

# The Dunscore Digest

Dunscore Church and Community Magazine

Spring 2020



Another big Fairtrade Fortnight success in Dunscore – see page 10

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## Minister's Musing

**Rev Stuart Mill**

March has come in like the proverbial Lion, making his grand entrance amidst strong winds and squally wintery showers. Let us hope that by the end of this month it will have calmed down, and left us weather which behaves more like a lamb.... as the old saying goes.

Anticipating the coming of Spring is such a deep-seated instinct for us. We note with inner satisfaction our first sighting of a snowdrop in the year just begun. This year the little maids of February have put on a wonderful show for us.

Soon they will be joined by the earliest of the daffodils, swaying as they do on hollow stems, making them more resilient to the vagaries of the Spring weather. High in the trees the old rookeries are being noisily repaired. But to date, the bumble bees are still deep in slumber and the swallows have hardly begun to think about leaving Africa and flying northwards to their accustomed barns and fields in Nithsdale. God is certainly to be found in the beauty and complexity of the natural world.

But our search for true spiritual happiness cannot be fully satisfied purely with reference to the world in which God has set us. We need to know that God our Creator, Redeemer and Enabler loves us. We need to experience the utter joy which fills our very being when we taste the certainty and touch the permanence of that perfect love.

As we journey through the season of Lent, may we be drawn into the mystery of God's gracious and dramatic Incarnation, seeking and speaking the truth in love.

Whether in prayer, in scripture reading, in the Lord's bread and wine or in acts of compassion, we find ourselves within sight and sound of Calvary; within touching distance of the stone across the entrance to His tomb, as it gently begins to move. The Lord has risen! He is risen indeed! Allelujah!

I wish you all a very blessed and joyous Easter.

## Corona Virus Outbreak

**Colin Mitchell**

### Offering Help to Our Community

Dunscore Church Session is keen to protect and care for members of our community (whether church members or not) who need help during the present Coronavirus outbreak. If you need help please contact your elder or me on 01387 820455 or 07850 840437. Help could include: Collecting and delivering shopping; Collecting and delivering medicines or someone to talk to.

We are continuing to pray for all those affected by the virus and all those in the health service and other support services.

## Community Council Column

**Alistair McFadzean**

Since the October elections, the new councillors have looked into and completed the following:

- We have had the damaged railings around the war memorial repaired.
- We have had a drop-kerb installed near the top of the village to allow motorised wheelchair-users easier access. We now have the long-awaited speed signs erected and working at both ends of the village – so watch how you travel!
- Our defibrillator is broken and not repairable. We are looking into a replacement.
- We now have 23 children and youngsters living in Dunscore and Throughgate. A few years ago, there was only one. We are looking at how we can make it safer for the ones at Throughgate to walk to school. It is a very dangerous and narrow road. We will keep you informed.
- Pot holes are an ongoing task.
- We have now received £2,000 which is the first annual payment from the Blackcraig wind-farm. It comes with restrictions so that we can only allocate up to £500 for any one project. If you or your organisation require funding, please contact any Community Councillor to check whether you qualify.

### I'm Having Trouble Sleeping...

**Doctor:** "Describe your typical night"

**Me:** "A strong man in a suit of armour"

**Doctor:** "No, I mean at bedtime"

**Patient:** "He probably takes the armour off"

## Taking the Rice Challenge

June Harmer

Between Dunscore Church and Dunscore School, we have recently completed the 90 kilo rice challenge. We took on the challenge because selling 90 kilos of this Fair Trade Kilombero Malawian rice is sufficient to send one child to High School there. In fact we sold an amazing 110 kilos of rice across our wee community. Thank you if you were one of the many people that bought it. I hope that you found that it cooked well and was particularly tasty!

It took me quite a long time to understand the challenge. Why this particular rice and what is the significance of 90 kilos? Then it dawned on me! It wasn't a direct payment for a child to go to school in Malawi but if a rice farmer there sells 90 kilos then he will earn enough from that to pay for one of his / her children to go to school for a year. Clearly, any individual farmer may have to sell two, three or four times 90 kilos depending on the number of school-age children that they have. And do this every year.

Our challenge in Dunscore should have helped some Malawian farmers and these little challenges also help us (both adults and children) to increase our understanding of how others live. How fortunate we are to have schools for all our children whether we are rich or poor.

You can find out more about the challenge at [www.jts.co.uk/90kg-rice-challenge](http://www.jts.co.uk/90kg-rice-challenge).

## Eco Update

Yvonne Stirling

Our group meets about once every three months, usually at Susan Leask's home as she entices us with a superb lunch. Although the group is under the umbrella of Dunscore Church, we encourage and have members of the local community too, and we are fortunate to have a regular attendance of around 10.

There is a Bog Walk to consider the issues of peat extraction being organised with the Crichton Carbon Centre. Several of us attended a Mending Workshop at St George's Church Hall, organised by Church of Scotland and we had the Dumfries and Galloway Council Climate Champion talking in Dunscore Church. Councillor Dougie Campbell obviously cared passionately about his new brief of championing all things environment and the talk was very well attended. We hope to organise further occasional evening speakers. The Litter Larks continue to pick litter on a monthly basis leaving from Dunscore Church car park at 9:30 am - usually the first Thursday of each month, under the organisational skills of Raymond (ask Davie about those!). I think I am right in saying there has only once been a cancellation due to inclement weather since we started and that was because you couldn't see the litter under the snow! There is normally a staunch group about 10 folk and it is good fun. There is coffee and cakes and the famous Empire Biscuits afterwards (you can see there is a common theme runs in this group).

Our next meeting is on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> April at Susan's house. If you would like to join us please do, you will be made welcome.

## Repairing Peatlands

Mas Smythe

*In the last edition of the Digest, Mas wrote about damage to peatlands. This time she talks a wee bit about repairing the damage:*

Several environmental charities in South West Scotland have been helping restore ecosystems in the Galloway Hills, working out how to mend moorland and bring back the wild salmon to the rivers.

Galloway rivers used to be rich in wild fish, but during the 1970s, salmon and sea-trout numbers crashed. Since then, the Galloway rivers became infamous as some of the most acidified catchments in the UK. We used to blame this on acid rain, hard rock, and the way that some plants capture atmospheric pollutants.

But then the scientists began to look at the peat, and think about greenhouse gases and climate change. We saw that the moorland had been drained and dried, and that the carbon was evaporating into thin air, and flowing off as peaty water much browner and muddier than before.

People at our local Crichton Carbon Centre networked with experts across the UK, and spent years trying to work out how much carbon was being stored in the peat, and how much was being released if the peat became damaged. So it's only recently have we realised that it wasn't just the conifers and the granite that are to blame for acidification, but the draining and deep ploughing of the peat on which the conifers had been planted.

While Crichton Carbon Centre were busy working out the carbon calculations, Galloway Fisheries Trust were trying to bring back salmon to the Galloway rivers. Fish eggs and young salmon and sea-trout were dying, because of the river chemistry. It was only when the two teams got together that they realised they were looking at two ends of the same problem: the damaged peat on the Galloway hills. So restoring the Galloway peatland should be good news for rivers, fish and water supplies, as well as for carbon.

