



# Dunscore Digest

March 2024

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## Church News

### Easter with a Spring Musings from the Manse ... Rev Mark Smith

It's March already! 2024 is rushing by! Snowdrops, lambs, daffodils, leaves, grass, are all growing and showing us that spring has sprung! Many of you have already been pampered & prosecco'd (in the Glenriddell Hall), quizzed (in the Flying Pig), and started Christmas shopping (at the Big Brew)! Does that mean you're ready for what is to come?

I hope that the end of March will provide important preparation for life as we celebrate Easter!

It's a traditional time to recognise the new life sprouting up everywhere, to acknowledge our dependence on that emergent life, and to enjoy the triumph of the sun over the darkness. The very word Easter comes from the same root as oestrogen – the life-nurturing chemical

– and reflects the link with life re-starting. New life from the seemingly dead soil and dried up branches. For Christians, it is used to reflect the Resurrection of Jesus – new life from the tomb!

However, to get ready for Easter we remember Palm Sunday and Holy Week. At church, we celebrate Palm Sunday with lots of 'Hosannas' and leaves! Join us to find out more.

During Holy Week, we reflect on Jesus' journey from city gates to the hill of the skull, from triumphant entry to ignominious death and anonymous burial. A bit of a rollercoaster by any measure. As we go through Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Eve (Holy Saturday, NOT Easter Saturday!!), we will take time to

be reminded of that journey – not just to re-tell the story, but to be reminded of its importance to us today. We will celebrate the bread and wine of the Last Supper, remember the crowd's cries of "Crucify Him!", weep at the tomb, before shouting 'Alleluia!' on Easter morning. It's a challenging journey: emotional, stressful, joyful, draining. It's a vital journey reminding us of what Jesus went through for each of us. It's a reflection of, and preparation for, the ups and downs of real life.

Unusually this year, our Easter celebrations take place in Moniaive, as it's a Fifth Sunday of the month (when we join in worship with our friends at St Ninian's), beginning at the Cairn Pool, followed by breakfast and our Easter worship in St Ninian's on North Street. A Grand Day Out!

Jesus' death and resurrection is not just history, not just a tale from the past, but, like the snowdrops, lambs, daffodils, leaves and grass, very real today. God's offer of New Life is as valid today as it was when Jesus walked the Earth! Join us to find out more.

Over the next couple of months, there is a lot of planning for our Summer Activities across our community. It is great to have such events in our village, but it takes a lot of hard work and commitment from the committee members. People are the life-blood of these events. Young people, old people, middle-aged people, no-aged people. How about helping out and not just taking part? Keep supporting the various regular groups and activities – a great way to meet new people and keep the life of our community flowing! Let's play our part with a spring in our step!

May God Bless you.

PS we're currently landline-less (!) so you can contact me via my mobile: 0776 215 2755 or via email: [mark.smith@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:mark.smith@churchofscotland.org.uk) or Facebook Messenger: RevMark Smith (you'll see my 'official' portrait, no gap between RevMark).

Dunscore Church  
 W: [www.dunscorechurch.org.uk](http://www.dunscorechurch.org.uk)  
 F: Dunscore Church  
 Y: CairnValley Churches

## KiKs - Kids in Kirk

### Tim Harmer

KiKs is our church children's group. It is mainly for primary school age children to help them explore the Christian faith. We hold it every 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday morning in church. The youngsters leave the main church worship for a separate meeting and their own age-appropriate activities. Currently we go into the church Heritage room. The youngsters return to the main worship after the sermon to explain what they have been working on. Through the new year we have looked at themes arising from the Bible readings that have been used in the worship services in church. The readings come from the Lectionary which is a three year cycle of Bible readings featuring one of the synoptic gospels

(Matthew, Mark, Luke) alongside another New Testament reading, an Old Testament passage and a Psalm for each Sunday. Our Church also uses a resource called 'Roots on the Web' which provides Lectionary-based material for use with children, young people and families each Sunday. This will usually include craft activities, drama, prayer in groups and reflection. The youngsters seem to enjoy the sessions and when they return to the service are always happy to tell the congregation what they have been up to.

**Sunday Worship**  
 (also on Zoom – check website/Facebook for link)  
 KiKs (Kids in Kirk) is for children who bring their parents to church!

**MARCH**

24 <sup>th</sup>	<i>PALM SUNDAY</i>	11.30am	Together with KiKs with Leaves!
28 <sup>th</sup>	<i>MAUNDY THURSDAY</i>	7.30pm	The Last Supper – Reflection & Communion
29 <sup>th</sup>	<i>GOOD FRIDAY</i>	2pm	The Crucifixion – Meditation & Reflection
31 <sup>st</sup>	<i>EASTER DAY</i>	8am	Poolside Praise at Cairn Pool, Moniaive
		9am	Breakfast Buns at St Ninian's, Moniaive
		10.30am	Family Worship at St Ninian's, Moniaive

**APRIL**

7 <sup>th</sup>	11.30am	Morning Worship
14 <sup>th</sup>	11.30am	Family Worship
21 <sup>st</sup>	11.30am	Morning Worship with Baptism
28 <sup>th</sup>	11.30am	Together with KiKs

**MAY**

5 <sup>th</sup>	11.30am	Morning Worship
12 <sup>th</sup>	11.30am	Family Worship
19 <sup>th</sup>	11.30am	Morning Worship
26 <sup>th</sup>	11.30am	Communion with KiKs

## Lubuto

### Alison Robertson

We heard recently from Rev Friday Sinkonde. There is to be a major rebuild on the site of the church in Lubuto. We have not heard of the timescale of the project. Andy is still accepting popular books for sale in aid of the project. There is to be a bookshelf in the church which will hold books for sale.

## Connect Tim Harmer

The Connect group continues as a weekly Bible study group meeting in the church on Thursday evenings at 7.30pm. At the time of writing, we are working our way through the Lord's Prayer as a Lent activity. The prayer appears in two forms in the New Testament: the shorter version in Luke's Gospel and the longer version, part of the Sermon on the Mount, in Matthew's Gospel. We take each line of the prayer as an individual study.

Recently, there has been a lot of interest in the original Aramaic language that Jesus would have spoken. Some scholars and theologians think that the nuances and sense of what was said in the Aramaic may have been lost in the translations we now have. An example is the opening phrase of the prayer 'Our Father.....' which may perhaps be translated as 'Our Creator....' Thereby we lose a specific gender for God which some don't find helpful and the sense of the relationship of a parent that can also limit how we think of God.

The Bible was originally written in Ancient Hebrew and New Testament Greek with a little bit of Aramaic and then subsequently translated into Latin and English as well as many other languages. The ancient versions of Greek and Hebrew are not spoken languages today. Koine Greek (New Testament Greek) was the Lingua Franca in the Mediterranean and Near East in Jesus' day, a result you might say of the conquests of Alexander the Great. The Old Testament was also translated into Koine Greek from the ancient Hebrew and Aramaic. So a lot of translations. Famously King James VI of Scotland and 1<sup>st</sup> of England ordered a team of Greek and Hebrew scholars of the day to produce a new translation of the Bible. In 1611 it was first printed and is now known as the King James Bible and is the basis for all new translations of the Bible into English.

## Eco Group June Harmer

The Eco Group in Dunscore organises interesting events & meetings.

The latest event was called "**Following Death**". A panel of 4 (a doctor, a church minister, a solicitor & a funeral director) talked about their roles when somebody dies. It was a very informative evening. Each speaker talked for 10 minutes followed by a Q&A time. I discovered some valuable facts.

Another **Repair Cafe** was organised for Wednesday 13th March in the church. People brought along anything that they needed advice about mending.

As you walk around the village you may notice some extra **Bird Boxes**. All beautifully made & put up to attract the local bird population.

**Litter Picking** is a monthly event (2nd Thursday) always ending up with a warming coffee & cake.

**Eco Snippets**, tips for working towards a more sustainable life, appear in the Church Family Notices every week. Over the years many facts have been passed on. Keep an eye out for them on the church website.



