

Dunscore Digest

April 2023

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From the Editors:

Under New Management

Apparently new editors are just like buses: you think one will never turn up and then three come at once! When Matthew decided that after 16 years he had given enough to the Dunscore Digest and would retire as Editor, it looked like the magazine might come to an end but we all felt this would be a loss to the village, so overcame our hesitancy and put ourselves forward to take it on. Three is a magic number in storytelling (3 pigs, 3 bears, 3 witches.... take your choice), so hopefully our three heads will be better than one and work some magic to keep the Digest going.

Our first task is, of course, to thank Matthew for his work in building the Digest from a church newsletter to the full representation of the Dunscore community that it is now. We have inherited an impressive folder of archive material, which will no doubt be a delight to heritage enthusiasts of the future, and picked Matthew's brains as much as we can to ensure a smooth transition in putting together our first edition. Thanks must also go to everyone who has contributed over the years - please don't stop! To start with, we plan to keep a similar format, but we are hoping to add in some new features in due course, so all ideas are welcome. We are starting by featuring local businesses that deliver to or are connected with the village. Please get in touch if you have a suggestion.

As we've put our first edition together, what has become most apparent is that Dunscore and the

surrounding area is a fantastic place to live. The breadth of community events is quite outstanding and there really seems to be something for everyone – and if not, there will be someone who will support you to start something new. Please take the time to read about some of the things that have been going on and continue to support your local community newsletter.

Gail, Gloria and Ann

Dunscore Digest Editorial Team

new email: dg2digest@gmail.com



Hosanna to Hallelujah ... and beyond!

Musings from the Manse ...

Rev Mark Smith



Spring has sprung! By the time you read this, we will have passed the Vernal Equinox, changed our clocks to British Summer Time, and be enjoying the flowers appearing in the fields, verges, and gardens. Signs of new life everywhere!

From ancient times, people living in these islands we call home have celebrated the change of season, welcoming the life bursting forth from nest and den, branch and bud – new life breaking out of the cold, dark ground!

For the past 2023 (or so) years, Christians have celebrated Easter at this time of year. The date of Christian Easter is linked with the New Moon and the Jewish Festival of Passover, which just happen to coincide with the change of seasons in the Northern Hemisphere. Just as new-born lambs cannot hold in their energy as they gambol across the fields and hills, so the grave could not hold Jesus! We celebrate Jesus being raised from death – New Life bursting from the cold, dark tomb!

It all sounds very poetic and idyllic, and has inspired much art and literature ...

BUT ... first we remember that He died! Crucified by the Romans at the request of the religious authorities for stirring up the people. Good Friday is the most important day in the Church's calendar – God's Friday, when everything changed. For everybody.

As the Jews prepared to sacrifice lambs to remember the Passover (when they were freed from slavery in Egypt) Jesus was executed. The same Jesus, whose birth we celebrate at Christmas, now died like a

common criminal even though He was innocent. He became the Lamb of God, sacrificed in the place of the guilty – you and me – to put us right with God.

The theology trips off my tongue (or keyboard), and may even sound exciting, but it is hard for the Western mind to comprehend. We don't practice animal sacrifice to pacify and appease gods, so the idea that Jesus somehow "paid the price" for our sin (the things which keep us apart from God and His Love) is not a natural concept for us in 21st Century Dunscore. I cannot explain how it works any more than I can explain the workings of the laptop I sit at as I type. But I know it does work! When people put their faith in Jesus it opens up the way to a relationship with the truly Infinite, truly Eternal God. Even today! Ask around ...

As human beings we are designed to 'tune-in' to the universe in all its dimensions (11 at the last count), not just the physical 3-D that dominates our thoughts and actions. Our being has a spiritual side to it, something beyond our mortal, time-limited consciousness, which has the potential to allow us to relate to God. What Jesus did in living, dying, and rising again, enables that relationship to be re-kindled, opening us to His Love in all sorts of ways – 3-D and beyond! The offer of Eternal Life is about the beyond coming into our lives now, as well as for Eternity!

HOLY WEEK goes from Palm Sunday, through Maundy Thursday, Good Friday to Easter Day. We start with Hosannas, learn how Jesus wanted us to remember Him, sit at the foot of the Cross, then wait ... for the joy of Resurrection!

As you celebrate Easter, enjoy a Treasure Hunt, eat the chocolate eggs, and enjoy the warmer (!?) weather, let each sign of new life remind you of the New Life Jesus came (and died) to bring. From Hosanna to Hallelujah via 'Crucify Him' is a true rollercoaster of emotions. Join us to find out more, or check out the various Holy Week Meditations on my [YouTube channel \(RevMark Smith\)](#). May God Bless you.



Other Church News

KiKs - Kids in Kirk

Tim Harmer

KiKs is a new initiative in the Church. Every 4th Sunday morning in Church we have a separate children's group with teaching, activities and crafts. This is to encourage families to attend church together and the adults can enjoy the main service whilst the youngsters have their own age appropriate group. We continued with KiKs after Christmas and the young people have enjoyed their time together. They feed back to the congregation what they have been doing when they re-join them for the last hymn. Come and enjoy worship at Church together as a family.

Messy Church

Jen Dobson



Here at messy church things have been ticking along nicely, we continue to provide a monthly family fun service in the church including craft, games, food and music. In our most recent service we were preparing for the 200th anniversary of the church building in September by making some gifts and crafts which will form part of the church's celebrations later on in the year. We are really looking forward to our Easter service next which this year for the first time will be on Easter day! We will be taking part in the sunrise service and then providing breakfast in the church afterwards followed by the messy church session. We are always keen to try new things and believe this is a great way to engage with the wider church community.

Messy church is unique in that all ages of people are welcome from the very young to the very young at heart! There is something for everyone and if you simply come along and have a coffee you will be most welcome.

Connect

Tim Harmer

The Connect group is a weekly bible study group that meets in Church on Thursday evenings. Bible study can sound a bit heavy but in reality we are a group of Christians who share our thoughts on faith and life issues via the medium of a study of various passages in the Bible. Following our return after a post-Christmas break we have looked at the prophet Elijah and the adventures he had as the lone voice speaking for God against the evil injustice a powerful elite brought to the lives of his people. It is a story of faithfulness to God and justice for the people. A story with many contemporary parallels for us today.

We have now moved on and at the time of writing we are undertaking a journey to the Cross with Jesus. This is a meditation and study for Lent moving through the incidents depicted in Matthew's gospel as Jesus journeys towards the events of Holy Week. Alongside of this we are also building up objects which are placed weekly into a 5" plant pot with compost and sand in it. In effect we are developing a Lenten garden.

Luboto

Aly Roberston

Visit by Two Zambians from Luboto

Dunscore and Moniaive churches are twinned with Luboto Church of Zambia.

Our Faithshare application was successful so the Church of Scotland will pay Rev Friday Sinkonde and Mr Levy Mwanza's air fares at the beginning of May for a two week visit. It will be great to meet face to face.