# Meet the Minister!

*The editor caught up with our new minister, Mark Smith, to find out a little more about him:*

## Where were you brought up?

I was born in Nottingham but my parents moved to York when I was a baby then to Manchester when I was about six years old. I went to the local comprehensive school there which, as luck would have it, was one of the best schools around.

## What did you do after you left school?

I went straight to Manchester University from school. My parents had moved out of Manchester by this time so there wasn't an option of living at home.

I studied Chemical Engineering and graduated in 1984 just as industry stopped employing new graduates! As a consequence I was unemployed for a while then found work with the Manpower Services Commission where I discovered my liking for working with people.

## When did you decide to become a vicar?

I had been involved with the church from a very young age as my father was a Vicar so I was brought up in a church environment.

At University I was involved in the Christian Union and, not long after graduating, the Church of England was encouraging people to test their vocation. I put myself forward and the Church accepted my calling leading to three years of training at Durham University and being ordained into the Church of England.

## What is the best thing about being a vicar / minister?

It is a privilege! As a minister you join people in all aspects of life's joys and challenges.

## What do you expect to be challenging in Dunscore?

Dunscore Church has a significant profile both locally and further afield. It will be a challenge to maintain this while encouraging everyone in Dunscore Church to ensure that God is always at the centre of all that we do.

## Why did you choose to live in Dumfries and Galloway?

Debbie and I came here for a holiday and loved the area. Debbie spotted a job here (she was a Health Visitor) and it seemed that we were being told something! She applied for and was awarded the job. We moved up in June 2004, initially living in our caravan! We rented a house for a while to get to know the area then bought a rather dilapidated house in Beeswing that we restored over many years.

## What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

We love walking. We are looking forward to discovering the tracks and paths around Wallacetown, Moniaive, Dunscore and farther afield! We also enjoy gardening ... and eating the fruits of our labours!

**Wine or whisky?** Whisky – a lovely Speyside malt please!

**Jam or Marmite?** Marmite – I have it at least once a day.

**Spain or Iceland?** Iceland. I've never been so that would be interesting.

**Ice cream or chocolate?** Vanilla ice cream – but a little chocolate too please!

**Football or rugby?** Football. Manchester City all the way.

*Thanks for sharing that with us Mark and we look forward to getting to know you really well soon!*



# Dunscore Heritage Volunteers

**Matthew Aitken**

The Heritage Centre will be opening for the new season from the first Sunday in April. Each Sunday our lovely volunteers fling wide the doors at 2:00 pm to welcome visitors from the village and across the globe. If you haven't visited yet, please look in soon. There is a great deal to see and hear in the centre.

If you might like to join the volunteer team we are always happy to add to the group. The duties are not challenging. The key thing is to give visitors a warm welcome, offer refreshments and answer any questions that they may have. You will receive training and will always be with an experienced guide while you gain in confidence. If you might like to join the team or would like to know more, please speak to John Drabble on 820356.

## Who'd be a Session Clerk?

Colin Mitchell

Life of a Session Clerk is surprisingly busy. It involves a lot more than I thought it would when I "volunteered"! It is even busier when we do not have a minister as I have to organise ministers to take our services. However, thanks to the hard work of the Nominating Committee we now have a new minister!

Rev Mark Smith will be inducted into his post as minister for the joint parishes of Dunscore and Glencairn and Moniaive on March 24<sup>th</sup>. Work to plan the service of Induction and the celebration afterwards is now well underway.

Dunscore is a thriving church and I am very optimistic about the future. We are fortunate in having enthusiastic members (and non members) who volunteer to give up their time to carry out many tasks including these:

Running "Messy Church" for younger children and their families; Leading evening services; Welcoming folk to church; Organising fund raising events; Serving on the Church Board; Cleaning the church; Being an Elder; Looking after the money; Serving coffee and tea on Sunday; Representing us at the General Assembly; Supplying flowers; Printing the Church Family Notices; Being part of the AV team; Keeping the website up to date; Liaising with the organist; Being our Associate Minister; Doing the admin; Making up the rotas; Representing us on our Presbytery; Being part of the readings rota; Looking after the building; Leading services at Thornhill Hospital and Briery Park; Leading the "Connect" bible discussion group; Looking after Health and Safety and disclosure and many more! Very many thanks to everyone who helps with all these and other duties.

## Bird of the Season

Lesley Creamer

### The Raven

Ask someone what a big black bird flying overhead is and they'd probably say a crow. However, increasingly around our area and elsewhere in Britain, that big black bird could well be a raven, the largest member of the corvid family which includes crows and rooks as well. A raven in flight can easily be distinguished from a crow by its wedge-shaped tail with central feathers forming a broad point while a crow has a much wider, flatter-ended tail with much more obvious 'corners'.



Listen for their very distinctive, guttural 'cronk', often heard when two birds are lazily flying across the sky together, one possibly performing mid-air somersaults, folding a wing into its body and rolling over sideways, tumbling downwards momentarily before flying on in a relaxed manner. It looks like fun and they do appear to enjoy it! Like all members of the corvid family, they're highly intelligent and can use those cronks to communicate all sorts of information on food and its location to other ravens, including recruiting them to help secure a food source. Not the 'silly, flighty person' of the dictionary 'birdbrain' but real brains of the bird world!



## Book Review

Matthew Aitken

### "The Island Child" by Molly Aitken

What have you been reading recently? Maybe you normally veer towards thrillers (like me) or, perhaps, you favour a wee bit of humour (and you can't go past a classic P G Wodehouse, can you?).

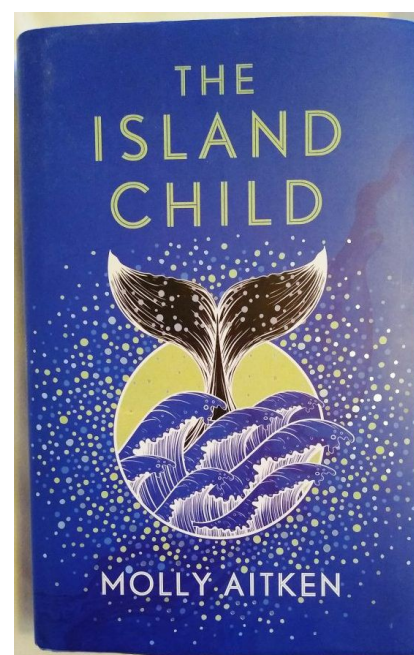
Recently I took myself well out of my comfort zone by reading the enchanting and wonderful "The Island Child". Certainly not a thriller (though there are some rather harrowing episodes) and likewise you wouldn't have it in the humour section despite some lighter moments.

The Island Child is a debut novel by the young writer Molly Aitken and is a delight! Though hard to categorise, it could maybe be best described as a "coming of age" book that cleverly follows its heroine, Oona, both as a child on an island off the south coast of Ireland and her troubled relationship with her mother and, in later life as an adult and mother herself in Canada as she is drawn back to the island of her childhood to confront her past there.

