



Signpost 2019



The Magazine of Alloway Parish Church

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www.allowaychurch.org*

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Letter from the Manse

Dear Friends,

I trust that you will receive this year's copy of Signpost with the compliments and best wishes of your local Parish Church.



We are pleased to share with you just some of the stories from the community we seek to serve. Stories that serve to illustrate just how many good and interesting things there are going on in our neighbourhood.

At this year's Church of Scotland General Assembly, a Radical Action Plan was unveiled. Doubtless the Church of Scotland is in need of structural reorganisation. I note the heart of this plan is to "identify, release and develop the gifts of the people" Amen to that.

Nevertheless, it is sometimes important that we have a radical action plan in our personal lives. Living by faith has never been easy.

I am often challenged by the words of the prophet Micah. He too lived in a time when traditional religion seemed to be fading. Even the religious had at times forgotten the most important things. The prophet reminded his society:

"What does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? Micah 6 v8

So let's get radical together and prioritise justice, kindness and humility in our own lives. By doing so we may find our families and communities will benefit from the changes we make.

May God bless you all.

Rev. Neil McNaught

August 2019

Our Former Trainee Minister

What an amazing second placement I have had at Alloway Parish Church. It was everything that I had prayed for.

When I began at Alloway in September 2018, I was rather nervous and unsure of what to expect at this beautiful church with such a large congregation that two Sunday morning services are required. I need not have worried. I received such a warm welcome, quickly felt part of the family and rapidly gained experience of so many aspects of life in Alloway.



I have assisted with all aspects of Sunday Worship, participated in Wednesday Worship, attended meetings of the Kirk Session, Congregational Board and various committees, visited many organisations, conducted funerals, assisted with pastoral visits and so much more. I was also able to attend the General Assembly and several Presbytery Meetings, and was fortunate to have had the opportunity to attend the training for Interim Moderators.

I asked for Alloway Parish Church as my second placement knowing that I would receive excellent training from Rev. Neil McNaught. I was not disappointed. To Neil and all my friends at Alloway, I send my heartfelt thanks not only for your support but also for the overwhelming gift that you gave me when I completed my placement on 30th June 2019.

I now look forward to beginning my next and final period of training - a Probationary Year at Irvine Fullarton Church. I will miss my friends at Alloway but, rest assured, I will be back to visit you.

All being well, I should be ordained in September 2020 when it would be great to see my friends from Alloway Parish Church attend what will be a momentous event in my life. I will remember you all in my prayers.

God Bless.

David Hume



Our Church Officers (2019 - 2020)



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Notre-Dame

Throughout the Notre-Dame fire on 15th April 2019, it seemed as though the entire cathedral was destined to be destroyed. But some heartening news emerged soon after.

The majority of what was seen burning so dramatically was the cathedral's roof - old timbers felled in the 13th century and covered in lead. Early aerial footage showed the roof's eventual collapse into a



vault which formed the church's interior roof. It turns out that the vault was built expressly to protect the interior of the building and slow the spread of the very sort of fire which broke out. Likewise, the flying buttresses on the side of the building also did much to

protect the structure by ensuring that the walls remained freely standing. That more of the cathedral was not ruined is thus testament to the ingenuity of its original architects and designers. Also, the spire which collapsed was not, in fact, the original as this was destroyed in the 1700s and replaced by a larger and more ornate version.

Many of the most iconic features of the cathedral also survived: statues of the Virgin Mary, Louis XIII and Louis XIV were unscathed, the bell towers remained defiantly standing, the large organ, although clogged with dust, still worked and all three of the major rose windows were intact. Much of the artwork and relics were safely removed and so the toll here was also much less than was feared.

This too was no coincidence. Having so many buildings from the the middle-ages in its city, the Paris fire department has in place well-rehearsed procedures on how to respond to such emergencies: protect people, save relics and artwork and ensure that the structure is safe. Executing their strategy to the letter certainly paid off; a tribute to the discipline, training and courage of the fire-fighters.

History is filled with the stories of lost buildings, lost artwork, lost records. It is also filled with inspiring stories of near miraculous reconstruction. Notre-Dame de Paris was not lost. Like every structure of its age, it has survived many calamities. Setting aside its spires, the famous south rose window was so damaged in the 19th century that it had to be entirely rebuilt although some of the medieval glass remained. Other significant sections of Notre-Dame have been rebuilt or replaced over the ages so this catastrophe is just another challenge in that process.

One striking image from the fire, seen high up in the background and unbowed by the flames, was the famous Golden Cross, distinctly present and shining brightly even against the surrounding inferno. A place of worship may be destroyed but not the God we worship. The message of the Cross at the centre of our Faith remains a timeless, undamaged truth. In our times of despair, it reminds us of the presence of God and the strength He gives. So let us not forget the Cross and all that it stands for.

Those already embarked on the restoration of Notre-Dame have much in their favour. The cathedral is one of the most meticulously studied buildings in the world. There are laser scans of the entire structure showing precisely how it was built, reams of information about the artwork and architecture and detailed photography of every section. The authorities have at their disposal the blue-prints, the political will and the greatest expertise in the world. So, let reconstruction begin.

Belleisle

It is appropriate that *Signpost* should reflect the sadness felt at the local sequel to the above - the destruction on 14th June 2019 of the beautiful and cherished Belleisle House. Those new to the Parish, to whom *Signpost* speaks, will find Belleisle's history easy to access, interesting and revealing of how it seminally defines the Alloway village of today. Longer term residents will likely be well versed in the potted history which follows.

The starting point might reasonably be taken from the mid-18th century. Ayr then found itself heavily in debt and confronted with numerous capital expenditure projects caused by past neglect. Sounds rather familiar. The lands of Alloway, gifted to Ayr by royal charter in

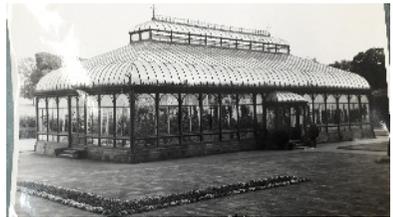
1205, had historically provided Ayr with a steady income. Selling them off was seen as an enticingly quick fix to the town's dire and intractable financial problems. This all co-incided with the return to their homeland of a number of Scots who had made their fortunes overseas. As Ayr was seen as a good and healthy place to live, many of them seized the opportunity to acquire land close to the sea and, in due course, a number of small estates were created in the locale. Of these, Belleisle was one of four to survive into the last and this century.



Belleisle House - Way Back

Belleisle House was built in 1775 for Hugh Hamilton, refurbished in 1830 by brother Alexander and passed on, over the years, to different families who refurbished and extended it in various ways. The two most noteworthy owners were probably: in 1876, William Dixon of Dixon steel mills in Glasgow, and, in 1894, George Coates of Paisley cotton mills.

In 1926, the then Ayr Burgh Council purchased back Belleisle House and its lands with the aim of improving its leisure and tourism amenities. Part of the land was added to the pre-existing Old Racecourse golf holes to form Seafield, part became the Belleisle Course and the rest was set out as a public park. The house was intended to go back for sale but was used instead as a golf clubhouse and, later, as a restaurant, lounge and for locker rooms. Upstairs became a museum with a resident curator displaying mainly natural history exhibits. The old conservatory was built in 1879 by the above William Dixon, revamped in 1955 and superbly restored from disrepair in 2017.



The Old Conservatory

To most, Belleisle simply means a visit to the aviary, duck pond, walled garden, play park or for golf, a wedding reception or afternoon tea. But the House was always the centre piece. So, however long a shot it may seem, let us hope that its reconstruction will also start soon.

