

Dunscore Digest

Dunscore Church and Community
Magazine

Spring 2022

Minister's Musings

Mark Smith

Put your eggs in Jesus' basket!

Spring has sprung! Signs of new life are all around us ... lambs in the fields, flowers on the verges, leaves on the trees, etc.

For the church it is nearly the end of Lent, the season of preparation, and time to celebrate. But what do we celebrate? And how do we celebrate? And why is it relevant today?

In some ways we try to re-enact the events leading up to the first Easter Day. Like any celebration there's a lot of noise and kerfuffle. Here's a quick guide ...

PALM SUNDAY Jesus entered Jerusalem, despite the threats of the religious authorities, and the crowds welcomed Him as a hero shouting HOSANNA which means "save us, we pray". He rode a donkey and was greeted by the waving of palm leaves. People were sick of the Romans and the corrupt puppet kings, and wanted a warrior to lead a rebellion. He didn't do that! Instead He challenged the religious leaders and teachers about how they portrayed God.

MAUNDY THURSDAY is when we remember the Last Supper that Jesus shared with His disciples and gave them Bread and Wine as symbols of His Love and Sacrifice.

GOOD FRIDAY is when the shouts changed to CRUCIFY HIM as the authorities tried to convict Him of crimes against the state despite a lack of evidence. Weak leaders succumbed to the cries of the crowd and had Him beaten and crucified as a criminal.

Theological bit: by being willing to die Jesus became the sacrifice needed by God to put us humans right with God.

Gastronomic bit: Hot Cross Buns ... mmmm!

EASTER DAY starts early with the dawn discovery of the empty tomb and the Risen Jesus and is filled with cries of ALLELUIA (or hallelujah) which simply means "praise the Lord." Jesus' resurrection shows that we too can receive Eternal Life with God – new life every day!

That's all well and good in church, but what does it mean for us now in everyday life? Whatever you feel like shouting, join us to find out more!

Dunscore Diary Dates

In Dunscore Church (unless shown)

April

3	11:45 am	Mission Aviation Fellowship special
10	PALM SUNDAY	
	10:30 am	Messy Palm Sunday
	7:00 pm	Prayer & Reflection - Hosanna
14	MAUNDY THURSDAY	
	7:30 pm	The Last Supper
15	GOOD FRIDAY	
	2:00 pm	An Hour at the Cross
16	EASTER EVE	
	12:00 Noon	'Come & Share & See' Lunch
17	EASTER DAY	
	8:00 am	Easter Worship at Hillhead Farm (near Glenmidge)
	11:45 am	Easter Praise
24	11:45 am	Family Worship

June

2	Evening	Beacon on the hill
5	12:00 - 4:00 pm	Picnic in the Park

It's All Go at the Pig Fiona Thompson

The flying pig is back open again after lockdowns, we have a lot of different things in the pub now.

We are open on a Monday night and every second Tuesday is craft night and just starting weekly on Tuesday night is a slimming night at 6:00 pm. Anyone can drop in for a weigh-in and to discuss recipes etc.

Wednesday night is the amateur dramatics night and we are open on Thursdays from 7:30 pm. We are open every second Friday night and the first Friday of the month is Quiz Night and the third Friday is Games Night.

The Chip Van visits every four weeks on a Saturday night and we are open every Sunday afternoon from 2:00 - 5:00 pm. There are also regular meetings that take place in the pub on a monthly basis.

We have tried to organise a Pizza Night but this has had to be cancelled twice but, hopefully, it will be third time lucky for the next one.

There are other opening times which get advertised on the Flying Pig Facebook page and the Dunscore and surrounding areas messenger.

As you know the pig is run by volunteers as it's a community-run pub, so if anyone would like to volunteer for anything in the pub please speak to Joe Cook.

We are pleased to report that Cairn Valley Community Transport is back to operating fully; if truth be told, we have been for most of the past year, but, inevitably, many people have been reluctant to travel. We are now back to full capacity, and, hopefully, by the time you read this, facemasks will no longer be compulsory on the bus.

The fortnightly service from Moniaive to Castle Douglas continues, and will be running on 14th and 28th April, 12th and 26th May, etc. It is no longer necessary to book, but it is always useful for drivers to know who to look out for, so a phone call to me to book a seat will always be welcome.

 <p>Cairn Valley Community Transport Excursions March - May 2022 <i>Everyone welcome, but all seats must be pre-booked</i> * BOOK ANY VENUE ADMISSIONS YOURSELF *</p>	
<p>Friday 18th March: Carlisle <i>Enjoy some retail therapy in Carlisle city centre, or visit historic sites like the cathedral or Tullie House.</i> Leaves Moniaive 09.00 Fare: £7</p>	
<p>Saturday 16th April: Carlisle Racecourse Easter Family Race Day <i>An afternoon of fantastic jump racing action, with lots of entertainment for the whole family to enjoy—bouncy castles, pony chase, face painting, balloon modelling, Easter craft workshop, etc.</i> Adult tickets from £16 - book in advance; children free Leaves Moniaive 09.45 Fare: £7 (children £3)</p>	
<p>Friday 6th May: Kirkcudbright (Galloway Hoard) <i>The Hoard is the largest and most varied collection of Viking-age gold objects and ornaments in Britain, discovered in Balmahie in 2014. Free admission</i> Leaves Moniaive 10.00 Fare: £5</p>	
<p><small>Leave times are from The Cross, Moniaive, stopping at Dunscore 15 minutes later. Other pick-up points can be arranged if practicable and depending on route.</small></p>	
<p>FOR DETAILS & BOOKINGS, CONTACT: Geoff Tel: 01848 330821 or 07702 915071 E-mail: geoff.creamer@outlook.com</p>	
<p>MONIAIVE—CASTLE DOUGLAS SERVICE (alternate Thursdays) 17/02, 03/03, 17/03, 31/03, 14/04, 28/04, 12/05, 26/05, etc. Pre-booking no longer required</p>	
<p><small>Passengers are respectfully reminded that the wearing of seat-belts and face-coverings is legally required on all journeys</small></p>	

