



DUNSCORE DIGEST December 2023

Church News



Minister's Musings - *Rev Mark Smith*

Remember the past ... look to the future! Tatty picking is over ... it's time to look ahead as the year draws to an end. And we start by looking backwards!

REMEMBRANCE came as we once again face a world at war – Ukraine, the Middle East, and so many other places. Once again we were reminded that during 'peacetime' (since the end of WWII) there has been no day free of conflict and death. Innocent people are still being displaced, injured, killed by armies, terrorists, governments, rebels. As we focus on those who have died in the past, we should be stirred to work for peace today to secure the future for our children. The Acts of Remembrance were a sobering reminder of the cost of ongoing non-peace and lead us to our next step ...

PRAYER is a natural response to things outside our control. A cry for help or justice or compassion as we all face the ups and downs of life – ill-health, mental stress, financial pressures, strained relationships, etc. As human beings, something deep inside us calls out to the 'beyond', the 'unknown', the infinite. Sometimes with words, sometimes with groans, sometimes with shouts of anger, frustration, disbelief. Often we simply need a reminder that we are loved.

HEALING BLANKETS are one practical way of expressing and giving comfort at a time of need. Warmth, protection, shelter for those in distress. We are starting to make (knit, crochet, sew) these simple symbols of love, so that they can be available to pass on to friends, neighbours, family, in times of need. They carry a simple message of reassurance that the recipient is not forgotten or alone – so important to know at any difficult time in life. These blankets will be available at the back

of church for anyone to take for anyone. No qualifications necessary! (My wife Debbie is co-ordinating this ... anyone can make a 6" square or a whole blanket 6 squares by 5 ... if you want to help create one contact her at the Manse.)

Remember the past ... look to the future!

ADVENT is in three dimensions – past, present, future. The Sundays of December look forward in Hope as we seek God's Peace and Joy in the here and now, culminating with the ultimate reminder of God's Love ...

CHRISTMAS! Lights, Nativities, Carols, Mulled wine, Mince Pies, Christingle – a feast for all the senses as we pass Mid-Winter's Day and look forward. Grateful for what we have, mindful of those who have not, ready to follow the example of God With Us – setting aside all that we have for the sake of others. That is true celebration. Join us if you can! **(see dates on the back pages – don't miss out!)**

From now to New Year there is this flow of remembering, responding, and resolving. Remembering reminds us of the mistakes we have made in the past, our need for God's Grace, and how He has worked in and around us through those willing to give themselves for others. We respond by acknowledging our past, the same old pitfalls which repeat themselves, the vicious cycles which so easily trap us, the ruts which blinker us as we hurtle along them, recognising our need to change. We resolve to make changes – to ourselves, in our relationships, in our actions. We commit ourselves to being people of peace, servants of others, channels of love in our families, our communities. Join us as we remember, respond and resolve together. As the hymn-writer put it: "past put behind us, for the future take us, Lord of our lives, to live for Christ alone."

Remember, Respond, Resolve. May God Bless you.

Dunscore Church Flower Celebration - Mary Waugh



Summer is now firmly in the past but amidst the present dull, damp and cold conditions, vivid memories of a really wonderful Dunscore event still raise the spirit. Yes, the Dunscore Church Bicentennial Flower Celebration was a resounding success. This occasion involved everyone, either individuals or organisations connected in any way with Dunscore, who wanted to participate. The response was huge and enthusiastic.

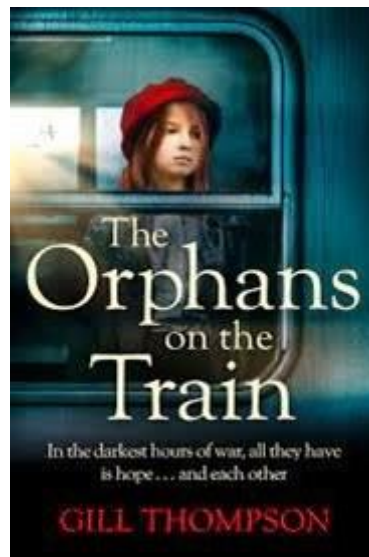
From the gates of the church on, the dazzling displays brightened up even the sunny, summer weather we were blessed with at that time. The floral offerings themselves were many and varied; some with a standard of innovation and imagination which would do any inventor proud.

On a social level, the flower celebration brought lots of people together: former Dunscore residents returning; visitors calling in on chance; locals interested to see what was involved or just coming in for a blether. The success of the event was evident in the amount of coffee and cakes consumed! Thank you everyone for the great effort and enthusiasm which all the individual and organisation contributions showed. This made the Dunscore Church Flower Celebration a resounding success.

KiKs - Kids in Kirk - *Tim Harmer*

KiKs, our Church children's group, is a group for primary school age children to help them explore the Christian faith and is held every 4th Sunday morning in Church. The youngsters leave the main church worship for a separate meeting for their own age-appropriate activities. They return to the main worship after the sermon to explain to the congregation what they have been working on. Through the autumn we have been continuing with themes arising from the lectionary readings in Matthew's gospel. Although we are a small group we generally have a fun time of learning and the youngsters particularly enjoy giving their feedback to the congregation.

Dunscore Heritage Centre - *Matthew Aitken*



We had a quiet time with fewer visitors than usual over the season but we have plans for a large leaflet run and distribution early next year so, we hope, numbers will pick up next season. Over the winter we open on request and always do our best to accommodate requests to visit the centre so if you or someone that you know would like to visit, just get in touch through [the website](#) or [Facebook page](#) and we'll be delighted to welcome you to the Heritage Centre. There are several books relating to Jane Haining in the Centre and we were excited to receive another recently. The Orphans on the Train by Gill Thompson is a novel loosely based on the life of Jane Haining. It's too soon for a review (as I have not had time to read it yet) but if you would like a copy, **try this link**.

Connect - *Tim Harmer*

The Connect group has continued its weekly bible study meetings in Church on Thursday evenings at 7.30pm. The group have been following a home-designed course on the Saints. We have been

looking at biblical Saints such as Luke, Mary, Peter and Mary Magdalene and local British Saints such as Ninian, Columba, Patrick, and Mungo or Kentigern. Group members volunteer to lead a session and they each bring their own individual colour to the session. We realised that for many of the Saints there is a paucity of factual information and a great deal of myth and legend but certainly much to inspire modern day Christians in their stories. At the time of writing, we are looking forward to Thomas, John, Paul and Andrew before we break for Advent and Christmas.