*Publicity Committee
Alloway Parish Church*



WHITELEYS RETREAT

Whiteleys Retreat - An Update

Since the purchase of Whiteleys Farm in March 2018, the focus of the charity has been the renovation of the retreat; specifically the two cottages and surrounding area to ensure that they are safe, accessible and welcoming for families who have a child or young person with cancer or a life altering illness. A challenge yes, but Maxine Allan CEO (Volunteer) oversaw every aspect; from encouraging local volunteers to helping to establish ties with businesses throughout Ayrshire. The result was unprecedented support from a variety of skilled trades people and, after only six amazing months, Whiteleys Retreat welcomed the first families to stay and enjoy unique therapeutic respite.



Fresh Air And Open Space!

Many families in need of respite say that a comfortable, homely environment is essential to provide a break from the hospitals and treatment centres. The cottages were designed to be airy, light, comfortable and were renovated to a high standard. There is wheelchair access and portable hoists and shower chairs for dignified bathing and movement.

The cottages can sleep between six and eight. This can include extended family helping to care for a child. The therapy is for the entire family, as all are affected by the illness - often by living apart due to hospital stays. The retreat now has an amazing space that is the Garden of Wellbeing and Tilly's Playpark which offers inclusive and sensory play. Families can also relax and enjoy various therapies such as massage, reiki, yoga, horticultural in the gardens or animal therapy by meeting the Shetland ponies, alpacas or rabbits.

As a charity, Whiteleys Retreat receives no government monies and has to rely solely on funding from elsewhere; this through applying for grants in the face of fierce competition, establishing charity partnerships with businesses, donations and third party fundraising. The charity is

hugely appreciative of the support that it receives at the various charity events that it stages and of the fund raising that local bowling and golf clubs, schools, youth, church and other groups carry out on its behalf.



Whiteleys Kiltwalkers

This year, Whiteleys Retreat took part in the Glasgow Kiltwalk and had 320 Walking for Whiteleys. It was a massively important fundraiser with each walker resplendent in their Whiteleys t-shirts that heightened awareness of the transformative respite the charity provides. They aim to increase numbers next year so, please e-mail them to be added to the Kiltwalk 2020 list.

This year, the charity made two key appointments: Bernard Smith (General Manager) and Susan Webb (Development & Charity Manager) both of whose posts are funded so that all revenues raised continue to go directly to respite services.

Whiteleys Retreat is immensely grateful to the large number of volunteers who helped it to achieve what it did in the last twelve months. They, along with with the Board of Trustees that provides oversight and governance, ensure that the retreat and the charity run smoothly. Perhaps you could spare some time to help with the increasing number of events it holds? Or even run your own: bowling, golf, zumba, or an activity at which you have a special skill? Please visit or contact them at: www.whiteleysretreat.com or info@whiteleysretreat.com



Meeting New Friends

Whiteleys Retreat
Registered Scottish Charity No 47040



Whiteleys Retreat



@whiteleysayr



Whiteleys Retreat



whiteleys_retreat

Trees At Rozelle

In 1760, Rozelle House was given a late 18th century landscape in a pastoral style. A peripheral belt of trees framed scattered parkland trees of oak and sycamore. Tree lovers are now rewarded with a greater variety following over two hundred years of planting.



Cedar Sculpture

Evergreens are an important asset in this respect. Close to Rozelle tea room is a mighty holm oak, not a native, but in cultivation since the sixteenth century. Nearby, and more decorative with its white flowers in summer, is a tall eucryphia introduced from Chile to Britain in the mid-nineteenth century. A distraction from the evergreen theme is the Luccombe oak which retains its dark green leaves through to the end of the winter storms.

Conifers are predominantly evergreen, and exotically from Chile are the monkey puzzles bordering the main driveway planted 1st April 1974 by Mr Wakefield, then Director of Parks and Gardens. To the east side of the house is a mighty Wellingtonia, one of the redwoods, some of its branches having layered into the ground. Further towards the sports pavilion is a lonely Deodar, a cedar from the western Himalayas, though it escapes notice when compared with the magnificent cedars of Lebanon planted contemporarily with the house. Sadly, one recently fractured beyond repair and is now amusingly sculpted for posterity.

One expects conifers to be evergreen and yet there are exceptions, notably the larches. The principal representative is the european larch, an impressive specimen of which is located near the ponds. More exciting is the ginkgo, another deciduous conifer on the south wall of the house but will it survive plans to re-render the masonry? As a species it is a remnant of an ancient family that existed 160 million years ago. If it has to go, then hopefully replacements can be planted elsewhere in Rozelle.

In the realm of fossil trees is the dawn redwood, also a deciduous

conifer, at the end of Ladies Walk. Thought to be extinct, it was discovered by a Mr Khan in central China in 1941 and now it is widely cultivated. Less well known is the pond cypress recorded at Rozelle in 1989, a relative of the swamp cypress, but now lost from view.

Gardeners at Rozelle continue to plant and tend trees for our delight. It but remains for us to enjoy them through the seasons.

Peter Dudney



Cedar of Lebanon

Can You Imagine?

Singapore based British citizen Mr Alex Nicholson, one of hundreds to suffer grievous personal loss in the Easter 2019 Sri Lankan bombings, said of his wife Anita and of his two children, Ben (14) and Annabel (11), all three of whom were killed in the atrocity:

"Anita was a wonderful, perfect wife and a brilliant, inspirational and loving mother to our two wonderful children. Our holiday was a testament to her wish to provide a rich and colourful life for them both. Ben and Annabel were the most amazing, intelligent, talented and thoughtful children. Anita and I were immensely proud of them and we looked forward to seeing them both develop and grow into adulthood".

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted." Mathew 5:4

Wise Words?

Bill Clinton: "People are more impressed by the power of example than they are by an example of our power."

Benjamin Franklin: "Well done is better than well said."

Audrey Hepburn: "Beautiful eyes look only for good in others, beautiful lips speak only kindness to others."

Rosa Parks: "No."

A Visit From Our Good Friends

There are some events that you put in your diary and then find that you cannot wait for the date to come round. Especially when the event provides you with an opportunity to return to two good friends hospitality that they have previously and generously



Francis, Neil, Ernest

extended to you. And so it was in January 2019 when Alloway Parish Church learned that the head teachers of the two schools that it partners in Bandawe, Malawi, Mr Ernest Chirwa from Bandawe All Girls Secondary School and Mr Francis Juma from Bandawe Primary School, had secured visas for a visit to the UK. As a host church, we booked their flights, arranged a full itinerary for them and eagerly anticipated their stay with us from the 6th to 19th March.

When members of Alloway Parish Church visited Malawi in 2017 and 2018, they were shocked to see the hardships that Malawians face: extreme poverty, starvation, poor hygiene, insecure water supplies, crop failure, widespread inequalities and exploitation. But they also found it humbling to see how these hardships did nothing to dampen the brightness and spirit of the wonderful people that they met. As guests in that country, they were overwhelmed by the love and generosity of spirit that emanated from people who had so little. Yet what they had they wanted to share. How fabulous it would be for Ernest and Francis to return from their 2019 visit to Alloway with that same message to their congregations and schools in Malawi.

Our itinerary aimed therefore to achieve several things: to offer Ernest and Francis a warm welcome and a memorable stay; to develop and consolidate the teaching skills conveyed to them during our 2018 Mission to Malawi; to enable them to see teaching methods being applied here in the class room and for both to be introduced to the congregation and community and given the opportunity to express their thanks and bring greetings from their respective schools.

After travel recovery, Ernest and Francis joined church members for a dinner in the Church Hall. Thrilled to be in Scotland, they updated us on the projects in Malawi that we have funded in previous years and on the benefits that these projects have brought. They joined Neil for Sunday services of worship and communion in the Sanctuary and, in passionate and inspiring addresses, moved everyone present with their expressions of profound faith, gratitude, eternal optimism and at how much they cherish the links between our countries and churches.

Our 2018 Mission to Malawi included seven teachers from Alloway



Smiles All Round: Karen,
Ernest, Julie, Francis, Caroline

and Doonfoot Primary Schools who joined the team to help develop the skills of the teachers there. Ernest and Frances were thus pleased to spend time with them here and to meet their pupils. Young Malawians recognise education as an escape route from poverty but many factors combine to thwart efforts to improve standards and

access. Francis and Ernest benefitted from discussion with head teachers here, Caroline Connell and Karen Butler, on topics such as teaching styles, discipline, sport and on how to deliver core subjects in more interesting ways.

