday night meeting, things began to happen as God started to move. When the service was over, the converts went out to an open air meeting at the market place. Sunday was a great day, for souls were saved in every meeting. Later that evening they went into the open air. Eyewitnesses told of how the market place was filled with people, one estimate put the number at a thousand. Men and women witnessed of their new found joy till after 11p.m.

By Monday, 26th November, almost the entire population of **Wick** was talking about the revival.

There was a deep sense of God's presence. At an open-air service on the Brae-Head above the harbour at the Pulteney side of **Wick** these young souls, some only converted for a few hours, boldly testified of Christ's redeeming power. Two well known young fishermen came out of the public house across from the meeting and John Flett, who had recently been saved in Yarmouth, went over to one of them and said, "I believe if you get saved, hundreds will follow and get converted after you." These two men joined the crowd and went to the market place. Later on, the meeting moved to the Salvation Army Hall which was crowded, some having to sit on the windows. That night the young man whom John Flett spoke to, was converted and became a Salvationist. Many others found Christ that night. The Baptist Church was also packed to capacity with people seeking God.

Tuesday the 27th was the greatest night of all. After the meetings indoors there was a tremendous open air service in the market place where it was estimated that over one hundred and twenty accepted Christ as their personal Saviour. Witnesses of this great event tell of how hardened men and women broke down, and with tears of repentance cried upon God for mercy. The young converts took off their coats and laid them on the ground so that those who desired could kneel in comfort. From that night the blessing spread like wildfire.

Those who were leading the work came under exceptional strain. Conducting meetings, holding nights of prayer and praise, leading enquirers to Christ, all took their toll on the health of those concerned. Captain Reid of the Salvation Army became ill. Young Lieutenant Long found herself in charge of the work. God used that young woman mightily in His service. The open air services at the Brae-Head brought out large crowds and on several occasions at least four streets were blocked. Listeners were amazed as the young Christians fluently quoted scripture.

A convert who later became a Salvation Army Officer, eventually rising to the rank of Brigadier, tells of these meetings. "I was unsaved and unmoved when the awakening started. As cashier of the Breadalban Picture House, I can say that hardly anyone was attending the cinema, at one showing there were only five present. I would be going to my work at 7 p.m. when the crowds were so large I could not get through and had to make a detour around back streets to get to my place of employment."

Brigadier Rosie goes on to give her testimony:

"I was saved in the New Year in the Rifle Hall. The crowds were so large that the Rifle Hall had to be taken over as it was the only Hall big enough, yet even that was too small. Six months later I came into the experience of scriptural holiness and could sing from a clean heart's experience,

*'I'm more than conqueror through His blood,  
Jesus saves me now,  
I rest beneath the shield of God,  
Jesus saves me now.'*"

Our sister went to the Salvation Army Training College and became an officer in many Corps where a great work was done. Her sweet voice could be heard singing the songs of Zion. She testified that the work done in her heart in 1922 has lasted well over fifty years. When the Lord builds the house, it stands. During her forty years active service she has seen wonderful things.

"What evidences of God's work there was," she said. "One young Christian had a melodeon and he would lead sometimes well over 500 in a march of witness from the Barrigol Hall to the Salvation Army."

What a sight this must have been.

In these times of refreshing it was wonderful to witness that all believers were united in Christ. The one aim was to see souls rescued from sin. Mr. Millard of the Baptist Church was at home on the Salvation Army platform as were the Salvation Army Officers in his pulpit.

The Baptist Church in Union Street was another place that experienced great blessing. Their minister, the godly Rev. Millard threw himself into the work with all his heart. He was greatly used in leading men and women to Christ, and was called upon at all hours to help sin sick souls.

His church was constantly filled, most of the time there was standing room only. Prayer meetings played a very important part in his ministry. The testimony meetings on Sunday afternoons were special occasions. Don Rosie told of how he stopped smoking six weeks before he got saved in a meeting run by Douglas Brown at St. George's Church, **Yarmouth**. It was said that he was one of God's gentlemen. He sailed in the motor drifter Brae Flett with the Flett brothers, and at one time the entire crew were all saved men. Another hard case, an engineer of a steam drifter said, "You ask me how I know I'm saved? I'll tell you. Before I got saved I would find myself under the bed on a Sunday morning because I was so drunk that I could not get into it on Saturday night. Now, I am in bed on a Sunday morning for I have never touched a drop of drink since I got saved."

These converts were new creatures in Christ, and they knew it.

"I'm saved; I know I'm saved," cried one fisherman. "How do I know? Well, yesterday I went into Walter' Craig's shoppie and on the counter were some knives. I could not steal them. Before I got saved I would have had two or three in my pocket."

How these uneducated men loved to tell in their own way the change that had been wrought in their lives since Jesus had come to abide in their hearts. They were so keen to testify that the leader during a meeting had to insist on order as two or three would have spoken at once.

A Salvation Army Staff Captain, Mrs. Rohu from **Aberdeen**, arrived to help in the meetings along with the wife of the officer from **Thurso**. They proved to be a tremendous asset to those who had borne the strain of the work in the early days of the awakening. The meetings continued to gather strength during the month of



December and the young converts stood over the New Year period with their colours flying. At the turn of the year many of the young men had the joy of seeing their parents become Christians. There was a marked improvement in the preaching of these young converts and it became obvious that they had become students of the Bible. They quoted with accuracy and clarity as they testified for Christ. During the first week of January 1922, these young men started to travel to the villages around **Wick** to take services. Among the places visited were **Ackergill** and **Staxigo**. Precious souls were converted through their witness.

Jock Troup arrived home at Wick on the 3rd of January 1922. He had visited **Dundee** after being in **Fraserburgh** and had seen God move in both places. These were very busy days for the young evangelist. The past few months of strenuous labour for the Master had left him exhausted. He had become hoarse and was advised to refrain from public speaking for a period. During his attendance at the meetings held in the Barrigol Hall it became obvious that his presence brought inspiration into the services. However, when his throat showed no improvement it was decided that surgery was necessary. This operation was carried out in the Bignol Hospital, **Wick**. With loving care and attention Jock was soon his own self again. His return to the work was greeted with great enthusiasm.