Sometimes dark and foreboding, often woven with Irish folklore, it is a beautiful read. Molly has a wonderful skill in crafting beautiful phrases evoking the atmosphere of the different stages of Oona's life.

I greatly enjoyed The Island Child and I was delighted to be taken out of my comfort zone. You may have spotted the reason that I did so. Molly is my niece.

The Island Child is published by Canongate.



## Time to Divest?

**Matthew Aitken**

Many of us have money invested in a variety of places. This may be in a bank, a building society, a pension fund or some other investment vehicle. If you have money in any of these places, do you know what your money is used for? Without knowing, you might have some shares in gambling companies, armament companies or in companies with very poor ethics. Would you be happy if this were the case?

Dunscore Church has some money invested in the Church of Scotland Growth Fund. Perhaps, not surprisingly, the Church of Scotland takes an ethical view on how it uses money in this fund and does not invest in gambling or armaments. It does, however, allow investment in fossil fuel companies and the Dunscore Church Board has been considering how we feel about this.

A Climate Emergency has been declared by governments around the world - including the Scottish Government. The very strong scientific consensus is that the major cause of increasing CO<sub>2</sub> levels and rising global temperatures is burning fossil fuels and this is already causing some of the poorest people across the globe to be displaced and to lose their livelihoods. It is also implicated as a significant contributory factor in disasters such as the recent fires in Australia. Clearly none of us can avoid using fossil fuels as they are so embedded in our lives (from heating to transport and plastics) but, if we are to have any chance of keeping global temperatures to a safe level, we have to move away from fossil fuels and towards renewable energy as rapidly as possible.

Fossil fuel companies have known about the impacts of fossil fuel burning for many decades. Only in very recent times have they shown any indication of taking even the smallest action towards changing their business model from searching for more and more oil, gas and coal rather than moving towards renewable energy. A recent report found that oil companies are investing just 3% of their capital expenditure in renewable energy resources.

For the past few years at the Church of Scotland General Assembly there has been a strong call for the Church of Scotland to divest (remove its investments) from fossil fuel companies. This has been defeated on two occasions with the Church choosing a policy of engaging with the fossil fuel companies instead. The Dunscore Board disagrees and believes that the Church of Scotland should be giving a lead to other organisations and should certainly not be making profits from an investment that is leading directly to hardship and misery by the poorest people in the world.

The Church Board wrote to the Church of Scotland to let them know how strongly we feel about this and have agreed that, if the Church of Scotland does not decide to remove its funds from fossil fuel companies at this year's General Assembly, then Dunscore Church will remove its money from the Church of Scotland investments.

## A Birding Bonanza

**Colin Mitchell**

Despite a forecast for heavy rain squalls and a high wind we decided to go ahead with the planned February bird watching trip to lochs between Dunscore and Castle Douglas.

Our first stop was at Auchenreoch Loch by the A75. We had to avoid discarded rubbish and litter (and worse!) to get to the Lochside. Here we saw a grey heron, goldeneye, little grebe, goosander, cormorant, red kite, mallard, Canada geese, carrion crow, coot, black headed gull, herring gull, wood pigeon, blue tit and treecreeper. Not a bad start to the day!

We drove on to Carlingwark Loch in Castle Douglas and walked through the park and along the footpath on the far side of the loch. Here we saw house sparrow, mute swan, jackdaw, a flock of redwings feeding on the trees and on the ground, great tit, chaffinch, goldfinch, song thrush, moorhen, blackbird and a close up view of a pair of bullfinches picked out in the sunlight in full breeding plumage. We walked as far as the bird hide to find that it no longer existed! We could not even see a trace of it.

After a "comfort break" we drove to Milton Loch where we enjoyed a picnic lunch. So far we had stayed dry and were out of the wind in the trees by the loch. Here we saw a buzzard, lesser black backed gull, magpie, and dunnoek. There were also lots of birds on the loch including a large flock of mute swans. Other water birds included wigeon, gadwall and pink footed geese.

We watched a flock of lapwings trying to fly into the wind. They battled into the wind but were continually blown back. They tried flying low and near the water but failed to make any progress. For about thirty minutes they struggled but did not travel very far. Eventually we lost sight of them and assumed that they landed in a field nearby. We discussed how much energy they would have used up at this time when feeding is in short supply and what made them keep trying to move west into the very strong wind.

Our next stop was at Lochrutton Loch where it was VERY windy! As we looked into the teeth of the gale we managed to see great crested grebes, more Canada geese and cormorants. We did not stay long though! We had a stop at Loch Arthur next where we saw more goldeneye as well as a robin and a sparrowhawk. It was then a short drive for coffee and cake at Loch Arthur tearoom and shop before travelling home. A good day's birding despite the weather!

# A Hebridean Induction

Sheila Anderson

*Sheila Anderson unearthed this article that she wrote many moons ago and thought it timely to share it, in view of Rev Mark Smith's Induction.*

In the summer (I think) of 1993, nine of us from Dunscore Church ensconced ourselves very comfortably on Calmac's impressive, Lord of the Isles, and there followed much hilarity and camaraderie on the five hour journey from Oban to Castlebay (Barra). We enjoyed views of Mull, Coll, Eigg, Muck and Rum bathed in sunshine. The Waugh family were camping on Barra, and they and David and Kathleen Greer were at the pier to greet us and assist us to our respective hotels.

The Induction service the following day was an occasion which will remain always in our memories. David had arranged for us to be collected by minibus from our hotels and Hamish, our driver (Manager of the Co-op and Session Clerk), drove us at breakneck speed to Cuithir Church and then went off to collect the Ministers from South Uist who were coming on the 3:00 pm ferry. The boat was late, but no matter, there was no real hurry, nobody was going anywhere, and it was a good opportunity for us to see round the Manse which was modern and not unlike the one at Wallaceston.

The wee church though grey and fairly plain on the outside was very attractive inside and there were 100 members and guests at the Induction service. The first hymn was sung in Gaelic by those who could (nearly all who attended, apart from the Dunscore delegation... who hummed well!). The wonderful quiet Hebridean accents of the Ministers who spoke and preached the word of "Cod" made the service a very moving experience for our Dunscore group. It made me realise how wonderful it is to hear our native tongue spoken clearly and slowly and with no shortcuts in its vocabulary!

Following the service, we all returned to Barra's pride and joy – the Community School in Castlebay. Built in the 1980s, it was the pilot for Scottish island schools. Used by everyone and providing education for primary and secondary children up to 6<sup>th</sup> year, it boasts a library and swimming pool as well as a large hall/dining area where we had an excellent meal which included fresh salmon and lots of wonderful home baking. There was much hilarity and it was good to be part of such a gathering which taught us so much more about what life is really like on Barra than if we had been regular holiday makers!

There was some excellent speechifying interspersed by entertainment, mostly in the form of unaccompanied Gaelic singing which I had only previously heard on the radio – and in that lovely setting and happy atmosphere it sounded a hundred times better. One Gaelic rendition – a Hebridean lovesong – 'The Fair Maid of Barra' was written many years ago about Miss Morag McAuley and it was she, now a very old lady, who presented David with an engraved Caithness bowl as a welcome gift from his new congregation.