workshop, etc. The return fare is £7 for adults (£3 for children), and passengers need to book their own tickets to the event. The bus will leave Moniaive at 09.45, calling at Dunscore at 10.00. On Friday 6th May we are making a second trip to Kirkcudbright to enable people to visit the Galloway Hoard exhibition (*see Pam's piece about this elsewhere in the Digest*), which finishes in the town in July. The bus will leave Moniaive at 10.00, calling at Dunscore at 10.15, and the return fare is £5. The exhibition is free, and, of course, there is no obligation to visit it – you can always just do your own thing. To book seats on the bus for all excursions please contact me on 01848 330821 or geoff.creamer@outlook.com.

Remember, the bus belongs to the community, and we try to use it as much as possible, so if you are involved with a group that needs transportation, please contact me. We are always keen to attract new drivers – the current drivers' pool has been diminishing, and to maintain the service it is essential for us to have an input of new blood. So, if you have some time to spare, like driving, like meeting people of all ages, like seeing the world, and like helping the community, we would like to hear from you. If you are interested, contact me (details as above) or Stephen on 07934 594184.

Changing in Churches Mark Smith

As many of you will know, the Church of Scotland is re-organising itself! This will affect us in several ways...

The number of Ministers allocated to our Presbytery is reducing from 20.5 to 12.5 (we have just 10 Full-Time Ministers at the time of writing) and this means that most of the existing charges / congregations (including ourselves) will have to link or unite to share full-time Ministers who will have several congregations in their charge.

The Draft Plan for this change is being refined to be presented at Presbytery at the end of April:

This will mean a lot of negotiation and liaising for congregations where changes are proposed.

A Buildings Assessment is being undertaken by the General Trustees of the Church of Scotland:

- This means that some buildings may have to close if they don't come up to scratch (access, heating, flexibility, community use, etc).

In September this year we will become part of an enlarged South-West Presbytery:

- This means that the administrative side of church life will be coordinated over a larger area.

But what about the everyday life of our church?

SUNDAY WORSHIP will have to change. It simply won't be possible for every congregation to have a Minister for every service every Sunday! Times for worship will have to be carefully planned and coordinated. Elders (and others) will take more of a part in planning and leading worship. Worship may be Zoom-ed from one church each week. Worship may not just be on Sunday. More Messy Church, Café Church, Family Worship patterns will emerge.

MINISTERS will continue as Teaching Elders and Moderators of the Kirk Sessions with oversight of the worship of congregations.

BUILDINGS may need to go. This makes sense financially, but will be extremely hard for some congregations, as you can imagine. Manses need to be reviewed too.

CONGREGATIONS may close if numbers continue to decline, finances are precarious, and new Elders and Ministers are thin on the ground - something needs to change.

ELDERS will continue to be the key pastoral contacts within the parishes.

DON'T PANIC! Here in Dunscore we have experience of trying new things (e.g. Messy Church, Prayer & Reflection) and an imaginative, diligent, and committed group of Elders

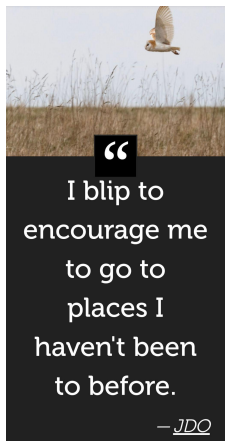
and Board members, and a flexible, practical building, and an open and loving congregation. What is to come next should not daunt us and is not beyond our ken or God-given abilities. Whilst, in some ways, what is to come will change little for us, we must pray for those congregations where the impact will hit hardest.

Nothing will happen overnight, or without consultation. The existing Ministers and Kirk Sessions and congregations have to agree on the terms of any linkage / union before anything happens on the ground. It will be complicated to negotiate, but this is about the Kingdom of God, not just maintaining tradition, managing historic buildings, or protecting existing boundaries. We need to seek what is best for the Mission of Christ's Body, the Church. It will take imagination and courage and, most of all, inspiration by the Holy Spirit to ensure the continued growth of the Church here in Dunscore, across South-West Scotland and the whole nation.

Pray that you will be equipped to play your part in this exciting, challenging, phase of church life.

10 Years "Being Excellent" Alison Boyes

Last week, I celebrated a special anniversary. Every day for the past 10 years, I have posted a photo on a social media site called Blipfoto. Sometimes I've written some words to go with it; other times I've added a quote or a poem. The rules of the site are simple: one photo a day, taken on that day, and the spirit of Blipfoto is "Be Excellent to Each Other". This makes it a social media site unlike any other, more of a community where users (called Blippers) share snippets of their daily lives.



Blipfoto was started in 2004 as a personal website by Joe Tree in Scotland. Two years later, he invited 15 other people to join in, and soon opened up the site to others. In February 2016 the site became community owned, run for the benefit of its users and supported by volunteers.