## Prayer Blankets Gill Allan

Do you like to knit or crochet ..? At Dunscore Church, we are making blankets to put on laps or around your shoulders; we are also making scarves and hats.

When finished, the blankets are blessed during our Sunday Service and placed in the Hall of Fellowship in a wicker basket for anyone to take who feels they would like one to comfort themselves.

They are also taken to someone who may like one - they are free and made with love. We are happy to receive squares if you don't want to make a complete blanket and we will join them together. It's a wonderful pastime and knowing that the blanket goes to someone who needs a virtual hug also gives comfort to you knowing it will be used to comfort someone else.

If you would like to participate but are not sure how to go about it, please just ask - a pattern with ideas on it can be given out. Any colours are fine, whatever you have spare from a project or lying around just waiting for a good cause. Wool can also be donated. Get your needles and hooks out - it's great!

# Children's News

## Dunscore Pre-school Centre Caroline Waugh

As the term draws to a close at Dunscore Pre-school, it's a moment for reflection on the enriching experiences and valuable lessons learned by the young minds within its walls. This term, the focus has been on the theme of 'People Who Have Helped Us', a journey that has broadened horizons and fostered appreciation for the roles various individuals play within our community.

One notable highlight was the visit from Colin Mitchell of the mountain rescue team. Learning about those who serve in emergency services like the police and fire brigade further deepened their understanding of community helpers.

Another memorable excursion took the children to the local church, where they had the opportunity to explore and learn about the significance of this place of worship in our community.

Beyond educational outings, the preschool also embraced the spirit of celebration, marking occasions such as World Book Day, Chinese New Year, Valentine's Day, and Pancake Day with gusto. These festivities not only added joy and excitement to the learning environment but also allowed the children to immerse themselves in diverse cultures and traditions.

The term will conclude with an Easter hunt and a range of springtime activities, promising more opportunities for fun and learning. However, amidst the excitement, it's important to pause and extend gratitude to the wider community that has supported Dunscore Preschool throughout the term.

The preschool extends heartfelt thanks to all those who have contributed, whether through visits, donations of old crafts, or support in fundraising efforts. It is this collaborative spirit and unwavering support that truly makes Dunscore Preschool a nurturing and vibrant hub for young learners.

## Dunscore Primary School Samantha Atkins P1/2 & P3/4

In P1/2 we have had a very busy time since Christmas. We have been learning all about Fairytales and how these link in with our rights. So far we have learned about Jack and the Beanstalk, Little Red Riding Hood, Cinderella, and The Gingerbread Man to name a few. We have been creating our own story boards, puppets and we even created our own giant beanstalk in the classroom.

We have been very lucky to receive lots of new play resources in our classroom and we now have a role play area, creative corner, discovery zone and book nook to use in the classroom to enhance our learning.

We have had an extremely busy term in P3/4 – learning about Scotland and Robert Burns. We were lucky enough to go on a trip with our friends from Moniaive Primary to Dumfries. In Dumfries, we explored the Robert Burns Centre, Burns House and Robert Burns' mausoleum. We learnt lots about Robert Burns and his links to our local area and loved looking at all the artefacts. Whilst there we learnt some Robert Burns songs and poems, culminating in a drama activity to re-enact Tam O'Shanter.

Earlier the same week we had our rescheduled trip to the Dark Sky Planetarium in Kirkcudbright. We enjoyed the interactive activities, especially the land-a-rocket and gravitational pull activities. We viewed the night skies in the planetarium and learnt all about each planet and their moons. There was also a film which asked the question 'Are we alone?' We learnt about what is needed for life and which planets and moons in the universe may have the possibility of supporting life. This led to lots of discussion and was a fantastic end to our Space topic.

Grant Dinwoodie visited our class throughout term 2 and 3. We learnt lots of Scottish songs and some Gaelic. At the end of our block we held a performance for all our families and friends – we were all nervous but really enjoying sharing all the songs we had learnt with Grant.

## Harry Dobson (P7) P4-7

We have been working hard in P4/5/6/7, undertaking lots of interesting tasks.

Our first topic was World War II and we explored a variety of key questions that we had. I really enjoyed learning about why the war started, how it progressed and what the key events were.

I enjoyed all of the art activities that we undertook. We also made models of gas masks, Anderson shelters and paper planes with military colours. They all looked good on display in our classroom.

We ended our topic with an assembly for the school and invited our parents in to share our learning. We ended with a medley of WWII songs that we encouraged everyone to join in with. We liked performing to a larger audience – everyone seemed to enjoy hearing about what we had been doing in class.

Our topic this term is all about Pollution. We have been investigating what it is and what we can do to reduce it.

The P7s went to a badminton competition to play against other schools in Nithsdale. We did really well as some pupils got 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> places. We are looking forward to competing in the regional Cross Country event and have been training hard for it.

P7's have also had a few transitional visits to Wallace Hall Academy participating in a variety of subject taster sessions and we also watched 'Shrek the Musical' performed by Wallace Hall Academy pupils which was great!

We are all looking forward to our Partnership Science Day at Moniaive Primary school for Science Week. The theme this week is "Time."

We are also really looking forward to our Easter holidays!

## Wee Brew Matthew Aitken



For the last few years, in addition to the village Fairtrade Big Brew, the school has held its own Fairtrade event, the Wee Brew. The children help to bake delicious cakes and traybakes, using Fairtrade products. The parents and friends are invited to enjoy a Fairtrade tea or coffee, baking and a chat. The children help to serve the baking and take the donations. This year's donations amounted to an amazing £172.00 and the school has decided to give this money to a school in Malawi. Last year, all the children in Dunscore school had an online chat with Charles Chavi. Charles, who visited Dunscore around ten years ago, is from a Fairtrade sugar growing community in Malawi. The school in Charles' village was paid for with the community's Fairtrade Premium (this is the additional money that a Fairtrade community receives on top of the payment for their produce and the community decides how to spend it). the Malawian school will probably use the money raised at the Wee

Brew to buy books and / or sports equipment and the children look forward to hearing how it is used.

## My experience with Morton Thistle Football Club Cameron Hodge (aged 9)



I really like playing football at Dunscore Primary school. My friend told me about Morton Thistle Football club and I decided to go along to the training sessions. It was great and I have been going since June 2023. I go to training every Tuesday at Wallace Hall Academy and sometimes at the weekend. After two weeks I got my Morton Thistle strip. It looks smart! The strip colours are light blue and purple.

My coaches are Greg, Davie, Lewis and Brian. The coaches are nice and help us learn new skills.

In the summer we play on grass and in winter we play in the gym hall. We play games home or away against other teams in the region. The teams I have played against so far include Annan, Greyston, Heston, Terregles and Mids (Lockerbie). I like to play on the wing and set goals up. Sometimes I score goals too. I like it when my team wins, once our team scored six goals in one game!

On 16<sup>th</sup> March this year I had the opportunity to go with my team mates to Palmerston to have a training session with the Queen of the South coaches. We met the team mascot, Dougie the Doonhamer, then watched Queen of the South play Falkirk. It was an intense and exciting match. Unfortunately, Queens lost 4 -1 but it was a great day out. At half time we got to play some football games on the big pitch in front of the crowd. I really enjoyed it, it was a great experience.

I would recommend anyone who likes playing football to join the club.

# Community News

## Community Council Andi Martin

Lots of things are going on with the Community Council at this time of year.

The new councillors have been appointed after the election in early March. Carrie McFadzean is now officially our new chairperson, Andi Martin has joined as the secretary and John McIntyre and Graham Walker have joined the existing council members of Joe Cook, Caroline Waugh, Cath Duncan, Kate Duffin and Tam Spence. We also have 3 associate members: Keith Harvey, Laura Creaney and Brian Johnstone.

Plans for the Easter Egg Hunt are in full swing, with the event being hosted at the Playing Fields on Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> March between 12 noon and 2 pm.