Some of our number left unwillingly for Oban that evening while a few of us were fortunate enough to have another two days to enjoy the scenery and learn something of the history of Barra and Vatersay. We did a tour on the Postbus which was better than any official Guided Tour! David and Kathleen came to see us off on the Sunday morning, ready to start their new ministry on Barra.

*David and Kathleen were there for five years, before retiring to Castle Douglas, and then Dumfries. They finally moved to Tain to be near their daughter. Sadly David passed away last year.*

## Community Bus Re-Starts

Peter Roberts

A new committee has taken over the running of Cairn Valley Community Transport. CVCT provides a fortnightly scheduled service from Moniaive and Dunscore to Castle Douglas, an extensive programme of excursions and a hire service to local affiliated groups for Glencairn, Dunscore and Tynron. The committee was elected at CVCT's AGM on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2019. The AGM is open to all residents of the three parishes. The committee members are Stephen Sparrow, Chairman and bus maintenance, servicing and certification; Geoff Creamer, Secretary and programme, bookings and driver co-ordinator; Peter Roberts, Treasurer – bookkeeping, accounts, VAT, grants; Alan James, service development and improvement and Hazel Ford, passenger representative. The first four above will continue to drive the bus, as part of a group of a dozen enthusiastic and committed drivers.

The committee wants to take this opportunity to thank Chris Whittle for his great service in managing all of the above roles single-handed for the five years from 2014 to 2019. He did a wonderful job in keeping the bus on the road during those years. Chris has stepped down and is no longer involved, so please do not contact him on bus matters.

CVCT is a charity. Three trustees are responsible to OSCR, the Charities Regulator for the proper running of the organisation. Trustees are nominated by the constituent community councils, and the new committee is currently engaging with the councils to seek the appointment of new trustees. A CVCT website is being developed and will come online around the end of March 2020 at [www.cvct.org.uk](http://www.cvct.org.uk). You will find information on excursions and other services on the website, and you will be able to book and pay for tickets online. You will still be able to book by phone (contact number below) and pay on the bus.

**For bookings and any other queries about services you should contact Geoff Creamer on 01848 330821, [geoff.creamer@outlook.com](mailto:geoff.creamer@outlook.com). Please do not contact Chris.**

# Songs, Germs and Worms

Lee Mackenzie

We now have 15 children at Dunscore Pre-School and we are busy and productive:

We started the new year celebrating Robert Burns by making our own Scottish songs. Our families helped us make up new verses to the song Katie Bairdie such as:

Katie Bairdie had a dug  
He was greedy, he was a pug  
Wasnae' that a bonny dug  
Dance Katie Bairdie.

Katie Bairdie had a moose  
He escaped, was on the loose  
Wasnae' he a cheeky moose  
Dance Katie Bairdie.

As 'Shark in the Park' is one of our favourite books to read, we visited the Shark in the Park show as part of the Big Burns Supper in the Spiegeltent. It was really funny. We've been reading a new book 'Tippety Tap' featuring a thunder storm which can be a bit frightening. As a result, we did some science experiments to find out what causes thunder and lightning. We did experiments to make thunder and made electricity like lightning using balloons - so it's no longer so scary. We also used balloons to make a rocket which flew the whole length of the table when we released the air!



**A balloon rocket**

We've been learning about germs and doing some experiments to find out how easily germs can spread. We used a water pistol and coloured water to find out how far germs can spread when we sneeze – a long way! We also discovered how germs on our hands can easily spread when we shake hands and how long we have to wash our hands to wash the germs away. We've made models of different kinds of germs in petri dishes and are observing them to see if anything grows! However we've also learned that some microbes are good, such as ones which make yoghurt.

To mark Fairtrade fortnight we became Fairtrade superheroes completing a challenge to spot as many items with the Fairtrade logo at home or in the supermarket as possible. We were also very busy in our kitchen doing lots of baking using Fairtrade bananas, honey, sugar and of course chocolate!

Our kitchen is in regular use and for Pancake Day we made lots of crêpes topped with honey or bananas. Joe discovered that tossing a pancake is more difficult than it looks. We used our French to ask for and say thank you for our crêpes.



**Balancing on a log is tricky!**

It has been very wet so it's been difficult to get to the woods as often as we would like, but on the odd sunny day, we have had fun making dens, balancing on fallen tree trunks and finding worms.

## Dumfries Christian Network

Alison Robertson

Dunscore Church is a member of Dumfries Christian Network. The aim of the organisation is to promote Christianity in Dumfries (and district), to build relationships between Christian organisations in Dumfries and also with the local community and to encourage and facilitate groupings within the Network to undertake joint Christian action and help with publicity.

Services are held in different churches for each night of Holy Week. Watch the notice board for details. There will be a special Songs of Praise in Guid Nychburris week.

## Fly with the Pig

Andy Griffiths

Every month, on the first Friday, please come along to the quiz. Your new host is "The Boggler"! The Games Night is on the third Friday of the month and every fourth Saturday, there is a visit from the chip van (next 21st March at 5:00 pm). Chris and his Kitty Music Night is on Saturday 18th April and the Riverside Ramblers are coming back to play sometime in May.

Like the Flying Pig Community Pub Facebook page to be kept up to date with what's coming up. Finally, if anyone would like to volunteer to work the bar, please contact Joe Cook on 820284.

# No Dunces in Dunscore!

**Samantha Wallace**

What a busy term we are having in school. Our heating works are still ongoing but we are nearing completion and are looking forward to everything returning to normal! We have welcomed Mrs Robertson back; we are all so pleased to see her. We have had many visitors and helpers in the school, Mrs Jen Dobson has been working with P3/4 on an art project, Mrs Hayley Harvey comes in to look at our Story Sacks with P1/2 and Mrs June Harmer has been coming in to work on sewing projects with our pupils. On the first Monday of the month for our Pupil Forums we have some members of the Fairtrade committee who take a group of pupils and also Kirsty McIntosh who takes our green group who care for our garden and learn all about the outdoors.

P1/2 have been studying houses and homes as their topic. Kirsty McIntosh has kindly been coming in to help us create different types of houses and homes. We have been on many trips to Dalgonnar to create nests and dens. Pupils were challenged to build a nest for an Osprey which needed to be 2m wide! They worked so well as a team to create the nest and enjoyed the challenge of finding the right type of sticks. A den that they could fit in was our next mission and they all showed such creativity and enthusiasm. At the end of our outdoor sessions with Kirsty we always have a wee mug of hot chocolate to warm us up, which has also been one of the highlights!



**An impressive "osprey nest"**

P3/4 are currently studying the topic of Scotland and in their writing they have been working on diary entries. They learned what it was like to be a pupil 100 years ago and were given the challenge of writing a diary entry of how they would be feeling. Here are some excerpts from one pupil's entry: "Dear Diary, I woke up and got dressed and then walked to school. We were doing times tables today. We had to do it 150 times! ... One child had to put the dunce hat on and that meant they were stupid ... before we went home we wrote I must not chatter 100 times."