Fairtrade Group - *Diane Cowen*



The Fairtrade Group held an online Pumpkin Competition, which was won by Gregor and Murdo Batchelor. They were treated to a hamper of Fairtrade goodies. We were delighted to hear that Dunscore Primary School had been shortlisted in the category for Educational Establishments for the Scottish Fairtrade Awards 2023. It was an online event that was held on the 8th November and we were even more delighted when we found out that we had won the award! On Saturday 2nd December we are holding a Christmas Market in Glenriddel Hall in Dunscore from 3pm till 5pm. Pop in and see us and get some early Christmas gifts! If anyone would like to join our Fairtrade Group please get in touch.

Dunscore Freecycle - *Matthew Aitken*

For more than 10 years the Dunscore Freecycle email list has been sharing information about items that are looking for a new home or things that someone is looking for. The list has grown steadily over the years and there are now more than 200 people receiving the updates! It's very simple: you just sign up to the list then you will receive the latest list by email whenever something is added. What's more, you will also receive email notification about events and activities taking place in and around the village (especially if I am reminded about them!). If you would like to be added to the list, just follow [this link](#). You can always unsubscribe should you decide that you no longer want to receive the notifications. There is also a Dunscore Church email list which keeps you updated with church activities. You can sign up for the church information at [this link](#).

Lubuto - Aly Robertson



The last week of August and the first week of September saw the visit of Rev Friday Sinkonde and Mr Levy Mwanza from the Dunscore and Glencairn & Moniaive twinned church of Lubuto, Zambia. They had managed to get their visas through the kind intervention of Mr Alister Jack MP.

They did not have straightforward journeys, but eventually joined us to participate in a packed programme. The Mitchells gave them a Dunscore tour and a talk about Jane Haining. There was a barbecue at Aly Robertson's house and a social evening at Andy Barr's. Members of Glencairn & Moniaive church took them to Loch Arthur and Kirkcudbright. Our grateful thanks to all who hosted them.

On the first Sunday, Rev Mark Smith interviewed Rev Friday at Glencairn & Moniaive Church. The Lubuto congregation has 4,000 members and seven choirs. The Zambians took part in the 200th Anniversary celebrations for the building of Dunscore Church, going to the flower festival on the Saturday and the special service with music and food on the Sunday.

If you would like to contribute to the Lubuto fund there is a jar in Dunscore Church. Some people kindly pay a monthly sum by direct debit. If you would like to do this, contact Aly Robertson on alyrobbo@hotmail.com. Andy Barr runs book sales and donations of easy to read books are always welcome.

Eco Group - June Harmer





The Eco Group greatly enjoyed a ranger-guided visit to Hestan Island. Being a very low tide, the island was accessible over the sand. Our guide pointed out many points of interest, including the impressive Elephant Rock.

September saw two events that the Eco Group were involved in. Firstly, Pauline Johnston made a beautiful flower display for the church's Flower Celebration. Wildlife and litter were included in the arrangement. The second event in September was a ranger-led walk to the fascinating Kirkconnel Flow, near Dumfries. An expanse of raised peat bog surrounded by birch and Scots pine makes this National Nature Reserve rich in plant, insect and bird species.

The Eco Litter Larks are back in action after a summer rest. Now the verges have been cut and the litter is easy to find, we meet at the church and pick litter once a month. Contact the Eco Group to be put on the mailing list.

Messy Church - Jen Dobson

As we are heading into the end of the year, we are also heading to the final sessions for Messy Church. Due to other commitments, the Messy Church team have decided to end Messy Church at the end of the year. The final Messy Church session will take place on Christmas Eve. During December, we will have our Christmas session on the 10th December at 10.30am and then a Christmas event on Christmas Eve at 3pm. Both these events will take place in or around the Church.

We want to thank everyone who has helped us over the last 5 years and all the children and parents who have supported us and enjoyed the fun and chaos of the Messy Church sessions. From giving out bags in the car park and doing sessions on zoom during the Covid pandemic, to christenings and seasonal events, we have really enjoyed the variety of creating fun in Church for the local community.

The Church hopes to create another form of family worship going forward, but please do come along and support us in our final sessions. Thank you from Rachel, Sam and Jen xx

Children

Dunscore Preschool - Caroline Waugh

Dunscore Preschool is continuing to provide enriching experiences for the children in this new term. Here's a summary of the key activities and highlights.

Trip to the Donkey Sanctuary: The successful trip to the Donkey Sanctuary allowed the children to interact with and enjoy the animals; the children had a particular fondness for the tortoise. Such visits offer valuable educational experiences and create lasting memories.

Forest School: The forest school activities have continued to be a source of enjoyment for the children. Exploring the changing seasons and fostering literacy skills through storytelling and imaginative play in the woods is an excellent way to make learning engaging and hands-on.

Themed Literacy Activities: The preschool has been incorporating literary themes like "The Gruffalo," "We're Going on a Bear Hunt," "Room on the Broom," and "Shops" into the curriculum. These stories provide exciting opportunities for the children to engage with literature through creative and interactive activities.

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Tesco Trip: Following the theme of "Shops," the children had the opportunity to visit Tesco, where they not only learned about different aspects of a store but also gained insights into what happens behind the scenes. This trip was complemented by the enjoyment of some tasty fruit, which can be a fun way to learn about healthy food choices.

Halloween Celebration: The Halloween celebration provided a fun and engaging experience for the children, as they had the opportunity to dress up and participate in the festivities. Themed celebrations like these can help create a sense of excitement and community within the preschool.

Overall, Dunscore Preschool continues to offer a well-rounded and enjoyable educational experience, combining learning with hands-on experiences and fun activities. These experiences not only contribute to the children's development but also create lasting memories of their time at the preschool.

Dunscore Primary School - Samantha Atkins



We have had a very busy start to this year at Dunscore Primary. The pupils in P3/4 have had the topic of Knights and Castles, P4/5/6/7 have been studying Wars and specifically WW2, and The Garden and Minibeasts has been the topic for P1/2.

