

# Dunscore Digest

## Dunscore Church and Community Magazine Covid Mini-Digest Summer 2020

### Minister's Mini-Musing

Mark Smith

I suspect that most of you reading this will have no idea who I am, or, at least, what I look like! Lockdown, isolation, shielding and distancing have become part of our life for more than 100 days and will continue for at least another six weeks! Many of the usual events and activities which appear in the Dunscore Digest are simply not going to happen this year. Fortunately, many groups have found ways round the apparent blockage and kept going.

The Church is no exception – if you haven't experienced Zoom worship on a Sunday morning you're definitely missing out! Check out those services or use the reflections and music on YouTube – details on the Church Family Notices each week (via your inbox or letterbox).

God's Love is reaching out across the world via cyberspace. We even broke the internet one week! As we enter Phase 2 of the Lockdown Easing Plan, you will see me wandering round the area looking lost and in need of a cuppa. Grey hair and glasses, in case you wondered.

Debbie and I are looking forward to actually meeting some of you in the flesh and joining in the life of the community, really, not virtually! Please let me know if you want a chat or just to say 'hello'!

God Bless and elbow bumps,

Mark RS Smith

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### Litter Larks in Lockdown June Harmer

Our Litter Larks have been frustrated not being able to meet up for some litter picking followed by coffee and cake. But meeting others has, of course, been out. It may, however, not be too long before we are able to start again so watch out for notifications – we usually meet on the first Thursday each month.

Why not take a bag and gloves on your daily walk and do a bit of litter picking on your own or with a friend

### Editor's Footnote

Matthew Aitken

Does it make sense to have a summer Digest when there is very little going on in the village? After consideration at a recent online Church Session meeting we agreed that it made sense to have a "mini Digest" so I put the word round many of our usual contributors and we ended up with something rather more than I had anticipated.

It is probably more of a midi than mini Digest. I hope that you find it an interesting read.

### Bird of the Season Lesley Creamer

#### Great Spotted Woodpecker

June 8<sup>th</sup> bang on time, exactly a year to the day since they last put in their first annual family appearance at my garden feeders, a Great Spotted Woodpecker dad and a couple of his newly fledged chicks! A lovely sight – Dad, black and white with the red patch on the back of his neck and under his tail, and youngsters with the red patch right on the top of their heads. Mum appeared later with possibly a couple of different babies. She has no red on her head or neck - very convenient for telling one parent from the other. Woodpeckers are highly territorial and the distinctive red patches on the youngsters' heads means the parents can easily identify them – and not chase them away for infringing on territory. As the birds grow, the red fades, parents regard them as a threat and will chase them away to find an unoccupied area for themselves.

GSWs are the woodpeckers you're most likely to see in this neck of the woods. Green Woodpeckers are around but not common and look completely different anyway and Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers tend to stick to south of the border.



### The Virus Mary Anderson

*Mary sent this wee poem at the start of the pandemic.*

There was a tiny virus  
Gave panic to us all  
Message was to stay at home  
And not see family at all

A lot of panic buying  
That emptied all the shelves  
The supermarket staff  
Working harder than the elves

Doctors, nurses and carers  
Working hard to keep us safe  
Clapping and cheering on Thursday at eight  
To let them know we appreciate.

Lockdown and social distancing  
Were the "buzz" words of the day  
Politicians and scientists  
Gave the rules we should obey.

Many people lost their lives  
All around the world  
Pray to God we never hear  
The word pandemic again.

## Dunscore Going to the Dogs Roy Spence

Reading an account in the archive centre of the gymkhana held at Dunscore shortly after the war, brought to mind one that was held in the Manse field at Kellieston about the same time.

Gymkhanas were quite popular around this time and many places held them. The main events were the show jumping, senior and junior, various races and a very exciting gallop (Jimmy Edgar of the Drum had a very good horse and he won many events). The show jumping was held in the usual ring but for the gallop the spectators went into the ring and the race went round the outside. At the Kellieston event there was also a class for heavy horse turnouts and, as a special attraction, greyhound racing.

