

Dunscore Digest

Dunscore Church & Community Magazine Covid Mini-Digest Winter 2020

Minister's Mini-Musing **Mark Smith**

Every winter we regularly face an onslaught of germs and viruses – ‘flu of various kinds, colds, Nora-virus, winter vomiting bug, etc. We now have to add corona-virus to that list of unwelcome visitors lurking as the nights darken. We are also painfully aware that Climate Change, with warmer winters, increases the survival of these microscopic aggressors. As the current lockdown drags on it is difficult to feel any hope for the future.

2020 has been a hard year. Not just because of CoVID and lockdown, but with the loss of loved ones. My thoughts and prayers are with those who have had to mourn without the usual network of support or the opportunity to give thanks for those they see no longer, or celebrate with friends and family. It has been hard to plan ‘special’ occasions, let alone our usual flow of events which mark the seasons of the passing year and remind us of God’s provision and presence in the ebb and flow of life.

I would take this opportunity to thank you all for your patience and faithfulness during this testing time. Thanks to those who have helped with the practicalities – online (Zoom, YouTube, Facebook) and on the ground (regular checks on the buildings, cleaning, and maintenance). Thank you Elders, for the care you have shown to your districts – telephone calls, passing on CFNs, keeping an eye out for neighbours. Thanks to Church Board members for overseeing our safe use of Dunscore Church, which has enabled us to gather ‘live’ again. Thank you to those of you who have been willing to try new things, seeking to serve each other within this community.

Advent this year starts on 29th November. The four Sundays before Christmas carry important themes for us: Hope, Peace, Joy, Love. We plan to hold a ‘live’ Prayer and Reflection each Sunday during Advent at 7pm – a chance to focus on the reality of our situation and look to God as we prepare to celebrate the Birth of Jesus, God Incarnate. Our main Sunday worship will continue to be via Zoom (recordings on YouTube) at 10.30am, with a Christingle Celebration on 13th December and Carol Service on 20th. We will also Zoom on Christmas Eve from 11.30pm and Christmas Day at 10am. Not quite traditional, but a chance to Celebrate Together!

Whatever we face over these winter months we all acknowledge our need of help. As Christians we believe that our help comes from God Himself. In Christ Jesus we see the Hope of Eternal Life, we can know Peace with God and each other, we can rejoice in the good things He gives us, and we can receive and pass on His Love. These are the things which will help us through this life and, by Faith in Jesus, the next!

Watch for details and JOIN THE CELEBRATION!

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS 2020

Celebrate with Dunscore Church

SUN 29th Nov	HOPE
10.30am	Morning Worship via Zoom
7pm ‘live’	Prayer & Reflection - Dunscore Church
SUN 6th Dec	PEACE
10.30am	Morning Worship via Zoom
7pm ‘live’	Prayer & Reflection - Dunscore Church
SUN 13th Dec	JOY
10.30am	Messy Christingle via Zoom (<i>details nearer the time</i>)
7pm ‘live’	Prayer & Reflection - Dunscore Church
FRI 18TH Dec	
7 pm	Carols in the Pub (at home!) via Zoom
SUN 20th Dec	LOVE
10.30am	Morning Worship via Zoom
3pm	Carol Service with Nativity via Zoom
7pm ‘live’	Prayer & Reflection - Dunscore Church
THU 24th Dec	CHRISTMAS EVE
11.30pm	Watchnight Service via Zoom
FRI 25th Dec	CHRISTMAS DAY
10.30am	Morning Worship via Zoom <i>Show us your presents!</i>
SUN 27th Dec	
10.30am	Morning Worship via Zoom

Session Business 1894 **Roy Spence**

Once again Roy has discovered a fascinating glimpse into the history of the church and village. How times change – or do they?

From the Dunscore Kirk Session Minutes, 14th October 1894 (transcribed as written).

In accordance with last Sabbath agreement the Kirk Session met today for the further consideration of the Schedules from the General Assembly’s Commission on the Religious Condition of the people, and was duly constituted.

Present – the Rev. R. Simpson with Messrs. Laurie, Gibson, Gold and Aitken, Elders. The following answers to the queries of the committee were agreed and signed by the Mod. and Session Clerk.