We were very lucky to be chosen to receive a fully funded visit from Glasgow Science Centre. We had two interactive science shows called 'Go Oxygen Go' for the P1-3 and 'Disgusting Digestion' for the

P4-7. In the afternoon the hall was turned into a Body Vision exhibit. We had a great day and we all learned so much.

Last term we had Julie Tyson in from Active Schools to work with the P7 on a Play Leader course. They had weekly sessions to build their confidence on working with other pupils to lead games and PE sessions. At the end of the block they took the P1-2 class and had a variety of games and stations set up and led it all very well.

This term we are lucky to have Feis Rois in the P3/4 class. They will have 12 sessions with a focus on traditional Scottish music and the project will involve a mixture of music making activities and singing. We are very lucky as the project is free and is funded through Dumfries and Galloway's Youth Music Initiative.

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On the 8th of November the 11th Scottish **Fairtrade** Awards took place and we were nominated and then shortlisted for the Fair Trade Education Award. The school must show that they have embedded Fair Trade into Global Citizenship, Learning for Sustainability or other teaching and learning. We were so excited when we won! Mr Carter was delighted with this **Fair Trade** award and is very grateful for the continued support from Dunscore Fair Trade Group who work in close partnership with the pupils and staff at Dunscore Primary to widen their knowledge of the importance of **FairTrade**, both in our community and the wider world.

The P1-2 and P3-4 classes are currently working on their Christmas Nativity and this will take place in the church on Tuesday 19th December at 10.30am and all of the community are very welcome to attend. The parent council are holding a Family Fun Night on Friday 1st of December between 6pm and 8pm, where there will be food, tea/coffee/juice and prize bingo included in the ticket price of £5 per adult and £3 per child. There will also be stalls and a raffle.

Dunscore Playpark Project - *Jade Crichton*



I'd like to update everyone on the work that the Dunscore Playpark Project is doing to improve the park. Firstly, I'll explain our project plan. We split the park project into 4 phases to try to make what seemed like a mammoth task more manageable.

Phase 1 was to carry out drainage works at the park as there had been a problem for some time with burst drains and water not draining away from the field. With the efforts of community fundraising we were able to carry out the necessary drainage work and it has made a huge difference to the park.

Phase 2 was groundworks. We are lucky enough to have such a huge park but the way it was, the play equipment was at the entrance and the rest was just a sad looking neglected space. We wanted to give the park a bit of structure, to make the space more inviting, to attract wildlife and to provide another area in the park away from the play equipment where people could sit and enjoy the space. With community fundraising and funding from the Community Council, we were able to plant a community orchard with picnic tables and benches. We planted a wild harvest hedge, which will not only provide food for nature but for the community too and will provide a shelter belt, which is very much needed at the park. 2000 daffodil bulbs were planted. We have started to create a bog garden and will continue to establish this.

Phase 3 was to install a path around the perimeter of the park which can be used by the whole community for walking, cycling, skating. We applied to two different windfarms for the funds to install the path and were very lucky to get the funding. Unfortunately, the work on the path was less than satisfactory and so the park committee has been working very hard this year to ensure that this is rectified. We requested core samples to be taken which showed the correct depth of tar was not laid in a section of the path. The contractor was going to come and re-do this section but we requested further core samples to be taken to clarify how large an area needed to be re-done. These have now been done and results are back, so we know how much of the path needs to be lifted. We have a meeting with the Community Assets officer and head of the Roads department at the council in 2 weeks' time to discuss the remedial work and make sure they know the areas we are not happy with.

Phase 4 is to install new play equipment and a sheltered seating area. This is the phase we are trying to move forward with, though it has been difficult to do so while still dealing with the problems with the path. We met with Jupiter Play a few months ago and got another plan and quote from them. We need up to date quotes to apply for funding. We have met with a local carpenter who has given a quote to build an eco-shelter for the park. I have seen his other work and it is very good. We have applied to the Hollywood trust for funding for the shelter and I have a meeting with one of their funding officers next week to discuss the application.

The image at the bottom of the pages shows the park design and quote from Jupiter Play. This is not a final design and there are items on the quote that we would remove but the play equipment that we are hoping to install is all on there and it will give you all an idea of the cost. It is very expensive! Because of how expensive it is, we are hoping to split Phase 4 and try to install a few pieces of play equipment at a time. This way the children will be able to start enjoying the park sooner. This is, however, not the most cost-effective way of doing it, as we would have transport and machinery costs twice, but we will weigh it up and depending on how much funding we can gather together we will make best use of the funds.

We have also had an inclusive swing seat installed, and had the Council replace the two standard swing seats, replace the bin and had the new park gate fitted. We have requested new football goals with nets and these have been ordered and will hopefully be fitted very soon.

I think everyone can agree that as a group of volunteers we have worked very hard for almost 3 years now and have made significant changes to Dunscore Park so that it is now becoming a space that the whole community can enjoy. If you use the park regularly and would like to see the new play

equipment being installed sooner rather than later then please show your support by coming along to our fundraisers. We really can't do this without the community's support. And if you'd like to be involved in helping out at events or have the chance to be more involved in the planning then join the Dunscore Playpark Project committee. It is open to all to join.

Christmas Visit - *Father Christmas*



Things are getting really busy at Santa HQ and the elves have been working long hours to make sure that everything's ready for the big day. There are lists everywhere of toys to be made or ordered online, which children have been good and which ones have been too naughty to get any presents and, most importantly, the list of all the places that I'm going to visit in the weeks before Christmas. I'm really pleased to see that Dunscore is on my list again this year and that I'll be visiting people around the village on Saturday 2nd December. I've got a busy schedule so I won't be there until around half past five in the evening but I'll have plenty of time then to see all the people that I need to see. We plan to start at the Doctors' Surgery and then head down through Throughgate and on to Mansegate. After that, we'll come past the park and the school and head up towards the village and on to our final stop at the Flying Pig. It's a good job that I'll have my elves to help me as there'll be lots of selection boxes to hand out as well. If the weather's bad or your parents are hungry or thirsty, the pub will be open for you from five o'clock to eat your chips from the chippy van or just to provide somewhere warm for you to wait for me to arrive. I'll probably get there at about half past six. I do hope to meet as many of you as I can: I'm looking forward to my annual visit to Dunscore as I rarely get to see anyone when I'm out delivering on Christmas Eve - I have so many places to visit in such a short space of time. Ho Ho Ho!

