

20th January 2022

Anywhere

**"I can go anyway, way I choose, I can live anyhow, win or lose.
I can go anywhere, for something new.
Anyway, anyhow, anywhere I choose."**

Pete Townsend & Roger Daltrey, Anyway ('The Who, 1965)

My first visit to Jura as locum minister, there and on Islay, reminded me how beautiful an island it is. We had a family holiday on Jura many years ago, and I'd forgotten that it is such a lovely place, even on a dreich day.

Jura has a special place in my heart, not just because of its beauty, but because one of my best friends is laid to rest in one of the island's cemeteries. Farquhar McArthur, a minister of the Gospel and one of the finest men I've known, died tragically young. His wife, Effie, was from a Jura family, and she and her husband lie together in the Kilearnadil graveyard above Keils village on the east of the island. Spending time at their graveside was one of the first things I did on Jura this time.

I was surprised to find a new Information Board by the cemetery gate, which, according to the local folk, hasn't been there long. It read:

Kilearnadil

Kilearnadil is named after St Earnan, St Columba's uncle, and one of the twelve men accompanying Columba into exile in Scotland. On his deathbed, St Earnan asked that his body should be carried to Jura and buried in "the first glen where mist was seen". His followers carried out his instructions, founding Kilearnadil chapel and burial ground.

St Earnan could have been laid to rest – as in *The Who's* lyrics – "anyway, anyhow, anywhere" he chose. I have no idea why he framed his instructions as he did. But the "anywhere" – chosen because it happened to be a random, misty glen – turns out to be Kilearnadil.

My friend was also laid to rest in this "anywhere". It was special to be in the place marked by his headstone. But he could be anywhere. For his spirit, influence, goodness, worth and value are *not* laid to rest in Kilearnadil burial ground. For me, he is everywhere, and his final resting place is just another place among many where I remember and give thanks for his life, "anyway, anyhow, anywhere I choose".

A prayer for today

*I'll need no plot, no grave, no stone when I depart,
For I'm assured I'll live forever in your heart.*