A special Gospel Rally was held in the United Free Church. This was his first engagement since the operation. Witnesses declare that it was a meeting "out of this world". The place was packed to capacity, chairs filled the aisles and there were people sitting on the pulpit steps. His text for that night was, "Ye must be born again." People who knew him in days past had to recognise that he carried the seal of God's approval on his life and work.

Jock now flung his whole weight into the meetings. The rest had done him good, for the time he had been laid aside proved to have brought fresh inspiration. So large were the crowds that gathered to hear the local man that the police asked him to move from the Market Place down to the harbour at The Camps. Services were held between 9 p.m. and 11 p.m. every night. Jock also preached in the Rifle Hall. It must have been a great sight to watch him holding forth with his jacket off and his sleeves rolled up. It was in the Zion Salvation Army Hall that he first introduced the following hymn to his local townsfolk:

*"What a wonderful change in my life has been wrought,  
Since Jesus came into my heart.  
I have peace in my soul for which long I have sought,  
Since Jesus came into my heart."*

The Master's call was heavy upon Jock, for it was not long before he started to travel. God's work in **Wick** went on, with the tide continuing to rise in blessing. One notable feature was that the young converts grasped every opportunity to witness for Christ. Jock made many new friends among them. One of these was a young man who had been saved only a few months earlier through the Pilgrim Preachers. From the beginning of his Christian life this young man showed great promise, and he travelled with Jock around **Caithness** holding meetings in halls and churches. He told me that they were praying one night at 11.30. Jock said, "Angie, we must go out and have an open-air."

Although it was late they went into the Market Place where they sang and preached. Doors and windows were opened as people came to listen. It was a marvellous night. Men and women collapsed in the street under the conviction of the Holy Spirit. As Angie told me about that occasion in his home at **Torry in Aberdeen**, my heart was amazed at the wonderful way in which God works. Tears were in his eyes as he remembered souls lying in the gutters crying on Christ for mercy.

Jock found it hard to get away to the quiet place. In a crowded home it was not easy to escape the publicity he attracted. Often he would go down to the old sail-boats which were moored on the river at **Wick**. There he cried alone to God in prayer. Sometimes Angie joined him. In later years these days became precious memories. Angie was later to associate himself with the Open Brethren. For over fifty years he has proved to be a faithful Bible teacher and evangelist. Many have found Christ through his ministry in the Brethren Assemblies, especially in Scotland. I counted it a privilege to meet one who has had the fire of God burning in his soul for nearly sixty years.

## Chapter 13

### THURSO

The town of **Thurso** lies west of the well-known landmark of Dunnet Head. As in many other places at that time, the spiritual temperature was low. One bright spot was the Salvation Army which had been established around the turn of the century.

**Thurso** Salvation Army had produced a young man by the name of Willie Leed, whom God used mightily in the salvation of souls particularly in **Portsoy**, Banffshire in 1923. Willie Leed was converted in 1915. He was a signalman during the war, sailing mainly in armed trawlers. He left **Thurso** to become a Salvation Army Officer in 1919 and subsequently rose through the ranks to become a Commissioner.

There were no herring drifters from **Thurso** at Yarmouth in 1921. A few fishermen sailed on **Wick** boats. In one way it did not reap the benefit of having boats return with crews of born again men. The winter herring fishing based at **Thurso** and **Scrabster** from December to January drew boats from **Wick** and the Moray Firth ports. Many of the men who came at that time had been converted at **Yarmouth**. They brought a breath of spiritual fire into a corner which had not as yet been touched by the blessing that was flowing amongst the fishing communities. When they were not at sea, they made their way to the Salvation Army Hall at **Thurso**. Ensign Hartington was the officer in charge and proved to be a man "whose heart the Lord had touched". Immediately he organised these fishermen and used them at every opportunity. Special prayer meetings called "Knee Drill" took place and open-air services were held. God began to move through these men for the revival of Christians as well as the salvation of sinners.

One of the men converted in December 1921 was John Sinclair, who became Sergeant-Major of the **Thurso** Corps. Mr. Sinclair took an active part in local government affairs, rising to the highest office in that realm. It was in these circumstances that he left his mark as a man who had high Christian principles in dealing both with the poor and with royalty.

"The meetings were packed and the crowds were so large that we were like herring in a barrel," he said. "I went along to Army meetings on Sundays, but had no real interest. One weeknight I went along for Willie Leed's brother, then I found myself being drawn to the Army Hall. My friend refused to enter, but I went in and got saved. Quite a few were at the Penitent Form that night. My friend Leed came along a few nights after that and he got saved as well. At the testimony meetings new converts would be anxious to tell in their own way how they were saved and what progress they were making."

Outside the Town Hall at least 130 men and women stood in a ring. Marches of witness attracted many as the fishermen, dressed in their jerseys, sang, "I'm not ashamed to own my Lord."

With great satisfaction he spoke of the words facing the penitent sinner as he knelt at the "Mercy Seat" in the **Thurso** Hall: - "Jesus can save you now." They were painted by his friend Willie Leed, the young Salvationist whom God was going to use throughout Britain in the rescue of perishing souls.

## Chapter 14

### PORTSOY REVIVAL 1923

**Portsoy** on the Banffshire coast knew something of delayed action regarding the evidence of the awakening of the Spirit. Only a few men and women were converted at **Yarmouth**, but they were genuine. When God moved in 1923, there were people already prepared. One such was George Currie. He had been a hard case before his conversion, but when he found Christ the change was remarkable. His entire family eventually became Christians. Another was Jock "Tartan" Pirie. These two men were ready to take responsibility when God moved two years later. One day while they were praying for the town, two young Salvation Army officers, who were based in the neighbouring village of **Cullen** came to **Portsoy** to do "Self Denial" collecting for Army funds. A request was made for them to come to the village and hold meetings.

It was no coincidence that a Captain Leed, who hailed from **Thurso** was the officer in charge of the Salvation Army at **Cullen**. He was a member of the Army team who had seen tremendous blessing around **Norwich** in East Anglia during 1921. In charge of the work was the spiritual giant Albert Osborne, who was later to become General Osborne. This young highlander was being prepared for the move of God in **Portsoy** years before it took place.