First Subject.

1. Indifference to the ordinances of Religion exist but is not widely prevalent.
2. Where indifference exists it is chiefly to causes under the second head- the other causes enumerated having little or no influence.
3. Indifference is associated chiefly with indolent and careless habits. The widely prevalent immorality is also prejudicial to attendance on ordinances. So is intemperance with its attendant poverty and the habits of thought and language which it fosters.
4. A considerable amount of drunkenness and immorality is connected with the periodical hiring markets at Dumfries. It would be better for everybody concerned if some more civilised method of engaging servants could be substituted for them. As for immorality, public opinion regards it too leniently. It would be more likely to decrease if people looked on it as a serious sin rather as a pardonable weakness. The discipline exercised by the Kirk Session seems to have little or no affect.

Staying Connected

Tim Harmer

Connect is an informal Bible Study group that would normally meet in participants homes around the area to study the Bible and consider contemporary issues in relation to faith. During the pandemic we have continued to meet on Thursday evenings via the medium of virtual Zoom meetings. We enjoy our discussions and individual members take turns to lead each week. If you are interested in joining please contact me on timharmer95@gmail.com.

During the autumn we have been looking at Paul's letter to the Colossians and trying to translate the principles we found in Paul's approach to the new church there to our own approach to the life of faith in our contemporary society. We had a break at the end of October and resumed on 12th November with a study of the Old Testament and in particular a look at the prophecies of Isaiah as read out by Jesus in the synagogue and which are understood by Christians to be fulfilled in his ministry and person: to bring Good News to the poor; Release to the captives; Sight to the blind; Freedom to the oppressed and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour. These phrases will form the titles for each week of our study which will take us up to Christmas. We hope in the New Year to look at Daniel to continue our time of Old Testament study. All are welcome to join the Group; you don't have to be a Church regular to attend.

Fairtrade News

Alison Borthwick

Nestle: Recently we got involved in the campaign to help keep KitKat Fairtrade as Nestle were going to cease to use Fairtrade ingredients in their product. The FT group and many other members of the community signed the petition and did a quick Zoom photocall holding supportive posters! Over a quarter of a million people signed this petition and got involved. Despite our efforts Nestle have not changed their decision and KitKat has now ceased to be a Fairtrade product. Very disappointing news for Fairtrade.



Our Keep KitKat Fairtrade Zoom Photocall

Tribute to Judith: During lockdown in Spring we heard of the sudden death of one of our Dumfries Fairtrade members, Judith Mylne. Judith worked tirelessly to promote Fairtrade and just before her death she had taken part in a voxpop in the Standard about the Fairtrade movement. MSP Colin Smyth recently paid tribute to Judith in the Scottish Parliament for her amazing work over more than 25 years to promote Fairtrade, the 'Fairtrade Champion'. Judith is sorely missed by us all and our Big Brews will not quite be the same without her. Although Judith did not only just support Fairtrade, she was a volunteer for many other organisations within Dumfries and Galloway the list is endless...

Pre-School Update Lee Mackenzie

We have had another busy term at Preschool as we welcomed the children back from the extended break. All the children have settled back into Preschool very well, and it is lovely to have them back. We missed them so much. We have all had to adapt to the "new normal" and this has meant increased hand-washing and cleaning. The children are all very good at washing hands regularly to wash away the "germs and nasties" and covering their mouths if they cough or sneeze.

Sadly, we can no longer welcome parents into Preschool as we used to, however we still ensure that we make time to chat to parents at the gate so that we can share the children's achievements and any concerns they may have. We are also sharing photos and videos on our learning app so that parents are involved and engaged. Another big change is of course that the children now attend for extended sessions from 08.45 to 3.15 Monday to Thursday and 08.45 to 12.45 on Fridays. The children have coped well with the longer sessions, although the staff get quite tired!

We enjoy delicious lunches every day prepared by the wonderful Helen at Dunscore Primary and this is a good opportunity to enjoy quality social time at the dinner table talking with the children. We still make sure the children have weekly opportunities to bake - this is Dunscore after all! We are always trying to improve the service we offer to children and their families and this year we are focusing on numeracy, the curiosity approach - using floorbooks to capture children's ideas in child-led planning and loose parts play, and parental engagement. Staff are still maintaining their continuing professional development however this has now moved to online learning. We are all getting very used to TEAMS meetings.