For the future, we are planning a Bonfire Party in November, The Santa Run in December and other events throughout the year.

If you need to know what matters are brought up at the council meetings, the notice board at the Flying Pig has our up to date notices or check our social media pages on Facebook or the website.

If you want to come to any meeting, all members of the public are welcome. The dates of the meetings are also on the notice board. If you want to raise something, please let one of the council members know and they will raise it on your behalf at the meeting.

## Fairtrade Annual Big Brew Diane Cowen



On Saturday 2nd March 2024, we held our Fairtrade Big Brew, an annual event we've held for 16 years now. This year we raised £420 which is really good for the size of our community. It was really busy in the church and the Glenriddell Hall, a fantastic turn out.

We had local stalls selling Fairtrade and lots of different crafts in the church, including home-made cards, bottle bags, paintings, felted pictures, fairly traded children's clothing, cheese and so much more.

We had refreshments in the Glenriddell Hall with lots of different soups and home-made baking, along with Fairtrade teas and coffees.

There was a raffle in the hall with the prizes being donated by each of the stall holders. There was also a children's treasure hunt which was in both the hall and the church. They were trying to find all the Fairtrade products. The winner, Harry, won a big box of Fairtrade Chocolates.

I'd like to say a big thank you to all the Fairtrade team for making this happen - another successful day.

Thanks again

## Glenriddell Hall – Clubbercise Fiona Thompson

Here are the next few dates for Clubbercise:

- Monday 25th March
- Wednesday 3rd April
- Monday 8th April
- Monday 15th April

All classes are at 6:45pm and are £4 which includes glow stick hire. Hope to see many of you there!

## Auld Alliance Twinning Association Robert Waugh

“Sorry I can’t make it; I’m tied up that day.” This is generally the sort of response that is common when the word ‘AGM’ is mentioned, no matter what organisation it is for.

This necessary annual event keeps raising its head and for our Twinning Association this year it was held on a cold, dull, Sunday in January. As Tynron, Keir and Penpont along with Dunscore are twinned with a group of villages in Northern France, it was fitting that we met at Tynron village hall.

For those lucky few who dragged themselves out that day the format for the meeting was a French onion soup and Galette des Rois (Kings’ cake - a French tradition for Epiphany) lunch with the routine business quickly and efficiently dealt with between courses, aided of course by wine, soft drinks and coffee. The meeting was such that it prompted one of the participants to comment that this was “the best AGM....ever!”

Our association, which promotes cultural links between Scotland and France, has a trip to France every two years between reciprocal visits by our French partners. This year we are the hosts with our French guests arriving for a 4 day visit in early September, dates to be confirmed.

We are a hospitable group and have hosted French guests in the villages for almost 30 years. As an active community group, we are always on the lookout for new hosts who, by participating, get a taste for what is for most a rewarding experience. Don’t worry if you don’t speak any French; many of the French participants speak good English and anyway there is always Google! If you do speak French however, this is an ideal opportunity to use and improve your language skills.

For those interested in finding out more about the Twinning Association or hosting, please contact Robert at [craigeller@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:craigeller@hotmail.co.uk) or any other committee member.

## Galette des Rois Gail Renaud

This is a French speciality, traditionally eaten on 6th January as a celebration of Epiphany, the visit of the Magi (three Kings/Wise Men) to the baby Jesus. Traditionally, a *fève* or token is hidden in the cake, rather like a coin in a Christmas Pudding. The *fève* was originally a bean, whole almond or clean coin but is now usually a small porcelain figure designed specifically for the purpose. Whoever finds the *fève* is the king or queen and gets to wear the golden paper crown that usually comes with the cake.

The cake looks impressive but is essentially a puff pastry sandwich with a frangipane filling and is easy to make: my children attended a French primary school and it was an annual tradition to make a galette with their class.



This version is adapted from Raymond Blanc’s recipe on [raymondblanc.com](http://raymondblanc.com).

### Ingredients:

- 400 g puff pastry
- beaten egg for glazing
- 75 g unsalted butter, softened
- 75 g icing sugar
- 75 g ground almonds
- 1 whole egg
- 1 egg yolk
- 1 tbsp dark rum or Cognac

### Method:

Roll out the pastry and cut two circles approximately 20 cm diameter, one slightly larger than the other.

Make the almond cream by whisking the butter, icing sugar, almonds, egg and egg yolk together. Chill in the fridge for a little while if you have time.

Put the smaller pastry circle on a baking sheet. Spoon the cream into the centre and spread out leaving 2cm around the edge. Add the *fève* (or coin, almond etc).

Brush beaten egg around the 2cm rim, then cover with the larger circle. Press down to seal and knock back the edge with a knife to make a firm seal. The seal needs to be secure or the filling will come out while baking, so you can fold it over if you prefer. Ideally chill again for an hour before cooking. Preheat oven to 180°C.

Score the top of the galette with a knife to make a pattern and brush with beaten egg.

Bake at 180°C for 45 minutes until golden brown.

## Dunscore Gala 2024

### Shell Rogers

Spring has sprung and the countdown to our Gala has begun. Since September, the committee has been working hard to get plans in place, so read on to find out what this year's Gala has in store. Before we get to that, we want to thank everyone who supported our recent Coffee Morning, particularly those who baked for us. We raised almost £400. We have another event planned - keep your eyes out for more details of this.

The Dunscore Gala itself is the time when our community comes together. The committee works to raise funds throughout the year to keep this a free family event. This year's Gala will launch on the afternoon of Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> August with events on every evening throughout the rest of the week, before the big day itself on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> August.

Many of our community attend every event, others pick the ones that suit them best. We try to offer something for everyone.



#### Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> August

Our Gala Royal party will arrive by limo (only the best for our VIPs) for an afternoon of fun in the sun – hopefully. We'll start with the official crowning, before the afternoon's activities get started.

As is tradition in our Gala, our annual competitions will be judged. Details of these will be confirmed nearer the time, but the Tattie bogles are making a comeback with this year's theme - Superheroes. We're bringing back the Bottle Rockets again this year and there will be bouncy castles too. The BBQ will be fired up for those who work up a hunger.

#### Monday 5<sup>th</sup> August

BIKE CHALLENGE. Open to kids and grown ups of all ages. There's always lots of laughs and 'cheering on' as participants pit their biking skills against the course to complete it in the fastest time.

#### Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> August

PET SHOW. A night to rival Crufts. Pets of all shapes and sizes are welcomed along to strut their stuff in the show ring. Local vets will be on hand to judge best in category, before announcing 'Best in Show'. All are welcome - over the years we've had a variety of dogs,

rabbits, guinea pigs, chickens, calves, sheep, ponies, tadpoles and many more.

#### Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> August

CAR TREASURE HUNT. A firm favourite of the week and a real adventure for anyone new to the area. Iain Currie will be setting the hunt again this year but other than that we know no more – he keeps it all TOP SECRET from everyone.

#### Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> August

FAMILY GAMES NIGHT. This is hosted in Glenriddell Hall, there will be a variety of games on offer all hosted by our own John McIntyre.

#### Friday 9<sup>th</sup> August

QUIZ NIGHT. The quiz to top them all. Ann Walton always makes this a fab night, running two quizzes at the same time, one for the kids and one for the adults. There's always lots of fun and laughter along with the brain teasing questions. Oh and the bar is open!

#### Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> August

GALA DAY AND NIGHT. The festivities will kick off with the procession of floats and vintage vehicles all being led from the Church to Gala field by the Buccleuch and Queensberry Pipe Band. When you get to the field there will be plenty of entertainment to keep everyone going throughout the afternoon. Our headline acts this year are Steve Colley Stunt Show and Tanzanian Acrobats, who along with Face Painting, Pony Rides, Bouncy Castles, Gladiator Inflatables, Lazer Quest, Bungee Trampolines, Slides, Quad Bikes, Archery, Balloon Artist, local Dance Acts and more besides, will keep everyone entertained for the afternoon.

Saturday night is alright for DANCING. This year our band is Deluxe Edition. You'll find them online if you want a sneak preview.