Lieutenant Towns and his co-worker realised that a few people in **Portsoy** were burdened over the spiritual state of their town. The officers began to pray along with them. Captain Leed testified that there were many occasions that Lieutenant Towns would weep all night for **Portsoy**. One day the junior officer asked for permission to go to **Portsoy** to conduct services. Immediately Captain Leed agreed. He had been praying that his co-worker would volunteer to hold meetings in that town. It was a known fact that many had boasted that **Portsoy** was not touched by any revival. Services were arranged to start during the week of 25th March 1923 in the form of open-air meetings at the Shorehead and indoors at the Christian Institute.

The open-air meeting took the usual form of others conducted by the Salvation Army. There was bright singing and testimonies from those who had come along with young Lieutenant Towns from **Cullen**. He then gave a simple message. Crowds gathered to hear. A man who was saved that night tells the story with great conviction.

"I was just going into my teens when I heard of the transforming power of Christ in the lives of the men who returned from **Yarmouth** in December 1921. Somehow **Portsoy** was never the same. Every Saturday night at 9 p.m., I would go to watch the drunks come out of the pub. The fights would be tremendous with blood flowing from the hardened men as they fought fiercely with each other. Fights also took place at the Shorehead. Little did some of these men realise that a few months later they would be standing and testifying to the power of Christ in the very same place. Why? Because Christ had come into their lives."

The same brother goes on to tell of that first meeting held in **Portsoy** on March 25th 1923.

"At the Shorehead open-air meeting after some songs and testimonies, Lieutenant Towns went into the ring and spoke. "This is your chance to get saved," he said. He

then took off his jacket and laid it on the ground. Then he fell on his knees and prayed. Immediately, Alex Pirie, James Slater and myself responded to the appeal before a great crowd who knew us well. We openly got on our knees beside the young officer and trusted Christ. Alex Pirie was later drowned in the early days of the seine-net fishing on the Dogger Bank. We were asked to testify for Christ right there and then at the Shorehead. Real assurance entered my heart. We all then went to the Christian Institute where a number got saved." The spiritual awakening had begun in Portsoy.

The services in the Christian Institute were times of refreshing. Many a night the hall would be packed to capacity with 500 people inside. The cinema was closed and later taken over by the Salvation Army. People walked from **Whitehills, Fordyce, Sandend** and **Cullen** to these meetings and there were many conversions. A certain Jimmy Hay was drunk when he cried out, "Lord be merciful to me a sinner." As he rose from his seat he was sober. It was said that there were 400 souls saved in **Portsoy** and the surrounding villages at that time.

There were some outstanding conversions in **Portsoy**, but that of Jimmy Hay was a case of immediate transformation. His brother tells of how the news was broken to Jimmy's mother. "A neighbour cried out, 'Your Jimmy has got saved in **Portsoy** tonight.' I cannot remember my mother's reply, but she stayed out of bed to see the result of the work of grace. In due course Jimmy came home and cried out, 'Mither, here's a new man tae ye the nicht.' My mother stood for a moment and then sang,

*'Ring the bells of heaven; there is joy today,  
For a soul returning from the wild.  
See, the Father meets him out upon the way,  
Welcoming His weary, wandering child.'* "

The fishing village of **Sandend** was shaken to its foundations that night. Jimmy Hay would often give his testimony at the Shorehead in **Portsoy**. There crowds would gather to hear what great things God had done.

*The article in **chapter sixteen** is a personal account of the awakening at **Portsoy** in 1923, by William Leed, one of the two men God was pleased to use.*

## Chapter 15

### JOCK TROUP

Jock decided in 1922 that his Bible knowledge was limited so he enrolled at the famous Bible Training Institute in Bothwell Street, **Glasgow**. At that time the principal was Dr. David McIntyre and God used this intellectual servant of His to mould the young evangelist.

Jock would constantly be having prayer meetings in his room at all hours of the day and night, and although this created some problems for Dr. McIntyre in his responsibility for the other students, the godly principal used all his wisdom and knowledge in making Jock realise that rules had to be kept. Some students testified that these times of prayer were a tremendous blessing to their souls, and set them an example of how to pray through and claim the blessing from heaven.

It was during these days that Jock met another young man who was fired with the power of Christ. When that young man arrived at the Bible Training Institute, he hardly knew how to use a fork and knife. Peter Connolly was born and brought up a Roman Catholic in a poor home in the North of England. From the moment he was saved his life began to speak volumes for the power of salvation. Soon a bond of love, unity and desire to work for Christ grew between these two and they were constantly called upon to conduct campaigns together during college days. Both of them found the discipline hard at the Institute, yet later on they often paid tribute to the help and encouragement they received. On one occasion, Jock and Peter complained about a certain lecturer who had not mentioned Jesus Christ in his lecture. The principal asked for their notes and they told him that they had disposed of them. He took time and patience to explain to his two over zealous students that the lecture had been on the Children of Israel in the Wilderness.

Travelling together in gospel campaigns around Britain, they won many for Christ. They would spend days and nights in prayer, even fasting when the heavens seemed as brass, with no one professing conversion. Tears would be shed as these men bound the enemy of souls, laying hold on the Word of God that declares, "Whatsoever ye bind on earth, it shall be bound in heaven." The two warriors knew that the secret of blessing was based in powerful praying.

In many fishing towns along the Scottish coast there are still those who remember missions being conducted by Peter and Jock. Over the next years they travelled extensively. In 1932 Jock was invited to become Assistant Superintendent to Mr. P. T. McRostie at the Tent Hall in **Glasgow**. The Tent Hall was situated in the Saltmarket part of Glasgow. It was built after Moody and Sankey held their campaigns in the city. Since then it had been a centre of evangelism. This new ministry in a more settled sphere provided Jock with a fresh challenge which he met with the help of the Lord. Jock by this time had found a help-mate who hailed from **Wick**.