The greyhound track was straight; it ran from east of the East Manse to near the bridge at Kellieston, the "hare" was a stuffed rabbit skin and was powered by a car, that had been jacked up, a tyre removed and the bare wheel rim used as a winch to draw the "hare" up the course on a long rope.

The first two races were run successfully but on the third, it may have been the final, the dogs caught the "hare" and started fighting over it. That was bad enough, but bets had been laid, and a major disagreement among the punters ensued!

This picture is the line up of the heavy horse turnouts. The one on the left came from McCheynston and the one on the right from Crawston, I don't know the one in the middle. Can anybody put a name to it?



Photo from Donald Clanachan.

*Coincidentally, I received another article about the Dunscore Gymkhana of 1945. It is quite a bit too long for a mini-Digest so look out for it next time!*

## Still Connected

### Tim Harmer

Our weekly Bible study group, Connect, has continued to meet during Lockdown by using Zoom. We have followed the series of Bible reflections for Lent and the period after Easter to Pentecost. We then looked at Psalm 121 and our reactions to the Pandemic and we are now following an introduction to a Bible Society series of studies on prayer, whole Life, the Spirit, Justice and the Word.

Everyone is welcome to join us in this very informal group where all are invited to share their thoughts with the group.

## Pre-School Prepares Lee Mackenzie

Dunscore Pre-School closed in March along with other schools and nurseries. We have been missing the children enormously and they have been missing us and their friends.

It has been an incredibly difficult time for them as everyday life seemed to change for them overnight, and our hearts went out to them. Our families have been amazing as always and we are so proud of them for the incredible way they have coped during this difficult time. They have ensured that the children received their full love and support while trying to cope with working from home and home-schooling older children, never mind everything else!

The children have been fantastic too, remembering to wash their hands and keep their distance from others, no matter how hard that might be. They are all outstanding!

We have been able to keep in touch using video conferencing, social media and socially distanced chats and they have been able to share their news and achievements. We are so proud of them.

Looking forward to the future, we hope to reopen on August 12 although as yet we are not sure what service we will be able to offer. We will have a small group of children in each of our two playrooms with separate entrances, and a member of staff who will work exclusively with that group. We also hope to be able to use outdoor areas such as the park and woods as much as possible, weather permitting of course.

We are installing an extra sink in one of the playrooms to help with hand-washing and will ensure that both groups of children have equal access to the same type of resources where possible. We will do our very best to ensure the children return to their nursery that is caring exciting and fun.

## Lubuto Link

### Aly Robertson

Dunscore Church (with Glencairn and Moniaive Parish) has been linked to the Lubuto congregation in Zambia for more than ten years!

Our friends in Lubuto are moving out of lockdown. They have a number of hour-long services, divided between the sections (similar to our Elders' districts). If you happen to be on Facebook you can catch the services on UCZ Lubuto.

We were delighted that Reverend Joseph Simukonda was able to join us on Zoom at the start of one of our services. We have plans to link up with the Lubuto congregation again at a future Zoom service.

Please continue to collect for the "Mile of Pennies". Keep your "pennies" ready for when we are back in the church. Walter handed in a magnificent £23 from the last collection.

I wrote this piece for the last edition of the Digest but had to leave it out because there was no space! It is a little long for the mini-Digest but just about possible to squeeze in!

## Making an Ethical Mark Matthew Aitken

We enjoy our coffee. We enjoy it even more if it is Fairtrade knowing that the producer has received a fair price for their efforts. But is it as simple as that? A lot of coffee on the supermarket shelves has the Rainforest Alliance logo? Is that as good as Fairtrade? Or maybe it's better in some areas and not as good in others? Why is shopping ethically so complicated?

A little bit of investigation is needed...

If you check out the Fairtrade Foundation website you discover that their mission is: "to connect disadvantaged farmers and workers with consumers, promote fairer trading conditions and empower farmers and workers to combat poverty, strengthen their position and take more control over their lives." That all sounds great but is it better than Rainforest Alliance? It goes on: "Fairtrade sets social, economic and environmental standards for both companies and the farmers and workers who grow the food. For farmers and workers the standards include protection of workers' rights and the environment, for companies they include the payment of the Fairtrade Minimum Price and an additional Fairtrade Premium to invest in business or community projects of the community's choice."