The children have really enjoyed learning about what Scotland was like in days gone past and we were lucky to find some pictures of Dunscore from 1923 which the pupils found fascinating.

The Rotary Quiz was held in Wallace Hall Academy this year and four pupils from our P7 class. They worked so hard and did very well. Our partnership school Moniaive were the winners. Our Family Bingo Night was another huge success with over 50 attendees. It was so lovely to see so many families and community members there. We want to thank everyone for their kind raffle donations and we are pleased to say that we raised a fantastic £306.50. This will be used on new resources for the school and will benefit the pupils greatly. Keep your eyes peeled for our next Bingo night!



**The Rotary Quiz Team**

We held our 'Wee Brew' in the Glenriddell Hall and it was lovely to work with the Pre-School and join together. It was a very well attended event and was so lovely to see so many families and members of the community. We raised a grand total of £84 which was shared between ourselves and the pre-school to buy Fairtrade products for us to use.

Pupils dressed up as their favourite sports stars for Sport Relief and we participated in lots of different sports activities. In the morning we ran for two hours and tallied up how many laps of the field we completed and by the end of the session all together we ran 166 miles! Pupils brought in money for Sport Relief wristbands, donations and also our Bake Sale and we raised £81 which will be given to Sport Relief to help there good cause.

## From John Drabble...

I changed my iPod's name to Titanic. It's syncing now.  
England has no kidney bank, but it does have a Liverpool.  
Haunted French pancakes give me the crepes.  
I got some batteries that were given out free of charge.  
A dentist and a manicurist married. They fought tooth and nail.

## Lubuto Update

**Alison Robertson**

Our friends in Lubuto are saving for a bus which they can use for activities and to hire out. They hope to have a twinning service on the anniversary of the twinning which would coincide with our own.

# All Brews Great and Small

Alison Borthwick

Following the Fairtrade Wee Brew organised by the school and pre-school, the Dunscore Fairtrade Group held their annual Big Brew on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> March in the Glenriddell Hall and Church. This was again a hugely popular event with lots of fantastic stalls, loads of visitors, tea, coffee, soup and cake and an amazing football frieze!

We had fabulous talks from Bala Sport and Just Trading Scotland this year just to add that Fairtrade element to our event. This proved hugely popular and we thank them both for travelling so far to be with us on Saturday. A massive thank you to all the Fairtrade team who always work so hard to make this event a wonderful day in the Dunscore social calendar. We hope you all enjoyed it!

The Fairtrade team continues to work with the Fairtraders at the school once a month learning about Fairtrade with crafts and baking.

In my last piece I asked: "Do you buy Fairtrade in your weekly shopping?" I am pleased that most of us are buying at least two or three Fairtrade items in our weekly shopping which is fantastic! Remember, the more we purchase and eat Fairtrade, the more we are helping the farmers to be paid fairly and have the chance of a better life for them and their families.

Anyone who wishes to be part of our Fairtrade Group please contact me, we are always looking for new members and you would be most welcome.



Some Fairtrade Baking!



The Amazing Fairtrade Football Frieze!

## Talking (Fairtrade) Balls

Angus Coull

As Alison mentioned above, Angus Coull of Bala Sport joined us for the Big Brew. We asked if he would write a piece for the Digest.

Bala Sport were delighted to be invited to show off our Fairtrade certified sports balls and say a few words on 7<sup>th</sup> March at the Dunscore Fairtrade Village Fairtrade Fortnight event. I really enjoyed the atmosphere at this well organised gathering (not to mention the Fairtrade home baking). The organisers did a terrific job, and it was a great opportunity to spread the word about Fairtrade balls.

Most people know about Fairtrade staples like bananas, coffee, tea and cocoa, but sports balls remain something of a secret. This needs to change if we are to fulfil the aim of our social enterprise co-operative, which is to make a positive impact on the lives of sports ball workers in India and Pakistan. By choosing to purchase a Fairtrade Certified ball from Bala Sport you can be sure the workers who make our footballs and futsal balls in Sialkot, Pakistan, or our rugby balls in Jalandhar, India are paid fairly, work in safe conditions, have access to union representation and benefit from the Fairtrade Premium.

This is the extra cash sum (10%) we pay on top of the price we buy the balls for which is administered democratically by Fairtrade Premium Committees. It's typically invested in the likes of free eye and diabetes checks, free bus transport to and from work, subsidised household products and free backpacks and school books for workers children. Perhaps though the most significant benefit which is part-funded by the Fairtrade Premium is the water purification plant built outside our football factory in Pakistan. This facility is available for anyone in the local community who can turn up and fill up containers of free, safe drinking water - it's not just for workers and their families.

We go to visit the workers as often as we can and I've seen first-hand the positive impact on families from the Fairtrade system and how it changes lives. It's a real challenge though to get the message across that Fairtrade balls are every bit as good, if not better than balls from the big name brands. Unfortunately FIFA doesn't allow any other certification mark on a ball apart from theirs. This means our balls can't be used at the high level of the men's game, but we'd far rather carry the Fairtrade Mark than the FIFA mark (and not have to pay the large fees to FIFA). We are making inroads in the women's game though which doesn't have so many commercial tie-ins as the men's game. Already in Scotland we have strong support from the St Mirren and Inverness Caledonian Thistle women's teams, as well as several in England.

My call to action to Dunscore is to spread the word to schools and grassroots clubs that there is a Fairtrade alternative to the big brand sports balls, they're good and they really do help change lives. You can buy a Fairtrade football for less than £10 and kit out a local primary school with a bag of 10 balls from just £95. Check us out at [www.balasport.co.uk](http://www.balasport.co.uk).



Angus with some of the Fairtrade balls

# Let's Get Messy!

Jenny Dobson

*I love our monthly Messy Church! But how did it start and what is it all about? We asked one of the organisers:*

**Where did the idea to have Messy Church in Dunscore come from?** As regular attendees of the church we were asked for our opinions on running a family service by the Elders. A group of us then got together. We wanted to start something for younger children and the messy church format fitted what we wanted to do.

**Who is involved in running it?** Myself, Samantha Wallace who is a teacher at the village school and Rachel Chandler-Rogers who lives near the village and is a deputy head teacher in Dumfries. We are all parents of young children as well.



**Harry - I like the songs, they are fun**

**Have you seen it done elsewhere and if so where?** I have been to a Messy Church in Cumbria when my children were very small and thought it was great.

**Eric- I like eating there and having food together**

**I guess that there is a Messy Church "model". Did you decide to divert from the model and, if so, in what ways and why?** We needed to make it fit the space and resources we had available. There is limited space in the church but we didn't want to have to rely on moving to a different location for the different elements of the service. That means that we have to do a bit of moving furniture during the service. But in terms of the core three elements of messy church: Creativity: Celebration and Hospitality, we have kept them in order with the messy church format.