It's going to be a brilliant week, so mark your diaries and we'll see you there!





## DADS - Burns Night

### Jane Kitasono



The Glenriddell Hall was the venue for a truly wonderful Burns Night Supper hosted by the Dunscore Amateur Dramatic Society. The tables were beautifully decorated with lights, foliage and old leather-bound books to create a warm, inviting atmosphere. It was clear a lot of hard work had gone into planning and as a result the evening flowed with a mixture of poetry readings, speeches and a great array of music - violin, flutes, piano and singing. It seems Dunscore has talent in abundance.

The Haggis, the star of the show, was piped in and addressed in the traditional way with great gusto. A poignant Toast to the Lassies was delivered with sincerity and replied to with warmth and humour.

The kitchen team came out to receive hearty applause for their hard work and it was a fantastic night all round.

Music, entertainment, haggis, whisky and convivial company: the Bard would have definitely approved and Dunscore Amateur Dramatic did him and the village of Dunscore proud.

## DADS - Steel Magnolias

### Brian Johnstone

Looking back at the early stages of planning what sort of production DADS would put on next, I have to admit a degree of scepticism when John, our Director, decided that it would be Steel Magnolias. Each part was massive, big scripts to learn, and all to be spoken in a Southern US accent! I shouldn't have worried, particularly when it quickly became obvious that this play was to be performed entirely by our (much more) talented, conscientious, and hard working female group within the society.

Phew! The guys were off the hook.

On looking in on some of the rehearsals in the Flying Pig over many weeks, I noted how the team steadily grew into their parts and polished these American accents.

Clearly a tremendous amount of effort was put in to learn lines, and this was evident when the curtain went up in the church on each performance in February.

Each actor played their part brilliantly. Sometimes when you know a person who is performing in a play or film, it is hard to avoid seeing them as that person rather than as the character they are playing. I can say honestly that throughout the play, such was the quality of acting, that I was fully immersed in each character. There was a good chemistry achieved among the players, and while I don't as a rule spend much time in ladies' hair salons, the setting felt real!

Dunscore Church once again made a splendid venue, and the stage design, set, props, and costumes were all fantastic. A credit to the hard work of the crew behind the scenes.

This fourth production by our local drama group provided a splendid evening of entertainment in the village.

We are regularly discussing what we might do next, and it would be good to hear suggestions from the community. Please do also get in touch if you'd like to get involved in any way.



## Moniaive Horse Show 2024

### Eunice Laidlaw

Plans for the Moniaive Horse Show are progressing well and we are looking forward to our show on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> July.

Although we have cut the dog show classes by two, these continue to be more popular each year. We are always on the lookout for more stewards and helpers, so if anyone would like a day out, please get in touch with Eunice on 07740-612-520.

**Speddoch Hall  
Ceilidh Dance  
Anne Murphy (Men of Morrinton)**



On Saturday 24th February, locals and not so locals enjoyed our second Ceilidh in Speddoch Hall. The David Kennedy Ceilidh Band provided the music with David expertly guiding everyone through the dances. Graham Sharp Catering made sure everyone was well fed with a superb buffet with soup, sandwiches and savouries at the interval.

The organisers would like to thank those who attended, making it such an enjoyable evening in a perfect venue. Profits from the evening will be donated to local charities. Last year's beneficiaries were Diabetes, Kidney Disease UK and CRY.

**Cairn Chorus**



*Singing to  
Trees*

**Concerts**

**Saturday May 14th**

7.30pm Glencairn Memorial Institute, Moniaive **Donations please**

**Sunday May 15th**

2pm Dunscore Church **Donations please**

**Afternoon Walks and Songs**

**Saturday May 14th**

3pm Townhead of Glencairn garden, Kirkland **Free**

**4.30pm** John Corrie

Wildlife Garden, Moniaive **Free**

[info@cairnchorus.co.uk](mailto:info@cairnchorus.co.uk)  
[www.cairnchorus.co.uk](http://www.cairnchorus.co.uk)

**Dunscore Slimming & Crazy Crafters  
Gloria Burke**

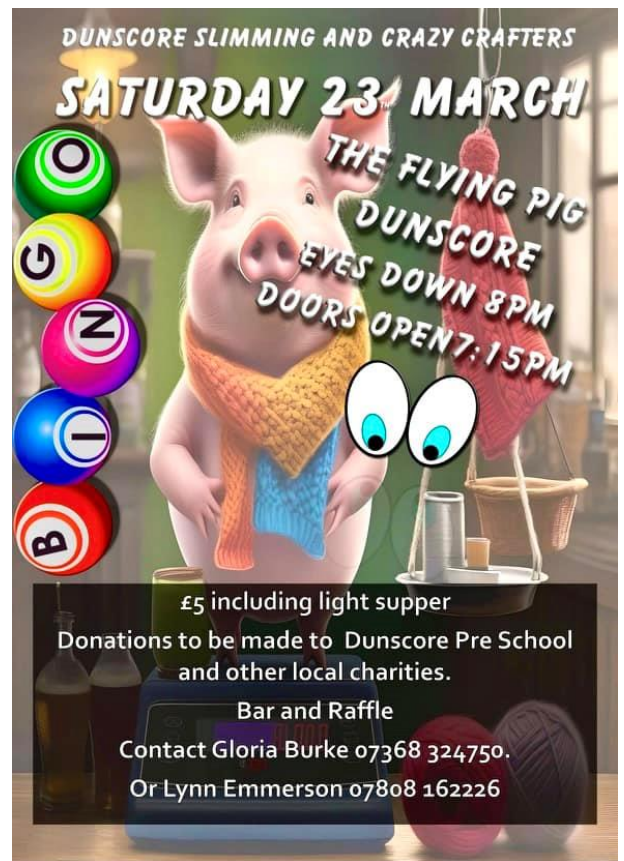
At the moment we are all busy planning a Bingo night in the Flying Pig on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> of March and have been out and about contacting local businesses for contributions towards the prizes and raffle.

Entry Fee is £5 for a book of tickets and includes a light supper. No need to book tickets just turn up. The bar will be open.

Doors open 7:15pm – Eyes Down for 8pm.

Look forward to seeing you all there. Don't miss out on a great night and you never know, you might even win!

We meet up for Slimming at 11 am and 11.30 am for Crafting, however once the clocks go back on Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> March we will be moving to Tuesday evenings again for the summer: 6 pm start and 6.30 pm for Crafters.



**Cairn Valley Community Transport  
Ann Walton & Kirsten Griffiths**

Cairn Valley Community transport is a small charity set up to provide transport services to the local community and the bus can be hired by any local group to provide days out for their members or transport to events that they are organising. Everyone involved at CVCT is a volunteer and we are always on the lookout for new people to join the team, particularly drivers.

We run a scheduled bus service to Castle Douglas on alternate Thursdays. For those people fortunate to be young enough not to be able to use their bus pass, the cost is £3.50 for the return trip. There is no need to pre-book a place on this route.

The timetable is as follows:

Moniaive Cross	11.15am
Kirkland	11.20am
Wallaceton	11.25am
Dunscore (Flying Pig)	11.30am
Newtonairds	11.35am
Shawhead	11.45am

The return service leaves Castle Douglas at 3.05pm and is due back in Moniaive at 4pm.

## CAIRN VALLEY

Community Transport  
Spring Excursions

Sat 6th April	<b>Carlisle</b> • 09:00 £8 bus ticket <i style="color: red; font-weight: bold;">Places Limited</i>
Sat 20th April	<b>Wanlockhead Lead Mining Museum</b> • 10:00 £5 bus • Tickets from £6.50/Under 16s free
Sat 4th May	<b>Rosslyn Chapel &amp; Biggar</b> • 09:30 £10 bus. Chapel tickets £9.50 for concession • Rosslyn first with a visit to Biggar town afterwards <i style="color: red; font-weight: bold;">Fully Booked</i>
Sat 18th May	<b>Durham</b> • 08:00 £14 bus ticket • A day out exploring in the city centre <i style="color: red; font-weight: bold;">Fully Booked</i>
Sat 1st June	<b>Ardrossan &amp; the Isle of Arran</b> • 07:30 £10 bus. £9.20 adult/£4.60 child ferry return • Bus trip to Ardrossan with 100 passenger ferry to Arran <i style="color: red; font-weight: bold;">Fully Booked</i>

To book: Phone - **Mon - Fri 01387 820869**  
 Email - [bookings@cvct.org.uk](mailto:bookings@cvct.org.uk)

Leave times are from the cross, Moniaive. Stopping at Dunscore 15 minutes later. Other pick-up points can be arranged if practicable and depending on route.