I joined as a way to improve my photography; at that time, back in 2012, I was taking all my photos on an HTC phone. It led to me applying to study photography full-time at Dumfries

& Galloway College and getting a proper camera.

The benefits of being a member of this community have been many - as well as learning about photography, I've made friends, and learned about life in other countries. To date, there are Blippers in over 170 countries, who have posted 3.4 million photos - an amazing archive of modern life.

If you'd like to see more, head to www.blipfoto.com. My profile name is greengirl.

Our friends in the Lubuto Church in Zambia are facing many challenges. The church roof has been damaged and needed urgent repair and they still need a replacement minibus.

Rev. Friday Sinkonde writes "Covid 19 really has left serious operational challenges. it's been hard to have both projects to be fulfilled, during the covid pandemic yet we need them urgently. We are trying to encourage our members to contribute however most of them are out of employment and, worse, those doing business are facing serious challenges. As for roofing we are hoping to do it at the end of this month if the response improves. For the bus we are pushing ahead though the response has been slow. We need your prayers...."

I shall be doing dinner parties to help raise funds. The first was due on the 26th of March but has had to be postponed because of Covid. I hope the dinner parties will become regular fun ways of raising desperately needed funds for Lubuto.

Anyone wanting to be included on the mailing list, please contact me Andy Barr on 07765887349 or at andybarrcards@btinternet.com.

Many thanks to the members who contribute with standing orders every month. They make up a solid and much welcomed contribution. Anyone else interested in making a donation by standing order, please contact me for details.

DADS

John McIntyre

Dunscore Amateur Dramatic Society (D.A.D.S.) first got together on the 9th Feb and have been meeting weekly to read scripts, work out what our first show should be and, as we hold our rehearsals in the Flying Pig, have a few drinks too.

There's some with experience and some who are brand new to acting, but we're all helping each other to work towards putting on a show later this year. We also have several members interested in backstage, who will help with props, scenery changes and making sure we are on stage at the right time.

We've decided our first show should be a bit comedic, so it's been a lot of fun reading through some options and acting out some of the scenes. Often it's just the way a word is said that has us all laughing.

Putting together a show involves lots of people playing their part in the whole, actors, lighting, backstage, prompt, and everyone works together for those few months and becomes a close-knit family. It's been great to see the start of this society and I'd like to hope it runs for many years.

We're pleased to announce that our first show will be a murder mystery - It's the annual gala, there's a controversial planning application, an unexpected visitor and someone gets murdered. There will be audience interaction, a

dressing up competition, maybe a cake competition, and food too, look out for more details.

If you are interested in joining us, we meet at 7:30pm in the Flying Pig every Wednesday.

Remembering Katie

Most folk in Dunscore will have known Katie Easton. Sadly, she died recently and we wanted to remember the wonderful friend that she was. We asked a few people to write a few lines about a memory of her:

Chris Whittle: Katie, who could possibly forget the lovely lady? Not me, that is for certain as she and her Madcap husband Barney were a feature of our earliest days in the village!

Dear Katie would be the sensible one of a fantastic pair of characters, she would curb his flights of verbal fantasy with a gentle tap on his shoulder and "that's enough" and "behave yourself".

A true power behind the mask of fantasy. Though she was just as capable of mad caperyness! She was so skilled in wool-craft / spinning, skills that she delighted to share with those who sought her help and guidance. But to Mary and me she was that truly rare thing, a lovely, loving Christian friend who we will remember for the rest of our life.

Mary has of course remade that friendship, God bless them both.



Katie with her friend Lorna

Pam Wrathall: I first met Katie at a spinning evening class in the early 1980s. I remember being intrigued by a tall woman with a calm demeanour and an infectious laugh. Katie was passionate about spinning and its related crafts (dyeing, weaving and knitting) and equally passionate about passing on her skills. She was always ready to teach, help and inspire.

Evenings spent in the upstairs workshop at Willowbank were a revelation as Katie opened up a world of colour,

fibre and techniques. She rarely criticised, merely pointing out a different, and usually easier, way. So many people, local and far-flung have benefited from her teaching and, in recognition of this, she was made an honorary Life Member of the Dumfries and Galloway Guild of Spinners, Weavers and Dyers. Many happy days were spent with Katie at local shows, schools and events demonstrating and raising the profile of spinning. Katie loved interacting with the public, especially children, and always involved them in a little project that they could take away.

Dunscore, and especially Dunscore Church, were close to Katie's heart. She was a regular member of the congregation and an enthusiastic participant in bible studies and all other church events. Psalm 139 was one of her favourites, possibly the basis for something that she often said: "We are all wonderfully different". We will miss her.



Katie and Barney

Vari Drabble: I really remember her for always being cheerful and for her spinning – and for the lovely craic we used to have with her and Barney.

Pam Mitchell: I came to Dunscore in 1984 and met Katie straight away. She was kind and generous from the beginning. She looked after our family's pet rabbits during our school foreign holidays and helped me with Hungarian student visitors. I never heard an unkind remark from her but I did often hear her uproarious laughter from her Willowbank garden. She loved fun. She was a warm, friendly, lovely lady and I miss her.

Family Church

Tim Harmer

The Church would like to make more of encouraging all the family to feel they can attend worship on Sundays.