Mr. McRostie died in 1933 and Jock was asked to take full responsibility for the work at the famous Tent Hall. At that time it was one of the largest independent missions in the land. He accepted the challenge and was Superintendent until 1945. During those years Jock fought against every evil that abounded in the city of **Glasgow**. The war

years were used as an opportunity to bring the gospel to the armed forces and supply weary travellers with meals. No doubt Jock's mind would go back to **Dublin** during the 1914-18 war, when Mr. & Mrs. West provided similar facilities which were instrumental in bringing him to Christ.

His open-air services at the **Glasgow** Cross were blessed times when his tremendous voice could be heard singing and preaching ever Saturday afternoon. He made sure that his meetings were always bright, whether it was out in campaigns or in the more organised atmosphere of the Tent Hall. One of his saying was,  
"There is no warrant in Scripture to tell us that a gospel service should be conducted like a funeral."

In Tent Hall days Jock invited many powerful ministers and evangelists to **Glasgow** for special meetings. Men like the well-known Bible expositor Donald Barnhouse. The evangelist W. P. Nicholson came and his ministry was blessed by the salvation of souls.

Jock never lost the urge to travel in order to preach the gospel. He had realised earlier on that he was called to be an evangelist and never lost that sense of call. However, the years had taken their toll on his health and after some illness he resigned from the leadership of the Tent Hall in 1945. Many folks speak yet of those days, and there are many who are proud to have been associated with him in the work of the Gospel. He never lost his love for the Salvation Army. During his frequent visits to **Wick** he always visited the Corps there. He took great delight in appealing for funds for the Salvation Army picnic for children in **Wick**. In the open-air at the Camps in **Wick** he would cry out for all those who could afford to give £1 notes, then for those who were able to give 10/- notes and last of all he would ask for the snow (silver) to cover the paper.

When a **Wick** Salvationist was being interviewed as a candidate for Officership by Commissioner Jeffries he was asked,

"Do you know a John Troup?"

"I know a Jock Troup," replied the candidate.

"Well," said the Commissioner, "I invited him to become an officer in the Salvation Army, but he felt he could not stand the discipline."

Jock is reported to have said at least once,

"If I had my life to live over again, I would be a Salvation Army Officer."

After Jock's health began to improve, he started to travel again and conduct missions throughout **Britain**. He also went abroad. In **America** he was greatly loved as an old-fashioned Gospel preacher. Many souls were saved in the campaigns he held across that vast continent. It was on one of these tours that he received his call to "higher service". At the commencement of a campaign in **Washington**, which was to last six days, he had just started his message, gave out his text saying,  
"What else can I say, but ye must be born again?"

At that moment he passed from time into the immediate presence of the Master he served and loved.

From that night in 1918 in the wheelhouse of the drifter Strombo, until he went home to glory on the 18th of April 1954, the Christ who saved him, kept him in every battle and trial. God took His servant home to heaven with his "boots on", preaching the old

Gospel he loved and defended. Often in conversation with his dear wife he had declared that he wished to pass on whilst on active service.

Jock was not an old man, but the thirty-six years of Christian experience were packed to capacity in the service of Christ. Truly he could say, "I love my Master; I will not go out free."

He has gone down in the annals of the Evangelical Church as one of the greatest evangelists Scotland has ever produced. It was his responsibility and privilege to be one of the few men entrusted to be at the "helm" in a time of spiritual awakening. One of Jock's favourite choruses was:

*"Just a little longer, and the trump of God will sound,  
Just a little longer, and we'll all be glory bound.  
Look away to Jesus, your redemption draweth nigh,  
Just a little longer, and we'll meet Him in the sky."*

His melodious voice has been preserved for posterity on quite a few gramophone records. He sang the old hymns with a tremendous depth of conviction seldom found in modern gospel soloists.

Many of the renowned evangelical leaders paid tribute to Jock and lamented that a great man and a prince had "fallen in Israel". His lifetime friend Peter Connelly said when he heard of Jock's untimely death, "I have lost my dearest friend. He wept long and uncontrollably for the souls of men and women that his eyes were like balls of fire. He taught me how to pray."



## Chapter 16

### THE STRATEGY OF GOD - Report of Revival in Portsoy

by William Leed

The following article is a personal account of the awakening at Portsoy in 1923, by one of the two men God was pleased to use. William Leed became a powerful instrument in the hands of the Holy Spirit. Both of these men became high ranking officers in the "Army" they served and loved.

I am deeply indebted to Mr. James Slater of Portsoy for access to this personal account.

#### THE STRATEGY OF GOD

William Leed

The editor suggested that I tell something of the story of the North Scottish Awakening 1921-23, and I do so hoping that our faith may be strengthened that the "God Who lived at Pentecost is just the same today" Why not a world-wide revival in our time?

My title is borrowed from Commissioner Brengle and his observations of God strategically using human events to accomplish His purposes for the salvation of mankind.

Surely Divine strategy arranged three independent spiritual spearheads to simultaneously attack East Anglia in 1921 with wide reaching results. Rev. Douglas Brown was mightily used of God in **Lowestoft** and surrounding area; in **Yarmouth**, Jock Troup, Scottish evangelist, then a Salvationist, was conducting spare-time warfare on theatre and cinema queues, also pub closing-time crowds, winning many souls; while Staff-captain Albert Osborn and Staff captain Gordon Simpson S.F.T. at **Clapton**, were undoubtedly divinely directed to arrange a Charabanc Crusade comprising Training Officers and Sergeants (I was fortunate to be a member) in widely scattered East Anglia, which brought to Christ a multitude of souls - 106 in **Norwich** alone. Towns and villages were invaded by Crusadets, morning, noon and nights, with outstanding response.

I believe God's strategy with those events was aimed at far wider issues, for the annual invasion of the fishing ports by thousands of Scottish fishworkers happened when Revival was getting into its stride. Douglas Brown had prolonged his Campaign, all places of worship being thronged with seeking souls, great numbers of Scots among them.

The fishing season ended, the Scots carried the Revival Fire north, and North Scottish towns and villages were aflame, converts "went everywhere preaching the Lord Jesus", thousands being saved. At **Peterhead**, 600 seekers were registered, and **Wick** Corps saw at least 500, and great numbers of professing Christians were revived; practically all denominations pulsated with new life, and eager converts carried the Gospel to their neighbouring villages.