We are trying to take advantage of as much outdoor learning as possible and go the woods, the park or play outside in the playground every day. We now have a new raised playhouse which the children love playing in. We have had to become more creative in our fundraising this year as unfortunately the coffee mornings, soup and puddings and Christmas Fayre we usually enjoy hosting are no longer possible. We have decided to design and sell Christmas cards, create tea towels featuring portraits by the children and produce a Fairtrade recipe calendar.

We currently have 12 children and look forward to welcoming another four children in January and a further two children in April, so we are going to be very busy indeed.



Learning why we wear poppies

Local Family History Matthew Aitken

From time to time we receive an email through the Heritage Centre website enquiring about relatives who were from Dunscore. We always have to say that we are not really set up to help with family history searches but there are one or two people locally that will help where they can. We had one recently with an interesting story:

My father's mother's family came from Dunscore and the surrounding area. Indeed, we managed to find two gravestones in Dunscore Churchyard the other day with some of my Craig ancestors on them - much excitement!

James' grandson George Craig went to India sometime during the late 1840s - 1850s as a journalist and became the Editor of the Telegraph and Courier and the Overland Telegraph & Courier. At the bottom right of one of the newspapers in the British Library's Oriental & India Office it says "Printed and Published for the Proprietors by George Craig at the Telegraph & Courier Office, No 2, Medow Street, Fort" - also down as Editor Bombay Telegraph and Courier Newspaper on his death certificate. He died at 17 Glengyle Terrace, Edinburgh on 18th January 1872. George Craig's son, William Maxwell Craig, became Surgeon General in the Royal Navy but died on 6th August 1914 much to the disgust of the RN! He was CB, RN, MB, CM. His cortege, over a mile in length, was headed by men of the Royal Marines, and the casket containing his remains, was borne to its last resting place wrapped in a Union Jack and repositied on a gun carriage drawn by party of men from HMS Victory. He was buried at Haslar. As James Craig had been a weaver and his son Edward Maxwell Craig (father of George Craig and grandfather of William Maxwell Craig) was a farm labourer, I feel this must have been quite an achievement for what was presumably a fairly poor family.

From the British Medical Journal obituary August 1914:
"By the death of Surgeon-General William Maxwell Craig, the naval service has lost a brilliant officer at the height of his career of usefulness at a time when his great ability as a surgeon and capacity for organization would have been of the greatest value to the nation."

Readers will know that Roy Spence has considerable knowledge of and interest in local history and carried out a little research of Parish records he was able to supply some useful additional information.

Dunscore Toddlers

Jade Crichton

Sadly, due to Covid, the Toddler Group is unable to run at the moment. But we hope that, as things improve in the New Year, we will be able to open back up again. We look forward to being able to welcome Dunscore toddlers back to the pre-school on a Friday afternoons.

Editor's Footnote

Matthew Aitken

Thanks to all the contributors to this Digest (some for the first time). As there isn't so much going on in and around the village, I expected it to be just a couple of pages – but not so, even having not one but two book reviews!
I hope that you enjoy reading it!

Still Bussing

Geoff Creamer

Due to the unprecedented circumstances we are all currently facing, the committee of Cairn Valley Community Transport has decided that this year's Annual General Meeting, which should have been held in early November, will be postponed until such time as social gatherings are once again possible. An alternative online session being considered impractical for various reasons.

The Committee's Report and Annual Accounts for 2019/20 will be available to view on our recently developed website www.cvct.org.uk. All the current members of the Committee have indicated their willingness to continue for a further year: Stephen Sparrow (Chairman), Peter Roberts (Treasurer), Geoff Creamer (Secretary), Alan James, Hazel Ford.

CVCT is continuing to run a monthly service from Moniaive to Castle Douglas on Thursdays (the next date is 10th December), leaving Moniaive at 11.15 and Dunscore about 11:30 am. Seats are currently limited and should be booked in advance by contacting me – details below.