**Lucy - I like that there are different activities and the adults and children mix together. Everyone is so friendly**

**Describe Dunscore Messy Church in three words:** Joyful, Chaotic, MESSY!

**How do you think that it has gone so far?** We are so pleased with how it has gone, we are getting really great numbers of children (38 at the last one!) and everybody giving us feedback says how much they enjoy it, young and old. We are really encouraged by the parents who come along with the children as they are keen to join in alongside their children.



**What would you say to people who haven't been to Messy Church and are a bit worried that it isn't for them?** It won't be for everybody, we understand it is quite far removed from a 'traditional' service, but we welcome everybody to come and have a go. We start off with a time of craft where there are different tables with activities on. There is a lot of moving about and chatter so even if you come late, no one will notice and you can join in at your leisure. For the older members who come along there is space to sit and chat with a cuppa and there is no obligation to do any crafts. If anyone wants to know more, please don't hesitate to speak to one of us or email me at: [jen\\_dobson@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jen_dobson@hotmail.co.uk).

**Jack- I like making crafts and getting messy**

## Let the Little Children Come to Me

Colin Mitchell

In Matthew 19 verse 14 Jesus says "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these". Messy church is, without doubt, helping this to come true in Dunscore Church.

It is a delight to see so many young children (and their parents!) enjoying the activities linked to a bible theme before singing songs about our faith. It is also wonderful to see these young people listening with such concentration to the bible linked story. Rev Tim usually rounds things off with a prayer before we all sing "Happy Birthday" to everyone (young and not so young) who has had a birthday that month. The sharing of food after the service is also highly valued.

Well done to the Messy Church team who organise the activities, songs, stories, prayers and food. I am also delighted to see many regular members of our congregation coming along to Messy Church to support the children. We all need to remember the words of Jesus from Matthew 19 verse 14. Please do come along to Messy Church.



## A New Chapter

Rev Stuart Mill

What better way for the congregations of Dunscore with Glencairn and Moniaive to begin a New Year and a new decade than by appointing a new Minister!

On 19<sup>th</sup> January 2020, the Rev Mark R S Smith was duly elected by an overwhelming majority of those whose names appear on either of the two Electoral Registers and who cast their votes. As Interim Moderator, I am delighted at this convincing result and offer my congratulations to Mark.

We are truly indebted to the members of the Nominating Committee under the leadership of Pam Mitchell and John Drabble for their enthusiasm, their generosity with their time and energy and for their commitment to finding the right candidate to nominate as Sole Nominee.

As the preparations for his Induction are set in motion, I trust that members, friends and parishioners of Dunscore with Glencairn and Moniaive will not only keep Mark in their thoughts and prayers, but also keep themselves informed of developments as the Presbytery assumes its role in organising the service of Induction.

Someone whom you already know as your Associate Minister, is the Rev Tim Harmer.

Tim has been active in leading worship and providing pastoral care in Dunscore for a number of years on an informal basis.

We are very grateful to him for kindly agreeing, last year, to accept the more formal role of Associate Minister of both congregations and parishes. He brings to this new expanded role the spiritual depth, warmth of personality and valuable experience which, by God's grace, have already begun to bring rich blessings to those whom he serves in the Name of Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

I urge you to support The Rev Mark Smith and the Rev Tim Harmer as a new chapter in the life of the Cairn Valley Churches begins.

*The Digest editorial team is very grateful to Stuart for providing his "Minister's Musings" so promptly each time! Has support in the work of Dunscore Church has also been much appreciated. Thank you Stuart!*

## Rural Talents

Rachel Chandler-Rogers

The Dunscore Rural is a diverse mix of women of all ages who meet in Glenriddell Hall on the third Thursday of each month from September to May at 7:30pm. The organisation was created by women, for women, in 1917 with the vision of educating, sharing, teaching and building a community of women across the country.

Each month we have guest speakers or one of our members sharing their skills or talents, allowing us to try many different activities throughout the year. We also have trips out to local or national places of interest or social trips to places such as the theatre. Since joining, I have enjoyed sugar-craft decoration for cupcakes, a trip to the Pottery Stack in Moniaive, a presentation of diving around the world, a glimpse into farming life with a family, 3D card making, a theatre trip, flower arranging, a Christmas meal with traditional harp music, a presentation from Blood Bikers, an evening with a retired D&G policeman, upcycling to create gifts and decorations and much more.

At every meeting, there is the opportunity to take up invitations to open evenings of other local branches, local competitions, national competitions and trips or outings. There is a raffle with a range of prizes and after each speaker or activity we enjoy time together over drinks and food. There are two competitions for each meeting and these allow people to showcase a belonging or to get creative! The judges have the hardest job of the night in picking winners! Competitions vary from traditional scones, gingerbread and flower arrangements to more unusual wrapping, upcycled items and fascinators!

Nationally and locally, the number of members of SWI has fallen, it would be a great shame to lose over a century of tradition and a plethora of local talent and knowledge waiting to be passed on. Whatever your age, background or talents, for under £30 a year per adult (over 18) and under £20 a year for juniors (aged 12-18) you will find a warm community welcome waiting for you! If you are interested in joining please contact me, Sheena Howat or Mary Anderson for more information.

## More from John Drabble...

This girl today said she recognized me from the Vegetarians Club, but I'd swear I've never met herbivore.  
I know a guy who's addicted to drinking brake fluid, but he says he can stop any time  
A thief who stole a calendar got twelve months.

# Remembering Jane Haining

Pam Mitchell

This year, for Holocaust Memorial Day, the photographic exhibition “Shared Fate - The Life of Jane Haining” which had been on display in the Holocaust Memorial Centre in Budapest and in Dunscore Church, was opened in Glasgow City Chambers.

Colin and I had spent most of the previous Saturday bubble-wrapping the several two and a half metre photographs, twenty large photo boards, and smaller caption boards ready for collection after church the following day.

They were collected by a large white van and driven off and I must confess that I did wonder if I would ever see them again? O ye of little faith!

On the Monday morning I travelled up to Glasgow, on a very early, cold, bus hoping that the photographs had made it to their new setting. They were there and, better than that, they were beautifully displayed in the foyer of the magnificent City Chambers building in George Square.

Ian Alexander from the Church of Scotland World Mission Council spoke about Jane's humility and bravery. The Provost of Glasgow welcomed the exhibition to the city where it would be viewed by hundreds of school children and adults. The British Ambassador from Hungary, Iain Lindsay OBE, spoke about Hungary's huge debt of gratitude to Jane Haining who had been put to death 75 years ago for working among her Jewish pupils and refusing to leave them in the dark days of 1944. Alister Jack, Secretary of State for Scotland, reiterated the importance of Jane's story being told today and spoke about the possibility of a statue being erected to her memory in Glasgow city centre. It was a very moving morning and I felt very privileged to represent Dunscore.

The Exhibition is now closed. I am hoping that some of the pictures might find their way back to Dunscore and perhaps be permanently held in our Church.