Pupils from Alloway and Doonfoot Primary Schools have provided astonishing support to both Bandawe All Girls Secondary School and Bandawe Primary School over many years. So meeting and talking to their African friends provided the pupils with a clearer and deeper understanding of the challenges life in Malawi present. Both schools work hard at being Rights Respecting Schools - a United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children. Pupils here recognise that their Malawian friends are not in receipt of their rights and the visit strengthened their determination to try and ensure that the pupils

in Bandawe are healthy, happy and safe. *I'll never be the same again - my management styles at BAGGS and my church will always now be smoother and include a touch of Scotland.*" was Ernest's verdict.

Another contribution by our wonderful young people came on the 14th March when Ernest and Francis joined some 360 of them, with parents and congregation, at a fantastic Pop UK 2019 Concert in the Church which raised £1000 for projects in Malawi. Pop UK aims to draw diverse communities together by providing a platform for children to sing positive, reaffirming songs that encourage them to live well and in harmony with one another. This resonates with Malawians whose communities customarily come together through rhythm and music.

Ernest and Francis visited homes of members of the congregation, Culzean, Braehead, Rotary Alloway and County Buildings and participated in a successful meeting with the Church Overseas Mission Committee to look at ways we might further strengthen our relationship and mutual support.



Lunch At The Manse With Our Office Bearers

So, on Monday 18th March, we had a celebratory and farewell service in the Fellowship Lounge. While we in Alloway and Doonfoot have done much to help our friends in Malawi, Ernest and Francis gave so much in return during their visit. Most of all a humbling appreciation of just how lucky we are in the developed world and of the pettiness of so many of our pre-occupations. Francis: *"This visit to Scotland has been wonderful. Highlights were travelling in new cars, sleeping in good homes with bedding, God has spoken to me here.* Ernest: *"Please accept my very deep appreciation for all the things that you did for us. May God bless all of you. You have enriched my experiences".* No, Ernest, you and Francis have enriched ours. Thank you for coming.

Julie Griffiths
Church Family & Schools Worker

The Importance of Being Clueless

Cluelessness is the new must-have.

Built-up expertise is the enemy of experimentation and crazy ideas.

Such expertise comes disguised in phrases like: 'We tried that already...'
'Yes, but.....' Phrases that dispirit and sap curiosity.

People should have permission to look around with fresh eyes.

Experts offer millions of reasons why something different will not work.

The more they say that it's a no-go, the more confident you should feel.

Cluelessness eschews the naysayers and pushes you forward.

Curiosity without presupposition opens up miraculous new possibilities.

Fear of failure and imperfection numbs the mind, it blanks off sight of issues begging to be resolved.

Getting back to a bit of cluelessness is the key to innovation and vitality.

Cluelessness provides you with a joie de vivre and a bit of zing.

Embrace a bit more cluelessness. Unlearn – strive to be naïve.

Cluelessness is not just for the young. It's for the young in spirit. Go on, be a big kid, stay foolish.

The status quo, the tried and tested are simply things to fall back on.

The bit between where you are now and fulfilling your dreams is what you are clueless about.

Leap. A net will appear.

Sahar Hashemi

Reference:

Hashemi, S., & Hashemi, B., 2004. *Anyone Can Do It*. Chichester: Capstone Publishing Ltd.

Don't be trapped by dogma - living with the results of other people's thinking. Don't let the noise of others' opinions bring doubts into your mind. Follow your instincts.

Steve Jobs

Scotland, The Kirk And The General Assembly (A personal view)

When the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland met in May this year, it was conscious that, over the last half century or so, the Kirk has become steadily less popular with the folk of Scotland. Falling membership and attendances, fewer people coming forward for ministry, increasing humanist services and falling income all testify to this decline.

The Assembly decided on “radical action” largely by streamlining and decentralising its governance and administration; fewer, larger Presbyteries but smaller Kirk Sessions; creating a growth fund to stimulate new worship groups and so on. A leaflet summarising the changes is available in the Church. Many of the proposals are long overdue and there remains much to do.

Shortly after the General Assembly ended, the Kirk and Churches around the world joined in a prayer initiative under the banner of “Thy Kingdom Come” and, in the UK, this culminated in a rally on Pentecost Sunday in Trafalgar Square that was attended by the Moderator of the General Assembly and leaders of other Churches in the UK.

“Thy Kingdom come ... on Earth ...” is regularly prayed by Christians, alone and in congregations around the world, but what might this Kingdom look like and do we need a Kirk that strives to produce such a Kingdom?

When asked what was the greatest commandment, Jesus replied “Love God and Love Your Neighbour”. Loving God involves worship, but also caring for the world in which we live – being good stewards of the resources that we have been gifted. Loving our neighbour means caring about everyone – even those who society find hardest to love. The characteristics that should be prized according to our faith include loving behaviour, joyfulness, peacemaking, patience, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control and all embracing goodness. These are the values that lead to a better society - “Thy Kingdom come”. However, so often our society values and rewards selfishness, greed, forcefulness and love of power and money. How does the Kirk, and the Church more generally in Scotland, react to the challenge of the mission that this poses?

Well, it offers regular opportunities for worship and reflection. Perhaps the style of worship does not appeal to all in this age of instant communication while restricting worship opportunities mostly to a small time slot in the week sits uncomfortably with our 24/7 world.

Worship of course has to be underpinned by belief in a creator, and there are increasingly eloquent voices telling us that the laws of science, mathematics and chance can explain how the universe could have developed without the need of an overarching creator. I don't have a problem accepting the "how?" although reading New Scientist suggests that there are still doubts about different versions of scientific "proof".

What I find difficult to accept is that they help us to understand the "why?" questions. With no creative spirit why do these laws that explain our development exist? Also, in a universe which is predicted to eventually end in oblivion; why do we exist – what is the purpose of life? Life without purpose seems a recipe for an unhealthy society where "all for self, now" is likely to become the prime motivation.

Good stewardship of natural resources is an area that the Kirk tries to promote; we are encouraged to register as "eco-congregations" and think and act purposefully about our responsibility to producing a sustainable world. Alloway Parish Church has registered as an eco-congregation. The Kirk nationally has a relatively ethical policy with regard to its investments, although the decision of the General Assembly to continue holding interests in companies involving extraction of fossil fuels was not universally received, especially by the youth delegates to the Assembly.

The Kirk is, it seems, rather better at "loving our neighbour". At individual, congregational, national and international level, it is involved in initiatives which make Scotland, and the world at large a much better place to live than it would otherwise be.

Of course it should not be claimed that the Kirk has a monopoly of good works, there are those who would reject faith in God but continue to act in line with the virtues listed above. Equally the Kirk is full of people who are just as susceptible to human frailties as anyone else and it is far from a perfect organisation. But it is underpinned by a purpose to

build a better society and through regular worship and prayer, acts as a conscience to try to do better.

Perhaps the main problem that the Church faces is that it tries too hard to promote itself rather than presenting the love of God through Jesus Christ to society. In many ways the radical action plan echoes this in that it is very much about reorganising the structure of the Kirk and relatively light on changing its culture.

A much admired window in Alloway Church sits at the East end of the sanctuary. It is the Houldsworth Window installed by a man in tribute to and in memory of his wife. Part of its fascination is its symbolism; some fairly obvious, some obscure and some which seems a bit out of place.

There are two main themes that are fairly straightforward. Along the bottom of the window are six panels each describing women of the Old and New Testaments that embrace favourable attributes of William Houldsworth's wife, Sarah Abercromby. Above that, the next layer splits into two scenes. On the left we see Moses in the desert raising a brass serpent on a pole to cure the travelling Israelites of snake-bites. This contrasts on the right with a scene representing the crucifixion of Jesus. The two scenes are linked by a text from John's gospel chapter 3 verse 14:

“Even as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up.”