Following on from the success of Messy Church on the second Sunday of the month we are starting a special young person's initiative on the fourth Sunday of the month. We hope this will help families to feel they can bring along

their children to worship on these Sundays. The separate session for our youngsters will run alongside the normal Sunday worship service to enable parents to join in with worship whilst the young people have their own age-appropriate gathering. The sessions will be led by adults and will use teaching material produced by Churches Together. The sessions will aim to be fun and include games, craft activities, drama and art. *News just in, it looks like these sessions will be known as KIK (Kids in Kirk).*

Community Council Alistair McFadzean

The Christmas Santa event was another great success. Thanks to Laura and her team of helpers.

We had a talk from Fiona Smith, Chairperson of the Glenkens District Trust about how Dunscore could benefit from their resources. The first step will be to contact local people to see what Dunscore needs.

The Community Council has provided money to the Primary School that has allowed them to buy two robot kits. These are proving to be a great success.

Future meeting dates: 11 April; 23 May; 4 July; 15 August and 26 September.

Gala Gearing Up! Fiona Thompson

We were involved in serving drinks and mince pies when Santa came to the village in December. This was a very enjoyable night. It was great for different organisations in the village to work together.

We held our first fundraiser in over two years on 20th February which was well attended despite the weather and it was so good to see people back supporting us.

We have had a couple of gala meetings and have some new committee members. We are aiming to have a full gala week this year, Covid permitting... We have still to finalise the week but have got everything booked for gala day and hope to have a parade this year.

Our main attractions this year will be Riders of the Storm equestrian display and Nick Gregory's Misselchalke gundogs. The week will be rounded off with our Gala Dance to The Castle Band in the marquee in the Holm Field. We hope to see lots of people there with everything back to a more normal gala week.

We are delighted that the marquee has been hired for several events this year. Erecting and dismantling the the marquee is quite a job so, if you might be able to help with this, please get in touch with a member of the Gala team.

Staying Connected Tim Harmer

Connect is an informal Bible Study group which meets weekly in Dunscore Church on Thursday evenings at 7:30pm. The group has continued to meet in the new year and recently has been following Jesus' journey around the

Holy Land by looking at the actual places he visited in his three year mission. We have all learnt much about the physical geography of the present day Israel, Palestine and Jordan through this study, even those in the group who have previously visited the area.

For Lent we have continued with the theme of following Jesus but through the words of John's gospel and the incidents leading up to the events of Holy Week. As has become our practice, different group members volunteer to lead each weekly session. We also pray together each week for our community and for wider concerns.

Look out for notices in the Church Family Notices (available each week on the Church Website and Facebook page) for up to date information on Connect meetings. All are welcome to join the group, you don't have to be a church regular to attend. The discussions range far and wide as we seek to relate the bible's teaching to our lives today.

If you are interested in joining please contact me on timharmer95@gmail.com.

Don't Miss the Hoard Pam Mitchell

You still have time but make sure you don't miss it.

The Galloway Hoard is THE must see event in Dumfries & Galloway. It is on display in the Kirkcudbright Galleries until 12th July 2022. You've got to go!

Colin and I visited it in January and were astonished at what we saw. We had pre-booked a slot (*no longer required*) and spent a wonderful hour studying the amazing exhibits and marvelling at how they had been displayed. It was truly awe inspiring.



The Galloway Hoard was discovered in 2014 on Church of Scotland land at Balmaghie. It is Scotland's earliest Viking-age hoard, deposited around AD 900. It includes gold, silver and copper alloy jewellery, objects made of glass, rock crystal and other materials as well as exceptionally well preserved organic materials.

Who knows why such a large collection was buried. We can only imagine the people who had made or owned such beautifully crafted pieces but what a privilege to be able to view it locally and learn a little bit about our past.

Go and check it out. It's even free! And there is a lovely café for lunch.

Saving Red Squirrels

John McIntyre

In many places red squirrels are making a comeback, however there is still a lot to do and it's a continuing process to protect this iconic species.

The Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels was fully supported by the Scottish Wildlife Trust, however some of that funding has been removed so the various groups are setting themselves up as independent societies looking after particular areas and working collaboratively. This is the next stage in Mid-Nithsdale's development, regular meetings are now taking place and a constitution has been set up for the group. But we need more members! There's lots to do and mid-Nithsdale is a huge area.

There's lots of different roles too, there's group governance, red squirrel surveying and landowner liaison to name a few. You also get to play with camera traps and microscopes.

We often get asked if red squirrels should be reported. The answer is yes, ALL squirrels should be reported, both red and grey as that helps us to know if what we are doing is working. You can report your squirrel sightings at <https://scottishsquirrels.org.uk/>

If you would like to join the society, please use the link above to join the hub and send a message to the Mid-Nithsdale group.

Jubilee Plans

Colin Mitchell

A group led by Kate Duffin of the Community Council is meeting to plan Dunscore events for the Jubilee celebrations over the long weekend of Thursday 2nd – Sunday 5th June.

So far, we have planned:

Thursday 2nd June A beacon on top of the hill at Dunscore. We will be collecting wood to burn on the beacon before the event. We hope many will walk up the hill to enjoy the event. Beacons are being lit across the Country and the Commonwealth.

Sunday 5th June A picnic in the park from 12:00 – 4:00 pm will be an opportunity to meet in the park and eat our picnics together (please bring your own picnic and chairs) There will be a cake decoration competition as well as a crown competition. We hope to have an ice cream van attend.