It is not possible to plan any programme of excursions at the present time, but we are always pleased to receive suggestions of places to which people might be interested in travelling; once circumstances permit. We hope to resurrect some of the trips that had to be cancelled earlier this year. We cannot promise to visit every destination suggested, but will be very happy to consider them for inclusion in a future schedule.

The Committee would like to thank everyone for their support over the past twelve months, and hope that we may continue to enjoy that support during the uncertain times ahead. We will do our very best to keep you informed about CVCT's operations.

For all enquiries/bookings/suggestions, contact:
Geoff Creamer (Secretary): 01848 330821 / 07702 915071 / geoff.creamer@outlook.com
Stephen Sparrow (Chairman): 01848 200564 / 07934 594184 / hello@cvct.org.uk

Zoom to Church

Matthew Aitken

It is not possible to hold church services in church every Sunday, so our church services continue to take place "live" online using the video conference app Zoom. The service is at 10:30 am each Sunday at this link:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86939887756>.

In addition, each month there is a reflective service in the church building. Keep an eye on the Church Family Notices, emails and website for when these take place. There are weekly Advent services in the church during December with dates shown on page one of this edition of the Digest.

You may remember that in the last edition of the Digest, we asked readers to complete a very short survey about live-streaming services (when we hold them in the church building). There was an excellent response to the survey and it was reviewed by the Church Session. The decision was that, initially, we will record services and post them to the internet but consider live-streaming in the longer term.

Thanks to everyone who completed the survey.

As Treasurer of Dunscore Church I have been all too aware of the financial impact of this difficult year.

One of the immediate results of the restrictions has been the cancellation of the weekly service in the Church and its replacement with a Sunday Zoom service which is shared with Glencairn and Moniaive Church. Whilst "Freewill Offerings" by standing order and the majority of the envelope donations have continued through this testing period, the "open plate collection" (collection during a service) has almost entirely disappeared. This leaves a serious shortfall in Dunscore Church finances.

Hopefully in the not too distant future our weekly Sunday Service in Dunscore Church will return and with it the opportunity to give by "open plate". In the meantime, however, for those who regularly donated by the "open plate" and wish to do so, I would ask you to consider donating to Dunscore Church on [Facebook](#) or by PayPal through the [Dunscore Church website](#) (which allows you donate to us through the Church of Scotland website). An alternative to those methods would be to donate in person at the monthly Reflective Services.

If none of the above is possible I would be happy as Congregational Treasurer to accept "open plate" donations for Dunscore Church either in cash, cheque or Bacs. Please phone me on 820301 and I will make the necessary arrangements. Your continued support for Dunscore Church is appreciated. Thank you.

Bird of the Season Lesley Creamer

Waxwing

How about a brightly coloured bird to cheer us all up in these strange times? This is a winter migrant which you're quite likely to spot in a supermarket car park as these are nearly always planted with rowan trees and



provide a feast for large flocks of these birds - waxwings. They often arrive in 'irruptions' when there's a sudden drop in food availability on the continent and rapidly spread across even to the west in search of their staple diet – berries. They can eat two or three times their bodyweight in berries every day!

Smaller than a starling, this is a stocky but really pretty bird with soft-looking, mainly reddish-brown plumage, grey rump, black bib, small black mask, yellow and white pattern in the wings and yellow-tipped tail, plus a prominent crest. They're highly acrobatic as they munch their way round fruit-laden trees and shrubs and have enlarged livers to help them cope with the high sugar content of berries - and alcohol content of rotting ones, although they're occasionally unable to fly due to intoxication! And of course, what goes in must come out so maybe avoid parking under rowan trees hanging with fruit or you might find you've shopped while they've dropped – all over your car!

The last time messy church met physically it was March when we had the best attendance along with a brilliant christening of the Chandler-Rogers children. It was not long after then that the first lockdown began. Since then we have been meeting virtually on Zoom. It has certainly challenged our planning to be able to include everyone in easier crafts, simple songs and bible stories. We have enjoyed the challenge and are glad that the messy services have come across well over the internet despite the poor connection from our rural bases.