Community News

Dunscore Rural SWI - *Jane Chalmers*

Dunscore SWI started up again after our summer break in September when we had a lovely evening with Julie, who brought along some of her amazing artwork. She went on to explain that what started as a hobby during the Covid lockdown has gone on to become a business. Julie's on Facebook and her page is called "All in the Eyes Art": definitely worth a wee look.

Our October meeting was our Open Night where we invite other Rurals along to join us and also we were delighted to have some locals along too. We had Bingo Night which was enjoyed by everyone. We also had a raffle, light supper and a general good laugh. Our next meeting is on Thursday 21st

December anyone is interested in joining us or would like more information, don't hesitate to get in touch.

10th Anniversary of the Flying Pig - Inez Scottie



Like every great Birthday Party, the scene was set with the most amazing pig-related banners, balloons and decorations, all ready for the start of the festivities. Presents had been brought and displayed: hand-made stained glass, a personalised mirror and a painted selfie, and the pub was looking fantastic.

Piggy games, tests of strategy and themed colouring-in were available in the car park with the weather giving us its blessing too, allowing many more people to join in with all the fun. As the afternoon progressed, we moved on to the quiz – family friendly – which was relayed outside as well, due to the number of people there. As usual, there was a lot of head-scratching and eventually cheers when we got our answers correct. This time, however, no-one had to be reminded that the “quizmaster always has the final say!”

Fresh from our brain-stretching we were invited to help ourselves to the most delicious hot buffet covering every inch of the bar, provided at no extra cost. Drivers going past must have wondered what the huge snaking queue in and out of the building was. To round it off we were treated to the biggest (and tastiest) flying pig cake ever made (well, in Dunscore at least). Once all the food and games had finished, it was time to round off the festivities with some Karaoke. The night brought out all of the local nightingales, helped along with the odd drink (some of us found ourselves stars of social media the next day).

All in all, it was a fantastic day showcasing what our community pub really represents. It shows how much care, skill and hard work people put into making it happen, bringing people together no matter their age or circumstance and giving us a lifeline that many other places have unfortunately lost. Thank you to everyone who has made it possible to keep the Flying Pig going for the last ten years and to all of you who made the day the resounding success it was.

Flying Pig - Ann Walton

It's been business as usual over the past few months with the pub in use most days. The games night has continued to be well attended and the format of having a different person to set the quiz each month has proved very popular. If you don't get to the pub early on quiz night then you struggle to get a seat. We've had some great quizzes set in recent months by Eve, Rev Mark and Sarah McConnell. There'll be a slight change to the December date this year as the quiz will be a week later than usual on Friday 8th rather than Friday 1st. This is being set by Shell and Guy so has the right

ingredients for lots of laughs! Keep your eye on social media for details of our extra openings over Christmas and New Year and check out the calendar on the back page of this Digest for arrangements for the Winter Barbecue and other December events.



Dunscore, Tynron, Keir and Penpont are twinned with four little villages in the countryside north of Paris. The twinning has been going on for more than 25 years. Seth Robertson, 13, shared his thoughts of the latest trip to France.

How did you travel to France? Ryanair. We had to get up at stupid o'clock to get the flight from Edinburgh to Beauvais. Gail gave us a lift. **What was your host like?** Very good. Quite an old house. She didn't speak any English and was a good cook. **You went for breakfast on your first day. What did you have?** Pain au chocolat and a pizza. **You visited a dairy farm whilst you were there. What was it like?** The different agricultural methods were interesting. They didn't let the cows out because it is too dry in the summer. They fed them on maize silage. **Describe your visits to the two cathedrals in Beauvais and Laon.** It was interesting. Their stories were interwoven with the history of France. The astronomical clock in Beauvais was good. Phillippe, the guide in Laon was dressed in a kilt and Glengarry as he was part of a local re-enactment group. There was a chapel to Joan of Arc in Laon. **You visited an old ceramics factory and toured the tiled houses of Beauvais. What did you make of this?** Interesting information was given about the ceramic business. The factory was opposite the cemetery so they could make grave ornaments. **What was the Chateau de Coucy like?** Its history was interesting. It was huge. The tower was blown up in World War One to prevent it being recaptured by the French. **What did you do at the Sunday lunch put on by the Vielle Alliance?** Like all meals it lasted about 3 hours. A couple sang and played the guitar, singing classic French songs. There were lots of outdoor games which were fun. **Would you go back?** Yes, definitely. I am looking forward to hosting in 2024.



Our Gala Week once again was a huge success despite the awful weather on the Saturday morning. The whole week was very well attended and we had a variety of events throughout the week. There was the Tattie Bogle competition again, which was won by Pauline Johnstone. There will be a Tattie Bogle competition again next year, with the theme being Super Heroes.

The week started with the church service in the marquee. This was followed by the opening of Gala Week and the crowning of this year's Gala Queen, Rosie Borthwick, with her 6 attendants: Ellen Clanachan, Robbie Kirk, Sophie Murray, Fergus Lester, Ritchie Henderson and Lucy Henderson, by our minister Mark Smith and his wife Debbie. This was followed by an afternoon of entertainment by The Ramblers, rocket launches, and miniature garden, art and baking competitions. The day was rounded off in the Flying Pig. This was a great start to what was going to be an excellent week.

On Monday night, Stephen had his bike challenge for adults and children, and there was also Hunt the Tattie Bogle in the field. All of this was enjoyed by participants and spectators. Tuesday was the return of our pet show and dog agility, which always has a fantastic turnout. There were dogs, cats, rabbits, Shetland ponies, pygmy goats and bantams. The overall winner was Orla, with Gordy, her Springer Spaniel. Wednesday was another well supported event - our car treasure hunt organised by Iain Currie which took us up to Moniaive. We had 36 cars take part, which was brilliant. On Thursday night we had karaoke and a disco, which was enjoyed by everyone who attended and had a dance and gave us a song. Friday night was our amazing quiz, hosted by Ann. This just gets busier each year! 31 teams took part and again it was a huge success.

