

PRESS RELEASE BY THE THREE CHURCHES IN THE PARISH OF CRUDEN
Cruden Church of Scotland, St James Episcopal Church, .Cruden Bay Congregational Church

To Press and Journal, Buchan Observer, Ellon Times

This press release focuses on the first of the three events mentioned in our previous press release dated 6 July.

A Church service with a difference – on Cruden Bay Golf Course

In the year 1012 among the sand dunes of Cruden Bay there took place a battle between the Danes and the Scots under King Malcolm II. It has been suggested that Cruden comes from *Croch Dain* - the slaughter of the Danes. The large flat slab of marble lying inside the east gate of Cruden Old Church is said to have been sent over from Denmark to mark the grave of a Danish prince killed in the Battle of Cruden. After the battle, the very first chapel in that part of North East Scotland (dedicated to St Olaf, the patron saint of Norway, and Denmark) was founded by the Scottish King to mark the spot where the slain were buried.

So 1,000 years ago, in 1012, Christian worship started in Cruden and has continued to the present day. The Church is mentioned in a Papal Bull of Pope Adrian IV in the year 1157; and in 1256 it appears as one of the prebends of the Cathedral of St Machar in Aberdeen with the right to appoint a Deacon to serve as Vicar in the Cathedral.

The first church was overblown by sand so another church was built on a slightly higher piece of ground. Blowing sand remained a problem, so, about the time of the Reformation (1560), a third church was built further inland upon the site now occupied by Cruden Old Parish Church.

The first event organised by the Cruden Churches to celebrate 1,000 years of worship in the parish is taking place on St Olaf's day which this year is Sunday 29 July. Appropriately, the service will take place, weather permitting, in the open air beside St Olaf's Well beside the 17th fairway of Cruden Bay Golf Course. Led by the Episcopal Bishop of Aberdeen and Orkney, assisted by the parish ministers, this will be an ecumenical service which anyone can attend.



St Olaf's Well

This has only been possible thanks to the much appreciated cooperation of Cruden Bay Golf Club Council. Those wishing to attend the service, which starts promptly at 9.30 am, should arrive in the Golf Club car park where they will be shown where to park. Those who will find the walk down to St Olaf's Well a bit daunting will be shown where to drive down to the Greenkeepers' Huts where they can park close to the site of the service. The service will finish within the hour and those attending can then make their way to the Golf Clubhouse to enjoy a cup of coffee and tea provided by the churches. The Golf Club have also agreed to sell bacon rolls to those who are feeling a little peckish after the early start to the day.

These plans are of course weather dependent. The Rev Rodger Neilson, minister of Cruden Parish Church, has welcomed the recent news of the Jetstream moving north to turn our recent wet and windy weather into what we would hope for in summer. However he points out that if that Sunday morning does turn out to be too wet or windy or cold, then when people arrive at the car park they will be shown into the clubhouse for the Club Council have given their permission for the service to take place in their magnificent clubhouse with the large windows overlooking the dunes and St Olaf's Well.

So anyone wanting to go to the service knows that whatever the weather they should arrive in Cruden Bay Golf Club car park just before 9.30 am on 29 July.