The school will decorate the school fence and the route to the park. We hope to give a Jubilee memento to each child and we have arranged toilets, marquee, seating and bunting.

The group still has lots to do. Please watch out for further information.

Pedalling on Parliament Sally Hinchcliffe

Last year, a group from Cycling Dumfries took part in 'Pedal on COP', joining people from all over Scotland (and beyond) in riding to Glasgow to take part in the Global Day of Action during the UN Climate Conference. This year, we're planning to ride to Edinburgh to join Pedal on Parliament (PoP) on 23 April for a mass bike demonstration for better cycling conditions in Scotland.



PoP's slogan is 'This Machine Fights Climate Change' – an acknowledgement of the fact that bikes, trikes and e-bikes can be a powerful way to cut carbon emissions. This year our mission has added urgency with the situation in Ukraine. As long as we're dependent on fossil fuels, it will be hard to put effective pressure on countries like Russia – but a bike can be fuelled on cake and (Fairtrade) bananas, putting no money into oligarchs' pockets.

Here in Dumfries and Galloway we've seen how people took to cycling during lockdown, and how e-bikes are making even longer journeys accessible. But for most people, the conditions of the roads and traffic are major barriers to switching from car to bike, even for quite short trips. The Scottish Government has recently increased funding for active travel, but it is up to local authorities to act. Across Scotland, it has become a postcode lottery whether your council is investing in cycling infrastructure or not – Edinburgh and Glasgow are streaking ahead, while the pace is a bit more glacial down in Dumfries & Galloway. Some groups are taking matters into their own hands, such as the KPT Trust's efforts to build a path from Penpont to Thornhill, but it shouldn't be up to communities to take on such a massive effort, just to allow their kids to cycle safely to school.

With the council elections coming up in May, we want to send a message to all local politicians that they need to start acting urgently in delivering conditions that allow everyone to cycle. There has always been a good Dumfries contingent at Pedal on Parliament but this is the first time we've actually cycled there.

We want to show that bikes aren't just a solution for urban areas and the central belt – with decent



infrastructure, many journeys in and around Dumfries could easily be done by bike rather than car. Clearly, riding 90 miles to Edinburgh isn't your average everyday journey – but it shows that this is something we feel strongly about, and that bikes shouldn't be overlooked in

favour of more glamorous solutions like electric cars.

We don't expect many people to join us on the full ride, but if you want to show support, you could join us for some of the way. We'll be setting off on Friday morning (22 April) from Dumfries and riding through Eskdalemuir and up to Edinburgh via Innerleithen. We'll arrive in Edinburgh on Saturday by 1:00 pm, where we hope to join more Dumfries folk, and thousands of others, for the mass demonstration.

Dunscore Old Cemetery Roy Spence

Dunscore Old Cemetery lies on a knowe about 50 yards north of the Cauldside road near the farm of Upper Portrack. It was the site of a pre-reformation Kirk, and is marked on a map of 1636 as the "Kirk of Dunskoir". In the 1640s it was in a ruinous state and it was declared that "they daere not for hazard of their life repair thearto for Godis worship" so it was decided to build a kirk at Cottack (Dunscore) that was more central to the parish. It was completed in 1649. A local farm called Kilroy may have got its name from the Gaelic for "Red Kirk", red from the red sandstone that was quarried in the area.

In the centre of the cemetery is the unroofed mausoleum of the Ferguson family of the Isle, the local landowners. It is in this enclosure that appears to be the oldest inscription in the graveyard, - to Agnes Grierson who died in 1636. Behind this building lies the best known grave in this

graveyard, that of Sir Robert Grierson of Lag, the persecutor of the covenanters. Many stories are told about his funeral, how a raven perched on his coffin, and the horses that pulled the hearse all dropped dead.

At least they would not need the tethering rings that are on the western wall of the cemetery! The gravestone was erected by one of his descendants and has a plaque on it from Lag Tower that is the clan crest, and at the base of the stone another plaque with the letters; S 1646 D WG WM, probably a marriage stone. Nearby is a stone commemorating James Grierson of Degoner (Dalgoner) who died in 1676, another branch of the Grierson family.

Between those stones is the grave of Robert Riddell of Glenriddell, owner of Friar's Carse. He was a friend of Robert Burns when he was in Ellisland and it was he who was one of the contestants in the drinking competition described in Burns's poem "The Whistle". He may have won the contest but it didn't do anything for his health as he died at the age of 37!

Set against the east wall is an impressive stone commemorating the Rev. Dr. Robert Bryden, a leading light of the Disruption and the establishing of the Dunscore Free (East) Kirk in 1843. Along from this stone is the grave of the Rev. James Pollock, minister at the East Kirk for an impressive 58 years. The Rev. Matthew Beattie and Rev. George Barclay of the Renwick Kirk and the Rev. William Barrowman of the Craig Kirk are also buried in this cemetery. Other persons of note buried here are Daniel Gold, a well liked school master for 37 years and elder at Dunscore, and William Ferguson school master at Burnhead.

By far the most common name on the headstones is Waugh, 55 in all, the most recent inscription in the whole cemetery being of Diana who died in 2012. Other well known local families such as the Boyes, Hiddlestons, Kirkpatrick, Lauries, McCubbins, McKinnels and Smiths are all well represented.

A feature of this cemetery is the existence of cast iron railings around some of the graves. Most of this type of railing was confiscated during World War 2 to help with the war effort.