We hope to arrange visits to the seaside, to the local hospital and possibly to Edinburgh.

If you can help with these visits or possibly provide accommodation for our guests, please contact Aly Robertson on alyrobbo@hotmail.com.

Many thanks

Children

Dunscore Toddler Group

Laura Heron



Dunscore baby and toddler group currently runs every Friday, 1.30pm – 3.00pm at the pre-school. We are very lucky to have the full use of the pre-school and its facilities. There are two rooms, one with a climbing frame, sand pit and plenty of toys for babies and toddlers.

The outside area also has lots of outdoor toys and a playhouse to enjoy when the weather is nice (or not so nice!). We also hope to have a couple of sessions in the park once the weather warms up since it's so close!

The last two years we have enjoyed Christmas trips to Dalscone farm fun and we hope to have future trips out if there is enough interest.

Currently, we are asking £1 towards snacks for the children over 6 months old. Teas and coffee are provided for the adults.

We are always excited for new faces to come along, everyone is very welcome. We currently have a Facebook group where we post updates about the group so if you are on Facebook please join Dunscore Toddler Group.

If you know anyone who might like to come along please spread the word!

Dunscore Pre-School

Caroline Waugh

Dunscore Pre-school has had another busy couple of months after a full Christmas season in which we had a Christmas performance of Three Little Pigs and Christmas party.

Into 2023 we have continued where possible with our forest days and with other outdoor play. We had a

memorable celebration for Burns night as well as marking Chinese New Year with appropriate activities. As part of our play this term within our playrooms we have made role-play areas including a shop and a hospital.

World book day gave all the children and staff members an opportunity to come to pre-school dressed up as a personality from any book. Dressing up is always a popular activity and it adds to the fun when the staff also participate. Continuing on the book theme we took a trip to the Ewart library, well placed beside the Catherine Street play park, which we also visited. This gave the children the experience of travelling to Dumfries by the service bus as well as enjoying some of the many appropriate facilities Dumfries has to offer.

There is always something exciting to look forward to at Pre-School. With Spring and Easter on the horizon we will be having additional outdoor time featuring easter egg hunts as well the usual outside activities.

Dunscore Pre-School is open and welcomes all children from three to school age. Hopefully we will soon be able to widen our scope with the introduction of an afterschool club in conjunction with the primary school.

Dunscore Primary School

Samantha Wallace

We have had a very busy term at Dunscore Primary. The pupils in P3/4 have had the topic of weather this term and have really enjoyed investigating this. They have taken part in lots of science activities including creating their own water cycle in a bag!

P5/6/7 have been studying the Victorians. They have been completing research tasks and investigating key people of that era. The pupils created some stunning artwork based on the work of LS Lowry.

Our Bodies has been the topic for P1/2 and they have engaged in this really well. We were very lucky to have a visit from one of our parents Dr Hodge and he came in to talk to us all about our bones. The pupils loved when 'Steve' the skeleton came out and they were very good at remembering and identifying all the bones.

We had a partnership science day at Moniaive this month and it was great to be able to take part in this after previous covid restrictions. The pupils loved meeting the other children in their year groups from the partnership and worked very well together. We had a morning full of practical activities and then in the afternoon we had a science show from Morgan and West.

Our 'wee brew' with the pre-school was very successful and it was great to see such a large turnout from parents and members of the community. The pupils enjoyed baking some sweet treats and we raised a great amount of £139.25.

Morton Thistle Football Club

Eddie and Suzanne Hewson



Morton Thistle Juniors has evolved incredibly quickly and it all started in the Summer of 2022. Our 9 year old son had only started developing an interest in football and after trying to get him into numerous teams in Dumfries, we were placed on various, long waiting lists. For myself, at 9 years old, life was football and the summer holidays revolved around the next Gala football tournament. After 2 years of missed Galas due to the Covid pandemic; 2022 was going to be a special year, the whole community was very much looking forward to getting together again. I approached Thornhill Gala to request adding a primary aged children's football tournament into the schedule, they were more than happy for this to go ahead and very supportive. The tournament surpassed all expectations; 61 kids, 11 teams and the most fun! At Gala Day the village was full of praise and the idea of forming a youth football team for the village was firmly planted.

My son was playing along with his classmates, and this had turned into a weekly, casual get together. A number of adults were involved who led a warm up, a few basic training drills then picked teams for a few games. My vision was that we would teach the kids the mechanics and an understanding of the game so they would be capable of playing throughout the region and perhaps even beyond!

Training was stepped up a gear and purely by word of mouth numbers grew and grew.

We formed a small, committee who have extensively researched the requirements of forming a team. We

have had so many people help us along on the journey; other local football coaches, the SFA, the third sector and locals who were involved in the original Morton Thistle; a huge thank you to all.

We have spent the last 6 months getting the Club and Teams ready; we now have officers in all Club positions and Team Coaches for each age group who are working through their SFA Coaching Qualifications. Our First Aiders and Child Welfare and Protection Officers have all completed the necessary training and we have submitted PVG applications for all officials who will be directly involved with players.

During this time and as word has spread, we have been inundated by support from local businesses and have been able to purchase training kits for all of the kids and match days strips for games. The backing we have received from the local community has been completely overwhelming and totally unexpected but also very reassuring; it's clearly recognised that there are not enough activities locally for our children. We have kept the kids involved throughout the process, from designing the kits to also each taking a turn to write and present thank you letters to our sponsors and those who have donated.

At the start of March, we entered teams into the South of Scotland Youth Football League for the 2012, '13, '14, '15 and '16 age groups. We held our first home festival on Saturday 18th March. For the majority of our players this was their first match. We were so proud of how they all played and also how they conducted themselves; such good behaviour and manners both on and off the pitch especially given the added pressure that there was a huge home support! There was so much great play, good teamwork, the added bonus of some goals but most importantly happy players and smiling faces. All the players were awarded with their first Morton Thistle Juniors "cap" at the end of the games. They were all so proud and can't wait for their next games.

If you have any queries regarding the Club or Teams, please contact MortonJuniors@gmail.com



Community Groups

Community Council

Alistair McFadzean

At our AGM in November 2022 it was decided that the existing office bearers would continue in their posts.

We have, in a small way, financially supported the start-up of Morton Thistle Football Club as there are a few of our Dunscore children involved.

There is also an update on our local development plan and we are now waiting on a final plan.

We are pleased to let you know that our Christmas Santa Extravaganza was a great success.

Next on the agenda is our Easter Egg Hunt on Sunday **9th April at 12:00pm** which is very popular. As you can imagine, there's lots going on this year. Keep your eyes open for more information and your ears to the ground.

Next on the calendar will be the celebration of King Charles' Coronation on **Sunday 7th May** and we are in the early stages of making the arrangements for a party in the park. Nearer the time there will be posters placed around the village with full details so look out for them. Information will also be published on the [Community Council Website](#).