It can be difficult for families to get logged on to the Zoom services, trying to get young children to engage with a screen is certainly a task! But for those who log in or watch the recording it is great to be able to connect as a community and share in the fun and chaos. Our knowledge of paper based crafts has expanded along with our ability to juggle excitable children and the precious mute button!! Our messy journey started in September 2019 with a monthly church meeting. Our anniversary celebration was over Zoom and who knows, we may be celebrating a Zoomiversary if we are still meeting virtually by then! Whatever happens, we are keen to carry on celebrating our church family together.

We are excited to share our messy Christingle on Sunday 13th December at 10.30 am. We will be making up Christingle party bags for people to collect the day before the service or after school / preschool on Friday 11th which will have all you need for the celebration. We are also planning a nativity for Christmas Eve, we are not quite sure what it will look like yet but you can be sure it will be full of fun, chaos and certainly messy!

Staying Up to Date

What time does the Flying Pig quiz start? What is the Zoom link for this Sunday's online church service? Would someone be able to use this chair that I no longer need? These are just a few of the sorts of questions that are answered very frequently by the email messages sent round the village (and much further afield).

There are three village email lists:

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

Lupus & Me Rhianna Davies-McCrorie

We spotted that Rhianna was raising funds for the Hibbs Lupus Trust and asked her to share a little of her story.

Imagine for a moment that you have just woken up; you had a brilliant night with friends and went to bed feeling on top of the world. You sit down to breakfast and start to realise your stomach is feeling a little bad. Unfortunately for people with Lupus this isn't just your typical sleep filled nausea, is a warning sign of things to come. Within half an hour you have begun to lose control of your bodily functions. Your temperature is spiking and your skin has clammed up. You cannot keep your eyes open as your body fights to pass out. Within three hours your body has developed ketoacidosis and dehydrated itself, completely shutting down. The paramedics are unable to administer intravenous medications in the ambulance because your veins have shrivelled up.



I had a tummy bug, that's all. I had something the majority of healthy people would just get on with and feel better in a couple of days. For me and my family it was one of the most terrifying moments of my life. Over the past couple of years, I have become increasingly involved in the Lupus and chronic illness community on social media and YouTube. We all have a similar story. We all fear those moments of realisation when a simple and usually easy to treat infection or virus becomes life threatening.

Lupus is an autoimmune disease, meaning that our immune systems do not work correctly, they are overactive and cannot tell healthy cells from diseased cells, therefore they attack everything: from your skin, hair and teeth to your internal organs. This is partly why early diagnosis is so important, it could save lives and prevent organ failure. It takes on average between six and a half and seven years to get a diagnosis which of course means that for many people they have to spend years dealing with the pain and the sickness whilst being told that the doctors can't find anything wrong. The nature of autoimmune disease makes it something difficult to treat efficiently, it also is likely that if you have one, you also have another. Along with my Lupus I, personally, suffer from Rheumatoid Arthritis and Pernicious Anemia. Each has their own set of symptoms and treatments. One of which is Methotrexate injections each week, this is a mild form of Chemotherapy which can have some pretty intense side effects that can last for several days; however, the benefits do vastly outweigh the costs in my case!



The Hibbs Lupus Trust is a charity that is incredibly close to my heart and I do my best to donate to them and buy merchandise from them every year to contribute to their efforts to help us Lupus warriors. They offer support to patients as well as contributing money towards research and medical equipment, so please do donate if you have a spare moment! You can find them at:

<https://www.hibbslupustrust.org/donate/>



Tae a Virus by Willie Sinclair

Ten months ago, we didna ken,
Yer name or ocht about ye
But lots of things have changed since then
I really must salute ye.

Yer spreading rate is quite intense,
Yer feeding like a gannet
Disruption caused is so immense
Ye've shaken oor wee planet.

Corona used tae be a beer,
They garnished it wae limes
But noo it fills us a' wi fear
These days are scary times.

Nae shakin hawns, or peckin lips,
It's whit they a' advise
But scrub them weel, richt tae the tips,
That's how we'll a' survive.

Just stay inside the hoose ye bide
Nae sneekin oot for strolls
Just check the lavvy every hoor
and stock- take you loo rolls.