About 1918 it was proposed to extend the cemetery down to the road but the scheme was abandoned because agreement on the value of the land with the land owner could not be reached.

Dunscore Biodiversity Colin Mitchell

Biodiversity is defined as the range of animals and plants and their abundance and I have a particular interest in the biodiversity in and around Dunscore.

We do enjoy a good variety of plants and animals around us. Roadside verges hold a diverse range of plants and

insects, particularly if they are not cut. Our local rivers and burns are also, generally, clean and hold a good variety of wildlife

The woodlands in the area, particularly broad-leaved woodlands, are a good habitat for plants, birds, mammals and insects. It is good to see broadleaved trees being planted by at least one local landowner.

Ponds and marshy areas encourage a range of newts as well as frogs and toads. Field hedges are a very important habitat for plants, insects and birds. However, I have seen one local pond drained and an area of gorse hedge removed recently.

Our gardens are very important habitats for biodiversity. Our flowers are used by many insects and there are many butterflies using the nectar from garden flowers in the summer. We also enjoy a wide range of moths, particularly in the summer. When our grandchildren stay in the summer we set up a moth trap and are amazed by the variety we catch overnight.

All these habitats are also valuable in terms of climate change because they store carbon dioxide (a major greenhouse gas).

HOWEVER the biodiversity in our area is under threat.

Many of the local fields are used to grow grass for silage. These are grass monoculture deserts and frequently spray is used to stop anything else from growing. Also, the fields are cut early, often during the bird nesting season, and birds such as skylarks with their wonderful song, are now increasingly rare.

Some of the superb field hedges and dykes have been removed to be replaced by fences. Fences are not good sources of biodiversity! Many ponds and marshy areas have been drained and the loss of amphibian habitat has led to a decrease in numbers of these species.

I do understand the pressure local farmers and landowners are under to produce food and supermarkets increase the pressure by negotiating lower prices for the products.

There is an opportunity to prevent such attacks on biodiversity. Now that we have left the EU, any agricultural grants from the Government should be on the basis of "public money for public good". This should reward farmers and landowners for improving and protecting biodiversity. Financial incentives should be given for maintaining and creating woodland, ponds, marshland, hedges etc. Rewards should be given to created wildlife areas in field corners and/or edges. In some areas in East Anglia farmers

are paid for similar improvements. It is possible to farm for profit and protect and encourage wildlife. What's more, farmers and landowners should be penalised for destroying wildlife habitats.

Despite this somewhat gloomy picture we can all play our part to improve local diversity. In our gardens we can plant flowers which yield nectar and pollen for bees and other insects; we should stop using weed-killing chemicals; we could create a pond (take safety measures if you have young children); we can put up bird boxes and bat boxes, we can feed the birds, create a wildflower area and lots more.

We all need to play our part. We will only realise that our local area is damaged for wildlife when we do not hear the birds in spring or see the animals and plants that we enjoy today.

Still Messy Rachel Chandler-Rogers

Following our wonderful Messy Christmas creating Christingles together and enjoying a Walking Nativity we met to celebrate the new year in January! We had great fun exploring the church taking part in a treasure hunt all together. We had a LOVEly February celebrating Valentines with all things heart shaped. This month saw us creating bouquets and cards ready for thanking the wonderful women in our lives this Mothering Sunday.



Each time we meet we are reminded how good it is to worship together, making a mess, listening to stories, singing, dancing and having fun as an all-age church family!

It is food for the soul to be so uplifted by children's laughter filling the church and we look forward to hopefully welcoming more people in our future gatherings!

Play Park Progress Jade Crichton

We were successful in our funding applications to Harestanes and Blackcraig wind farms and have secured £45,000. This money was applied for phase 3 of our project which is to install a tarmac track round the perimeter of the park.

We have notified the council and they will be putting the job out to tender. We hope that the track will be laid by the end of summer.

Two benches and a picnic table are to be installed in the new orchard area of the park. This will be done in the next couple of weeks.



We recently had a community planting day at the park where we planted 420 trees from the Woodland Trust to create a hedge along the back boundary of the park. It is a wild harvest hedge with a mix of blackthorn, dog rose, crab apple, hazel and rowan. This will be beautiful once it becomes established, creating seasonal interest and attracting wildlife.

All's Fair in Dunscore Alison Borthwick

We held our annual Big Brew on Saturday 26 February in the Glenriddell Hall and Church. After missing out last year due to the pandemic it was so lovely to hold this event in the village and see everyone come out and support us.

The hall was full of wonderful stall holders selling their crafts and beautiful harp music was played by Mia Bennison. In the hall there was soup, loads of cake with tea and coffee on offer. The children enjoyed the treasure hunt this year finding all the Fairtrade items in the hall and church.

A huge thank you goes to everyone that came along, our stallholders and all our extra helpers. The Fairtrade team

worked so hard to make this event happen and we were thrilled to bring this back in Fairtrade Fortnight.



The Fairtrade team continues to do great work with the Fairtrade Group at the school once a month learning and sourcing Fairtrade with crafts, baking and lots more. The children all made wonderful Fairtrade posters that were displayed in the hall for the Big Brew.

The Fairtrade team continues to meet up regularly, in the Glenriddell Hall or Church and if you would like to come along to a meeting you are more than welcome. It's a lovely group to be part of and we would welcome new members at any time. Fairtrade coffee and cake on offer of course!