The Moniaive - Castle Douglas service will run throughout Spring on:  
 • Feb 1st, 15th & 29th  
 • Mar 14th & 28th  
 • Apr 11th & 25th  
 • May 9th & 23rd  
 For prices and pickup times, visit [www.cvct.org.uk](http://www.cvct.org.uk)

The special excursions that we have planned for the spring are now almost all fully booked and there are waiting lists for those that are. We will soon be planning our summer schedule and would welcome suggestions for destinations for those trips. Places can be secured by either phoning 01387 820869 on weekdays only or by emailing [bookings@cvct.org.uk](mailto:bookings@cvct.org.uk). Please note that we have had some recent problems with this email address so if you don't get a response then please telephone to confirm your place(s).

CVCT recently began a collaboration with the Theatre Royal in Dumfries and the first group of locals went to see the performance by the Guild of Players a few weeks ago. There are plans for more trips like this in the future so keep your eyes open on social media as they will be advertised there.

We will also be providing transport to some of the venues for the Spring Fling between 25<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> May 2024. Precise details are still to be confirmed but will be available on the [Spring Fling](#) website as well as social media.

In the meantime, if your organisation would like to hire the bus then please contact Alan James on 01387 820241 or [alansnademill@outlook.com](mailto:alansnademill@outlook.com) to make a booking.

## Dalgarno Singers 50th Anniversary Concert

### Gail Renaud

The Dalgarno Singers, who include among their number several participants from Dunscore, will be putting on a special performance to mark the 50th anniversary of the group. The programme, which will also feature professional soloists, will include Mozart's Requiem, John Rutter's 'Feel the Spirit' and a number of other pieces. It should be a treat!

**Saturday 11th May, 7.30 pm**, St John the Evangelist, Newall Terrace, Dumfries DG1 1LW

## D & G Carers Centre

### Nina Raynor

# Are you a Carer?

Many people do not see themselves as Carers and may be missing out on vital support, services, benefits, and information.

Refer yourself to the Carers Centre

A Carer is someone who without payment, provides help and support to a partner, child, relative, friend or neighbour, who could not otherwise manage without their help. This could be due to age, physical or mental illness, addiction, or disability.

For more information call us on **01387 248 600**  
 or email: [info@dgalcarers.org](mailto:info@dgalcarers.org)

# Farming

## Farm Life in Spring Harry Dobson (aged 11)



Hello, I am Harry and I live on a farm. It's right on top of a hill above Glenmidge. Easter is a very busy time on the farm. The white fluffy lambs are being born and the colourful calves (we have shorthorns). It is also a time to start getting ready for summer. All the flowers like daffodils sprout out, some people even begin to start cropping. We have horses, but only two. Eve the mum and Ericsson the foal. Eve might have a baby as well, since everything 'springs out' in spring. This is why we are so busy.

The things I do on the farm are helping with feeding all the animals and helping mucking out. The cows are having a lot more food as they are due to give birth in April. The farm is really beautiful, when it is sunny (and it never is); you can see over the sea to Cumbria, England. One of our pets, a cat, lives on the farm and sleeps in the workshop. This is strange as most cats sleep inside an actual house, so that makes the farm a little bit more special. The only other thing that happens in spring is the crows are very annoying and they can hurt the new lambs. So I either clap or make a big noise to scare them away.

My favourite part about the farm is the big bales. I can climb on them as they are stacked in a way for someone to play on. Well, now that's all from me, so until next time, cheerio!

## Fardingjames Farm Claire Henderson

It's been a long 6 years for the Henderson family, with the very start of the new cowshed taking place in 2018 when the slatted tank was built - the project being a complete new set up. Since then we've slowly built it up year by year when funds have been available, creating the shed itself with help from local shed builder Andrew Fry. Adding to it with cow cubicles, feed passages and, of course, a brand spanking new parlour. Iain Howat has somewhat lived here the past few months, making sure

all our electrician requirements are being fulfilled (my new cooker hood being the most important of course!)

There has been lots of digging and building, mending and making, and not forgetting all the blood, sweat and tears that have been shed over these last few stressful years. It was always Robert Henderson's ambition to improve the farm and still sustain a good work life balance and inevitably we needed a new parlour to secure our future of continuing to milk cows. He loved the farm, especially the cows but also the sheep. Since his sudden passing in 2021, it's been Ross and Stuart who have held the fort here at Fardingjames. With their Dad in mind, they continued his dream of a new parlour and the day is nearly upon us when this will finally become the reality in March this year when the parlour will be completed.

The parlour is a rapid exit Dairymaster which is able to milk 32 cows at one time, hoping to reduce current milking time by half, which is good news for Ross and Stuart. We currently milk 170 Friesian dairy cows with a grazing system. We also have 200 black faced sheep which we lamb outside over the month of April.

Lambing time is nearly upon us which always includes soggy lambs in the Aga for a 5 minute boost to heat up and pet lambs getting chauffeured around in the doll's pram by our kids - even making it into the Scottish Farmer newspaper last spring.

Last year we had our pet lamb, Sweetie, visiting Dunscore Pre-school and primary school. She enjoyed the children feeding her milk and fussing over her in the playground. And yes, she had a lead on, courtesy of our 4 year old daughter Lucy who liked to take her for walks.



We had Primary 1 and 2 from Dunscore in June (as well as Moniaive Primary the previous year) for a farm visit to help consolidate their learning from their topic work. These farm visits are done through The Royal Highland Education Trust (RHET) who help facilitate the school trips to local agricultural amenities. The children enjoyed seeing the cows being milked, learning about

silage and, of course, feeding the calves and lambs. And not forgetting our cat Biscuit, who may I add won first place at Dunscore gala pet show, and yes she also had a lead on, which Faye and Lucy are begging me to mention.

The farm visits are a great way of involving the local community and opportunities like this are crucial in order to teach children from a very young age exactly where the food on their plate comes from.

On one hand, farming and country life lends itself to green fields, fresh air and the ability to get on with your work independently - it's a way of life. On the other hand, it's evermore important to educate people about food production and how farming shapes the countryside and green spaces enjoyed by so many. Thankfully the weather was kind the day they visited and there were lots of glitter wellies and unicorn hats on show for the farm tour!

On saying goodbye to the class we reflected on what a rewarding morning it had been. Although Dunscore is a rural village and renowned for its strong links to the

farming community, it is refreshing to talk to these young people about farming, food and the environment and know that they already have a good understanding of this subject. Myself and Ross have 2 young daughters, Faye and Lucy, who are currently interested in helping outside and being involved. Will they eventually want to take on the farm? Will they follow in their Dad's footsteps? Who knows. But what we do know is that this kind of public engagement proves to be valuable and will hopefully help bridge the gap between farmers and the next generation.

Ross and Stuart will continue, however, to follow in their Dad's footsteps as we prepare for a busy spring time ahead. The completion of the parlour is a rewarding sense of achievement; however, with Robert not being around to see, it remains bittersweet for the family. His wellies have been imprinted into the concrete of the entrance to the dairy as a constant reminder he is there. He would have been incredibly proud of what has been achieved here and we will carry on his legacy by continuing to do what we love - farming and education within the thriving community.