At **Cullen**, outpost of **Findochty**, Lieutenant Reg. Woods (late Commissioner), led some little girls to Jesus and told them to ask their mothers to pray for them. Golden

haired Anna Gardiner did so, and her war-widowed mother, stricken to the heart, replied, "My quinie (wee girl) I canna' pray for masel' yet"  
Said Anna, "Mither, ye can be saved. too!"  
That was a troubled night for Mrs. Gardiner, and it was no co-incidence led Lieutenant Woods to bring a group of converts for an open-air next day almost outside her door. Mrs. Gardiner left her washtub, arms full of soap-suds, and standing in the ring with uplifted hands cried,  
"I want you all to know I accept Jesus Christ as my Saviour!"

Her witness electrified **Cullen Seatown**; the Lieutenant announced a meeting in the hall which was filled, and that afternoon a soul saving work began that never ceased until very many converts were won.

A few months later my Lieutenant (Col. Albert Towns) and I were appointed from Clapton to **Cullen**. These wonderful days - crowded meetings in the hall which was filled, and that meetings weekdays and Sunday - 24 meetings weekly outdoors and inside including Y.P. - great enthusiasm - everyone anxious to pray, sing and testify. Our first open-air comprised eighty in the ring, and I felt "surely God is in this place!" That was the night of our arrival and that impression never left me.

To organise the Corps was a glad responsibility, but we were anxious to win souls, but this was difficult - everyone seemed already saved. The D.C. reminded us there was a time for ingathering and a time for building them up in our most holy faith.

1922 was a wonderful year. To watch these newly-born Christians grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ was an inspiration. It did much for ourselves also. A Training Officer had advised me to give my very best in my first address and to improve on that standard in every meeting following. He little realised what he was laying upon me. We had eleven senior meetings weekly besides five Y.P. meetings and ten open-air, besides constant visitation. We had to wrestle in prayer. Certain sects challenged the converts on Army doctrine, which made us search the Scriptures even more thoroughly than when in training, but this confirmed our confidence in the Scriptural foundations of our movement. After a lifetime of prayerful consideration of "the faith which was once delivered to the saints", my convictions thereon are deeper than ever.

Somehow, despite seeming improbability of another great ingathering of souls, we believed we would again see God's hand mightily at work. For our New Year motto we chose General Osborn's song "Greater Things", and in our Watchnight Service issued a challenge. After much prayer we asked all who believed the coming year would show "even greater things" to sing the chorus with uplifted hands. I see them now - the packed hall - uplifted faces, some tear-stained - hands outstretched to God - a sublime moment of childlike faith in God. We little realised how it should come - another Great Awakening.

**Portsoy**, one-time busy little sea part, six miles east of **Cullen**, was our responsibility. We more than once held a two-man open-air there, but there seemed little interest. We were later told the folk prided themselves that in former times when revival swept the coast **Portsoy** remained untouched. Duncan Matheson and James Turner were reputed to have laboured there in vain.

Delivering SD (*Self-Denial*) envelopes there early in 1923 I was twice challenged; a woman told me **Portsoy** could go to hell for all the Christians cared, and an elderly fisherman implored me to hold meetings there. Deeply concerned, while cycling home that day, I felt a distinct urge that something must be done. But how? Our **Cullen** itinerary was heavy. Owing to a clause in letting of the hall, we dared not close it for one night. Others were keen to use it, and once they got in we would be on the streets.

On the following Tuesday, however, we arranged for someone to hold the fort at **Cullen** whilst a party of us invaded **Portsoy** where a hall was engaged for a meeting. At the preceding open-air a young man knelt in the ring causing a sensation. The hall was crowded. There was obvious conviction, but none came forward indoors.

Next Sunday a young **Portsoy** man came to **Cullen** and claimed Salvation. Begging me to come to **Portsoy** for a Sunday meeting, he said many there were under conviction and he was sure they would respond. Again, local difficulties confronted us, but I asked the Lord if this was of Him would He cause the Lieutenant to offer to go with a party. To my joy, walking home that night the Lieutenant said, "Let me go with some of the fellows, Captain." I immediately secured the hall and announced the meeting. Next Sunday we turned our **Cullen** services into prayer meetings for **Portsoy**.

During one night meeting I was distinctly convinced souls were surrendering at **Portsoy**. Later I met the Lieutenant on the road home and said, "Before you tell me anything, you have had souls." "Yes," he replied, "three young men came forwards in the open-air, and six more men indoors." "Thank God," I answered. "Now you will return tomorrow and others will follow." One of the party said later, "You often speak about the Holy Spirit, Captain. I saw Him at work in the Lieutenant in that open-air. He was truly filled with the Holy Ghost!"

Next day six young men surrendered. God now wonderfully helped with arrangements for our Cullen meetings, and we had nineteen seekers at **Portsoy** on Tuesday. On Wednesday the D.C. came. We engaged the Town Hall and twenty-six souls were registered.

And so it went on: the Town Hall was packed nightly, floor and gallery, many unable to gain admittance. Often folks were at the penitent-form before the meeting commenced as the people gathered long before commencing time, singing and praising God.

There were so few to help us with the penitents, we frequently had to leave the prayer meeting to run itself. Eighty year old grannie Pirie, olden-times Salvationist, kept things going. I see her now walking the aisle singing, "There are angels hovering round to carry the tidings home."

The town seemed transformed; one somehow felt spiritual atmosphere everywhere; the glory of the Lord seemed upon the place. Singing could be heard from the houses

as converts gathered to praise God everywhere. I recall a wonderful occasion when an elderly lady pulled me from the street into her home, saying, "Pray wi' me, Captain; I want tae mak' ma peace wi' God!" Her kitchen table became a hallowed altar. Many were pointed to Christ in their homes.

One memorable night when a hefty R.C. lady came to the Mercy seat a young woman rushed forward embracing her. Enquiring later, I found the girl was her niece. There was bitter estrangement between the families - family dispute - violence - the lady had broken her brother's arm. For twenty years they had not spoken to one another. Two years later I saw both families walking to the Holiness Meeting with Bibles under their arms.