Saturday took us to Gala Day, which started off dreich and wet, but this didn't dampen people's spirits as the turnout on the day was excellent. We had 7 floats and walking fancy dress in the parade, which for a small village is amazing. The parade was followed by a brilliant afternoon of free entertainment for all the family from Vander Wheel of Death, The Stannage Stunt Team, the Buccleuch and Queensberry Pipe Band, Next Level School of Dance, and Lynette Turner Highland Dancers.

We also had Dumfries and Galloway blood bikes, vintage tractors and cars, inflatables, quad bikes, pony rides, archery, a mini funfair, hair braiding, hair wraps, hair braids, hair tinsel and hair feathers, a bungee trampoline, a big slide, face painting, craft stalls, and book stall. In addition to all this we had a choice of places to get something to eat: Knockenhair hospitality, a burger van, street food, Glen Urr ice cream and pancakes. The week was then rounded off by the Gala Dance, which this year was to Not Guilty. A great night was had by everyone to round off another brilliant Gala Week.

The work started again on the Sunday, tidying up the field. Our Gala Queen Rosie then represented Dunscore Gala at an event which Dumfries and Galloway council organised for all Gala Kings and Queens for the Coronation.

When we get the support we do throughout the week, it makes all the hard work putting it on so worthwhile, seeing people having such a good time. Our AGM took place on 2nd November 2023. We would like to see some new committee members come and join our hard working but fun committee so if anyone would like to join please contact a committee member. We have started organising things already for next year's Gala Week and if anyone has any ideas you would like to see at the Gala Week or as a fundraiser please let us know. A lot of our funds are raised by hiring our marquee, which is a lot of work, and we are always looking for volunteers to help some of the committee members putting this up and taking it down. Again, if you would be able to help with this, please let a member of the committee know.

The Dalgarno Singers' Christmas programme is a mixture of traditional music from around the UK, classical Christmas choral music and show tunes, so there is something for everyone, as well as a raffle for an excellent Christmas hamper! *Tickets* are available on the door or from members of the choir. Cairn Chorus are performing a number of concerts around the area, including one in Dunscore Church on 10th December. The theme is Songs Magical and Medieval.

THE DALGARNO SINGERS

AFTERNOON

**CHRISTMAS
CONCERTS**

Rory Robson
Music Director

Hilary Craig
Accompanist

Maxwelltown West Parish Church
Sunday 10th December 2023 3:30pm

Closeburn Parish Church
Saturday 16th December 2023 3:30pm

Adult £10
Student/Child FREE

TICKETS FROM:
Midsteple Box Office 01387 253383
Louise Cant 07772 899559
John Drabble 01387 820376
Gwyneth Frame 01848 311058
David Muir 01387 710216


www.dalgarinosingers.co.uk



Speddoch Hall was originally built in the 1930s to be used as a school until it closed in 1962. Sadly the original building was totally destroyed by fire in 2013. The hall now sitting on the original site was completed in 2018.

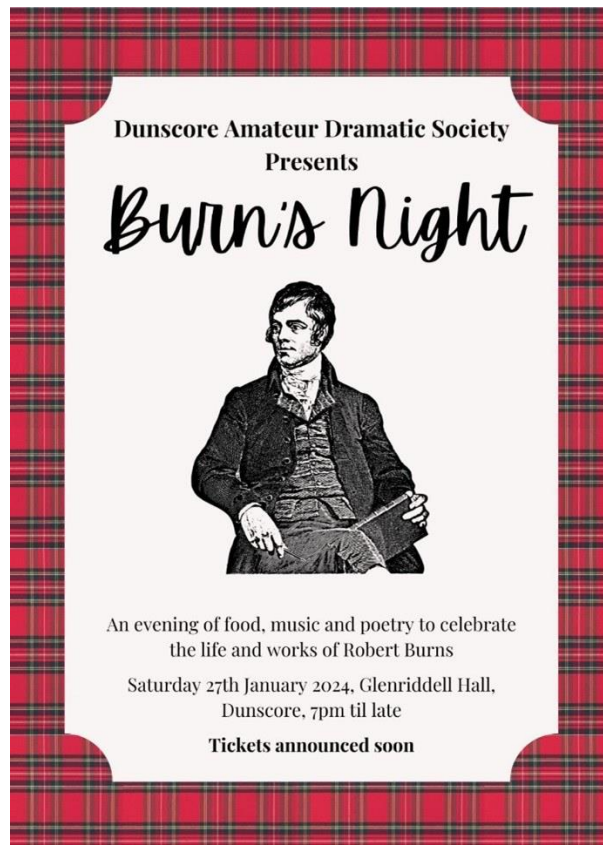
The hall can be hired for a variety of functions throughout the year: birthday parties (all ages), weddings and any other private events. If you would like more information, please contact either Fiona on 07592975209 or Jane on 07879604513.

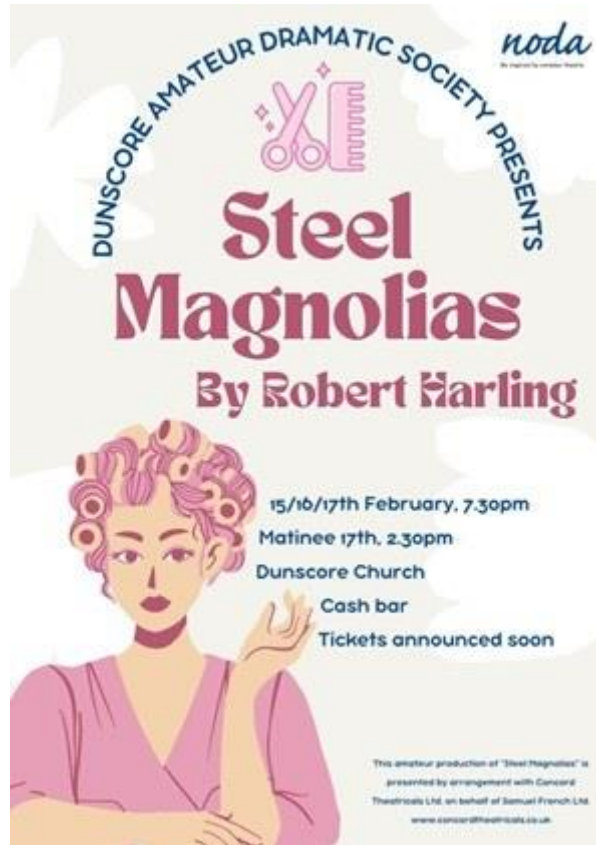
Back in June the hall was hired for a wedding and this is what they had to say: *On Saturday 15th July, we held our wedding at Speddoch Hall, we being myself, Elspeth Desai, and my long term partner, Luke Park. When planning our wedding we wanted something personal and less formal than a traditional venue and thought a village hall might be the answer. We settled on Speddoch for its beautiful setting with big open views and because the hall itself is nice and modern with plenty of space both inside and out. The hall had plenty of chairs and tables for our 85 guests, and looked great*