Snakes are often used in Christian symbolism to represent evil and as Moses is told to raise a brass serpent on a pole he is seen to be reminding the Israelites to relinquish their sinful ways and look through the brass artefact to God to find a cure.

In the same way we are asked to look through Jesus' life and teaching to see God's ways that lead to a better society. The Kirk's job is to concentrate on showing Christ through both words and deeds to the people of Scotland. If the radical action plan promotes this change in attitude, then it will succeed in reviving the fortunes of the Kirk; if not, then God will reform the Kirk, possibly in a completely different form.

Dr David Lewis

Flower Fellowship

The Alloway Parish Church Flower Fellowship is made up of members of the congregation who very kindly supply the flowers for the Church each Sunday throughout the year.

These flowers which provide much pleasure to the rest of the congregation are then distributed to a member of the Church. Often this is done at a time when it is important that that member knows that we and others are thinking of them.

To be able to bring a little bit of joy to someone who is celebrating a special event or going through a difficult time is indeed a privilege. As well as providing these flowers, the Fellowship helps to make up over 100 posies for Harvest Thanksgiving and willingly joins in to assist with decorating the Church for Advent. All of this is done behind the scenes so to speak, but is done with much joy, laughter and friendship.

We are most grateful to members for their help throughout the year and especially to those who very generously donate towards the cost of flowers. The team are always looking for and would welcome enquiries from new members willing to join our happy band. We are fortunate in having excellent flower arrangers in the team although we sometimes ask a friend to help or have an arrangement done by a local florist.



What a Team - Flower Fellowship Ladies At Work

During summer opening we place a small posy on the table at the main door so if you want to start by doing something small we would be delighted. Please contact any member of the team below:

Oonagh Allison:	01292288599	Moira Douglas:	01292442951
Isobel Allison:	01292440387	Anne Fawbert:	01292441373
Sandra Telford:	01292443278		

Oonagh Allison



River Garden at Auchincruive

In January 2013, in the face of concern about rising drug deaths in Scotland, a small group founded the charity "Independence from Drugs & Alcohol Scotland." Its aim was to find a way of helping people in the early stages of recovery from drug and alcohol problems, to get into long-term recovery - something that had never been achieved in the UK. Four years later, in March 2018, River Garden Auchincruive opened on a 48.5 acre site by the River Ayr which, when fully developed, will house 40 men and women going through the process of recovery.

River Garden offers a 3 year residential programme. It is modelled on the world's three most successful self-help organisations for people in recovery: San Patrignano (Italy), Basta (Sweden) and Delancey Street (USA) which have achieved 70%-80% success rate in helping people back into mainstream society. River Garden mirrors their principles: abstinence, trust, firm boundaries, mutual support, social enterprise, respect for life, and responsibility - an approach that is different from any other in the UK.

Participants receive training in various social enterprises. Currently, they are refurbishing gardens, establishing a café, a bakery and a garden nursery, selling and processing fresh food alongside other craft industries on site but with the aim of expanding this into the wider community.

We now have open to the public a walled garden, with a fine collection of specimen trees and a pop-up cafe in one of the Victorian glasshouses on the east terrace with fantastic home-baking on offer Friday to Sunday. With our partner, the Medical Research Council at the University of Glasgow, we hope that River Garden will serve as a prototype for the support that other units offer to those with drug and/or alcohol addictions.

Please visit River Garden Auchincruive and see our facilities and the work that we do. We can be found at the Nellie's Gate entrance to the Auchincruive estate off the B743, 1.5 miles from the Whitlett's roundabout (KA6 5AE).

Mark Bitell

Alloway Church And Robert Burns

The very first Burns Supper was held in the part of Burns Cottage used by then Kings Arms Hotel in the summer of 1801. It was five years after the death of the bard when nine men met to remember their young friend Robert Burns. This supper was organised by an active member of Ayr Presbytery, fellow writer and friend – Reverend Hamilton Paul.

The group described by Rev Paul as the “Alloway Club” continued to meet annually in July to celebrate the Bard until 1810 when they decided to change their dinners to January on the anniversary of his birth as opposed to July, the time of his death.

This early “Burns Club” later passed out of existence. Alloway Burns Club was revived in 1908 many years after other Burns Clubs had been formed and 51 years after Alloway Parish Church was opened. Alloway Parish Church was built despite numerous objections from the Burns movement as it affected the line of sight between the cottage and the monument. A close link between Church and Club was revitalised as demonstrated when an active Church member W. H. Dunlop of Doonside became Club President and remained so until 1911.



Alloway Burns Club
Presidents Badge of Office

Over the next 111 years the Club has gone from strength to strength. It has held tight through two world wars and many other issues. Through this time several famous people including political leaders have taken honorary membership of the club, even Muhammad Ali the then World Champion Heavyweight Boxer said he was proud to accept honorary membership in 1965.

The close ties between Church and Club have also gone from strength to strength. It is doubtful if there has been any time in the Club’s history when a good number of office bearers in the Club were not also office bearers in Alloway Parish Church. Alloway Church Ministers and office bearers past and present have participated in Club

activities - the last Minister even served as President. In the South West corner of the nave of the Church you will find the Robert Burns window, dedicated in 1996 to commemorate the bi-centenary his death.

These close ties with the Church is something the Club is very proud of and hopes to continue. Today the Immediate Past President, Senior Vice President, and President are all members of the Kirk Session. We are also so very proud of two Past Presidents (both elders) who have been made Honorary Presidents of the Robert Burns World Federation, John and Margaret Skilling.

Folks in the Alloway area have had an interest in Robert Burns for generations. When the magistrates of Ayr tried to remove the bell of the Auld Kirk in 1789 the local populace “repelled the attempt by open force”. The bell which had been in situ since 1657, was removed from the tower in December 1999 to allow the tower to be repaired. This circumstance allowed it to be used during a service in Alloway Parish Church to herald in the new millennium.



Hands Off Our Bell Tower!

Alloway Burns Club has now over 100 members and certainly not all members of Alloway Parish Church. It is an active club meeting in both the church halls and the village hall. There is a varied programme. In July we meet for a Friendship Evening at Burns Cottage to commemorate the first Burns Supper and like they did in 1801 toast the bard, thereafter we go to the village hall for food and entertainment enjoyed by young an old alike. In November we celebrate our country's patron saint with the St Andrew's Evening. In January close to his birthday we have a well-respected Anniversary Dinner in the Brig o' Doon House Hotel. At that time of year we also hold an event open to the public with songs, readings etc which is part of the "Burns Hame Toun Celebration" this happens in the sanctuary of the church. We also have trips when we visit places of interest and often places with a connection to Robert Burns.

During the year there are interclub nights and youth evenings but the season starts with the coffee morning. This is a fundraiser for the Primary 7 Burns Supper. The Primary 7 Burns Supper was started several years ago by Tom and Margaret Morral, both active Burnsians



Church's Burns Memorial Window

which involved Primary 7 pupils from local schools getting together for a Burns Supper. In recent years the mantle has been taken by Alloway Burns Club and it has grown and grown. The "Supper" now takes morning and afternoon sessions in Ayr Town Hall and is attended by pupils from schools

throughout the entire of South Ayrshire.

This is a tremendous opportunity for P7s to meet and demonstrate their truly wonderful talents. As can be understood this takes a lot of organisation and a degree of finance hence the fundraiser.

Alloway Burns Club boasts having members who are under 9 years old to over 90 years old and prides itself on being a hospitable and welcoming club. We all have an interest in learning about the life and works of our national bard and enjoy the friendly, entertaining, and interesting club events. To be a member of the club there is no requirement to be a member of the Church or indeed have a knowledge of Burns you only need to be interested in the life and works of Robert Burns and Scottish literature.