Dunscore Scottish Woman's Rural Institute (SWRI)

Jane Chalmers



Dunscore Scottish Woman's Rural Institute (SWRI) as it was known when it first started was a meeting once a month for the local women to come together. The format as it was then is pretty much still the same now. There would be a speaker or demonstration with a wee competition then tea and a biscuit.

The whole thing was set up to help housewives gain more skills so the focus was on homemaking, mending

and of course baking and socialising. The rural became the place to be for many farmers' wives and daughters.

Now we are known as SWI the rural was dropped because we now encompass all areas both rural and urban. The first institute was formed in Longniddry in 1917, Dunscore was formed in 1922 and we celebrated our 100th anniversary with a lovely meal at the Woodlands.

We meet at **7.30pm** on the **3rd Thursday of the month** in Glenriddell Hall at **September to May**. We have over the years also run trips in the summer often joining with other local institutes, some of which are now no longer running.

I joined the rural when I was 14, going along with my Mum in Glencaple, after a few years off with children I joined Dunscore nearly 15 years ago. It has given me the opportunity to meet others in the area who I probably wouldn't have otherwise, we swap stories, hints and tips and just have a good laugh. Both of my daughters came along with me and both joined in, gaining confidence and learning new skills. They have both moved away now but Beth has just joined her local rural so the cycle seems to be continuing.

New members are always welcome with a friendly smile and of course a good cup of tea and some home baking.

Dunscore Our Fairtrade Village

Diane Cowen

On Saturday 4th March 2023 we held our Fairtrade Big Brew an annual event we've held for 15 years during Fairtrade fortnight. This year was one of the most successful Big Brews to date, we raised an amazing £586.67 which was brilliant!

We had local stalls selling Fairtrade and local food, drinks and crafts, Some of the children from the school's fairtrade group made some cakes using Fairtrade products, and posters. They also helped us out on the day which was very much appreciated as they were a fantastic help.

The stalls were all in the Church including cheese, sweets, savouries, flowers, jewellery, crochet cards and crafts, with the refreshments in the Glenriddell Hall with a variety of soups and lots of home-baking which is always very popular, alongside lots of Fairtrade teas and coffees.

We also had a raffle and the prizes were all donated by each of the stall holders. There was a Fairtrade treasure hunt for the children which they all really enjoyed finding the fairtrade items around the church and hall!



It was lovely to see everyone there enjoying themselves and how after all these years our Big Brew is still so popular and a huge success. We had a great article recently in the Dumfries and Galloway Standard showcasing our event and also made it to the Daily Record online. We had great support from local MSP's who enjoyed the soup and cakes!

I'd like to say a big thank you to all our Fairtrade team for all their hard work and bringing it altogether, helping out with the organisation of the day, all our stallholders, our soup makers and bakers, our runners and washer uppers our raffle ticket sellers and everyone else who made it happen. Thanks again!

Flying Pig

Ann Walton

Our little village pub is getting plenty of use these days with local groups using the space when the pub isn't open for normal business, so much so that there is now something happening in there every day of the week. We've had a number of volunteers trained up as new bar staff, making it easier for us to keep regular opening times, something that has been an issue for us in the past.

So, what's on?

The pub is open for drinking and blethering on a **Monday** evening from about 8pm.

On **Tuesdays**, the Slimming Group use the space from 6pm and are followed in by the Craft and Chat group after 7pm.

Wednesday night is DADs night (Dunscore Amateur Dramatic Society). They usually meet between 7.30pm

and 9.30pm and will soon be looking for new members for their next production.

On **Thursday** evening, the pub is open around 7.30pm for more drinking, blethering and, as a bonus, someone can usually be persuaded to cook chips for everyone to share later in the evening as well.

We're not open every **Friday** night but on the first Friday in the month, we hold a quiz. Since September we've had guest hosts, something that, so far, is working very well as it has created a variety of new ideas and has proved to be a lot of fun. The April quiz on Friday 7th March will be hosted by our very own Rev Mark and will be starting at 8pm.

On the third **Friday** of every month, we have a games night which usually consists of a darts and a dominoes knock out tournament. The competition for the prizes is always keen with a Kilnford Steak pie and a bottle of Prosecco being highly sought after.

We held a successful board games night one Friday before Christmas and there are plans to hold another one in the near future. Last time the games played included Settlers of Catan, Frustration and Tsuru but who knows what next time will bring? It probably won't be Monopoly...

We tend to only open on **Saturdays** when we have a special event on. Last November, we held a "Youz and Yours" night, our equivalent of a "Mr and Mrs" night. We can only hold this every few years, when we have new people in the village who don't know what they're letting themselves in for! We had some great fun with all the couples taking part really entering into the spirit of things. Few of us will forget what happens between Mark and Debbie first thing in the morning! Richard and Inez were the winners this time around, but thanks are due to all the couples who helped make it such a great night – Anne and Tam, Andi and John, and Trevor and Gill



On **Sunday** afternoons we are continuing to open from 2pm. This is usually very much a family affair with as many children and dogs as there are adults. At the end of January, we had a visit from the Mostly Ghostly team who came to tell local stories as part of their Howff Tales

tour. The afternoon was well supported and James Lester, one of our Sunday afternoon regulars, has kindly written a review of the session for us:

Mostly Ghostly in Dunscore

James Lester (aged 12)



On the 29th of January, Kathleen from Mostly Ghostly came to tell stories to people in the pub. The stories were about paranormal activity happening near us like in Dumfries or Morton Castle. They were really interesting, ranging from people walking through walls to ghosts on the road. It was great to see so many people in the pub. There were people who usually went there but there were people I've never seen at the pub before. I had so many theories about the stories and Kathleen was really nice. She would listen to whatever you were telling her. All of the stories were interesting and very cool. It was a great thing to listen to: she was never going to give us up with her stories, she was never going to let us down with the weirdness, I was never going to run around or desert it, it was so cool. Everybody there thought it was great to chat to the people listening and Kathleen. So overall, it was a great time and something I'd like to see again.

Mostly Ghostly came to the Flying Pig for the Howff Tales project, part of Scotland's Year of Stories.

Dunscore Flying Pig Simple Weigh

Gloria Burke

This is a healthy eating plan for life not a diet, as such. You can go out anywhere for a meal, night out or special occasion and not necessarily put weight on.

We started up last March every Tuesday Evening at 6:00pm in the Flying pub in the heart of the village. From March to December 2022 the group lost 22 stone 10 pounds, not bad for a small village.

We meet up and get weighed, have tea, coffee, juice and we chat, we all encourage each other, have a laugh and support each other. We have a [Facebook group](#) with lots of recipes, health information for anyone with

Diabetes, High Blood Pressure, IBS, Gluten Intolerant and more in relation to specific dietary needs.

We have home cooking each month and enjoy a cake for special occasions, come and join us if you want to lose weight, run after your children or grandchildren, get healthy or fancy a friendly chat and a cuppa, we have been known to do chair exercises, dance and hula hoop, more laughing than doing I have to say, all new members will be made very welcome.