Our holidays have been pit aff
Noo that's the Jet 2 patter
Pit oan yer thermals, have a laugh
And paddle 'doon the waater'

Canary Isles, no for a while
Nae need for suntan cream
And a' because 'o this wee bug
We ken tae be19

The boredom surely will set in,
But have a read or doodle
Or plan yer menu for the month
Wi 95 pot noodles.

When they run oot, just look about
A change it would be nice
We've beans and pasta by the ton
And twenty stane 'o rice.

So dinnae think ye'll wipe us oot
Aye true , a few have died
Bubonic, bird flu and TB
They came, they left, they tried.

Ye might be gallus noo ma freen
As ye jump fae cup tae cup
But when we get oor vaccine made
Yer number will be up.

With this year's Halloween being a lot different for the kids, I thought maybe we could make it 'normalish' for them and try and see if we could make Guising work with social distancing. I put it to a few mums and they all agreed we could make it happen and give the kids some fun on Halloween.

I honestly thought if we get about ten houses wanting to take part that would be fantastic. To then have approximately 40 houses take part was just amazing! The village all pulled together and gave the kids a night to remember. We had bus shelters decorated, donkeys popping their heads out to say hello, even games to win a treat. The effort was just outstanding from everyone. One of the funniest parts was a few of the adults who were standing by their windows dressed up and popping up at the kids. It was so lovely to see a real buzz about the village, families all walking about, kids laughing and accruing enough sweets to last them to next year!



The feedback from the village was that everyone really enjoyed themselves and we hope to make this a new annual event. I just want to say a massive thank you to everyone for making the night such a great success. You all made a lot of children very happy!



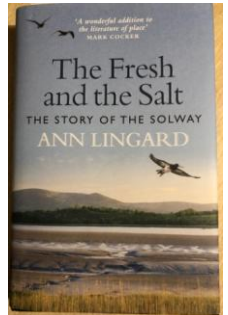
I'm now working with my Elf Squad on an exciting event for Christmas that has been very generously paid for by the Dunscore Community Council. We have got some contacts at the North Pole and on Sunday 13th December (early evening) the main man himself will be visiting Dunscore with some of his friends and co-workers and will visit all the children in the area in his sleigh. He might even have a lovely treat for the children so pass this onto the kids so they make sure they are on the nice list! The route Santa will take will be posted on the community council Facebook page, so make sure to follow it to be kept updated with all the info for the event.

**“The Fresh and the Salt – The Story of the Solway”
by Ann Lingard**

I saw this book on display in Thomas Tosh in Thornhill and swithered whether to buy it as it is quite expensive (£25). However, I am glad that I decided to purchase a copy. In this very well researched book Ann Lingard looks at all aspects of the north and south shores of Solway. Chapters include those looking at the animals and plants living in and on the mud and sand of the shore, the formation and uses of the land at the edges of the estuary and inland, the history of the people living by the Solway, food from the estuary and other interesting aspects about the area.

Although Ann Lingard lives on the south of the Solway, she includes lots of information about our side too. I was, for example, amazed to read that there is the remains of a narrow gauge railway on the Kirkconnel Merse side if the Nith opposite Glencaple. There is a lot of focus on the life in the mud and sand of the estuary including the mud shrimp corophium which is vital to the birds using the area and some parts of the book are quite technical. This could make the book a hard read but she always intersperses the technical text with anecdotes which enhance the text and make the book an enjoyable read.

I also learned about the wealth of sea life that lives on and around the foundations of the Robin Rigg wind farm turbines. I had also wondered what had destroyed the rail bridge that crossed the Solway near Annan and now I know! This story, and many others, are told in this book which I recommend to you.



Community Council Column

Alistair McFadzean

Our meetings early in the year were cancelled by we have managed to meet a couple of times online.

We have been able to allocate funds to a variety of local organisations: £1250 to the Pre-school, £500 to the Wednesday Club, £3750 to the Gala, £1,500 to the school and £500 for notice boards at Mansegate and, possibly, Throughgate. We hear that Santa will be making a stop in Dunscore on 13 December. We have allocated some funds to support this!

There are plans to install a small heater to ensure that the defibrillator doesn't suffer from the winter cold.