Please visit us at <https://www.allowayburnsclub.org.uk>, our Facebook page, Twitter or view us on YouTube.

Bill Duncan

Church Elder and Senior Vice-President

Police Sergeant to Identity Parade members: "Right, when I say so, you will step forward one at a time and say in a loud, clear voice: 'Hand over the money and I want it all in fivers and tenners'."

Chief suspect: "That's no what a' said."

75 Years Ago - First Hand Accounts

(D-Day - 6th June 1944)

I was assigned to Weymouth. Our orders were to keep sightseers away from the vessels berthed there - hundreds of them. Even a blind man could see that something big was about to happen.

Geoffrey Cassidy (Ordinary Seaman)

We listened to the radio set we had up in the hay loft. Then the message came through. Armada sailing. After terrific rejoicing, we allocated the weapons that we had kept hidden in bee hives. Then out we went in spite of just a few hours sleep to blow up railways, bridges and trees so as to block the roads ahead of the invasion.

Yvonne Cormeau (French Resistance)

Only after setting sail were orders opened. Ours included a model. It came in pieces each made in and despatched from different places in the US. This was the first time the pieces had ever been put together. It was Omaha Beach. The detail was astonishing. Such was the preparation and secrecy of the operation we were embarked upon.

Cromwell Lloyd-Davies (Major - aboard HMS Glasgow)

Half a mile from shore, we opened the bow doors and eight DWKS set off. Then twelve tanks which had flotation buoys and a stern propeller; four of these just sank straight to the bottom. Poor souls inside. We then took on 400 wounded men for our return. As an 18 year old, you felt more excitement than fear. But I could scarcely take in the enormity of the scene before me. It took your breath away.

Peter Thompson (Able Seaman)

Suddenly, the air was split with the piercing sound of the bagpipes. Along the beach, amid the carnage, a piper was marching up and down. It was the personal piper of Lord Lovat who then formed up his other men and, with exploding shells and gun fire all around, marched them all off the beach parade style through dense, billowing smoke and into a nearby village. That was the high point for me.

Ken Oakley (Able Seaman)

Waiting first in line at the aircraft door, I threw out a stuffed moose head that our unit had purloined from a pub in Exeter. After a few drinks there, we thought that this would put the fear of God into any enemy that it hit. Then, heavily laden with parachute and equipment, I jumped into the night sky muttering my final prayers.

Nick Archdale (Lieutenant)

I felt this bang on my wrist and that was it. Next thing I was lying on the floor of a house and then on a beach under a tarpaulin. I was taken out to a tank landing ship which had an emergency theatre. When I came to, there was blood everywhere from haemorrhaging. A nurse came and pulled the bedclothes away. I looked down and there was nothing there. My arm had gone. It was a bit shattering really.

Geoffrey Barkway (Staff Sergeant)

You did not think about getting killed. Your only fear was letting down yourself, your comrades or your battalion.

Carwood Lipton (Easy Company, 506th Infantry, 101st Airborne Division)

There was immense fire power coming at us. We lay there, faces in the wet sand, trembling with cold. Eventually, the pillboxes to our right were silenced. I thought of the men inside them and of those around me. All called up for service just like myself with no wish whatsoever to be where we were. But what could any of us do about it?

Norman Travett (Sergeant)

"From Forgotten Voices Of The Second World War" by Max Arthur and The Imperial War Museum Published by Ebury Press. Reproduced by permission of The Random House Group Ltd. © 2004"

50 Years Ago - Stay Calm And Carry On

Asked for his reaction when he was told: "30 seconds of fuel remaining" while piloting the lunar landing module, Eagle, still some 100 feet above the Moon's surface on 20th July 1969, Neil Armstrong replied:

"I simply figured that every time the gas tank in my car shows empty, there always seems to be a bit of fuel left in there somewhere and that, well, this thing is probably no different".

Christian Aid Week 2019

A huge thank you to all of those people in our parish who contributed in any way to this year's Christian Aid week. It can be a daunting experience for the volunteers to do door to door collection in Alloway and Doonfoot. However, having braced themselves to ring those doorbells, they are often rewarded by the generosity of many of the householders.

This year, our total including collections, coffee morning and book sale amounted to a wonderful £10,853 which was a £400 increase on 2018. Christian Aid works with the poorest communities across the world whatever faith or nationality and this year's Christian Aid Week focused on Sierra Leone. Here they are working hard to reduce the high infant and maternal mortality rates by building small hospitals and clinics where mothers can safely give birth. Thanks to you for helping with this important, life-changing work.

*Helen Ness
Mission Committee*

Leisurely Lunches

Our normal pattern of six lunches between September and March will again be held in our church halls. The proceeds from these events will be used to help build a much needed new hostel for the girls' school in Malawi. We also aim to provide a welcoming venue where people can enjoy good food and good company – everyone is made welcome.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Sunday 29 th September | - Harvest Supper at 6pm. |
| Thursday 31 st October | - Bonfire Lunch at 12.00 - 1.30pm. |
| Thursday 21 st November | - American Lunch at 12.00 - 1.30pm. |
| Thursday 30 th January | - Burns Lunch at 12.00 - 1.30pm. |
| Thursday 27 th February | - St David's Lunch at 12.00 - 1.30pm. |
| Thursday 26 th March | - Daffodil Lunch at 12.00 - 1.30pm. |

We hope that you will make a note of these dates in your diary.

*Helen Ness
Mission Committee*

North Coast 500

“Anywhere in the world.” I said. My husband’s choice to celebrate his retirement with a “Big” holiday? No less than the North Coast 500; to travel around the top of Scotland, a 500 mile road trip and that doesn’t include getting to the starting point.

Now, like many living in Scotland, my preferred holiday is a “fly and flop” – fly to sunnier climes and hit a sun bed with book and sun shades at the ready! Husband John, however, had been longing to do this trip for a wee while, and so, together, we set about organising it. We bought the NC 500 book, watched hours of “YouTube” clips and, having done our research, we started to plan our trip in detail.

Initial thoughts about renting a camper van were soon dismissed. Why miss out on the best of Scottish hospitality that is available and



Stunning Beaches - Everywhere

can be enjoyed by spending the night in the various hostelries en route? Not to mention my beloved soft-top Mini – driving it around Scotland in May; perhaps we would be able to take the “tap aff?”

We booked a mix of BnBs, guest houses, a 5 star hotel, a glamping pod and a shepherds hut! We

checked the mileage between each night’s stay and the availability of petrol and food for those nights where we might be a bit isolated and so ‘going it alone’.

All planned, and all booked, the adventure began on 7th May. We decided to start our trip with a night on Skye and a couple on Harris. Not strictly on the NC500 route, but, come on, who would not want to include them when out in that direction anyway?

The first days were a total panic – horizontal sleet, tortuous single-track roads on Harris and so little retail therapy available at the rest points. Fortunately, when we left Harris on the early ferry, the sun was

blazing down and, although the cold air persisted, it did not prevent us loosing the “tap” of our trusted Mini and getting some wind in our hair.

As we travelled around the north of Scotland, thoughts of sun cream, loungers and cocktails faded away as the beauty of our native country unfolded before us. Superlatives cannot do justice to the glorious sights that appear around every corner. We really are blessed to live in such a truly remarkable part of God’s Kingdom.

The mainland places where we spent the nights were Kinlochewe, Ullapool, Talmine, East Mey, Tain and Ballachulish. Each had a unique character and warmth of hospitality. The food was delicious and, as fish fans, what better thing than to see the boats unloading on the quays and then sampling the catch in the various inns and hotels that very evening.

Our favourite night stop was probably the Shepherd’s Hut in East Mey, just by the Castle of Mey, the late Queen Mother’s favoured home. The Castle sits right at the north east tip of Scotland just along from John O’Groats. Remote? Goodness me, yes, but it was hardly slumming it – with a wee stove, double bed, en suite facilities, breathtaking views and astonishing sunsets.