Every Tuesday night at 6pm

No joining fee

£1 a week to cover costs



The total weight loss is the equivalent of the weight of an adult panda!

DADS

Sarah McConnell

REVIEW OF MACBETH or CARRY ON KILLING

Dunscore needs MORE:

Witches!

Murder!

Ghosts!

Actors falling off the stage!

Audiences falling about laughing!

The Farndale Avenue Housing Estate Townswomen's Guild Dramatic Society Production of Macbeth (or FAHETGDSPOM for short) made for a cracking evening of fun, murder and mayhem, thanks to the excellent performance by the Dunscore Amateur Dramatic Society, which I was lucky enough to catch on its first night.

FAHETGDSPOM is actually a very difficult play to put on, since it's both a gallop through all the best bits of Macbeth and a good-humoured farce. The actors have to be able to switch effortlessly from declaiming serious poetry to slipping on a banana skin. But DADS rose magnificently to the challenge.



Lynne Hodge as Macbeth shouldered the brunt of Shakespeare's words and did so with intelligence and style in an exquisite mint-green satin coat. Lady Macbeth (a very credible if hirsute Joe MacGrain) remorselessly replaced the couple's usual Netflix-and-chill evening entertainment with a spot of impromptu regicide. Olive Melville held the whole enterprise together with poise and grace as FAHETG's doyenne—at least until Brian Johnstone upstaged everyone in a crowd-pleasing knock-off Dame Edna blue sequin number. Special mention must be made of the hard-working quartet of Carrie Wright, Jennifer Dobson, Jane Munro and Gail Renaud who amongst them covered an astonishing NINETEEN other roles. How "Producer" Mark Wood kept them all in order is a secret all parents would like to learn.

And those were just the performers on stage.

Farce is tricky to pull off—to work well, it needs split-second timing and a really committed team of experts behind the scenes. From the off though, DADS had wowed us by creating an amazing stage within the church: all credit to the construction team of Gavin Dykes, Andy Griffiths, Adam Johnstone & Andi Martin. Jo Abbott welcomed the audience by pointing out all the essentials: the stage, the seats and where to buy a drink in the interval. And Iain Howat swished that curtain like nobody's business.

Back-stage, DADS's performance owed its drive and good cheer to thoughtful direction from John McIntyre, supported by stage manager Laura Creaney. Props and Costume (Richard & Inez Scottie, Colette Swan) were absolutely on-point too. FAHETGDSPOM is clearly a play that's meant to go wrong, but it needs to go wrong in the right way, so I was particularly impressed by the

slickness of the sound & lighting operated by Gavin Creaney.

This was such an enjoyable evening that DADS mustn't be "a walking shadow, a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage, and then is heard no more". I can't wait to see what Dunscore Amateur Dramatic Society does next.

Gala Fiona Thompson

The gala committee have been organising this year's gala since the last one finished, as soon as it finishes we are back organising the next years.

We have a lot of marquee hires which is a great way for us to raise money to help us organise such a successful gala week.

We are always looking for volunteers to help put up and take down the marquee/s as this is a lot of work, if you have anytime to be able to help please contact Jimmy Anderson or any of the committee members.

This year's gala week is **Sunday 6th August - Saturday 12th August 2023.**

This year we are having a gala king and queen again along with their attendants, the king and queen will be chosen at the family disco on **27th May** in the Glenriddell Hall. All the royal party will be announced at this event.



We have most things organised for this year's gala week.

Our competitions this year will be:

An art competition for the children incorporating the 200th anniversary of the church.

Miniature garden competition for kids and adults.

The baking competition is lemon drizzle cake.

Crowning of king and queen on **Sunday 6th August** followed by afternoon of fun more information will follow on gala Facebook page.

Monday - Cycling challenge for kids and adults

Tuesday - Pet show and dog agility

Wednesday - Car treasure hunt, Iain is organising this again for us, he has done this for a number of years and is always a fantastic night.

Thursday - This year we are having a family disco and karaoke night.

Friday - Kids and adults quiz night

Saturday - Gala Day - Fancy dress parade, this year's acts are, Wayne Wander Westhuizen and Mark Stannage stunt team Lynette Turner dancing and Next Level School of Dance, Dumfries and Galloway blood bikes, plus side stalls. Finishing off the week to our gala dance to Not Guilty.

We then clear the field on the Sunday again we would be very grateful for any volunteers to help tidy up and take down marquees and take tables and chairs away.

Looking forward to seeing everyone at the selection of the gala king and queen in May and then at the gala week.

Dalgarno Singers

John Drabble



The DALGARNO SINGERS, your local choir, is looking for more members.

We have been going for over 30 years and are 22 strong at the moment. Our enthusiastic conductor, Rory Robson is from Dalbeattie and our expert accompanist, Hilary Craig from Dunscore.

We thoroughly enjoy our rehearsals at Penpont Primary School on Monday nights in preparation for 2 concerts a year, in the Spring and Christmas, with a break for the Summer.

Although it is an advantage, some of us do not read music – all you need is a good ear and enthusiasm.

We all enjoy a very varied selection of music, ranging from songs from the musical theatre to Scottish melodies, from classical choral works to folk songs.



We would welcome anyone wishing to have a go; you can join any time – there are no auditions and you do not have to pay your very reasonable subscription until after a 6-week trial period.

If you are interested in finding out more, please visit our website <https://www.dalgarnosingers.co.uk> or ring John Drabble on 01387 820376 or Gail Renaud on 07756679391 for information.

If you'd like to hear the choir perform the next concerts will be:

Penpont Church - Saturday 22nd April. 7.30 to 9pm

Max West Church - Sunday 30th April. 7.30 to 9pm.

French Twinning Association

Robert Waugh

A trip to remember- no speaking French required.

This year from **19th to 23rd October** all interested members and friends of the Auld Alliance Twinning Association are invited on a visit to the twinned villages in the communities of La Drenne and Le Coudray-sur-Thelle in the Oise area of Northern France.

These trips are always fun and there is something for everyone. In the past we have enjoyed visits to attractions as diverse as France's last nail factory, a Highland games and the French Parliament. We have celebrated with our French friends over the past almost 30 years and always enjoyed the friendship, the activities and of course the excellent food and drink. The difference between these trips and normal breaks abroad is that the participants on a twinning visit are able to enjoy France from a French perspective. The planned visit in October offers an unrivalled opportunity to experience a France normally unseen by visitors from abroad. This is France, from the inside.

It is a myth commonly levelled at the activities of the Auld Alliance Twinning Association that a fluency in the French language is a prerequisite for participation. This is simply not the case. Many of the host families speak good English and welcome anyone from this part of Scotland and beyond. Members and past participants with little or no knowledge of French are matched with English speakers and thus are able to benefit fully from the unique insight into life in France offered by the visits. Some people shy away from considering going on a

twinning visit due to their inability in the future to host French guests when they visit us every other year. Please be assured that by going on this trip there is absolutely no obligation to host or indeed participate in any future reciprocal visit.