once decorated. We were very pleased with how the day went and had a fantastic time celebrating with friends and family. There were some well-timed breaks in the weather, and good food and a dance were appreciated by all. Having grown up in the area and attended Dunscore Primary School I also enjoyed the chance to spend a little time back in such a lovely place and community. Many thanks to Fiona and rest of the committee for having us! It was lovely for the hall to be part of their special day and the committee were delighted to receive this feedback.

In September, the hall hosted an afternoon tea and in October, a Halloween Party. At the afternoon tea we held a draw for the chance to win a Bodyshop Advent Calendar. The winner was Elaine Cook - we hope you enjoy opening up the surprises in December, Elaine!

The next event will be the Xmas Fayre on 25th November. The format for this will be Soup & Pudding and there will be a variety of stalls where you can purchase goods. For further details, please see the posters which will be displayed on various notice boards in the area. If you are looking for something to do during the winter, the hall is regularly used for: Indoor Bowling - Mondays 7.30-9.30pm. If you want to give it a try, contact Zoe for more information on 07912853906; Ladies Badminton - Wednesdays at 2pm; Badminton - Thursday nights at 7.30pm





Burns Supper - Glenriddell Hall, January 27th: Following our very successful Burns Supper last year, we are offering a repeat performance. Come along to eat, drink and share your Burns party piece!

Steel Magnolias - 15th -17th February 2024: This time we are getting a little more serious and will present Steel Magnolias by Robert Harling. This is a bittersweet story of friendship in a small Louisiana town - you may remember the 1989 film. Come along, y'all, and spend some time with these wonderful characters and enjoy this funny and moving story.



Sunday 30th July was another wet Moniaive Horse Show but it dried up and was a lovely afternoon. Although we were down a bit on competitors and the public, it was still a good show and everyone enjoyed it. Our newly painted jumps poles and new safety rings and barriers looked very professional and tied everything together nicely. There are many people to thank and if I omit to mention anyone, be assured everyone who contributes in any way to the show has the committee's thanks and appreciation.

Firstly, thanks go to the Wilson Family for the use of the fields, as without them there would not be a Moniaive Horse Show. Thanks to all the sponsors who support us, who are too many to list here but get mentioned on the show schedule, and to everyone who gives a donation – again without this support there wouldn't be a show. We were fortunate to be successful in our application to Moniaive Community Council for windfarm funding and this went towards safety equipment for the show. The committee would also like to thank everyone who helped stage the show and the stewards and helpers on the day, as well as the judges who give their time to come along and do such a good job.

This year we had Knockenhair Hospitality provide lunches for the judges and stewards and there were many good comments on the delicious food provided. Saucy Stop provided outside catering for the public, along with Urr Valley ice cream who both said they had a good day and are willing to come back next year. The Tack Van was a big hit and, again, would like to come again, and will include doggy stuff next time as well. Harbro and D & G Trailers also brought along stands. Jimmy Mensdorf provided a large container with fresh, clean water for the horses, and it was much appreciated. Dunscore Gala provided us with the marquee and this year we also hired the tables from them which was a big help. We also had a new announcer this year and we hope Mike Smith will be able to come again next year – football fixtures permitting!

Every year the proceeds from the raffle go to a charity and this year we split it between Farmers Field Donkeys and Mossburn Animal Sanctuary. Having more qualifiers for the Blair Horse Show brings competitors from all over and we welcomed them from Stirling, Kilmarnock, Newton Stewart and Stranraer, to name a few, as well as the local competitors, many of whom have been coming for several years and continue to support us.

The committee should also give themselves a pat on the back as it is hard work staging the show, both before and after and this year we had the added task of painting the poles and washing the show jump wings thanks to the Barn Owl who had taken up residence in the store!

If I've forgotten anyone, apologies, but you are thanked and appreciated. We look forward to the 2024 show and if anyone would like to come on the committee or be a helper on the day, then please contact a committee member.



From January 2024 there will be a new display within Dumfries Museum showing some of Anne McEntegart's wonderful art works. There will also be a panel exploring Anne's life and providing contextual information for her art. The team at Dumfries Museum look forward to sharing Anne's story with their visitors and are currently creating a dedicated area to display some of her oil paintings.



Through the years that I edited the Dunscore Digest, I looked for people with a passion for a topic that would interest the readers and who could express their knowledge simply and clearly. Roy was someone who always achieved these standards coming up with an article that was always fascinating, usually surprising and often fun to read.

Roy's passion was for local history and through his meticulous research (which often meant him travelling to Edinburgh or Dumfries) he wrote about many topics such as taxes in Dunscore in the 18th century; Dunscore Church Session minutes from 1894 bemoaning the drunkenness and immorality that was prevalent; a day when tanks rolled through Dunscore; and about the history of Dunscore village hall.

A few weeks before the Digest was due out, I would contact Roy and ask if he could write another piece for the magazine. He never refused. Sometimes he would say: "Yes, I'm working on it" and other times it was: "I don't know what I'll do this time but I'll come up with something". And he always did. He never missed an issue.

Beyond the Digest, Roy was a guide in the Heritage Centre. In addition to sharing his vast knowledge of everything relating to Dunscore history, he was a valued member of the guiding team and frequently found fascinating new material to add to the exhibits in the heritage centre. Recently, he searched Dumfries Museum for artefacts with a connection to Dunscore and found flint cores, hammer and axe heads, and a spade. He asked the museum if they could be photographed and this was done and the photos are now on display in the Heritage Centre. Roy was particularly pleased that there was a Bronze Age axe head that had been found near where he lived and he reckoned that it might well have been used to clear the trees on his farm!