Sunsets To Take Your Breath Away

The east coast proved to be equally beautiful with distinct differences from the west but the same picturesque country towns, stunning beaches and welcoming, friendly folk around every corner.

May was a great month in which to do the NC500. Not too busy, plenty of daylight, a chance of some decent weather and, to our relief, seldom bothered it seemed by the wee beasties.

I am truly blessed to have had such a wonderful experience with John. We will treasure the memories always and would recommend it as a great way to see Scotland at its best.

Julie Griffiths

Childhood In Alloway

Most of my formative years were spent in Doonfoot and Alloway. In the sixty-odd years since then, major changes have taken place – no surprise. In the 1950s, the majority of houses in Doonfoot were located in the single-sided river development. This extended from Seafield with some homes in the then unsurfaced Scaur O'Doon Road.

The notional centre of Doonfoot was McCutcheon's Stores, more affectionately known as Nellie's Shop, now the Spar store. It was tiny and could only accommodate two or three customers. However, Nellie could disappear through the back and, after a while, miraculously reappear with almost anything you had asked for. My young eyes were always drawn straight to Nellie's window display - large glass jars filled with soor plooms, imperial mints, liquorice straps or bon bons.

Sadly, or perhaps inevitably, Doonfoot had four distinctive features which are no more. Few will recall the prisoner of war camp which occupied much of the Greenan area. The last of the huts there were demolished around 1960 but you can still see traces of the concrete foundations if you know where to look. Prior to their demise, they were used by seasonal 'tattie howkers' harvesting the nearby coastal fields.

The second feature which has gone is the Greenan Laundry (pictured) -



thought to have been built as a paper mill. Its tall brick factory chimney could be spotted from a wide area. It was located on the west bank of the River where the dam and mill lade can still be seen.

The other two long-lost but noteworthy features were two nurseries. Both on the left side of the road over Doonfoot Bridge. Each had extensive rows of very distinct and impressive glass houses. One of the nurseries survived until fairly recently. The other stood closer to the

junction of Longhill Avenue and Dunure Road. Known as Stonefield Nursery after the nearby ancient standing stone, it specialised in growing carnations. Before the growing season, they would move in a portable steam boiler – a strange contraption that looked like an old railway engine. Pipes were connected up to this to sterilise the soil in the glasshouses. What a palaver. They also had a packing shed with long, water filled, lead-lined tanks. We thought the tanks had a better use – for sailing model boats. Mine was a clockwork model of the 2nd World War destroyer. We all had to scarper whenever Mr MacKay, who ran the nursery, appeared back on the scene.

None of this sort of caper went on in Alloway. Well perhaps it did because it had its own resident police constable. His mode of transport was a black, heavy metal Raleigh bicycle. Around Burns cottage was much as it is today but with only some 50 houses. What is now the Loaning and Woodend Road was again acres of glasshouses.

The Post Office is also unchanged. Upstairs was a manual telephone exchange. There were no dials on your telephone; you simply lifted the receiver and waited until the operator answered to manually connect you to your number. At night, the telephonist often fell asleep so callers had to wait until he or she woke up. Can you imagine?

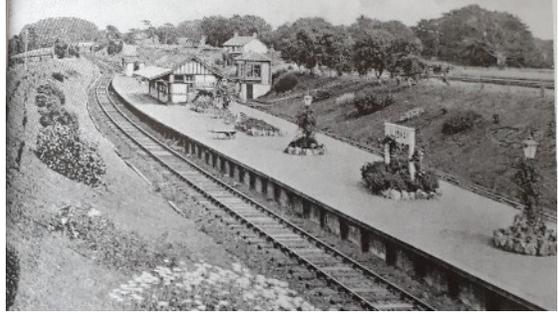
It is now over 110 years since Alloway joined the railway age. The Dunure and Maidens Light Railway was opened in 1906. The word 'Light' means that the railway was constructed under the Light Railways Act which permitted less rigorous engineering standards. Its main purpose was to connect to the then new hotel at Turnberry.

A major issue with the initial route proposed for the line was its proximity to Auld Alloway Kirk. The answer was to excavate a huge cutting slightly further away, build the railway, cover the railway over and back fill it all with the soil removed to make the cutting. Hence the tunnel's appearance today. Alloway Station, now the cycle path, was located close to the tunnel entrance while a goods yard occupied a higher site up where the Church Halls and Burns Centre now sit.

I helped to clear the site of the present Church Halls. I remember

that it was November 1963 because a lady that lived in a nearby house rushed out to tell us that President Kennedy had been assassinated.

The Dunure and Maidens Light Railway was closed in the 1930s but re-opened after the war. It served Butlin's Camp, the Heads of Ayr, Dunure and the Turnberry Hotel. I well remember long trains being hauled up to the Heads of Ayr with many requiring two steam locomotives. An excellent book: *Rails To Turnberry And The Heads Of Ayr* by David McConnell & Stuart Rankin tells you more about the line.



Alloway Station Looking East

We also spent a lot of time in Belleisle Park enjoying everything that it has to offer. This, in much the same way as young families still do to this day. So sad that the house was recently lost but thank goodness there are still some things in Alloway and Doonfoot that are unchanged.

Stuart Campbell

Life?

Life is an opportunity, seize it.
 Life is mystery, wonder at it.
 Life is a tragedy, confront it.
 Life is a struggle, accept it.
 Life is precious, preserve it.
 Life is a promise, fulfil it.
 Life is a gift, cherish it.
 Life is luck, make it.

Life is beauty, hold it in awe.
 Life is a duty, complete it.
 Life is sorrow, overcome it.
 Life is an adventure, dare it.
 Life is a dream, realize it.
 Life is a song, sing it.
 Life is a game, play it.
 Life is life, fight for it.

*Mother Theresa of Calcutta
 (From Stella Teachout)*

Why Fairtrade Matters In 2019



A speaker at our church in the late 1970s highlighted the need for fairer trading conditions for farmers and suppliers from low income countries. Back then, no-one ever thought about the international trading system. But the speaker went on to tell us that the most common jar of high quality “gold” instant coffee then available, using coffee beans from Kenya and Uganda, retailed at £2.00 and that the farmers received a mere 2p of that. We were shocked. Those doing the lion’s share of the work received a mere 1% of the final price. How could this be true?

Today, we are much better informed about the harshness of the international trading system and of the huge rake-offs taken by middle-men, distributors and so-called market specialists. In some cases, these middle-men operate within the same country as the producers through corrupt cooperatives and wholesalers.

Why is this important? The farmers and suppliers are just like you and me. They want a reasonable education for their children, access to health care, reliable and safe water and sanitation. But the rewards for producing the primary products that we take for granted mean that they simply cannot afford many of these basic things. That is where Fairtrade comes in - a global movement with a strong and active presence in the UK, represented by the Fairtrade Foundation.

It's human nature isn't it? We go to the shops and we want to achieve good value for money. But the charity Tearfund recently suggested that we really need to “*lift the label*” on the bargains we purchase and to recognise that, in getting “*good value*”, we are often inadvertently sustaining exploitative systems of production of many basic products - clothes, food and other commodities.

“But I would never support such exploitation!” You may say so, or maybe you do not care - as long as we in the UK are all right. In the

Bible, we find that Jesus was very clear indeed about our responsibilities towards the poor and insisted that we should always work against those who are exploiting the most vulnerable wherever we find the exploiters.

How can we make a real difference? Quite simply, we can do this by buying products which bear the Fairtrade mark - as much of them and as often as we possibly can. The mark guarantees that the goods have been produced in an ethical way and that the communities producing them have received a fair price. Producers are thus able to expand their businesses and people have the means to improve their lives. A win:win situation where we share some of our resources and provide a tangible example of Christian concern in action.

What fairly traded products are available? Over 3,000 products have now received Fairtrade certification. Only those carrying the Fairtrade mark guarantee a fair return to producers in low-income countries. The main products you will see are cocoa, bananas, coffee and tea, flowers, seed cotton, cane sugar, vegetables, rice, oilseeds, fruits and nuts. Many are produced organically and the quality and proportion of Fairtrade items available are steadily increasing.