What then does a twinning trip to France involve? Firstly, you must pay for your travel costs. Most people choose to fly although several on previous visits have travelled by train. You will be advised what flight is chosen by the association and travel to the airport can be arranged in conjunction with other participants. For children and young people some help with the air fares or other transport can be offered depending on the number participating. There is one further requirement and that is membership of the Auld Alliance Twinning Association. This comes at an affordable £15 per annum for family membership or £10 per annum for individual membership. Not much for the experience of a lifetime!

In France your hosts will arrange for your transport to the villages. You should bring a gift for your host family. Your accommodation is of course free as are your meals with your host family. You are also not usually required to pay for any of the activities. You may have to buy food or drink on the days out but food in picnic form can sometimes be supplied by your host family depending on the destination. One of the days is usually allocated to being entertained by your host family. This may sound too much of a step into the unknown but more often than not these host family activities involve getting together with another host family and their guests and visiting some of the local sights as well as a good amount of eating and drinking. This doesn't seem too ominous, does it? Another activity that takes place on every visit, usually near the end, is the Soirée which includes all hosts and guests. It takes place in one of the village halls and involves music, dancing, food and drink. A great opportunity to finish the visit in style.

More details of the trip to France can be obtained by initially contacting Robert Waugh. Email address: craigeller@hotmail.co.uk Remember you don't need to live in Dunscore, Keir, Penpont or Tynron to participate. Anyone interested who joins the association can go.

This is a great opportunity. Don't miss it!

Dunscore Orchestra

Kass Marsh

The Christmas Service on the 18th of Dec is a very special event in Dunscore. Organised with enthusiasm by Sarah McConnell, it draws a very happy crowd from the local community and further afield, who know they will find themselves filled with fine festive cheer at this marvellous annual event.

Some orchestra members only return to the area for the festive season, and whether they are seasoned players, or ones who only dust off our instruments once a year - I tend to fall in the second category with my recorder - we channel all our efforts into one early doors rehearsal on the day of the service.

This was my son Roger's second year conducting the orchestra, and these two days are the sum of his conducting career to date! This is what he had to say about the day: "It was great growing up with the Dunscore Christmas Orchestra bringing everyone together for music, song, celebration and home baked mince pies, so when the orchestra was needing a new conductor, I felt this was a tradition I couldn't let die away. After a few quick conducting lessons, I was definitely learning on the job, but it is a treat to now be leading the music in this special annual event."

My eldest, who always loves to come and join in the singing, notes, "We are pleased to report that, unlike last year, this year all the tunes were conducted in the correct time signatures, and he even helped the congregation join in at the right time, most of the time anyway."

It takes a talented bunch of musicians to be able to produce such a magical sound in a short couple of hours, but magic it is. What a pleasure to see the smiling faces of the congregation as they sing and join in our music making. It is a delight to be involved, and a delight to get to the end unscathed each year - we certainly earn our exquisite homemade mince pies!

We look forward to seeing you there next year.



Cairn Valley Community Transport

Antoine Lemaire

Cairn Valley Community Transport is urgently looking for committee members to help with the running of the organisation, as well as for volunteer drivers with a D1 class on their driving licence (pre-1997).



SPRING EXCURSIONS

EVERYONE WELCOME, BUT ALL SEATS MUST BE PRE-BOOKED.
BOOK ANY VENUE ADMISSIONS YOURSELF

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.

MONIAIVE—CASTLE DOUGLAS SERVICE (ALTERNATE THURSDAYS)
16/02, 02/03, 16/03, 30/03, 13/04, 27/04, 11/05, 25/05, ETC.
PRE-BOOKING NO LONGER REQUIRED

PASSENGERS ARE RESPECTFULLY REMINDED THAT THE WEARING OF SEAT-BELTS IS LEGALLY REQUIRED ON ALL JOURNEYS

FOR DETAILS & BOOKINGS, CONTACT:
ANTOINE
TEL: 01848 200775
E-MAIL: SECRETARY@CVCT.ORG.UK

WWW.CVCT.ORG.UK

DATE	DESTINATION	LEAVE MONIAIVE	FEE
FEB 24	CARLISLE CATHEDRAL, TULLIE HOUSE, SHOPPING	9AM	£10
MARCH 04	CASTLE KENNEDY SNOWDROP FESTIVAL	9.30AM	£10
MARCH 24	DUNDONALD CASTLE & SCOTTISH MARITIME MUSEUM, IRVINE	9AM	£10
APRIL 14	WEMMYS BAY / ISLE OF BUTE	8.30AM	£17.50
MAY 05	CUMNOCK FACTORY OUTLET CENTRE & DUMFRIES HOUSE	10AM	£8
MAY 19	19TH MAY CARLISLE LEAVE MONIAIVE	9AM	£10

Also, later in the year, there is a trip to Stranraer Oyster Festival the on **16th September**, leaving Moniaive at 9am. £12.

All excursions can also pick up in Dunscore and en route.

Excursions will not run with less than 8 passengers.

Everyone welcome.

Admission fees etc not included.

For details and bookings contact Alan on alan@snademill.co.uk or 01387 820241

Passengers must wear seatbelts.

Moniaive Horse Show

30th July 2023

Eunice Laidlaw

Moniaive Horse Show has grown over the years from a small, Gymkhana style event for locals, to the show it is today, with showing classes, show jumping, working hunter and a dog show. We have affiliations to many of the breed society classes and are affiliated to Blair for Working Hunter and National Pony Society classes.

The show is always held on the last Sunday of July and after two years break because of Covid we were back last year, with a vengeance, and the weather was particularly kind to us as we have a reputation of it being a wet day.

Competitors come from all over such as Cumbria, Perthshire, Wigtownshire, Ayrshire and even Arran.

It's good to welcome competitors back from year to year, as well as new ones. Jack Ewart, our chair for many years, has been the driving force behind the show and made it what it is today.

Without our many sponsors and donors for their generosity, Dunscore Gala for the marquee and the Wilson Family for the use of the fields there would not be a show.

It is a fun day out with plenty to see.



Local Charities

FRED

Iraina McGroarty



We are called FRED and FRED stands for Farmersfield Rest home for Elderly Donkeys. We are located at Farmersfield on the Morington Road. This is home to the McGroarty family and we have lived here with donkeys since 1999. We became a registered charity in 2014, and our aim is to provide a permanent home to older donkeys, but we have not yet refused sanctuary to a donkey due to being too young!

Why donkeys? Rather why not donkeys. Donkeys are fabulous beings who have a sense of fun, curiosity in their surroundings and a willingness to be sociable with people. We have had donkeys for over 25 years and Iraina worked for The Donkey Sanctuary in Devon as an area welfare officer for 11 years. During that time we amassed a lot of knowledge and experience about the needs of donkeys. It was a natural progression to establish our own charity where we could take in donkeys that would remain here with us for ever.