## Heritage

### Heritage Centre

John Drabble



The Dunscore Heritage Centre in the church will be open from 2-4pm every Sunday from Easter Day to the end of October. There is something here for everyone, including a warm welcome, kids' exploring games, tea, coffee and juice. Entrance is free, but we always welcome donations.

We have invested funds from donations into distributing many more leaflets around the region, and we think this will increase visitor numbers this year.

The excellent interactive display has been updated and made it much simpler to get access to fascinating material about the history of the village, the church and the Jane Haining story.

Each year, on Holocaust Memorial Day at the end of January, we gather at the Jane Haining memorial cairn in the church car park. We remember Jane and the millions caught up in the holocaust and in wars, some of

which are happening right now. Children from Dunscore Primary School, the school that Jane attended, joined us again this year for the commemoration.



If you have, or know of, any archive material (*stories, photos, artifacts etc.*) that may be of interest, please do let us know via the website.

Please visit the website [www.dunscoreheritage.org](http://www.dunscoreheritage.org) which has been recently given a fresh look, with lots more material.

We are enormously grateful to Kevin Wallace who not only simplified the interactive display, but also re-designed the website.

Finally, we are always looking for more volunteer guides – please give it a go and spread the buzz!

**Score**  
Ann Walton

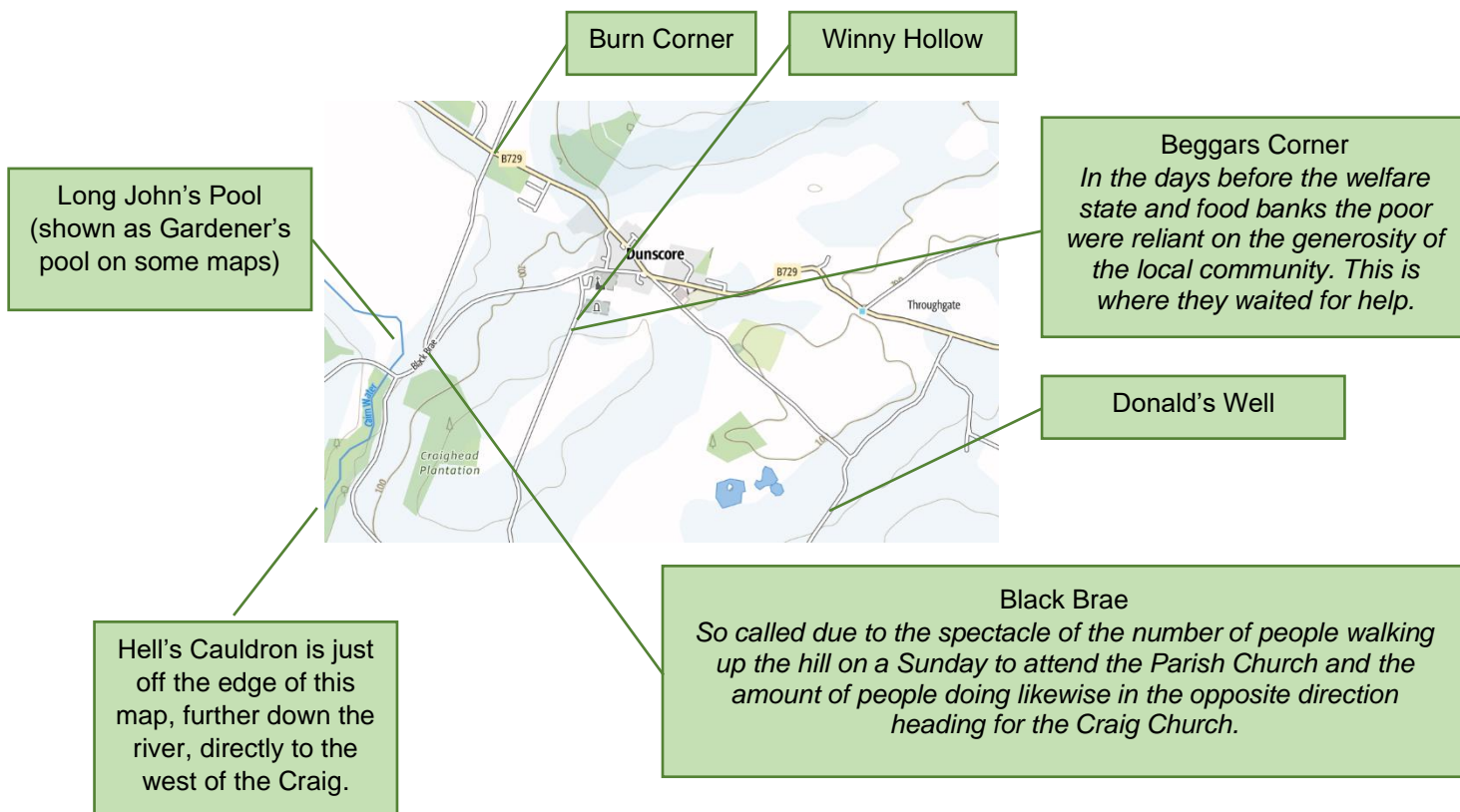
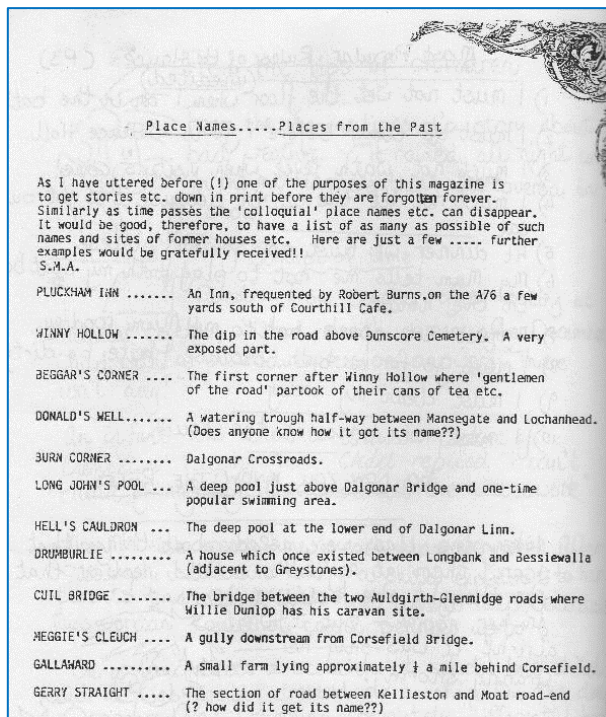
reproduce selected items of from these magazines in future editions of the Dunscore Digest.

Concerned that some of the local place names were dying out, the editors of the Dunscore magazine, 'Score' produced an article listing some of the ones that they thought would be of interest to people in the local area in their Spring 1990 edition. Chatting to Archie and Sheila Anderson, who provided us with this article, they offered some more information than is listed here. I've added that information in the annotations to the map below.

Since this original article was produced some of the references have disappeared as well. Courthill Café was where Courthill caravan site is now, just up from Friar's Carse on the A76. Willie Dunlop's caravan site has now gone. Turning right at the T junction at Glenmidge will take you to where it was at Cuil Bridge at the next road junction.

Although not shown on the map below, I had always assumed that Meggie's Cleuch referred to the bridge on the B729 but Archie told me that a cleuch is another name for a gully.

If you are interested to read more of these articles, there is a complete set of Score magazines available for you to access in the Heritage Centre. We also plan to



# Charity

## FRED

Iraina McGroarty

Spring is a time of rebirth, renewal and growth. An exciting time of year when the darkness of winter gives way to brighter days, shorter nights and the promise of warmer sunnier days.

Here at Farmersfield we love nature awakening, trees starting to bud, the wonderful yellow of the daffodils beginning to bloom, some of our hen ladies already going broody.

But I want to take you back to December, to the week before Christmas and to a very sad donkey who didn't have a name, but needed a home. Once we knew this poor donkey was coming to Farmersfield we set about finding a name for her. As a SCIO (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation) FRED relies heavily on donations from individuals and we asked one of our benefactors who suggested Lizzie would be a good name for the donkey.