"What a wonderful change in their lives had been wrought since Jesus came into their hearts."

The elderly fisherman and his wife who first challenged me, were converted and their home became the first Corps quarters. The lady challenger of that day also came to the Lord. Later she became the Home League Secretary. Her husband was a wonderful trophy of grace. Sixteen years afterwards he thumped me on the back when I briefly visited the town, saying,

"Captain Leed, you are my spiritual father!"

I was deeply moved as I also was that day on visiting a grand soul who at conversion was unable to read owing to unfortunate circumstances in childhood. She learned to read in order to understand the Bible and Song Book. Greeting me with her Song Book in her hand she joyfully said,

"Oh Captain, listen tae this lovely songie I've jist been reading."

As she read a thrill of joy came over me.

There was no great preaching, just a simple presentation of the Gospel with earnest appeals to yield to Christ. Sometimes no address was given, seekers came to the penitent form as soon as the meetings commenced. An outstanding feature was that the large proportion of elderly folk who were saved - aged married couples particularly, and faithful Christians they became. There was no undue excitement, they not being an over-emotional type. Prior to the Awakening it seemed a spiritually indifferent town. .

Lack of space prevents further reminiscences but many times I have thanked God for the gracious privilege of sharing in that wonderful work of grace, for a lifetime friendship with my Lieutenant of those great days, and the memories of those converts the majority of whom are now in the Gloryland.

"And the hand of the Lord was with them and a great number believed and turned unto the Lord." (Acts 11:21)

## Chapter 17

### NEWSPAPER ACCOUNTS

The newspapers, local and national, gave quite a coverage to this awakening by the Spirit of God.

Local papers reported the ebb and flow of the blessing in the lives of the people. By and large they gave an accurate account of the events that took place in their towns and villages.

One national paper carried the statement that pipes, tobacco, tobacco pouches and cigarettes were placed in a given spot in the middle of the villages of **Cairnbulg** and **Inverallochy**. The articles concerned were then set alight in bonfire style and the converts sang hymns and prayed, but as far as I have endeavoured to trace this event, I have been unable to find anyone to corroborate it.

In the Christian press, coverage was given to the revival and reports show that Professors and Ministers had to acknowledge that it was "of God".

I am indebted to the editors of the papers concerned for access to their back numbers and for permission to quote freely from them.

#### **Jock Troup's Interview with the Glasgow Herald 30th December, 1921**

**This interview was conducted in Dundee where Jock was having great meetings.**

"Having a grand time in **Dundee** with many cases of wonderful experiences of salvation. Keep the Rev. John Harper's prayer before you, 'God have mercy on Scotland'."

Since Troup came to **Dundee** last weekend, meetings have been held in the Old Steeple Church, while prayer meetings are held daily in the Y.M.C.A. which attract over 200. During the weekend well over 100 converts have been recorded including a man associated with the Communist Party. We are told that the fishing communities of Fifeshire, particularly **St. Monance** and **Cellardyke** are affected. The feature in **Dundee** is the way in which the different ministers have cooperated."

#### **Another extract from the Glasgow Herald of December 1921 goes as follows:**

"The prairie fire of religious revival is raging along the coasts from **Wick** to **Peterhead**. It was kindled by a torch lit at **Yarmouth** and **Lowestoft**. It is filling the Kirks and emptying the pubs.

'We came back with nae muckle siller, but with saved souls,' is the frequent remark made.

'Is there any new message?' I asked.

'No, just the old, old story, but the preaching has power.'

They speak affectionately of Jock and Douglas meaning their leaders. Jock Troup a herring cooper from **Wick** and the Rev. A. Douglas Brown a Baptist minister from **London**. While having dinner one Sunday aboard a herring drifter Jock Troup said, 'We're going to have a revival, we must pray and then go out and get it.'

This they did, they knelt on the floor of the cabin and cried to God, then went ashore and held the first of many open-air meetings in **Yarmouth**. It is obvious that PRAYER AND CONFIDENCE ARE THE WEAPONS WITH WHICH THIS BATTLE IS BEING FOUGHT.

Meetings started in the open-air, then the churches opened their door and hundreds professed salvation. 'It won't last long,' they said, but the fisherfolks are home from East Anglia and in every port they are spreading the message. The churches have been revived. It is indeed for the North East a "Bonnie Bairn" time as the Covenanters would say."

#### **Peoples Journal of 10th December, 1921**

"At testimony meetings these weather-hardened fishermen speak of 'The Great Captain', call Christ, 'The Skipper' or of 'Having the Pilot on board' because they are bound for the Port of Heaven'. The chart is the Bible, so with such a CHART and such a CAPTAIN, 'We canna' gang rang', they say. The songs sung are old favourites, such as Old Hundredth; Will your Anchor hold in the Storms of Life?; and When the Roll is called up Yonder',

A stirring incident took place at the Monument in Broad Street, **Peterhead**, when 34 people threw themselves on a muddy road crying for Christ to save them. At an indoor meeting later in the Salvation Army, 40 knelt at the penitent form. The testimonies were tremendous. There was the hardened character who threatened his wife with a razor, who got converted and then his wife followed him. Then there was the wayward girl."

#### **Peoples Journal of 17th December 1921.**

"People are thronging the streets going to Church; nine out of ten can be counted on being bound for a place of worship. They are not the conventional type of Churchgoer. With them religion is part of themselves, not to be confused with the donning of fine raiment. So one discovers them in the garb of their calling, the men in blue jerseys and caps, the women in shawls, but there are well-dressed people sprinkled amongst them - which shows that the movement is not confined to only the fisher class. Where the church should hold 500, a 1000 or more contrive to find an entry and the doorway is blocked with others who would fain get in.

There is no waiting for the fixed hour for the beginning. Prayer is offered spontaneously - without a break, the worship switches again into hymn choruses. Voluntary testimonies are frankly and eagerly made by young converts. Tales of drink and gambling, of domestic unhappiness, of soured existence, flow from the lips of men and women who passionately plead with the unconverted. The messages are simple. There is insistence on one point - the acceptance of Christ as the only road to salvation.