Margaret Steele's granddaughter visited the exhibition and wrote the following poem:

## **Stand Together** by Anna Steele

First there was prejudice  
And hate  
And shame  
Then there was violence  
And evil  
And shame  
Then people got hurt  
And things  
Got tough  
But then there was protests  
But there  
Wasn't enough  
But if we all speak up  
And change  
Together  
Then we can fix our actions  
For now  
And forever.

# Gala Gets Going!

Fiona Thompson

The Gala team held another very successful soup and pudding lunch in February. Lots of soups and puddings to choose from and it was very well supported. Our next fund raising event is an afternoon tea on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> June 12:30 pm – 2:30pm in the Glenriddell Hall. This year's Gala Queen will be chosen at this event.

Our gala week is organised! Gala Week is Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> - Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> August 2020.

This year our photo competition theme is “Water” as we have had so much recently! So get snapping with your cameras or phones for some great photos.

With the success of last year's Tattie Bogle competition we are having one again this year. Get your thinking caps on for what you are going to do. The judging will be around the middle to end of July. More information will follow.

This year our acts for Gala Day are: Riders of the Storm trick riding and equestrian stunt display team; Elaine Hill sheepdog and duck display team; Dumfries Blood Bikes; Lynette Turner dancers and the Dumfries Pipe Band. The week will end with our Gala Dance to the super Stratosphere. As usual there will be something for everyone.

# From the Archives

## Five Years Ago: Dunscore Digest Spring 2015

**Community Council Column:** Proposed windfarm: A meeting was held in the Glenriddell Hall on 7 January to discuss this planning application. Views were heard in support and opposition to the plan from many attending and members of the Community Council. At the end of the meeting the Community Council voted to oppose this windfarm application.

**Village News:** If you have been in the Ladies toilet at the Glenriddell Hall recently you may have noticed a framed certificate on the wall. It is to certify that the toilet has been twinned with a loo in India.

**Writers' Group:** Our last meeting had a guest writer who spoke to us about professional presentation and introduced us to a Flash Fiction genre of 81 words exactly. We usually work to 100 words exactly so it was challenging!

**Church News:** Dunscore church has submitted a large application for funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The church is being damaged by water penetration in several areas and, if untreated, this would cause significant deterioration to the fabric of the building. We do not intend to allow this to happen.

## 10 Years Ago: Dunscore Digest Spring 2010

**Rock Solid** Rock Solid is as strong as ever. Leaders are in good spirits and find that, though numbers are lower (six keen young lads), each session is as lively as it ever

**Dunscore Shop:** Please continue to support the shop. Please buy your Fairtrade tea and coffee there and, while doing so, buy several other items. Have you tried the famous pies? Can you swap an item that you normally buy in a supermarket?

**Lubuto News:** Lubuto are thrilled that Kay and Gill are going to spend 10 days in Lubuto in March. In their visit they will build up friendships and look to strengthening the links between the Lubuto school and our two primary schools in Moniaive and Dunscore.

**Eco Congregation:** The failure of world leaders to reach a binding agreement on climate change has spurred further action in churches and communities. If governments cannot lead, and it seems they can't, then faith groups, churches and others must.

**Church News:** The layout of the church with its large overhanging gallery and its high pulpit meant that two screens and two projectors were required if all the congregation were going to be able to see the screens.

## Dunscore Guild Coffee Club

**Alison Robertson**

I am looking for ideas for speakers for our Guild Coffee Club so if you can make a suggestion, please let me know? Dunscore is hosting Dumfries and District Guilds Together Let's Celebrate in the evening of Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> June. I would be very grateful for any donations of baking.

## Keeping Connected

**Tim Harmer**

The Dunscore Connect Bible Study group has continued to meet on Thursday evenings in participants homes around the local area to study the Bible and consider contemporary issues in society. We have recently been following a study of Mark's gospel, the shortest and arguably perhaps the most accessible account of Jesus' life in the Bible. Members of the group led discussions on the 16 chapters of the book. We do sometimes also have a short act of worship to begin with and we also pray together for individuals and issues.

These recent sessions have been marked by some lively discussions on the historicity and original intentions of 'Mark' when he wrote the book. The Gospel tells of the ministry of Jesus from his baptism by John the Baptist to his death and burial and the discovery of the empty tomb – but notably there is no genealogy of Jesus or birth narrative, nor, in the original ending at chapter 16, any post-resurrection appearances of Jesus. It is also now thought to be the earliest written of the gospels.

The group has now morphed into a Lent discussion group held on Thursday evenings in the Church for five Thursdays in Lent (though currently on hold) following a study of the beatitudes from chapter 5 of Matthew's Gospel. All are welcome to join the Group, you don't have to be a Church regular to attend.

# History of Our Village Hall

**Roy Spence**

In 1863 the Dunscore Heritors found that it was desirable for a new school to be built in the village. The school master and the parents had been complaining that the present one was in a ruinous state and was unhealthy because of its proximity to the Kirk yard. It was situated on the Kirkgate where the small car park is now. Grierson of Dalgonar offered to fufee a site for a new school. I have not been able to find the records of the building of this school but a porch was added to it at a cost of £5 in 1869.

After the Education Acts of 1872, local School Boards were established and the Dunscore School Board decided that it would extend the Free Kirk School at Old Mosside to accommodate all pupils that were at the village at the time (in the parish in 1873 there were 281 children between the ages of five and 13). In 1877 the School Board transferred the ownership of the village school to the "Glenriddell Young Men's Mutual Improvement Society" for the sum of £46-10/-. It was then run as the "Glenriddell Public Hall Company."

This Improvement Society had been formed in 1869 to give lectures for the benefit of the local young men on a wide range of subjects such as: John Knox; China and the Chinese; Perseverance; Electricity (with demonstration), and many more. The lectures were usually given by local people, quite often a minister. I wonder how our perceptions of these various subjects have changed over the last 150 years! The only reason that I can find for it to be called "Glenriddell" was that an early president of the society was Mr J. Caven of the Snade, which, at one time, had been an estate owned by the "Riddells of Glenriddell".

In 1915 the ownership of the hall was transferred to the Parochial Council and in 1922 a major enlargement and improvement was proposed including the provision of a commodious ante-room, with ladies' and gentlemen's dressing rooms, while the existing ante-room accommodation would be used for the enlargement of the hall. The funds for these improvements were raised locally. The opening sale of work in October 1923 raised £345 which went a long way to meeting the total cost of £450.

The sale and hall was opened by Mrs Murray Kerr who congratulated the committee on the improvements that had been made, and anticipated that many happy evenings would be spent there. The committee in charge of the scheme consisted of: Mr W. Barrowman (Convenor), Craig Manse; Mr C. Nairn, Mosside; Mr F.J.D. Milligan, Merkland; Mr D. Robson, Newton; Mr W. Waugh, Broadford; Mr R. McNaught, Burnhead; Mr J.N. Farish, Broombush; Mr J.E. Laurie (Secretary) and others. At a later date the Hall Enlargement Committee presented Mr J. N. Farish with a handsome marble timepiece in appreciation of the work that he had gratuitously undertaken on behalf of the committee. Further refurbishments were carried out between 2005 and 2013 that were funded by Dumfries and Galloway Council and under the management of local Hall Committee. The Committee still pays ground rent to Dalgonar Estate.