When she arrived here Lizzie struggled with walking, one foot in particular was really long and misshapen. Her breathing alarmed us - it was incredibly fast. A reasonably healthy donkey will have roughly 20 breaths per minute; this girl was averaging 62 breaths a minute. She was described as gentle and quiet and she was, but only because she had no choice but to comply. This donkey had neither the ability to escape from, nor the energy to put up a fight against anything she didn't like. But her eyes were so expressive. To begin with, we saw the whites of her eyes: she was fearful and hypervigilant. It was like she expected the worst and yet there was also something there, some spark, some part of Lizzie that spoke to the core of us all. From the moment we met Lizzie she had us captivated. We wanted this beautiful petite, delicate dark brown donkey to know she mattered, to understand she was loved and to believe she would never suffer again.

Usually, we let new donkeys settle for a week or so before getting them vetted and starting routine procedures. Lizzie, however, couldn't wait. Our vet diagnosed pneumonia and we started antibiotics. Her worm count was off the scale so we wormed her. Lizzie had not had any pain relief so she was started on medication and we had bloods taken amongst other things to find out if Lizzie was pregnant. Every day we spent lots of time with Lizzie, talking to her, sitting with her and getting her used to us on her terms. Soon we stopped seeing the whites of her eyes and instead we were greeted with Lizzie coming towards us and genuinely relaxing. Lizzie began to thrive and we all felt optimistic for her future.

On the advice of our wonderful farrier we had Lizzie's feet X-rayed and the pictures were not pretty. They revealed serious issues which will prove to be life



limiting for Lizzie. This was a very bleak day for everyone. Many tears were shed. Soon after this her bloods confirmed Lizzie was pregnant. A donkey's gestation can be anywhere between 10 and 14 months. What we knew was that as Lizzie got heavier there would be more pressure on her already compromised feet. Graeme, our farrier, has worked wonders to keep her comfortable and sound.

So we are heading into Spring with Lizzie getting bigger by the day. Some days she looks ready to burst but we do not know when she will foal. For Lizzie's health the sooner the better. Lizzie's story is one of renewal. We know little of her past other than she was taken from a very bad situation and had several short term homes until she came here. But here she has a name and an identity. Everyone who has met Lizzie adores her. She is so beautiful. Lizzie loves being scratched at the base of her neck. She goes into a trance and her lower lip quivers with pleasure. She likes to sniff faces and when she does, this feels like a moment of trust between two equals. It really is a privilege to be trusted by Lizzie, given what we can surmise about her life.

Lizzie is in the wee paddock at the front of Farmersfield - you can see her as you pass us. Please keep her in your thoughts as she enters the final stages of her pregnancy. Wee Lizzie has come from darkness, pain and uncertainty and now we have the opportunity to hold her in the light and help her as she approaches motherhood. We are a rest home for elderly donkeys - we deal with end of life and all the problems leading to it so it will be amazing to have a baby donkey here! Fingers crossed all will be well for Lizzie. She deserves only good in her life.

If you want to visit Lizzie and the other donkeys please message us through FaceBook or phone 07852447076 to arrange.

# Gardens & Nature

## Scotland's Garden Scheme

Ann Walton

Date	Address	Postcode	Times
Sunday 24 <sup>th</sup> March	The Limes, Kirkcudbright	DG6 4XD	2pm - 5pm
Sunday 28 <sup>th</sup> April	Balmaclellan House, Castle Douglas	DG7 3PW	1pm – 4pm
Monday 6 <sup>th</sup> May	Threave Gardens, Castle Douglas	DG7 1RX	10am – 5pm
Sunday 12 <sup>th</sup> May	Dalswinton House	DG2 0XZ	12pm – 5pm
	Arbigland House, Kirkbean	DG2 8BQ	2pm – 5pm
Sunday 19 <sup>th</sup> May	The Limes, Kirkcudbright	DG64XD	2pm – 5pm
	Brooklands, Crockettford	DG2 8QH	2pm – 5pm
Saturday 25 <sup>th</sup> May	Cally Biodiversity Gardens, Gatehouse of Fleet	DG2 2DJ	10am – 5pm
Sunday 26 <sup>th</sup> May	Corsock House, Castle Douglas	DG7 3DJ	2pm – 5pm
Sunday 2 <sup>nd</sup> June	Seabank House, Rockcliffe	DG5 4QH	2pm – 5pm
	Cowhill Tower, Holywood	DG2 0RL	2pm – 5pm
	Waterside Garden, Moffat *	DG10 9LF	2pm – 5pm
Sunday 23 <sup>rd</sup> June	The Hewke, Lockerbie	DG11 2JY	2pm – 5pm
Sunday 30 <sup>th</sup> June	Southwick House, Southwick	DG2 8AH	2pm – 5pm
Sunday 4 <sup>th</sup> August	Dalswinton Mill	DG2 0XY	2pm – 6pm
Sunday 29 <sup>th</sup> Sept	Cally Biodiversity Gardens, Gatehouse of Fleet	DG2 2DJ	10am – 5pm

\*Advance booking essential

These are gardens within a 25 mile radius of Dunscore which are open on specific days of the year to raise money for charity. Admission to all but two of these gardens is listed as £5. The two which merely specify a donation are Cowhill Tower and The Hewke in Lockerbie.

Charles Jencks' garden at Portrack House in Holywood is already sold out so is not included in this list.

Also included on the website is Peilton. The given address is Moniaive but the postcode places it at Kirkland. The more knowledgeable of you out there will no doubt know exactly where it is. It's listed as opening for a week in May or early June, depending upon when it's looking its best so we'll need to keep a collective eye out for it being advertised.

Some of the gardens on this list will also open at other times by prior arrangement and there are others which only open by prior arrangement. I've never visited any of the gardens listed as 'by prior arrangement' as I've

never been organised enough but also, I think that it'd be a bit awkward going around a stranger's garden on my own. I wonder if there would be enough people interested to get a small group together to visit one or two of these gardens this year?

Whilst I was compiling this information, I wrongly thought I'd identified a mistake on the website and messaged them to let them know. When I explained what I was doing, they very kindly offered to send us a paper copy of the handbook for the whole of Scotland. I've arranged for it to be posted to the Flying Pig so that everyone can benefit from it – especially those of us who aren't happy to use a computer!

For more information about all these gardens and full details of sites all over Scotland, either consult the handbook in the pub or visit [Scotland's Garden Scheme](#).

Some gardens will accept dogs on leads but please check first.



## Gatelawbridge Village

Ann Walton

Every two years the residents of Gatelawbridge open up their gardens to raise money for charity. This is not part of the open gardens scheme but it's a grand afternoon out, particularly as the styles of garden are very varied. This year, they plan to open on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> June from 12pm to 5pm. Adult entries are £8 but children go free. Teas will be served from 1pm to 4pm. For up to date information about their plans, follow them on Facebook at [Gatelawbridge Garden Walks](#).

## Looking Forward to Spring

Andi Martin

As we come to the end of February, the gardens are starting to let us know that spring is just around the corner. Snowdrops are showing their little white bell shaped heads, winter aconites bring a smile to your face as the small sun-like faces bring a spot of colour to the winter days. The trumpet-like flowers of the daffodils bring music to the crisp morning airs and the majestic tulips are slowly showing their heads.



But it's not just the upcoming seasons we should be happy to see. Birds are singing their morning songs, feeding on the seed heads of last year's blooms. Sunflower heads provide a tasty snack, creepy crawlies the protein diet, and now the water is starting to subside after the winter rains, the fruit trees are offering early buds of tastiness for these creatures to enjoy.

In the hedgerows, the yellow of the broom bush flowers show the early bees where the food is for the queens to feed on. On the ground, pheasants who have succeeded in beating the shooters are running amuck. Bunnies hop and squirrels bound around.



Spring will soon be here and we can all look forward to the year ahead and all the pleasures we will be able to enjoy.