Bird of the Season

Lesley Creamer

Siskin



If you're like me, living on the edge of a wood and with several hanging feeders filled with scrummy sunflower hearts – or possibly niger seed, you may be aware of an amazing cacophony of bird noise in the trees as you step outside just now. This is most likely to be Siskins queuing up for

a bite to eat as their staple winter diet, the seeds in pine cones, has usually run out by this time of the year.

They're small finches, about the size of a blue tit, with a distinctly forked tail. The male has a splendid black crown and bib, streaky yellow-green back, and unstreaked yellow-green breast and rump; the female as usual is less

brightly coloured. Of the many twitters and trills they make, the most distinctive sound is a drawn-out wheeze. They're really feisty wee birds, quite likely to chase away bigger birds on the feeders and, although - or maybe because - they're highly sociable, are just as likely to break out into bouts of bad temper within their own groups! Their motto might well be "Wha daur meddle wi' me" or, for the more refined, "Nemo me impune lacessit!"

Fun While Learning

Lee Mackenzie

As Covid restrictions have eased slightly, at Dunscore Preschool we have been able to enjoy once again some of the activities which we had always previously enjoyed so much.

We have welcomed parents who have shared their skills and talents, and look forward to being able to welcome in more parents as restrictions continue to ease. To celebrate Burns night, Flora brought her violin into Preschool and played a variety of children's and traditional folk tunes and led the children singing traditional Scottish folk songs. Claire, a depute charge nurse in the paediatric department at DGRI, kindly came in to talk to the children about how health care professionals care for children when they are ill. Joe was her willing patient who consented to copious checks and bandages being applied.



As one of our children welcomed a new baby sister, we had a focus on babies and childcare and explored how to care for babies to ensure they are nurtured and healthy. We had fun washing, changing, feeding, cuddling and taking our baby dolls for a walk.

We enjoyed wearing a touch of tartan for Burns night, and as always children and parents made an extra special effort, as well as tasting some traditional Scottish food. We also celebrated Chinese New Year with children

bringing in traditional Chinese food and costumes and making a lion's head for our very own lion dance. We took our Chinese New Year animal masks to the park and acted out the traditional story in a special animals race. For Shrove Tuesday we enjoyed a pancake race at the woods and enjoyed some crepes with a variety of toppings.

To celebrate World Book Day and to encourage literacy and a life-long love of reading, children brought in their favourite stories to share with their friends and, once again, children, parents and staff made an extra special effort to dress up as their favourite character. We also made a special trip into town on the community bus for a trip to the library, park, café and mosque. A huge thanks to Peter for all his help and support driving the bus and being so accommodating. We are very fortunate indeed to be able to use this amazing service. At the library we explored the books on offer and library staff supported the children to make their own world book day bookmarks. The children had great fun playing in Catherine Street park, and then enjoyed a delicious lunch in 'The Usual Place' café. Thank you to the staff at the café for their help and organisation. The children very much enjoyed learning about the mosque and their special practices, and many thanks to Zac for taking the time to show us around the mosque and explain everything in such an engaging way. It was such a pleasure to be able to take the children on this trip, and we received many positive comments on the children's good manners and behaviour. The best reward however came from the enjoyment on the children's faces "This is the best day ever!"

Eco Activities

June Harmer

Having taken over as Chair of the Dunscore Church Eco Group last year we finally managed to meet in person this February.

Our main points for discussion were:

Repair Cafe "Make do and Mend" - 30th March.

This is an event asking people to bring items that need mending. We'll have a team of enthusiastic amateurs at the cafe to help with advice and offer solutions. Refreshments will include soup and rolls, coffee, tea and cake.

Eco-Led Service - 15th May This will be a joint service with Moniaive led by the Eco Team and it will have the theme: "It's not somebody else's problem".

Litter Larks are out and about again, monthly on the 1st Thursday. We meet at 9:30 am and spend an hour cleaning up the roads and verges of Dunscore and the surrounding areas.



Eco Snippets have been greatly appreciated on the Church Family Notices. Thank you to all who contribute to that.

Toilet Twinning New toilets in Dunscore Primary School are nearly finished after a very long refurbishment. We have been encouraging them to [twin their toilets](#) and will support them in doing this.

The Nuclear Option Matthew Aitken

Have you ever considered investing in nuclear weapons? No, probably not! It is, however, possible that by having money in certain financial institutions you may inadvertently be funding these weapons.

A recent report by Pax (a peace organisation in the Netherlands) called Don't Bank on the Bomb looked at financial institutions who have a policy to restrict such investments and those that have "imperfect policies". The Bank of Ireland, the Co-Operative Bank and Triodos Bank are among those with comprehensive policies excluding investments in companies who manufacture, develop, test or use nuclear weapons. Institutions who don't have comprehensive policies include Aviva, Barclays and the Nat West Group (which includes RBS).

Don't Bank on the Bomb produced another report last year called Perilous Profiteering looking at those with a vested interest in keeping the nuclear arms race going. Organisations on this list included AXA and Lloyds Banking Group (which includes the Bank of Scotland).

Maybe it's time to look more closely at who uses our money.

Toddling On Caroline Lester

Dunscore Toddler Group has relocated from the PreSchool Centre to the Glenriddell Hall where we meet each week on Friday afternoons from 1.00 pm till 3.00 pm.



There is a nominal charge per family for each weekly meeting. The Community Council generously provided additional funding to cover expenses including hall hire charges.

The group comprises a number of regular families whose children range in age from four weeks upwards. The children are able to participate in craft activities as well as

playing with the toys which are available. There is also a snack provided each week.