Our donkeys are all stabled at night in their friendship groups except in the summertime when some can stay out all day and night. Donkeys are not suited to our wet weather and not having waterproof coats they need shelter and protection. That means lots of mucking out and an endless supply of good well rotted manure if anyone wants some!

When you have donkeys you do not have worries to seek! We have Oscar who is a highly skilled gate opener, Bertie and Dudley who climb through the muck heap to escape with great regularity, dear Daphne who is genetically predisposed to being obese and looks like a Toblerone from the front, Oak who is very old and thin,

Barney Crawford and several others who have such bad teeth it's a major job keeping weight on them. But despite the difficulties keeping donkeys bring, the joy and delight far outweigh the anguish. Here we believe in trying to meet the needs of every donkey by recognising them as individuals with their own likes and dislikes. We recognise the value of trying to enrich their environment and to give them choices as much as we can - such as friendship groups, whether they go out or stay in, whether they interact with people or not, whether they want brushed or not.

Three generations of our family live here and I think we would all agree that while life can be chaotic it is definitely never dull. Currently we have 25 donkeys at FRED and have taken in 8 donkeys so far this year. This is exceptional for us and we think speaks to the economic crisis the country finds itself in. Like many animal charities resources are being stretched at a time when donations are very hard for people to give. We are a very small charity with no paid staff so every penny really goes to the donkeys. We fundraise with an Open Weekend every year, we have donkey sponsorship and we have some very generous followers and a small annual grant from RS MacDonald.

We also started a CIC (Community Interest Company) in 2017 offering Animal Assisted Therapy. This is called Animals Supporting People at FRED. Broadly speaking we work with anyone who is having a hard time and would benefit from time spent in the company of animals. At present we have funding for unpaid Carers through the Carers Strategy, for young people from Holywood Trust and for the Sunday Club from Awards For All. We also support people through Social Work, Education and Self Directed Support. People spend time not just with the donkeys but also the ponies, the tortoises, cats, dogs, hens, geese and Maisie the pig.

We very much welcome visitors to FRED. Most people arrange visits by contacting us on our [Facebook page](#). We can usually accommodate requests for visits given a couple of days' notice. We also enjoy arranging group visits for interested parties.

We think the donkeys love having people stop and talk to them as they are having a walk round the Craigs. The donkeys will choose whether to come to the gate or dykes for a clap and the only request we have is to please don't hand feed them. Despite their pleas that they are starving and never get treats, hand feeding is just not good. It causes fighting among the donkeys and encourages them to bite in their urgency to get the treat! So please talk to them and clap them but no feeding.

Pick 'n' Mix Cause for Paws

Gill Allan



This is a charitable Group that myself and two others run to help all animals, it's mainly dogs and cats but we have helped with hedgehog rescues and even a lamb that had weak back legs.

We raised funds for walking wheels for the lamb until he could walk unaided by holding raffles and auctions, using donations to raise money.

The proceeds from both the raffles and auctions go to help in any way we can, medication, food, vets bills and travel for rescue animals from abroad to the UK. Basically we do what we can even providing strollers and walking aides for owners who cannot afford to buy them.

Of course none of the above is possible without support from members buying raffle tickets or donating to our charity.

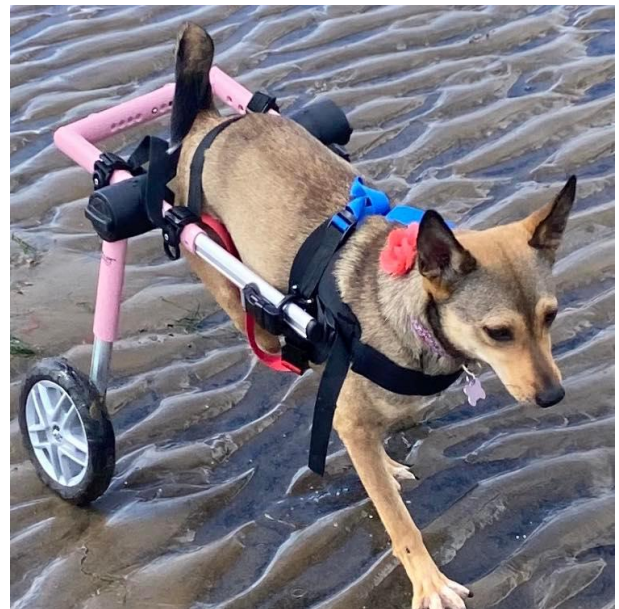
It's hard work and sometimes, more often than not actually, heartbreaking work as we see such cruelty to poor animals. On the other hand, the kindness of the rescuers and adoptees is so wonderful we never fail to be amazed by it. My bank balance is a lot less

nowadays but I have never been so happy and proud to be part of this group. Every time a poorly dog lies on one of the beds I have made I could cry as I know it is giving them comfort.

This story is about a pup from Egypt

This pup was treated so badly by some young children that she needed surgery to remove her back legs. Fortunately, she was found in time and taken to a rescue that we support where she got the medical treatment that she needed. When she recovered, we helped with the costs to bring her to the UK where she was adopted and now leads a very happy life.

This photo shows her with the wheels we provided for her. She is so happy with her adopted family and is living the dream life. Of course, she sleeps on one of my beds which makes me really happy to have helped.



Heritage

Church Bicentenary Part 2

(For part 1 see the winter 2022 edition of the Digest)

Roy Spence

The contract to build the new kirk was agreed on the 15th January 1823 between the Heritors represented by James Grierson of Dalgonar, Thos. Whyte of Glenessland, Geo. Wigham of Hallidayhill, James Laurie of Milliganton, Robert Barr and the Contractor James Thomson, Architect, Dumfries as principal and Robert Watt, Ironmonger, Dumfries as cautioner

(guarantor).The contractors agreed to provide the materials required and build the new kirk on the site of the old one and conform to the plans submitted by James Thomson. They also had to dispose of the rubbish and excavated material to a site not more than 1/4 mile from the site as directed by the committee. The materials of the old kirk are considered to be property of the contractors except for the slates and flashings which are to be retained by the Heritors.

The total cost of the new kirk was to be £1072-10-0, which by the Bank of England inflation calculator, is £97,197.87 in today's money. The money was to be paid in three instalments, first, when the walls were raised to the level of the window soles, second, when the roof was completely finished and the remainder

when the whole work was completed, the keys were delivered to the minister and a certificate produced from an inspector appointed by the Heritors.

Before work could begin, the coffins of John Cavens, late tenant of Snade, who had died in 1822 and of his daughter were moved to the West corner of the kirk yard. The last service having been held the old kirk was handed over to the tradesmen on the 3rd of March 1823 for them to begin work.