From time to time I receive messages through the Heritage Centre inbox from people looking into their family history. Roy was always a first call to see if he could help them with some local knowledge and, invariably, he came up with far more than I would have believed possible. This was usually the result of more significant research (more than the recipients could have imagined or expected).

All of the church congregation and the Heritage Centre volunteers will miss Roy greatly and I will miss him especially but remember fondly his support, knowledge, willingness and the wee Roy smile.

We were asked to reproduce the words that Janet Spence spoke at her father's funeral. Here they are in full:

Dad

Our Dad is part of this landscape.

He's in the dykes that he has built and repaired, from Crawston Hill, through Merkland, up the Braeface to Springfield, up that steep climb to Springfieldhill and up, over the back.

He's in the fences that have been hung.

He's in the drains and ditches he has dug.

He's in the farm steadings he has built and repaired, and repaired again.

He's in the stone heaps in the corner of the stony field.

He's in the well-marked tracks through every gateway.

He's in the gates that swing wide, and he's in the gates, festooned with baler twine, that need to be wrestled open.

He's in the faint echoes of his ancient Massey Fergusson.

He's in the layers of whitewash on the stone shed walls.

He's in the history and heritage of this area.

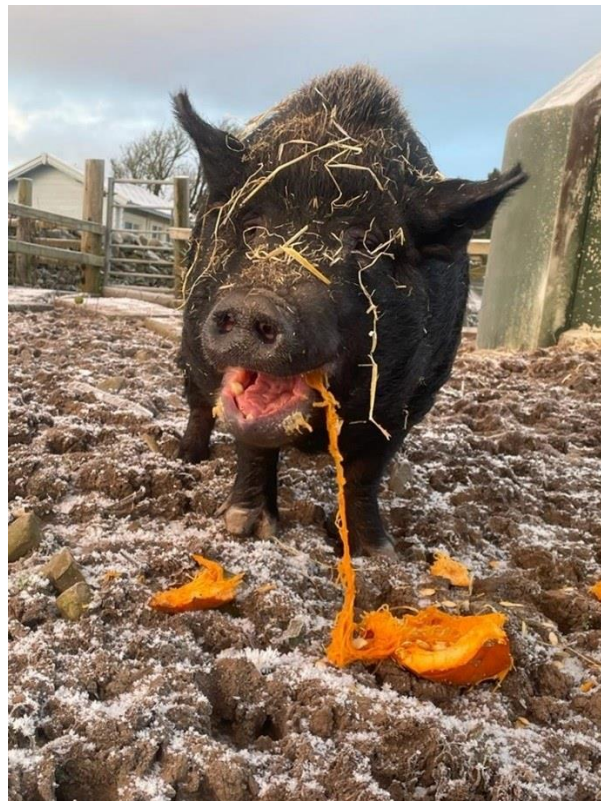
He's in the stories he told that we'll continue to tell.

He's in the cattle and sheep; the woodpecker and buzzard; the peewit and the oystercatcher and the whaup.

He's in the soil and the seeds and the crops and the harvests.

He's in the sky and the sun and the wind and the rain.

Our Dad will always remain part of this land.



Now that the clocks have changed and we are moving into the darker months of the year, life at FRED has changed too. In summer, the younger donkeys can be outside overnight, but once the temperature drops to around 6 degrees everyone comes in at night. So now all 24 donkeys are stabled with their partners, and turned out during the day when the weather permits. We have lots of physical jobs to do, bringing donkeys in and putting them out, mucking out stables, bedding down, carrying water buckets, feeding, etc. The days are short and there is so much to pack into the daylight hours.

Donkeys don't have waterproof coats and to prevent them getting wet and chilled, we keep them stabled on rainy days. We accept that being in a stable is effectively akin to being kept in a box or cage so we try to mitigate boredom and frustration by spending time with the donkeys, having radios on, trying to enrich their environment with raw vegetables for the donkeys to chew, treat balls for those who don't get frustrated by them and having friends stabled together. We have fenced run out yards at the front and back and this allows the donkeys to go in and out of the stable, stretch their legs and socialise with their extended friendship groups. It also keeps the donkeys off the grass and therefore off the mud.

Our biggest battle every autumn and winter is with mud. It's a catch 22 in that if the donkeys go into the wet and often flooded fields they will create mud but if they are stabled all day and night their mental wellbeing will be compromised. It's the same with our ponies and horses: they benefit hugely from being able to be part of a natural herd staying out in all weathers. But that also creates anxiety for us - are they using the shelters, are they grazing enough, are they warm enough, are they coping with the wet and mud and so on till summer when we worry about the heat, flies and too much grass! There is no shortage of worries when living with so many donkeys and ponies.

The tortoises are overwintered inside our house, except for Marge the Sulcata who is too big! Sadly Marge hates his winter quarters; we know this because he constantly tries to dig his way out. We had hoped to build him a better winter house that would actually allow him access to the outside while offering him enough heat to keep him eating and digesting his food, but we didn't manage it in time for this winter. It's a priority on the jobs list for next year and any help with this project is welcome!

Maisie our old lady pig seems quite happy in winter. We pack her tardis with clean, dry straw which she rearranges in a considered and delicate manner which seems at odds with her bulk. She grows thick bristly back hair which, along with her deep straw bed, keeps her warm and comfortable. Like many of us, Maisie loves her carbs and in winter she gets regular cakes and bread to keep her spirits up. People are very generous and Maisie benefits from plenty of donated windfall apples, and Hallowe'en pumpkins.

We (currently) have 4 very lovely sheep - Peggy, Claude, Lauren and Dennis. They stay in the field running up to Wee Moss-side with the mini Shetland ponies and the bachelor donkeys. They were all pet lambs and are now very curious, gentle adult sheep. It has been a few years since the mini Shetlands have been in that field, But changes within our horse population (the putting to sleep of dear Jimmy and Bob's beloved companion Monty) meant that the dynamics in the herds had changed and Tim, the wee brown and white gelding, became an absolute thug to old Bob, the big horse, and to Gavin, the young Highland pony. The solution was to move Tim and the mini mares. It has so far worked really well and it's good to see the little ones charging about the big field.