So Fairtrade means protection for the environment, safety standards for workers plus a guaranteed minimum price and a premium to be spent by the community. How does that compare with the Rainforest Alliance (RA)?

Head over to their website and you discover that: "The RA Certified seal is awarded to farms, forests, and businesses that meet rigorous environmental and social standards". So far, so good. Digging a little deeper into the website it says: "In order to become certified, farms must meet criteria of the RA Sustainable Agriculture Standard. The Standard encompasses all three pillars of sustainability - social, economic, and environmental. RA Certified farms are audited regularly to verify that farmers are complying with the Standard's comprehensive requirements, which require continual improvement on the journey to sustainable agriculture. The Standard is built on these important principles of sustainable farming: Biodiversity conservation; Improved livelihoods and human well-being; Natural resource conservation and Effective planning and farm management systems."

How, then, should we compare the two standards? I next went to the Ethical Consumer website and looked for what distinguishes the standards. The differences are not large but are, arguably, important.



Both carry out stringent checks of farms and processes to ensure that their standards are being met. RA does not (unlike FT) ensure any minimum or guaranteed price nor a FT Premium to producers and are criticised for certifying coffee products that contain as little as 30% certified coffee.

So, which to buy? For me, the additional protections and Fairtrade Premium make Fairtrade the obvious choice. That said, the Rainforest Alliance does offer significant benefits to the farmers, workers and the environment so always choose Fairtrade but, where it is not an option, definitely go for Rainforest Alliance over un-certified products.

## Boggling Time

**Beccy Richardson**

We asked Beccy, aka *The Boggler*, to tell us a little about the online quiz that runs each week:

I took over as quiz host for the monthly Flying Pig quiz night in January this year. Little did I know that after just two quiz nights lockdown would strike. So, what to do? I put out a Facebook post asking if people would be interested if I ran the quiz 'virtually'. The feedback was a resounding 'yes', so on March 21st I ran my first Flying Pig e-quiz, via the Pub Facebook page and a virtual quiz messenger group.

Families and friends formed their teams, and met up via a range of social media - Messenger group, WhatsApp, Zoom, Skype etc. Amazingly, 21 teams took part and when I asked if folk would like the quiz to be weekly, again I got the thumbs up.

There have been team members taking part from Essex to the North of Scotland, Ireland to Newcastle, and many places in between, as well as participants in Canada, Spain and even Chile! The quiz has become the catalyst for folk to 'meet up' on a weekly basis, and have a bit of fun and banter during these difficult times. At its peak there were 51 teams and 256 participants, and at the beginning of May I even managed to run the quiz from hospital, having broken my ankle!

So, all these weeks later it is still going strong, and I feel very happy that my quizzes bring a bit of light relief from the stresses of Covid-19. If you've not tried it yet, why not log on and join us, 8:00 pm Saturday Nights on the Flying Pig Facebook page:

[www.facebook.com/FlyingPigCommunityPub/](https://www.facebook.com/FlyingPigCommunityPub/)

Here's some taster questions (answers can be found somewhere in this edition):

1. What did Jack Dorsey, Noah Glass, Biz Stone, and Evan Williams collectively create?
2. Which city had the first ever fashion week?
3. Typically, what four ingredients go into a cosmopolitan cocktail?



You'll get up first thing in the morning and clean it all off!

## **Book Review**

### **Colin Mitchell**

#### **The Running Hare – John Lewis Stempel**

I received this book for my recent birthday. I read lots of non-fiction nature and wildlife books. The Running Hare by John Lewis Stempel is one of the best.

It is an amazing mix of observation of the year in the life of his field “Flinders” as he prepares the field for a crop of wheat until the harvesting. He does this using traditional and organic methods surrounded by neighbours (the “Chemical Brothers”) who use up to date and much more ecologically damaging methods.

Throughout the book he closely observes and encourages the wildlife that uses his field which becomes an oasis in a desert of intensively farmed land. He particularly focussed on attracting hares to his field and writes with considerable emotion about their life there.