The speed signs working well and are having a visible impact on speeds (although a small number of drivers will never slow down despite any signs that we put up).

We were sorry that Alan Todd stood down as Vice Chair but delighted that Gavin Creaney has taken on this role.

The AGM was due to be held in October but has been postponed until January.

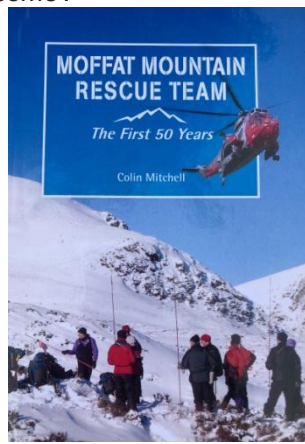
Moffat Mountain Rescue—The First 50 Years

This is a gripping book. It takes the form of recollections of current and former members of Moffat Mountain Rescue Service. It is excellently illustrated with many photographs.

Here is a quote from Joe Burns. 'Those who criticise should join us sometime and witness the moment a casualty is located: injured, shivering with the cold and wet, frightened, vulnerable and totally defeated by the circumstances that have completely overwhelmed them. They witness a group of fellow humans who through their training and commitment can very rapidly convert a life threatening situation into one of care and comfort and be returned to loved ones who have been anxiously waiting and praying for a positive outcome'.

The book covers the fifty years of the Moffat Mountain Rescue Team's existence including their role after the Lockerbie Air Disaster.

An excellent Christmas present! Copies are available from Colin Mitchell 01387 820455.

**Tribute to Jane****Pam Mitchell**

In 2019, Mr David Coughtrie, Vice President of the Caledonian Club in London visited the Dunscore Heritage Centre. The purpose of his visit was to learn about Jane Haining.

David established The Caledonian Lecture ten years ago to commemorate Scots who had lived and worked abroad, making a significant contribution to their country of adoption while retaining their Scottish values. Jane Haining was a most worthy candidate for the 2020 lecture. This was given by Mary Miller, author of "Jane Haining - A Life of Love and Courage". The lecture was broadcast on line on 7th October and since then has been viewed at least 800 times. It seems it was a most successful means of reaching a wide global audience. David is arranging for a DVD to be sent to us for use in the Centre when we are back to some kind of normality.

You can listen to and watch the lecture on the Heritage Centre website: <https://dunscoreheritage.org/jane-haining-story/>



Pam and I are keen travellers here in UK and further afield. Not this year though! We spent most of the spring and summer in and around Dunscore.

Lots of time was spent in the garden. At the end of last year we dug up all our herbaceous plants and covered the border with black polythene to remove weeds such as ground elder, couch grass and bindweed. Just before lockdown we removed the covering, dug over the plot and replanted the herbaceous plants. This herbaceous border was a great success and gave a wonderful floral display right through the spring and summer and into autumn. It was good to sit with a morning cup of coffee and just enjoy the sights, scents and sounds.

We had our failures too! Dahlias were planted in another border and were invaded by many slugs. We were keen not to use chemical slug bait and tried copper bands and wool pellets without success. Eventually I went out every night with a torch and picked up every slug I saw. These slugs were deposited some distance away but the numbers did not decrease. I wondered if they were travelling back to my dahlias. As an experiment I marked them pink with some of Pam's nail varnish! They did, indeed, travel back!

We had lots of successes also. Cosmos and nasturtiums have done really well as have our fuchsias, pelargoniums, petunias. Many of these were in hanging baskets which gave a fine display throughout the summer.

Walking around the Craig block also was a real pleasure as the wild flowers were particularly good. Wildflowers included celandine, sweet cicely, red campion, woodrush, wild garlic, bilberry, tormentil, blackthorn and meadowsweet. We spent some time labelling these plants and there uses for others to enjoy.

Birds including house sparrow, robin, dunnoek, goldfinch, goldcrest, red kite, sparrowhawk, buzzard, thrush, blackbird, great spotted woodpeckers, tree sparrows, rooks, crows, jackdaws, starlings and collared dove were seen in and around the village.

Although we could not visit other houses or be too near others, village events did happen. The quiz was looked forward to each week and although our team never did very well, we enjoyed taking part.