Figures in tens and twenties move down the aisles of places of worship to prostrate themselves at the stool of repentance. More come to increase the number of motionless figures at the front. It is an experience that sends a thrill through your veins. The people refuse to leave the building, and once more the singing breaks out, as full-throated as ever.

The villages along the **Moray Coast** are moved by the revival. Each centre is sending out groups of God-fearing sturdy fishermen as day missionaries to the immediate neighbourhood, which in turn follows the same course. By cycle and foot without regard to weather they make their pilgrimage. They are triumphant heroes of the Cross of Christ with its meaning and message. Everywhere at home and in the streets there is joyous singing of hymns such as, 'At the cross where I first saw the Light'. 'We are not revolting against the churches', says Jock 'But the Almighty is.' The ministers have left the Bible to a new theology which is not based on the Bible. God has lowly and humble instruments to guide people back to the truth which is in Christ. It is a revelation to hear the songs sung in the Spirit."

#### **Buchan Observer - Peterhead – 29<sup>th</sup> November 1921**

"Religion of an evangelical nature has always appealed to fisherfolks. At **Yarmouth** meetings of an evangelical nature were held on a large scale and there were at least 1500 converts. On returning to **Peterhead** a number of young converts held an open-air meeting with a view of continuing the good work. On a cold November night young fishermen converts were singing and preaching for several hours."

#### **Buchan Observer – 6<sup>th</sup> December 1921**

"Religious Revival still continues to spread in **Peterhead**. The movement has been taken up with great enthusiasm by the Salvation Army. During the past week open-air have been held every night, and young fishermen and fishergirls have given personal testimony to the experience of salvation. A stimulus has been given to the revival through a united effort by the Congregational and United Free Churches having a Campaign by an evangelist named Mr. John Moor."

#### **Buchan Observer - 20<sup>th</sup> December 1921**

"There are, I believe, deeper truths in this revival movement than meets the eye of the casual observer, for men and women, young and old have been swept off their feet in 1000's as the movement has swept up the seaboard of the **Aberdeenshire Coast**. Life has been radically changed, and the old valuations are gone. Something big and overwhelming has happened to them, and we stand by and gaze wonderingly and perhaps half contemptuously at the phenomenon and ask ourselves, 'What is it, what is the power that has changed our ordinary, placid and quiet-living neighbours into praising, praying, prophesying evangelists?' I have met them personally and collectively and can say it is not emotion! One thing has impressed me and that is that the gatherings are mostly acts of praise. I wish it well, and will be delighted if the march continues and turns the cold critics into convinced supporters and admiring friends. "

#### **Northern Ensign, Wick - 30<sup>th</sup> November 1921**

During the weekend services were conducted by local Salvation Army Corps, when a number of **Pulteney** fishermen who were converted at **Yarmouth** lately addressed both open-air and inside meetings at Zion Hall. On Monday and Tuesday open-air meetings were held and a number professed salvation."

#### **Northern Ensign - 7<sup>th</sup> December, 1921.**

"The air is electric with revival enthusiasm these days. A remarkable awakening has taken place particularly amongst the fisherfolks, many of whom once believed as they say in having a good time, and who were outstanding characters. They have

abandoned their old way of life, and have identified themselves with Christian Service particularly the Salvation Army. I have been present at several open-air meetings at the Market Place and at one inside meeting in Zion Hall and have been greatly impressed by the amount of spiritual fervour manifested. Unlettered lads spoke in homely language telling of their change of heart. One said his chum had declared it was like a 'Flu' and was spreading. Another convert said he had joined the ship of salvation. It was not an eight-man crew craft; it was not a small packet, but a ship that could take all onboard. Another said he was once full up of dancing, pictures, drink, gambling and several other things, now he was full up of salvation."

**Northern Ensign - 14th December, 1921.**

"The revival inaugurated in **Wick** by the local fishing community at **Yarmouth** continues to be held twice a day, afternoon and night in the Salvation Army Hall. Evening Service on Sunday was held in Rifle Hall which was not sufficient to accommodate all who wanted to attend. Staff Captain Rohu of Aberdeen gave the address. The converts already registered number over 400."

**Northern Ensign - 21st December, 1921.**

"The meetings in the Salvation Army Hall continue with marked success with many wonderful conversions taking place. Several fishermen converts have left for West Coast fishing. One boat, the Mizpah is manned entirely by men who have professed Christianity, and their departure last week for the **Stornoway** fishing was a scene of great interest at the harbour. The boat sailed with the Salvation Army flag flying from her masthead and the crew and their friends sang revival hymns. It was really a scene unexampled in the history of the Port of **Wick**.

The boat was stormbound at **Scrabster** and the crew went to **Thurso** Salvation Army and held meetings where a number professed conversion.

The meetings continue in Zion Salvation Army Hall, and the work shows no sign of abatement. Of late the parents of young fishermen have been following their offspring into the Narrow Way. "

**Yarmouth & Gorleston Times - 10th November, 1921.**

"John Troup was an excellent advert for Christianity. There is a heartiness and sincerity in his Amens and Hallelujahs that make people believe that he has something worth having.

'Some people call me mad', said Jock, 'There's going to be a lot of mad folk in **Yarmouth** before this is over. What will the old devil be saying now, I wonder? I bet he's having a sore bad time.'

Every evening and three times on Sunday Troup holds open-air meetings. Many converts kneel down in the street each night.

A correspondent for the newspaper travelled to **Fraserburgh** to interview Jock Troup. He tells how he eventually found Jock leading the singing at a meeting in the Congregational Church. He was a powerful man built like Jack Dempsey the boxer. Three others stood with him in the pulpit, one a fisherman dressed in his fisherman's jersey. The church was packed mainly with those of age group 25-35 years with a percentage of middle-aged, the women were very conspicuous with their home knitted shawls. The meeting over, they made their way home singing revival hymns.



I tried to get an interview with Mr. Troup but he was far too busy helping men and women who had responded to his appeal. I arranged to meet him in the smoke-room in my hotel the next morning. As I made my way there after breakfast I heard hymns being sung and when I opened the door of the smoke-room there was Troup along with two friends. His eyes flashed with fire and zeal as he related how he worked from morning to the wee sma' hours preaching and praying. He told me how he started meetings in **Yarmouth**, how he was dismissed from his work, and stayed on at **Yarmouth** for a week or two and then came to **Fraserburgh**.