This is the first of Stempel that I have read and I have enjoyed how he uses the poetry of mainly John Clare and also Robert Burns, Thomas Hardy, Andrew Marvell and Edward Thomas. I was aware of the work of John Clare and his tragic life (he died in an asylum) and Robert Burns but not of the others.

I was also introduced to new words such as spavined, embonpoint, sillion and mendicant. These, and others, had me stopping and researching before continuing reading.

I would commend this book to all who care about our wildlife and the challenges created by some modern farming methods.

## **Still Fairtrade**

### **Alison Borthwick**

The Fairtrade Group have been doing a little fundraising over the Covid 19 pandemic to support our Fairtrade suppliers who have been struggled throughout this difficult time. We raised over £700 for them (from our Fairtrade funds and by donations from teams in the Flying Pig online quiz) and were delighted with the response to this from the community, thank you so much! There was also an idea that Matthew gets his hair cut with horse clippers....wonder how that went! No comment...

The Peace Festival & our Gala have obviously been cancelled this year but we look forward to supporting them with all things Fairtrade next year.

On a very sad note we heard the news of the passing of Judith Mylne recently. Judith was a well known face around our Big Brew and a massive supporter of Fairtrade and a member of Dumfries Fairtrade Group. Dunscore group will miss her dearly.

Stay safe everyone.

#### **Boggler Answers:**

1. Twitter
2. New York, in 1943
3. Vodka, lime juice, cranberry juice, orange liqueur



## **What's Going On?**

What time does the Flying Pig quiz start? What is the Zoom link for this Sunday's online church service? Would someone be able to use this chair that I no longer need?

These are just a few of the sorts of questions that are answered very frequently by the email messages sent round the village (and much further afield).

There are three village email lists:

- **The Community Council List** – Occasional emails are circulated round this list with information about local events, matters relating to the Community Council and, currently, about Covid issues. To join this list, send an email to [c.mitchell50@btinternet.com](mailto:c.mitchell50@btinternet.com) asking to be added.
- **The Dunscore Freecycle and Events List** – There are emails round this list every day or two with events coming up, other village information and items that local folk have available or are looking for (usually free). To join this list send an email to Matthew at [auchenage@gmail.com](mailto:auchenage@gmail.com) asking to be added.
- **The Dunscore Church List** – If you want information relating to the church such as service times, Church Family Notices, Zoom links and other church information, you should join this list. Send an email to Matthew at [auchenage@gmail.com](mailto:auchenage@gmail.com) asking to be added.

## **Gala Update**

### **Fiona Thompson**

You have probably heard that we have decided to cancel this year's Gala. A sad, though somewhat inevitable, decision. If you would like to see some photos of the Gala over the years, have a look at the Gala Facebook page where there are some back as far as 40 years ago!

After the massive success of last year's Tattie Bogle competition, this summer, we are saying that folk can do Tattie Bogles just for a bit of fun (no competition this year) and to brighten up the village. If you create one, please put a photo of it on the Gala Facebook page.

You will read elsewhere in the Digest about the weekly quiz with the Boggler but the Gala quiz will also take place this year but, for the first time, it will be online. Once again, Ann Walton will be our quiz master and the quiz will take place on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> August (replacing the Flying Pig quiz for that week only). Questions will be posted online.

## **Back in the Church? Matthew Aitken**

At the time of writing, Covid restrictions are being eased very cautiously. We are currently allowed to open the church for private prayer. But before anyone can use the building, even for such a limited purpose, there are pages of rules that have to be complied with, Risk Assessments to be completed and protocols to be put in place. We are working on these and will be returning to the church building just as soon as we can. We are not ready quite yet but we'll let everyone know as soon as we are able to use the church building again.

## Wildlife In and Around Our Dunscore Garden During Lockdown

We have spent much more time in our garden than we usually do during this period of lockdown. As well as carrying out garden tasks we have noticed a variety of wildlife.

I usually wage war on snails and slugs and do not use chemical slug pellets to control them. This year I have been trying to identify the different types and we seem to have large black slugs, yellow slugs and field slugs as well as garden snails and brown lipped snails here. They appear to be thriving!! I wish we had hedgehogs and more thrushes to eat them.