But, this will mean I have to pay more! Yes. But please “*lift the label*” on the “*cheap*” products that are for sale, bear in mind how these exploit the poorest and most vulnerable and then consider the additional cost in terms of suffering throughout low-income countries.

More information? If you need help in buying Fairtrade products, ask specifically for them in your local supermarket, or come along to the Alloway Church Fairtrade Stall, held once per month. Thank you.

Malcolm McNeil

For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat... Mathew 25.

Thank You Advertisers

We would like to thank all of the local businesses that chose to advertise in *Signpost 2019*. Your support has helped us defray the cost of producing this publication. We ask all our readers who use the services of our advertisers to let them know where you saw their details. Thank you.

Burns Monument

In 1814, the Burns Monument Trust was established with a view to building a suitable memorial to the life and works of Robert Burns in his birthplace village. After a world-wide fundraising campaign, Burns Monument was built by Edinburgh architect Thomas Hamilton Junior and opened in 1823. Hamilton's design was in two parts, the base and the superstructure, that commemorated Burns's 'birth and genius'.

The base of the monument is a three-sided prism of coarse Garscube sandstone with the three sides facing the ancient regions of Ayrshire: Kyle, Carrick and Cunninghame. This base grounds Burns in his native soil, reminding us of his birth and mortality. The superstructure is of durable sandstone, quarried at Cullalo in Fife. It is surmounted by an elaborate finial, supported by three dolphins made from local sandstone, and a copper gilt tripod.



Atop One Of The Nine
Beautifully Ornate Columns

The proportions of the Alloway monument indicate other secrets in the design. In sharp contrast to the low-lying birthplace cottage, this was a tall structure visible from afar. The monument's height divided by its breadth produces the figure 1.618. This number, known as the golden mean or golden ratio, has long been considered the perfect proportion and is found in the length of the hand and the forearm, or at the Great Pyramids of Giza. This aesthetic, the classical design and the repetition of the number three in the building's design, would have been understood by another community of interest:

freemasons. Burns Monument is a tribute to a freemason by freemasons.

Although Burns Monument Trust maintained the monument well, more recently, it did not spot that water was penetrating the structure until evidence of this appeared throughout the building. Over the last few years, a conservation group has been trying to find ways to stop the moisture ingress and rectify the serious damaged it has caused. The result has been the comprehensive restoration works that have just been

completed - extensive grouting repairs, stone restoration, leadwork, drainage repairs, a new cupula and general decoration.

A combination of modern technology and clues found in the archive of Robert Burns Birthplace Museum helped identify the reasons for the moisture, the opening of mortar joints and the loosening of masonry. Infra-red imaging revealed significant and unexpected internal dampness - disappointing given the Monument's comprehensive refurbishment in 1998. So how could this have happened? A vital clue lay in correspondence between the architect and the original trustees and suppliers. Thomas Hamilton Junior's design of c1819 specified that the stonework was to be:

'bedded on Mortar with a close joint, well squared and laid with a cement composed of white lead and oil mixed with river sand, clean washed ...'

The problem was that the oil used was linseed, an organic compound that destabilises over time. This had undermined the grouting and caused large gaps to appear everywhere. To address this, we carried out a programme of historically accurate re-grouting to make the structure watertight and provide for its long-term protection.



Stonemason's Painstaking Work

To fully fill the the open joints and voids, we developed a bespoke technique for the 'industrial' scale of the grouting task we faced - every joint was affected. We appointed a specialist mortar consultant, teamed with the Trust's stonemasons at Culzean and painstakingly tested, refined and perfected the special grouting insertion technique. This enabled us to fill the voids in the Monument with some 9000 litres of hydrophobic (water repelling) grout quickly, effectively and with minimum waste. The innovative approach we pioneered provides the legacy of a new repair process that can be applied in the future to any other traditional ashlar buildings.

One disadvantage was that grout contains a high proportion of water. So we actually introduced yet more moisture into the structure. It will take years to dry out so we have installed a new system of gentle, conservation standard heating to speed this up. During drying, staining and salt crystals will appear on interior wall surfaces which, although unsightly, will tell us that the building is drying out. In due course, the interior walls will be finished with a 'sacrificial', breathable limewash which will drop off and leave a protective coating on the face of the stone.



Restored Guilt Tripod

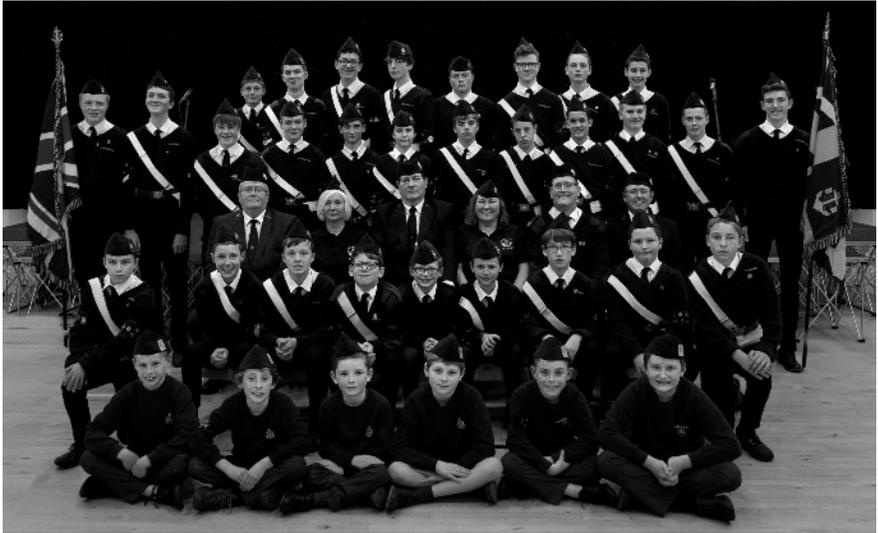
Through the Mackintosh Environmental Architecture Research Unit, we installed special humidity and temperature sensors with radio controlled data loggers that monitor air quality and the building's structural integrity - the probes for which can be seen on the inner walls. Having restored the Monument, we are determined to keep a close eye on it.

On 4th July 2018, we found a time capsule containing an Ayr Advertiser and a West Country Journal from 1816 and 1815 and a silver sixpence depicting George III. Spookily, the capsule was left after a parade to the then new monument on 4th July 1823, so it next saw the light of day some 195 years later. On 14th August 2018, a new time capsule was laid down. This contained two masonic coins from Ayr St. Paul Masonic Lodge No.24, a £10 Clydesdale Bank note featuring Robert Burns, a sketch of Robert Burns by Isla Grant (aged 17) and a piece by Parris Joyce (aged 25) about what Burns meant to her. This to mark 2018 as the Year of Young People.

Burns Monument was re-opened to the public on the 22nd July 2019. The whole restoration project continues; from the outset, it has been generously supported by individual donors and organisations. It was an exhausting and painstaking task but one that was well worth the effort. Thank you to you all.

Gavin Pettigrew

1st Alloway Boys' Brigade



In September 2019, the 1st Alloway Boys' Brigade (BB) Company will be 40 years young. How time has flown. While no members of the Battalion are this year due to receive the coveted, hard-earned Queens Men award, it has eleven members who are on track to receive this prestigious accolade (all going well) in 2020. That would be the highest number ever in Company history. Nonetheless, we are still very proud of what the members of our Company achieved this year as we did present:

- 5 President Badges
- 9 Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Awards
- 3 Duke of Edinburgh Silver Awards
- 3 Duke of Edinburgh Gold Awards

Active commitment and energetic participation is the most important aspect of BB membership. During the year, 2500 hours were completed in the Company's Event Management Project which benefited 25 local charities. The concept was that the various charities ran the events and "Alloway BBs" worked behind the scenes to ensure its smooth success.