Having mostly old, pre-loved animals we are acutely aware that death is never very far away from Farmersfield. Every winter we wonder if everyone is able to get through the challenges the coldest, wettest, stormiest months bring. We do our best to ensure everyone in our care has the best life we

can give them and a holistic approach to welfare is critical. I type this watching my old black cat and I think maybe he won't get to the warmer days of spring. I feel sad. Then I remember that compared to millions of people in other parts of the world, we are in a little protected bubble here and even in winter life is very sweet for us.



Website: <https://www.caninerescue.co.uk/> Based near Glencaple, the Dumfries & Galloway Canine Rescue Centre is a charity dedicated to rescuing and rehoming dogs.

I have made lots of crochet blankets for them as well as sewing some soft beds for them. They are always so grateful for anything that makes the dogs feel safe and make their life a little more comfortable while they wait for their forever homes. Anything is welcome such as dog food, treats, blankets, beds etc or money donations. You can also volunteer to help exercise the dogs with little walks, this gives them a chance to get used to the outdoors as well as having contact in a casual friendly way. This also helps them in finding their forever homes.

I received the most beautiful card from the staff at the rescue centre thanking me for helping to the "woofers" warm on cold days. If you are looking for a hobby, or just something to pass away the time of an evening or weekend try crocheting or knitting a blanket with any leftover wool. I promise that the dogs will love snuggling up with your blanket, regardless of the colour or pattern, a dropped stitch or two they just want a cosy warm blanket to rest on. Some of them have had a bad life, some whose loving owner may have passed away and they have no idea why they are not at home. Please before you go and buy a dog give some thought to looking for a rescue dog their love is abundant, and you could give them a forever home.

In June, Pam and I were very fortunate to go on a cruise from Iceland to Svalbard and then northern Norway. Much of the time was spent above the Arctic Circle, where many of our local winter migrant birds spend their summer and breed in the lands of the midnight sun.

Our first bird that we saw was the barnacle goose. It was like seeing old friends on their holidays! This breeds in the Svalbard Islands where we anchored at Longbearyen. In this area, you are not allowed to wander outside the town limits without a rifle in case you are attacked by a polar bear! We explored the town where we also saw rare ivory gulls and breeding snow buntings. We met a local girl who informed us that there was a bird hide by the shore. Here we saw lots of shore birds that we see locally too.

We did not see a polar bear though! From Svalbard, we sailed south to the coast of Norway and Leknes in the Lofoten Islands. Here, I saw redwing, which are now arriving in the Dunscore area in big numbers, and goldeneye. Goldeneye is a winter visiting duck often seen on Bobby's Loch near Maxwellton House. These birds travel into the Arctic Circle, where the 24 hour daylight allows for raising young where there is plenty of food and all day feeding opportunities. We had lots of other wildlife sightings, including various types of whales on this superb cruise.



On a summer day, over the bank holiday, I chose to marry the wee man. The garden was our chosen location - in the river of all places! The grass was cut, the flowers in full bloom, pots lined our route from the top patio down to the river. Plants that had been given to us as wedding presents were used in borders and pots so we were passing gifts from friends (roses, rhododendron, osteospermums and fruit trees). The venue couldn't have been more perfect -. relaxing, beautiful and full of all our friends and family. The string quartet filled the air with the sweet notes of music. This location was our choice and I couldn't have chosen a better one.



Patersons started delivering to our village during Covid and have continued with it since. Their produce is tasty and great quality; they do a variety of boxes or you can choose your own items. They also include everyday items and I use them regularly.

Address: Unit 1B, Longtown Industrial Estate, Longtown, Carlisle CA6 5TJ, [01461 800616](tel:01461800616), <https://www.patersonsfruitandveg.co.uk>, Kieran@patersonsfruitandveg.co.uk, search for Patersons Fruit and Veg on Facebook

Deliveries: Daily - £1.50 Charge, **Boxes:** From £12.50 - £22.50 ([Fruit Boxes](#), [Vegetable Boxes](#), [Salad Boxes](#), [Mixed Boxes](#), Christmas Boxes, [Business Boxes](#))

Calendar of December Events			
Fri 1 st	6pm – 8pm	School	Family Fun night
Sat 2 nd	3pm – 5pm	Glenriddell Hall	Christmas Market
	5pm	Flying Pig Village	Chippy Van
	5.30pm	Moniaive	Saints and his elves tour Throughale, Mansegate to the Flying Pig
	7.30pm		St Andrew's Day Ceilidh (booking required), Memorial Institute.
Sun 3 rd	11.30am	Church Moniaive	Advent Sunday – Hope for the Future Wreath making at the Memorial Institute. (Time to be confirmed)
Thurs 7 th	7.30pm	Church	Emily Smith – Christmas Concert
Fri 8 th	8pm	Flying Pig	Christmas Quiz
Sat 9 th	7.30pm	Tynron Hall	Music Quiz
Sun 10 th	10.30am	Church	Messy Christingle – Light for the world
	2pm	Church	Cairn Chorus – Little Gifts of Light
	2.30pm	Flying Pig	Winter Barbecue
	7pm	Church	Advent Prayers – Peace in our lives
Sat 16 th	3.30pm	Closeburn Church	Dalgarno Singers - Christmas Concert
Sun 17 th	11.30am	Church	Carol Service – Joy with added Orchestral
Mon 18 th	6.30pm	Moniaive	Living Advent Calendar. Meet at the Cherry tree to be taken to each night's surprise venue. Lasts about an hour.
Tues 19 th	6.30pm	Moniaive	Living Advent Calendar
Weds 20 th	6.30pm	Moniaive	Living Advent Calendar
Thurs 21 st	6.30pm	Moniaive	Living Advent Calendar
Fri 22 nd	6.30pm	Moniaive	Living Advent Calendar
Sat 23 rd	6.30pm	Moniaive	Living Advent Calendar
Sun 24 th	11.30am	Church	Family Worship – Love Came Down
	3pm	Church	Scratch Nativity & Carols
	6.30pm	Moniaive	Living Advent Calendar
Mon 25 th	10.30am	St Ninian's Moniaive	Christmas Day Family Worship
Tues 26 th	2pm	Flying Pig	Boxing Day opening
Sun 31 st	10.30am	Church	New Year's Eve Family Worship
	7pm	Flying Pig	Hogmanay opening (to be confirmed)
Mon 1 st	2pm	Flying Pig	New Year's Day opening