I set live mammal traps and caught house mice both in the garden and in the house. (House mice habitat is described as partly living in fields, shrubs and open woods; partly parasitic on man, occurring almost everywhere in his dwellings). We caught 3 mice in the house and released them some distance away. They were back within 2 days!

The other common mammals around our garden are pipistrelle bats which hunt around the garden at dusk.

I have found toads in the rockery whilst I was weeding and they are quite common in the garden although I do not know where they breed locally. We do have a pond but it only has a diving beetle and a horsehair worm in it. The horsehair worm is about 10cm long and looks just like a horse hair. It is parasitic on insects such as grasshoppers and it presumably was transferred to the pond by a bird.

It has been a good year for butterflies and it will get better. So far we have seen Red Admiral, Tortoiseshell, Peacock, Green Veined Whites and Orange Tips. Other insects include Honey bees, Tree Bumble bees, Common Carder bees, Garden Bumble bees, Buff Tailed Bumble bees and Red-Tailed Bumble bees. We had a colony of tree bees in our compost heap last year. They aggressively defend their nest which was quite scary until I found out that they do not sting!

The bird life has been a tonic to watch and listen to. The dawn chorus is full of the song of the blackbird and dunnock and both have bred in the garden. We have also had four baby wrens which were the size of big bumble bees. They have been great to watch as they are fed by attentive parents.

Other birds seen include sparrow hawk, buzzard, red kite, gold finch, chaffinch, house sparrow (lots), tree sparrow, goldcrest (heard), willow warbler (heard), blackcap (heard), blue tit, great tit, coal tit, swallow, house martin, swift, pheasant, carrion crow, rook, jackdaw, raven, black headed gulls, collared dove and wood pigeon.

We have also realised the huge importance of having water available for birds to drink and bathe in. We use an old seed tray without drainage holes. We have put a stone at the edge for the birds to stand on at the edge of the water.

This is only the wildlife from the animal kingdom and there is lots from the plant kingdom in our gardens (sometimes called weeds!) and the hedgerows and roadside verges around the village. That is for another time!

### Alistair McFadzean

Since our last meeting on 2nd March, both our April and May meetings have been cancelled due to the Covid-19 virus. We are intending to have our next meeting on 6th July in the Glenriddell Hall, where we will be able to "social distance" everyone.

We have been awarded nearly £2,000 to help with Covid-19 from Hairstanes Wind Farm, Blackcraig Wind Farm and D & G Council. If you have any suggestions on how we should use or allocate this money, please let me know on [alistairmcfadzean@gmail.com](mailto:alistairmcfadzean@gmail.com) or contact any member of the Community Council.

The defibrillator has now been replaced. We had to pay the full price of over £1,000.

It is, once again, time to get applications in for your annual wind farm distribution. Please get them to me or to Lesley Ross (our Community Council Secretary).

### School During Shut-Down Sam Wallace

This term has been slightly different for us at Dunscore Primary and due to the current situation, we have been home learning!

It has been very unusual and at times challenging for us all but I just want to say on behalf of myself and all staff members, thank you so much to parents and pupils as they have worked so hard and been extremely supportive.

As staff we have been creating learning packs and providing online resources for pupils to use. Pupils have been sending us video clips and pictures of what they have been doing at home and it has all been amazing. The Rising 5's have also been working with me and sharing information and pictures and also listening to stories which I have recorded for them.

During these difficult times we really have seen what a wonderful school family and community we have and I feel so lucky and privileged to be a part of it.

### Dunscore Covid Support

From the start of the Coronavirus Pandemic it was clear that many in our community were going to need support, help or guidance. Whether it is someone to pick up a prescription or, perhaps, what day a particular shop is delivering locally, whether someone might be able to help with some gardening or just for a chat. All these and much more have been dealt with on the Dunscore Covid Facebook page.

If you are from the Dunscore area it is well worth joining this Facebook Group. Just search for Dunscore Covid Facebook Group and put in a request to join.

If you don't have access to Facebook, Dunscore Church is also offering support. Call Colin Mitchell in the first instance on 820455.