Sources:- National Archive Centre, Dumfries Archive Centre, D & G Standard.

## Bring on Babies (and Toddlers)!

**Jade Crichton**

I first went along to Dunscore toddler group when my daughter was six months old, and it has been my social life for the last four years! I grew up in Heathhall so not too far away. I had friends in town but didn't really know many people in Dunscore area. Being a new mum I was keen to meet some other local mums. When I first attended there were only two other mums there and it wasn't really equipped for babies so much. But gradually over the years we have a lot more attending with a mix of children ranging from birth to four years old. As the group became busier we were able to get some high chairs and plenty of other baby equipment and toys. The older children are very well catered for as it is run in the Dunscore Preschool so we have full use of the facilities. There is an indoor climbing frame with slide, a sandpit, lots of toys, a "home" corner which the children have, this week, started running as vet surgery! There is a nice quiet reading area and plenty of drawing and craft materials. In the summer months we use the outdoor play area which also has a sand pit, mud kitchen and other outdoor toys.

The toddler group is a really valuable group to have in Dunscore as, living in a rural area, can be quite isolating as new mother. It's a great way of getting out of the house and meeting new people. I have made some great friends there, as has my daughter Olivia and my son Angus who is coming two next week and just loves it. As I attended the group every week since Olivia was a baby, she got to know the preschool very well. She met her teachers frequently and got to know the children she was going to attend her preschool years with. Because of this when she turned three and started preschool, she was excited and at ease.



Dunscore Toddler Group runs every Friday in term time 1:15 – 2:45 pm. It costs just £1 per child and includes a tea or coffee for the parent or carer and a snack for the child. We have a private Facebook page for parents to keep them up to date with what's on.

## 25 Years of Twinning

Christine Carson

Twenty five years ago in May 1995 the four villages of Dunscore, Penpont, Keir and Tynron were formally twinned with four villages near Beauvais La Neuville d'Aumont, Le Coudray sur Thelle, Ressons L'Abbaye and Le Deluge.

This year, therefore, it is the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our Twinning Associations: The Auld Alliance and La Vieille Alliance. From 6<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> August, we will be hosting 35 visitors from France, many of whom have been involved in the twinning from the beginning (that's fingers crossed, and pandemics permitting!).

The twinning evolved from correspondence and annual exchanges between the primary schools, Dunscore and Penpont here and L'Ecole primaire de la Neuville d'Aumont. Although the connection between the schools has lapsed, the exchange visits continue and people of all ages participate, from five to 95. The visits have also begun to diversify. In 2017 and 2018 several of our members took part in garden exchanges (we were blessed with a heat wave for the French visit in June 2018), and in July last year, four of us travelled to France for an arts and crafts visit, which included, among other things, a visit to the studio of Guilaine Vertueux who makes furniture and sculptures from waste cardboard.

So, why do we do it? Personally speaking, I think that it gives participants a real chance to experience the language and culture of another country, to meet people, to make friends and to go to places that are definitely off the beaten track – I'm thinking, for example, of the Clouterie Rivierre, a nail factory in Creil. Dickensian in character, it transported us all back to the 1800s. They make 2,800 different types of nail (who even knew that was possible?) using the same machines that the factory opened with in 1866.

When we visit each other, we are very much 'looked after' by the host families and host association. Many of our members have been visiting each other for many years and real friendships are formed, and there is, happily, ample opportunity to sample, and imbibe, local specialities. I now know that Mirabelle is not a person but an eau-de-vie that packs a punch, made from a small golden plum.

While it is fair to say that the exchange visits are the highlight and *raison d'être* of our associations, we do organize events throughout the year in our four villages, e.g., the French Film Night in Dunscore and the Quiz Night, most recently held in Keir. Le Brunch in Tynron is also a popular feature of our fundraising calendar. We have also recently organised a French language class in Dunscore.

To celebrate our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, the Auld Alliance and La Vieille Alliance are creating a recipe book with recipes and anecdotes from both Scottish and French members, each of which will be printed in English and French. We're in the process of gathering together recipes from members past and present.

It is a credit to our villages that we have managed to sustain our Twinning Associations for a quarter of a century, and thanks are due to everyone who is currently involved or has been part of the Association in the past. Thank you also to all our supporters who come to the fundraising events and to all four Community Councils and the Blackcraig Wind Farm Community Fund. For more information, please email [c.carson@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:c.carson@hotmail.co.uk) or find us on Facebook.

## Postcard from Budapest

Pam Mitchell

I recently listened to an amazing CD. You have got to hear it and, what's more, you will want to buy it!

*Postcard from Budapest* by Robert Severin is a beautiful new work. Robert came to Dunscore to perform the second track featured on the album "Star in my Shadow" when the Church Heritage Centre launched the latest book about the life of Jane Haining. The audience were captivated as he sang the moving song which he had just written about Jane, accompanying himself on his guitar.

This album features eleven new songs. Each one tells a very moving story. The title track is about a postcard that Robert found in a second-hand bookshop in Budapest, written in English in 1932, but never sent! A solitary word in Hungarian in the bottom corner asks "Do you love me?"

In another track, Robert links an elderly lady, who had lived in the Budapest ghetto during the war, to Dumfries and Galloway, finding out that she was the oldest passenger on flight Pan Am 103 which was blown up over Lockerbie. This track is called "Crimson Burned the Night".

There are many more wonderful songs. All the tracks, words and music, are by Robert and the CD was made and recorded in Glasgow. *We have copies of the CD for sale in the Heritage Centre at £10.*



## Church Services and Village Events

Church services are usually on Sunday at 11:45 am (changing to 10:00 am in July)  
The second Sunday of each month is usually Messy Church and it starts at 10:30 am and not 11:45 am. There is also an evening service on the second Sunday of the month starting at 7:00 pm. You can check times at [www.dunscorechurch.co.uk](http://www.dunscorechurch.co.uk)

Date and Time	Event
Saturday 21 <sup>st</sup> March 5:00 pm	Chip van at the Flying Pig
Sunday 5 <sup>th</sup> April 10:30 am	Palm Sunday – Messy Church Service in Dunscore Church
Friday 10 <sup>th</sup> April 7:00 pm	Good Friday – Quiet evening service
Sunday 12 <sup>th</sup> April 8:00 am	Easter Day – Early morning service at Maxwellton Chapel (limited parking, please share transport)
Sunday 12 <sup>th</sup> April 11:45 am	Easter Day – Morning service
Saturday 18 <sup>th</sup> April	Kitty Music Night in the Flying Pig
Monday 28 <sup>th</sup> April at 12:00 midday	Eco Meeting
Sunday 7 <sup>th</sup> June 12:30 – 2:30 pm	Gala Afternoon Tea in the Glenriddell Hall
Sunday 2 <sup>nd</sup> to Saturday 8 <sup>th</sup> August	Gala Week

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**The Dunscore Digest is produced and circulated by Dunscore Church. It is free but we are really grateful for any donations towards printing and production costs.**