The names of the masons who worked on the kirk were – John Gracie, Thomas Anderson, John Smith, Thomas Smith, Thomas Morrin, John Halliday, William Callander and James Callander. The labourers were – Robert Telford, William Miller and James Findely. The wages of the masons were two shillings and sixpence per day and of the labourers one shilling and eight pence. John Gracie, as foreman got three shillings. John Gracie worked from 24th March until 16th August a total of 76 days, where James Callander only worked for 25 days.

An old “Popish” baptismal font that had come from the original Dunscore Kirk and had been built into the wall of the 1649 kirk was extracted and is now in use today in the modern kirk.

The building work seems to have been completed by the 16th August and the Heritors held a meeting in the kirk on the 28th for the purpose of allocating the seats in the new kirk. I haven’t found the outcome of this but some of the old box pews had names on them.

On the 10th October, Mr Bryden requested the Presbytery to meet at Dunscore to take the new kirk off the tradesmen’s hands. That meeting took place on the 10th December, Messrs MacGowan and Thomson representing the tradesmen, Messrs Anderson of Stroquhan, Burgess of Lochenlee, Milligan of Dempsterton, Laurie of Milliganton and Robert Barr of Riddingwood the Heritors. The Reverends Wallace, Wyghtman, Drew, and Bryden being the Presbytery members. After inspection the Presbytery reported that the new kirk had been finished as per contract and should be taken off the tradesmen’s hands and that they should be paid in full.

The first service was probably held on Sunday 19th October 1823 as the Kirk Session held a meeting there for the first time in a few months, but they make no mention of it in their minutes. In October 1923 the centenary of the kirk was celebrated, and the Rev. Masterton commented that no records of the opening had been found. However, the salary of Robert Craig, the church officer was increased from thirty shillings to two pounds per annum and the Board bought him a new broom and scraper.

Jane Haining

Pam Mitchell

Jane Haining’s story will never be forgotten in Dunscore and now it is to be shared and told to young people across Scotland. Her old school, Dumfries Academy, and Woodfarm High School in Thornliebank near Glasgow, have agreed to run a pilot scheme between April and June this year to use developing resources to enable pupils to learn more about the Holocaust focussing on the inspirational life of Miss Jane Haining. Mr William McGair, who taught at Dumfries Academy till 2016 will oversee this developing project.

In light of growing levels of antisemitism, racism and intolerance her wonderful example of courage and bravery should never be forgotten. By refusing to leave her post as Matron of the Scottish Mission School in Budapest and return to Scotland she was condemned to die in Auschwitz - Birkenau concentration camp in 1944.

Also, as next year marks the 80th anniversary of her death, Edinburgh City Council will commemorate her with a “Stolpersteine”- translated as a “stumbling stone” set into the pavement outside St Stephen’s Church in Edinburgh.

Heritage Centre

Matthew Aitken



The Dunscore Heritage Centre will be open for the new season from Easter Sunday (**9th April 2023**). It is open every **Sunday afternoon from 2:00 – 4:00 pm** but, if these times don’t suit you, contact us on: info@dunscoreheritage.org and we’ll do our best to arrange a suitable time when you can come.

What should you expect if you visit?

First of all, there will be a warm welcome! We have a wonderful team of volunteer guides who will be there to greet you and explain what there is in the heritage centre and how to access it all. They will also offer you a cup of tea or coffee.

There are three strands to the heritage centre with information, photos and articles relating to the history of the village, the history of Dunscore Church, and a lot of material about the life of Jane Haining. You can see photos, watch videos, listen to audio and read articles on the touch screen. The guides will show you how to operate this.

There is a fascinating self-guided walk around the church that explains about the many interesting features and artefacts that you will see. There is also a children's quiz that takes them around the building and, once completed, they will receive a Dunscore Detective badge.

If you haven't visited the heritage centre yet, why not pop up one Sunday afternoon. We look forward to welcoming you!

The photo shows some of the leaflets available at the heritage centre



Nature

DUNSCORE BIRD GROUP – BACK ON THE WING!

Colin Mitchell



After a break in the activities of the Dunscore Bird Group caused by COVID, we had our first outing to the north of the Solway estuary in January. At the first site we visited, near Gretna it was very exposed, cold and raining although the forecast for the day was sunny weather. Despite the weather we saw a good range of birds including lapwing, barnacle geese and curlew. We started to travel west to Browhouses where the sun came out and we enjoyed good bird sightings as the tide came in and moved the birds towards us. This site had large numbers of wigeon and mallard as well as a little egret and other wading birds.

Seahouses was our next stop. This is an embankment jutting out into the estuary where the viaduct crossed the Solway before being demolished in 1934. This embankment makes a very good birdwatching site as birds move with the incoming tide. Here we saw more wigeon, teal, turnstone and a red breasted merganser. By this time the day was bright and sunny but with a cold wind. Fortunately, there is shelter from the wind at Seahouses!

Our travel west took us to Newbie, near the mouth of the river Annan. We had lunch sitting in the cars and the tide was by now very high and there were few birds to be seen. We moved further west to Powfoot. Here the

weather was reasonably warm with full sun. We were treated to the amazing sight of 50 pintail ducks. This was quite a sight as I had never seen so many pintails in one place and never on the sea (they are usually freshwater ducks). We also had good views of ringed plovers.

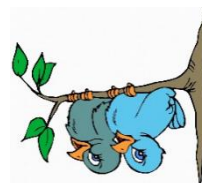
Our next stop was the Wildlife and Wetland Trust (WWT) at Caerlaverock where we added to our bird list with shoveler duck, moorhen, tufted duck, barnacle geese, kestrel, tree sparrow and mute swan.

It was getting towards dusk as we returned to Dunscore having seen 46 different types of bird.

Our February outing took us to the south of the Solway Estuary where we visited various sites and saw a wide range of birds including curlew, goosander, greenshank, oyster catcher, golden plover, shelduck, bullfinch, goldeneye, sparrowhawk, snipe, heron, pink footed geese. The highlight of the day was watching a murmuration of thousands of starlings swirling in the sky above Gretna as the sun went down. Another great birding day with 47 different species of birds seen.

The Dunscore Bird group is open to all no matter your birdwatching skills. Beginners are most welcome! Contact Colin or Pam Mitchell if you wish more information.

c.mitchell50@btinternet.com



Spring Cool Nature Facts – Watch Out

Gloria Burke

Slow Worm

Now's the time to keep your eyes peeled for sight of the silky slow worm, as they'll soon be coming out of hibernation. Slow worms look like snakes but are actually legless lizards that thrive in warm, humid conditions. They eat slugs, snails, insects, and other creepy crawlies, so they're a friend to the gardener.

Once they've emerged from hibernation, slow worms too will be on the lookout for a mate. Female slow worms incubate their eggs internally, giving birth to live young in the late summer. She usually has around eight babies, which can fend for themselves immediately.

If you'd like to attract these fascinating creatures to your outdoor space, making a [slow worm sunbed](#) is really easy.