At this year's Summer Camp, 26 Boys and 8 staff were invading Lochranza, Arran. We are very pleased to report that the camp will be sponsored by a private individual who was very impressed when he saw first hand of how well mannered and hard working the young BB boys are. We would also like to thank two other benefactors: Knights Templar for its donation granted in recognition of community service and to William Grants Ltd who provided us with sports equipment.

A recent change in the award system now allows activities that members undertake outwith the Company and the structure of the BBs to be recognised. Achievements as musicians, solo sports and other specialist activities are now included, something that provides the opportunity for our youngsters to increase the credits they can earn.

In true BB fashion, the Company is built on the twin pillars of Discipline and Christian Faith. It puts this into practice in various ways through, for example, high standards of team work and drill, individual and team sports and the Company band. All of these these contribute to the our appeal and success. The Company re-enrolls on the 23rd August but new members would still be very welcome through:

Stewart Robertson 01292 442217 Judy Wilson 07708 059794
Rosalind McWhirter 01292 880520

Stewart Robertson

All Age Worship

Services from 9.45 to 10.30am at Alloway Parish Church
(Followed by hospitality in Church Hall)

29th September	Harvest Thanksgiving
27th October	Who am I?
24th November	Saint Andrew
29th December	New beginnings

A lighter brighter series of services for people of all ages.



Guide Trip To Lorne Estate

On the 24th May 2019, 1st, 2nd and 3rd Alloway Guides and the Alloway Rangers buckled their seatbelts on a coach and headed to Cairnryan Ferry Terminal. We had been lucky enough to get on an adventure trip organised by the District Guides at Lorne Estate, Belfast.

We arrived in the city at about 5.30pm and took another twenty minute drive to Lorne Estate where we were shown our rooms. To help settle in, we played a few games, had a quiz and got to know the estate.

Next day, we had to complete the first of three group activities out of: Gladiator Challenge (Jacob's ladder, grid and tyres), zip line, high ropes and abseiling. Everyone coped with the dizzying heights, some impressively so but we all enjoyed watching and encouraging others.

Then it was on to the Ulster Folk Museum. This was a gorgeous and educational masterpiece all about life in Ireland in the 1900s. Instead of drab pictures and listless lines of dialogue, we were treated to recreations of old buildings, the taste of newly made soda bread and a glimpse of what life would have been like before cars and other technologies. By luck, the day we visited, there was a horse and carriage



At The Ulster Folk Museum

competition; these were old-fashioned pony and traps pulled gracefully by beautiful horses.

That night, we had a joint campfire with other Guides – one unit being from Ireland. They had been staying in tents and were also leaving the next day. Could they sing? Yes, but let's just say they knew some very racy campfire songs! We ended the

night with a celebratory roll down one of the hills by the estate which was muddy but fun.

The next morning we packed our bags with sombre smiles, but we weren't quite done. There were two more climbing activities to get through and, by the time we had finished, everyone was sweat-soaked

and grinning. We boarded the coach once more, driving to the long anticipated Titanic Museum.

The museum was lovely. It is an amazing building architecturally and its exhibits were well presented and interesting. We all found that it deals with the Titanic tragedy with a soft elegance and it leaves you feeling mournful for those lost at the sea on that fateful night. We saw and heard some emotive depictions of events from survivors; the final communications of the Titanic (by morse code) being particularly touching. One small group also had the bonus of going to the SS Normadic, the last ship made by the White Star Line.



Safety Brief - Paying Attention

After saying our goodbyes, we boarded the bus for the ferry terminal. Almost everyone fell asleep on the crossing as it was around 9:30 pm. Everyone seemed to be happy to get off as the boat was very rocky! We got back at Alloway at 11:30pm and we all went home to bed. I don't think the parents saw us all till lunchtime!

Abigail Hitchcock

Meganne Andrews

Last July, I travelled to Lesotho with 10 other girl guides from Scotland as part of Girl Guiding International Opportunities. The aim was to encourage education for girls in this country and address period poverty and child marriage through meeting other guides and people in schools, villages and orphanages.

The trip broadened my outlook, exposed me to opinions that differ from those heard in Scotland and made me feel grateful for what we have and respectful of those who face greater challenges elsewhere.

Meera Mohankrishnan

3rd Alloway Brownies



What a busy year the Brownies have had. Girlguiding has a new programme and a new ranges of interest and theme badges. The Brownies started with the 'Be Well' theme where we learnt about using our muscles, sharing and solving problems with others, getting a good night's sleep, the importance of drinking enough fluids and ways of boosting your self-esteem.

We also had lots of fun activities too: a lucky dip crafts night; a visit from South Ayrshire Food Bank; a pyjama party and toy pet show and our Halloween Pumpkin Party. We participated in the 100th Anniversary Remembrance Parade, had a Christmas Crafts night, a Christmas Party and an end of term trip to the Farm Park where we saw lots of animals and met Santa.

New Year saw us decorating pots, planting hyacinth bulbs, going on a cinema trip, celebrating Burns Night, making bird feeders and holding quiz nights. Soon it was time for new Brownies to make their important Brownie Promise and receive their Promise badge.

After Easter, a fire engine came and the Brownies learnt about fire safety, tried on the fire-fighting uniforms and saw all the fire-fighting equipment. All Girlguiding Units took part in a District Litter Pick. We also had a Book Swap Night where Barn Owl Sonya told us all about the book she is writing. The older Rainbows came and visited us for Bump Up Night, and we planted tomato seeds and told the Rainbows about Deytenat who is the little girl we sponsor in Ethiopia.



We ended the year by putting together stamp entries of 'Our Favourite Things', visiting Belleisle for Pond Dipping with the Rangers and a visit to the play park. Thanks are due to all our volunteer Owls for making this such an exciting fun year for all the Brownies.

Lise Whittle



Stepping Stones

(A Local Bereavement Service)

**STARTS IN ALLOWAY PARISH CHURCH HALL,
AULD NICK'S VIEW, ALLOWAY AT 7PM ON 30TH
OCTOBER 2019.**

Stepping Stones is a bereavement support programme that will be offered in Alloway to the local community after the Kirk Session of Alloway Parish Church identified it as an area of care they wished to develop and offer to everyone in the community.

The programme will run for six weeks and is best suited to those in their first year of loss. It is designed to build people's confidence and offer resources, insights and information which can be drawn upon during their journey of bereavement. The programme stands alone - there is no one-to-one follow-up - but we are able to refer individuals to other agencies if this is required. Be assured that anyone with a story of bereavement will be made most welcome.

Stepping Stones will be co-ordinated by Paul Russell who is highly experienced in bereavement support and who was part of the NHS Ayrshire and Arran Chaplaincy Team. Paul was asked to train a group of people from Alloway Church and to establish along side them a team with the appropriate skills and professional expertise.

In our community we know there are many who need support in their time of loss. Perhaps you do too. We are now ready to deliver a local bereavement service to help them or you at a time of need.

Should you require any further information, or if you would like to express interest in attending Stepping Stones, then please call Julie Griffiths on 07779543971 or email her at juliegriffiths66@yahoo.co.uk.

Thank You Contributors

The Publicity Committee of Alloway Parish Church would like to thank all those who devoted so much time and effort to writing and submitting such interesting and diverse articles for inclusion in *Signpost 2019*. Without you, this publication would not have been possible. Thank you.

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Ayrshire Tat & Chat Lace Group	Mrs I Lewis	01292 570663
Ayrshire Rock Garden Club	Mr R George	01292 500231
Ayrshire & Arran Plant Heritage Club	Mrs N Crossan	01292 679256
Badminton Group	Mrs R Andrews & Mrs J Lamont	01292 445208 01292 442056
Beavers	Lewis Hedge	07957 765257
BB Brigade Captain	Mr Stewart Robertson	01292 442217
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BB Junior Section	Rosalind McWhirter	01292 880520
BB Company Section	Mr Stewart Robertson	01292 442217
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