Church Crescent families enjoyed a "socially distanced" VE Day party and also Gala day party where we talked, with a wee drink or two, with neighbours across and down the street.

Our new minister, Rev Mark Smith, started with us just as lockdown started and he and his wife, Debbie, have settled into the manse. Our weekly church service using Zoom is very well supported and has included lots of craft activities. Mark has also put lots of bible meditations onto YouTube.

We are, indeed, very lucky to be living in Dunscore during these difficult times.

I spoke to Mark Frankland of the Food Bank recently for an update. He is the amazing and very hard-working individual who set up this small independent charity a number of years ago. As well as managing and running their premises in Buccleuch Street, Mark distributes much needed food parcels to those who require them in villages and towns throughout Dumfries & Galloway. I particularly like this project as no-one needs to fill in any forms or prove their need for help with food. They simply have to phone him (01387 279680) between 12 noon and 4pm Monday to Friday, or call into the shop for assistance.

Mark asked me to mention that they are now seeing people who, six months ago, had a job, a mortgage and a car and would never have dreamt they would ever need to contact The Food Bank. The lockdown and subsequent job losses are taking their toll on people and they are now distributing 1,500 food parcels a month – three times as many as in January of this year! If the above applies to you or someone you know, please do contact him.

Mark told me that local food companies have been very generous, as have the many good people of the area but the need is still great. Winter is just starting and it will be a long and a hard one for many folk living on little income. I know many of you give through 'Just Giving' on line, www.justgiving.com/first-base but as an alternative, he would be delighted to receive cheques made out to The First Base Food Agency. The address is: Mark Frankland, The First Base Agency, 6 Buccleuch Street, Dumfries DG1 2NH.

As a footnote, and though it is obviously on the 'back burner' just now, the Agency also has an Education Project which entails visits to schools across the region giving drug and alcohol awareness presentations to 2,500 pupils. They also support families affected by drugs and alcohol, women at risk of violence, ex-service personnel, and foreign nationals facing poverty and deprivation. This is a good local charity to support if you can.

Lubuto Link**Aly Robertson**

Zambia has experienced a two year drought which saw staple food prices rising by 300 per cent. Daily electricity cuts of between six to twelve hours have been ongoing for over a year. Meanwhile, Zambia's increasing government debt swallows 95 per cent of GDP. Zambia has been affected by Covid 19. Restrictive measures were introduced in mid-March when the government asked everyone to social distance and to wash their hands.

All programmes at our sister congregation have been put off until 2021 apart from a fund raiser for a bus on December 6th. The bus will be used to raise funds for the poorer members of the congregation. We will be having a special collection for this at our service on that day. Details of how to give will be in the Church Family Notices, Facebook and will be circulated round the Church email list.

Since returning in August, school has been very different for us all, however the pupils have made this difficult time easier by their smiling faces and determination to follow the new rules and make them work for us.

Our new Primary One pupils have coped remarkably well, settling in to school, new routines and are just amazing. We were sad not to get to say a proper goodbye to our Primary 7 pupils before they went to Wallace Hall but as soon as we are able to they will be back to have their leavers event. We hear they are all doing very well.

Mrs Davidson has retired and is missed in the school community, but again, when we are able to, we will have an assembly at school so that staff, pupils and parents can say goodbye.

We are delighted to welcome Miss Nolan to our school. She is in her probationary year and is taking P3/4 and has settled in very well and has already built up a great relationship with staff and pupils. Mrs Robertson is back with us as Principal Teacher with P5/6/7 and everyone is delighted to see her back in the school and the classroom.

As we couldn't have our traditional Halloween Disco this year, the parent council kindly donated treat bags for the pupils to take home. The pupils all loved them and it was a nice way to mark the occasion and for the pupils to not miss out.

We have been busy this week painting poppies on stones to place at the war memorial for Remembrance Sunday. After Sunday, we are hoping that we can use the stones to create a more permanent display somewhere for the whole community to benefit from.

**Placing pebbles at the War Memorial**

Christmas will be very different this year for all of us however, we are looking at ways in which we can still bring some Christmas magic to the pupils and the wider community.