'The doctor says I must slow down but I'll continue on and on.'

Although Jock Troup occupies a prominent place in the movement, yet the most prominent Person in it is God Himself. God has become very near and the secret of it all can be summed up in one word - prayer."

#### **Fraserburgh Herald - 13th December, 1921.**

"The remarkable religious movement continues, and during the weekend Churches and enquiry rooms have been filled. One of the most unemotional ministers in the town who has not so far identified himself closely with the movement declared at the close of his sermon on Sunday,

'The Spirit of God is working, powerful in this town. There is absolutely no doubt about that. Staid church people may be shocked by some of the things that are being said and done, but we must exercise charity, for great good is being wrought.'

One reporter states, 'I have not heard Jock Troup preach. He has been the means of hundreds of people getting saved, but I went along to the Congregational Church in Mid Street and found it full, three-quarters of an hour before the meeting even started and failed to get in. I then went to the Market Square where a few hundred folks were singing and testifying to the new experience of salvation and peace. Later I made my way back to the Congregational Church and was fortunate to get into the porch and hear Troup preach. His text was "I am the Way". A friend gave me his seat so I could get a glimpse of the speaker. He was shouting at the pitch of his voice, with arms and legs in motion all the time. A doctor has suggested Troup should rest, but he will not consent to that, he is so earnest.'

Evening meetings are held in at least three Churches."

#### **Fraserburgh Herald - 27th December, 1921.**

An evangelical hurricane has struck the North East.

A French Psychologist Monsieur Paul Hargener visited **Cairnbulg**. This learned gentleman likened the revival to that of Wales in 1904. He talks of seeing Mr. Sonny May and Willie Third who are fishermen explain the Bible to 200 fisherfolk along the seashore."

#### **Elgin Courant and Courier - 2nd December, 1921.**

"The inhabitants of **Hopeman** have been greatly blessed by the recent revival in **Yarmouth**. Large open-air services are held in prominent places and services are held inside with the help of Rev. J. Cameron of the United Free Church and Rev. S. Conway of the Baptist Church. Many who have been converted are those who have served their country in the 1914-18 war."

**Northern Scot - 7th January, 1922.**

"People who have no connection with it are wondering when it will finish. **Burghead** and **Hopeman** continue to support it enthusiastically. An elderly evangelist said, 'Those once sceptical are now in favour.'

The meetings are continuing in Yarmouth style. I am pleased to be associated with these young converts.

Bright Gospel meetings are held in the United Free Churches and Free Churches in **Burghead**. It seems the movement is stronger in **Hopeman** with meetings held in the open air, with services held indoors at the United Free Church."

**United Free Church of Scotland Report.**

**Issue of Deputies published during the last week of December, 1921.**

"Three ministers, Rev. Dr. R. J. Drummond, Edinburgh, Rev. J. Hall, Edinburgh and Rev. O. Russell, Paisley, visited **Fraserburgh, Peterhead, Cullen, Findochty** and **Portknockie**. They had this to report:

'We went to meetings together and individually so we have this to say. To our minds it is a genuine awakening. It is a work of God. The men whose names come to the front would be the last to take credit. They are honest, earnest, modest young men, with a humble idea of their own ability. Those brought to a decision of Christianity are young men in the 18-30 age group. We have interviewed the local leaders, David Cordiner at **Peterhead**, Jock Troup at **Fraserburgh**."

## Chapter 18

### DAVID CORDINER

Article in "The Railway Signal", Magazine of the Railway Mission.

"David Cordiner does not mention his experiences at **Peterhead** very often - he is afraid lest people think he is a somebody, when he knows, 'Jesus did it all'. He was in the fishing fleet at **Yarmouth** along with Jock Troup when the revival broke out there.

He had to bear the hardships of the poor fishing that was experienced when the fleet went out day after day and often returned with hardly a fish.

Jock Troup heard the voice of God in the trouble and began open-air meetings, at which David stood as a listener. David had been converted some two years previously, but had never come right out for God. One night, however, he faced the matter, and he felt within him a great deliverance had come. Now he could take part in the meetings, and began by bringing his mates and the fishergirls to the meetings, and many were saved. Soon the boats turned home once more to Scotland, and when he reached **Peterhead**, and went home to his father's house, he felt a heavy burden of responsibility upon his soul.

One Saturday night he was compelled to go along to the corner where the men usually gathered. He had never preached before, and had neither heads nor tails to his address; but the Lord filled his mouth with words, and soon a crowd gathered. For nearly two hours David held on his burning appeal. That night, seven men came out and knelt down on the stones of the street, confessing their sin and committing themselves to the Saviour. Next day, Sunday, was a day usually spent mostly in prayer. When night came, he went forth again to the street, and again a crowd gathered. The night was cold, and after a time a march was formed, and the crowd went into the Salvation Army Hall. Here a great scene was witnessed, when over twenty anxious souls sought the Saviour.

For six weeks, meetings went on every night, David bearing the greater share of the work, but others also came to help, and hundreds professed decision for Christ. Some news of this movement reached us in **Glasgow**, and on the first Saturday of the New Year of 1922, I went to **Falkirk** for the weekend, to help Mr. Currie, of the Town Mission, who was Chairman of our Newton St. Boswells Branch at one time. At **Larbert** I met a friend who said to me,

'Have you heard that David Cordiner has come to **Falkirk**?'

I said, 'No.'

'Well he is to take part in the meetings at the Town Mission this weekend.'

I was delighted to hear it, and went on the **Falkirk** with keen expectations. Mr. Currie met me, and told me about David Cordiner's arrival, and that he had come without being asked, and that, whilst he would take part in the meetings, I must also take part. We went to the Mission Hall and knelt down in the vestry to pray. While we were kneeling, the door opened, and someone knelt down near me, and I knew it was David Cordiner. When we got up from our knees, I shook hands with this serious-faced young man. I said,

'You will take the meeting tonight?'

'No, you must fulfil your programme,' he said."