## Some Facts About Birds

Gloria Burke



### Winter Ball

School Science Books say a sphere has the least surface area for any volume. That's why chilly birds fluff themselves up, retaining warmth by minimising the area where body heat is lost. If the birds look fat don't be fooled. They need our help with responsible nutritious feed such as various seed, nuts, fat balls etc.

Here is a list of seeds to attract a variety of birds to your gardens. Always choose good quality mixed seeds and feed.

**Nyger** - attracts goldfinches and siskins.

**Nuts** - attract all kinds including woodpeckers, blue tits, great tits and greenfinch.

All birds enjoy **fat balls** and **suet**.

### Hot Headed

While roosting birds reduce their core temperatures and cut flow to extremities, they must keep their brain running in case of urgent action. While their bodies may be a cool 35-38 degrees C their heads are still cooking at around 40 degrees C.

### Cold Feet

Birds walk on snow, ice or cold ground without a hint of discomfort. Veins transporting colder blood back from the feet are wound tightly around arteries coming the other way – an ingenious central heat exchange.

### Fat Burners

Great Tits will put on 10% of their body weight between waking up and going to roost. That's like a human eating 8 kilograms of butter a day.

It's burned off overnight, ready to start again the next morning, which in itself is amazing as we humans cannot do that. (Many of us wish we could). Next time you see them in your garden flitting back and forward all day you will appreciate how much work they do to stay alive every day.

# Other Interests



## Moffat Mountain Rescue

### Colin Mitchell

The Moffat Mountain Rescue Team was formed in 1969 and was named the Moffat Hill Rescue Service until 1995 when it became the Moffat Mountain Rescue Team. I joined the team in 1984 and have served as deputy team leader, team leader, chairman and secretary. I am now an ordinary member! We are on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week and every day of the year.

I have been on many callouts with most having happy endings but, sadly not all of them.

My most memorable Christmas Day call out was in the aftermath of the Lockerbie Air Disaster. The team leader was out of the country and so I led the team throughout the incident. The scenes we saw on the first night were horrific and sadly our first aid skills were not required. All the nasty stuff was over by Christmas Day and we were searching an area of forestry in a remote area when I received a radio message saying Christmas dinner was being served at the end of a nearby forestry road. On arrival we met the Salvation Army in a van with a Christmas dinner. After this wonderful treat we continued searching until it got dark and returned to the school in Lockerbie where we had another Christmas dinner. I then travelled home to yet another Christmas Dinner with the family.

The most recent callout was to Criffel where a lady had broken her ankle between Criffel and Knockendock. We realised that this was going to be a long carry out and we called on the Galloway Mountain Rescue Team to assist us. An advanced team with a paramedic reached her first and administered pain relief. Her ankle was splinted, she was wrapped in a warm casualty bag, put on a rescue stretcher and carried to the valley where she was put into one of our vehicles and transported to a waiting ambulance.

We train regularly to make sure the team have all the skills to carry out rescues in any area and in any

weather. All team members have outdoor first aid qualifications and some of us have a more advanced qualification as Remote Rescue Medical Technicians. We also train to work with helicopters. I recently completed an off road 4X4 driving course. Great fun!

We do not only deal with mountain incidents. We assist the police with missing person searches, give safety cover to mountain races and help out in severe weather incidents. All team members are volunteers, The team cost £27,000 to run last year. We receive some funding from the Scottish Government but the majority we raise ourselves with some help from windfarm funding.

We have a base in Moffat where most of our equipment and two of our vehicles are kept. We keep one vehicle in Dumfries. All team members have equipment kept at their home. This includes a radio, full waterproof clothing, helmet, climbing equipment, first aid kit, a mountain shelter, search lamp and avalanche protection and rescue kit. This allows us to travel to callouts without having to go to Moffat.

As I am one of the most elderly members I rarely go onto the hill (I am not fast enough uphill nowadays!) and now operate the base and help the team leader control the incident. I also am used to drive vehicles when required. We are called out via a text to our phones. This is often late at night or very early in the morning. When this happens, I get my rescue kit into the car whilst Pam fills a flask with hot drinks and prepares sandwiches etc. When I was working, there were times where I had been out all night and straight to work in the morning. My secretary was good at keeping me supplied with strong coffee throughout the day! The team is in good heart with 27 members on the callout list and more in training preparing to join the team.

I hope you do not need our services but if you ever need our help dial 999 and ask for the police and then mountain rescue!

## Smartphone Photography

Keith Walker

You often hear photographers say that the best camera you have is the one you have with you. It's a bit of a cliché but, as with most clichés, it contains more than a smidgen of truth.

Almost all of us have smartphones in our pockets almost all of the time, many with superb cameras. So we snap away taking hundreds of images, filling up our device and only occasionally showing them to others. It is estimated that more pictures are now taken every 100 seconds than were taken throughout the whole of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. But what if we want to "improve" our photos?

Firstly, don't get suckered into the notion that you need an expensive camera and lenses to achieve great results. You don't, and never ever say, "Oh it's just a phone shot." Many well-known photographers, including the likes of David Bailey have displayed images taken on a smartphone at major exhibitions.

So what can you do to help you get what you want? Obviously, looking at images taken by others will give you an idea of what you like, but how do you edit your pictures to produce what you're after? Though most

phones will have some photo editor built in, perhaps the best app in this respect is Snapseed. Free, with helpful tutorials and an easy-to-understand interface, it is a powerful tool to help you manipulate images.

Take for example the images below. The one on the left is the unedited version as snapped on the phone after the recent Gala coffee morning. This was then shared with the Snapseed app where the perspective was tweaked a bit, the lamp post removed using the healing tool and the brightness and contrast slightly increased. The final image is very far from perfect, but it is perhaps a better picture of the church. All the editing was done on an old Samsung smartphone and took about 2 minutes. Had the weather been better, the process could have been completed before I left the car park.

Now whether it is right to remove objects like the lamp post or not, well that's very much an individual call. Historical accuracy against a less cluttered image is a decision you have to make when editing, and the intended use of your final image will inevitably shape that decision.



*If anyone is interested in perhaps finding out more about Smartphone photography including use of apps and cheap ways to print images, please contact the Digest. If there is sufficient interest, then some sessions may be organised for later in the year.*

# Local Business

## Dunscore Fuel Supplies Ann Walton



Since moving to Dunscore from Kent in 2003, Martin Phipps has offered a variety of services to the local community. As part of his fuel supplies business, he currently sells, firewood, coal and bottled gas. All are available to order from him for delivery but he's also happy for members of the local community to collect what they need from his yard at Longbank in Mansegate and then pay him by bank transfer or cash. There's an honesty box on site. He also has the ability to take card payments when he makes a delivery.

His current price list is:

### Coals and Wood

20kg Premium House Coal £15.50

25kg Burnwell Blend £15

25kg Newburn £17

Hardwood logs £6 per bag

Kindling £4 per bag

Fire lighters £1 per packet

### Calor Gas

7kg Butane £29

15kg Butane £49.50

19kg Propane £48

47kg Propane £90

When Martin first moved to the village, he began by digging out fishing ponds at Longbank. He now charges £5 per person per day for coarse fishing. The ponds are mainly stocked with tench, roach, rudd and perch. He no longer breeds the worms himself but imports them from Holland. Prices for 2024 are yet to be confirmed but he estimates that they will retail at around £28 per kilo. He has a small fishing tackle shop for people coming to fish and he also has fishing rods available to hire out for a small fee. The ponds are open all year round for fishing but visitors are more likely to be successful in the warmer months when the fish feed more keenly.

The photograph below was taken when Nith Young Anglers Club came to the ponds in May 2023 for a day's fishing.



To order fuel or to arrange a fishing trip, Martin can be contacted on 07840 816236 or 01387 820569

We plan to prepare the next issue of the Digest in time for the gala. If you wish to contribute an article for that then please contact us at [dq2digest@gmail.com](mailto:dq2digest@gmail.com) before the end of June 2024. We're keen to hear from new contributors.