In December an excursion to Dalscone Farm was arranged as our end of term party.

This group is open to all children and their carers. We hope you can join us.

15 Years Ago

Yes, the Digest really has been going for 15 years (although it didn't have its official Digest title quite then). Here are a few snippets from the June 2007 edition.

Minister's Musings (Christine Sime) As people involve me in some idle chatter, passing the time of day, I love waiting for them to get to the bit: and have you any holidays planned? And then to watch their reaction as I calmly reply: Not till September, then I am off for three weeks to Zambia.

Sunday School (Aly Robertson) Firstly, two huge 'thank you's'- to those people in the congregation who have recently volunteered to help with the Sunday School and to teachers who have retired after giving so much time and effort over the years. Sunday School is a wonderful opportunity to share God's word with young people, and to hear their individual insights into his creation.

Free to a Good Home (Kath Aitken) No, not a puppy or a kitten! Have you items or produce that are surplus to requirements but could be useful to someone else? If so, please put the details on a card on the Eco Notice Board and it may be possible to find it a new home. If you do not wish to give the item away, just indicate how much you would like for it but please make a donation in the Eco Box. *This developed into the Freecycle email list that still runs.*

Golf Match against Moniaive Church (Barney Easton) The morning broke overcast but dry. All 15 golfers converged on Thornhill, there was a pitch of excitement in the air, almost like an electric current. All the members were preparing themselves for the tee off time of 10:30 am. First to play were the captains and their partners. Even at the first stroke of the club, the spirit of camaraderie was obvious. There was a good feeling in the air, it seemed we were just carrying on from where we finished last year. What was also apparent to me was my radical use of my clubs, which not only surprised myself but everyone within 200 yards.

Appy days Matthew Aitken

Continuing the wee series looking at phone apps that might be interesting to others..

When trying to record a walking route on Google Maps (not easy) I stumbled across Google Fit. This



app automatically records walks (also other forms of exercise but not so well) telling you how far you have walked, how many steps you have taken and how many "heart points" you have gained. The World Health Organisation reckons that you should aim for 150 heart points a week so it is interesting to see these build up. And, back to the original reason for downloading this app, it records routes very well.

Soup, Coffee and Mending Matthew Aitken

The most recent Eco Group event was a superb Repair Cafe in the church.



Apart from delicious soups, rolls and sandwiches, baking, tea and coffee and a great deal of chat, there was a chance to bring along something that needed repair.

Visitors brought electrical items, a computer and some garments all of which were checked over by our expert team and (almost) all left in better condition than when they arrived!

It was a lovely, social occasion and it was great to meet some new people too. It also reminded us not to just throw things out but always to consider, first, whether they can be repaired. Very many thanks to the willing experts who gave their time to make this such a success. It sounds like this may become a regular event every few months.

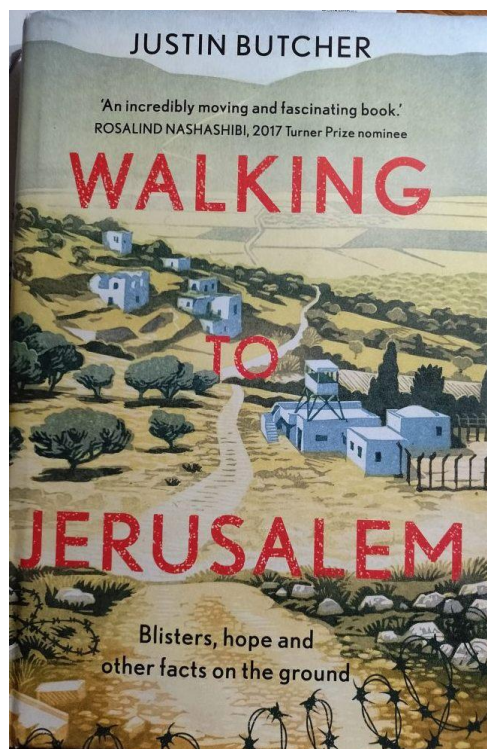


Book Review

Kath Aitken

Walking To Jerusalem by Justin Butcher

This book was kindly left for the Dunscore Church library by Sarah and Andrew Wind-Cowie and, having completed some voluntary work in the Middle East a couple of times and knowing something of the political history, I thought it would be an interesting read.



The book is a diary of the amazing journey by a group of people from several different countries who

walked from London to Jerusalem in 2017. This particular year marked the centenary of the Balfour Declaration, the fiftieth year of Israel's military occupation of the Palestinian Territories and the tenth year of the blockade of Gaza.

The book is very informative but an easy read and is now back in the bookcase in Dunscore Church. There are many interesting books there and they are freely available to anyone to borrow.

Dunscore Heritage Centre

The centre is opening again from Easter Sunday so, if you have been meaning to visit, now is the time!

You will find information, photos, accounts, videos, audio recordings and artefacts relating the life of Jane Haining, the history of Dunscore Church and rural life in and around Dunscore over the past decades and centuries.

You can visit the Heritage Centre any Sunday from 2:00 - 4:00 pm (the volunteer guides will even offer you a cup of tea or coffee!) or you can arrange to visit at a different day or time by contacting us through Facebook, Twitter or the [website](#).

If you have any notion about joining the volunteer guide rota please contact John Drabble on 820356. It is not too onerous and you'll initially be on with an experienced guide.