Glorious Dawn Chorus

From April until July, the early mornings will be full of the raucous sound of songbirds. These feathered alarm clocks sing to attract a mate and also to defend their territories. The still morning air and spring chill makes for the perfect time to attract a mate, before the day's main activity of foraging for food kicks off.

The earliest risers each morning tend to be skylarks, song thrushes, robins and blackbirds. Wrens and warblers typically join in after a bit of a lie in. For a morning activity like no other, wrap up and head out with a cuppa around 30 minutes before dawn to catch the full concert as it warms up.



Cannibal Caterpillars



April marks the emergence of one of our most abundant butterflies – the orange tip. One of the earliest butterflies to be seen, orange tips can be found flitting through meadows, woodland glades and hedgerows, as well as gardens with tasty flowers.

The male orange tip is pretty easy to spot - he's white with, you guessed it, orange tips on his wings. The female, however, is white with black tips on her wings. Both have gorgeous green mottled underwings, which helps to differentiate the female from the small white butterfly.

You'll generally only find one orange tip egg per flower-head, as the caterpillars are cannibals, and will happily munch on another orange tip egg or caterpillar they meet. To avoid this, the females produce a pheromone to deter other orange tip females from laying an egg on the same flower.

Local Gardens to Visit

Ann Walton

Most of these gardens will be opening for charity as part of [Scotland's Gardens Scheme](#). For more information about the gardens including accessibility, admission costs, other facilities and their precise locations follow the link and search for the garden name.

The Charles Jencks' Garden of Cosmic Speculation at Portrack won't be open as usual this year due to flood damage earlier in the year.

All gardens are open from 2pm to 5pm unless otherwise stated.

Monday 1st May

Threave Garden Show 10am – 5pm

For more information, click on this [link](#) and select 'events'.

Sunday 7th May

Dalswinton House

Sunday 14th May

Arbigand House, Kirkbean

Sunday 21st May

The Limes, Kircudbright
Brooklands, Crocketford

Sunday 28th May

Craigeburn House, Moffat
Corsock House, Castle Douglas

Sunday 4th June

Capenoch, Penpont

Sunday 11th June

Leap Cottage, West Cluden
Bonerick House, Irongray
Seabank, Rockcliffe

Sunday 18th June

Dunesslin, Dunscore

Sunday 25th June

Cowhill Tower, Holywood

Sunday 2nd July

Southwick House, Southwick

Sunday 9th July

Whiteside, Dunscore 1pm – 5pm

Sunday 16th July

Dalbeattie Community Allotments, Dalbeattie

Sunday 23rd July

Crofts, Kirkpatrick Durham

Sunday 30th July

Craigeburn House, Moffat, 1pm – 5pm
Kings Grange House, Castle Douglas



Something for the Children:

BRR-ILLIANT HEDGEHOG FACTS

Gloria Burke

Get the lowdown on one of our planet's cutest critters with our fascinating hedgehog facts!



Scientific name:	Erinaceus
Family name:	Erinaceidae
Classification:	Mammal
UK status:	Declining
Lifespan (in wild):	Around seven years
Weight:	Up to 1.1kg
Body length:	14cm – 30cm
Top speed:	9.5km/h bursts
Diet:	Carnivore

Habitat: Grassland, hedgerows, woodland and meadows

Hedgehogs are famous for their prickly spines, which they have everywhere except on their face, legs and bellies. These cute critters depend on their spines for defence, both while they sleep and when they face enemies. By curling into a tight ball and tucking in their heads, tail and legs, they protect vulnerable parts of their body.

The body of adult hedgehogs ranges from 14 to 30 centimetres long, and their tail can add one to six centimetres. When they are born (there can be up to seven in a litter) their spines are soft and short. But soon after birth, their spines harden, becoming stiffer, sharper and longer. Babies stay in the nest until they're about three weeks old. By that time, their eyes are open, their spines are effective, and they can safely follow their mother outside the nest as she looks for food.

Top on the hedgehog's menu are insects, followed by small mice, snails, lizards, frogs, eggs and even snakes. Mostly nocturnal creatures, they head out at night in search of food – but they are sometimes active during the day, too, particularly after it rains.

They are in decline in the UK and if you put out kitten biscuits (not fish) and a dish of water and are very patient you may see them in the garden. We set up a camera last year and we had five in the garden feeding

and drinking at the same time. We have a feeding station for them and sometimes they sleep in it. Hedgehogs have a trick up their, *errr*, "sleeve" to give themselves extra protection – self-anointing. These amazing animals are immune to certain poisonous plants, which they eat before making a frothy saliva in their mouth. The hedgehogs then lick their spines, spreading the saliva with the plant's poison all over the spikes. Scientists believe this may help hedgehogs hide their scent from predators or give them a nasty shock should they attack!

There are **15 different species of hedgehog**, found across Europe, Asia and Africa. Whilst these cool creatures mainly stay on the ground, they are quite good swimmers and can climb trees, too!

Fun Facts

- ✓ Hedgehogs have more than 5000 spines (quills). The spines last about one year and are replaced by new spines.
- ✓ A hedgehog's eyesight is not the best but they have excellent hearing and smell.
- ✓ A baby hedgehog is called a hoglet – how cute.
- ✓ Hedgehogs are lactose intolerant – not good with dairy products. Only give them water to drink

Featured Local Business

In each edition of the Digest, we plan to feature a local business which is either based in the village or delivers to the village on a regular basis.

T. H. CARSON Multi Award Winning Butcher

Gloria Burke

Address: The Cross, Mill Street, Dalbeattie DG5 4HE
Tel: 01556 610 384

Email: jane_carson@btinternet.com

Here is a link to their [Facebook](#) page

***NOW offering free deliveries to Dunscore every Wednesday and Friday ***

Carson's Butchers is our featured business for this edition. They deliver a meat order to Watsons Grocers in Moniaive each Wednesday and will deliver your order en route. The van is fully stocked, as well as taking orders for delivery, so if you are not sure what you want, you can choose on your doorstep.

The shop is immaculate and the staff are very helpful. I have tried other butchers from time to time however I prefer Carson for quality and value for money.

There's a weekly list of the farms that the meat is sourced from, an example of which is in the photo.



They have a meat package each week and also prepare and cook a wide variety of pies, as well as lasagne, mac cheese, cottage pie and much more.

As an example, this week's specials include: chicken with lime butter marinade, rosemary and mint lamb steaks, Thai red curry with chicken, hog roast sausages, Mediterranean tomatoes, garlic mushrooms and much

more including saucy desserts, cheesecakes and sticky toffee puddings.

I always check out the Facebook page for specials and they are happy for you to ring the shop, email or message them for prices and availability. You can also ring the shop and ask for the van to stop at your address as it's full every week.

If you know of a local business that would like to be featured here or have any other suggestions of content for the Dunscore Digest then please contact the editorial team on dg2digest@gmail.com

For more information or to publicise local events you can find the village calendar and contact details at [Dunscore Diaries](#). This same information is fed into the [Community Council](#) website.