## **Session Clerk Report Colin Mitchell**

### **Welcome To Our New Minister**

Our new minister, Mark Smith, has had a difficult start to his ministry with us due to the COVID-19 outbreak and subsequent lockdown. Even his induction took place using a computer link! Mark has worked very hard preparing services for delivery via computer as well as a weekly meditation that he records and can also be watched on a computer. We even recently celebrated Holy Communion via the internet!

Once lockdown is over we will have a celebration to welcome Mark and his wife, Debbie, to our churches.

### **Keeping Our Church Ready**

Archie Anderson and I have been visiting the church regularly to check all is well. This check includes ensuring the building remains in good condition and secure. We have kept the heating on to maintain the building at 10°C. Archie has been running the taps and flushing the toilets as a precaution to prevent any Legionnaires' disease risk in the water system. The Church of Scotland has recently given advice about what we need to do to open the church again. This is a 35 page document!

The Scottish Government has given permission to open churches for private prayer and we will inform everyone when we have the church ready to do this.

### **Worship During Lockdown**

As many of you are aware we have continued with Sunday worship by running very well attended joint services with Glencairn and Moniaive by computer. The Connect bible study group continues to meet weekly (again over the internet).

We do realise that some of our congregation do not have computer access and hope we can worship together in our church soon.

### **Thank You**

Thank you to everyone who continues to work very hard to make sure that the work of Dunscore Church continues as best as possible during these difficult times.

### **Messy Online**

### **Sam Wallace**

The Messy Church team have been part of the Zoom services over the past few months with stories, crafts and songs being incorporated into our services but last week saw the return of Messy Church!

It was a very full on service with action songs, crafts, stories, and Lego readings! It went well and although we had some technical issues, it was loved by all.

Seeing everyone joining in with everything just brought a smile to all our faces. We are planning on holding another full-on Messy Church in July, and we are currently in talks of how we could do a virtual holiday club for children in August. The Messy Church team will be in touch with more details soon.

## **Virtually Church**

## **Matthew Aitken**

Every Sunday, since we have been unable to be in the church building, our church services have been "live" online using the video conference app Zoom.

This has worked surprisingly well and we have had virtual congregations up to 50 or more.

What has been even more surprising is the number of people that have watched the video of the service that is uploaded to YouTube every week. Often more than 100 people view these videos.

This set us thinking. When we return to the church building, should we still video the services and upload them to YouTube? Taking things a stage further (and a bit more expensive and tricky to do), is there a call for streaming services live over the internet?

As a result, we have set up a very short questionnaire. You can either complete this online at this link: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/VY9WR2Q> or answer the questions below and send them by email to me at [auchenage@gmail.com](mailto:auchenage@gmail.com) or phone on 820448.

Here are the questions:

1. Have you watched any of the video recordings of the services?
  - a. No, I have not watched any of the service recordings
  - b. Yes, one or two
  - c. Yes, most of them
  - d. Yes, all of them
2. When the services are back in the church, if we made video recordings of the services, do you think that you would watch them?
  - a. Yes, every week or nearly every week
  - b. Yes, around once a month or less
  - c. No, I am not likely to watch the services
3. If the services in the church were "live streamed" (so you could watch the service on the internet as it was taking place), do you think that you would do this?
  - a. Every Sunday or nearly every Sunday
  - b. Yes, around once a month or less
  - c. No, I am unlikely to watch the services "live" on the internet

## **Virtual Church Week**

Despite not being able to meet in the church building, Dunscore Church is still very active. Here is the regular week's schedule:

**Sunday 10:30 am** – online service with Glencairn and Moniaive

**Sunday 7:00 pm** – Together at Home: Prayer, thought and reflection using the weekly prayer and theme from the Church Notices

**Wednesday Reflection** – Each week Mark records a reflection with music and prayer and posts it on YouTube. The YouTube link is in the Church Notices

**Thursday 7:00 pm** - Prayer, thought and reflection using the weekly prayer and theme from Church Notices.

**Thursday 7:30 pm** – Connect. Weekly bible study group meeting on Zoom. See the item elsewhere in this Digest.