

#### **Editorial**

The front cover for this edition of The Herald is from the VE Day 80th Anniversary celebrations, this included an afternoon tea. From the pictures it looks like everyone had a wonderful time. There is more information on the celebrations that took place in the church within the magazine.

With Summer now over there are lots of groups within the church restarting, I hope you will find something you can join in with. There are also a few social activities arranged in the coming months including a variety show on Saturday 27th September to raise money for church funds.

On a personal note, Shane and I would like to thank everyone for their messages of congratulations on our engagement, you have all been very kind!

Rachel Queen, Editor

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# Have your say

If you have any comments to make on the Magazine, please feel free to do so by letter or email to <a href="mailto:herald@castlehillchurch.org">herald@castlehillchurch.org</a>. We are always pleased to consider any articles for the magazine from members of the congregation. These can also be sent to the same email address

# From The Manse

Dear Friends,

The past three months have been unusual for me as I am nearing the end of my time as Interim Moderator of the parish of North Carrick and by the time you read this, there will be a new minister in post – the lady who preached to their Nomination Committee at Castlehill. It has been a challenging time for the people

of North Carrick most of whom have been vacant for ten out of the past eleven years and I would ask you to remember them in your prayers ahead as they embark on this new, exciting chapter in their story.

My involvement has been minimal, but I hope I have been able to provide some stability through a very difficult period for them.

As I near the end of my involvement there, I am very conscious that I am not the best of multi-taskers and I take this opportunity to apologise to you for all that has been left undone at Castlehill as a result of my attempt to support the wider church.

As we look forward into the autumn, we are gearing up for an exciting celebration of Remembrance, 80 years after the end of the Second World War, with considerable preparation already underway by most of our organisations. Can I take this opportunity to thank all those who prepared and organised our very successful VE and VJ afternoons: they were not only enjoyed greatly by those who could attend but raised a remarkable sum of money for Erskine Home.

It is one of the hallmarks of Castlehill that we are an outward looking congregation: we can have fun together but there are always spare seats for visitors on such occasions – more to follow in the next months. We have also a deep care for the suffering in our community and our world and often reach out to them with our support. We have been asked to share in doing so again for the tragic, ongoing conflict in Ukraine in advance of a Christmas which for many of the Ukranians will be different from previous times because more of their country is being progressively destroyed. A list will appear in the magazine of items which are required and however few you can offer, they are much appreciated.

On a happy Church family note, our editor, Rachel Queen became engaged recently and we extend to Rachel and Shane every blessing for their wedding preparations and their future together.

The wider Church of Scotland picture may remain rather blurred and seem uncertain, but the longer the confusion lasts, the more convinced I become that God is preparing the future of the Church through the strength of individual congregations. It is our call to be one of those for our large community and to enjoy doing it together as we reach out to those who have not yet experienced Church. May God continue to give us the courage and the enthusiasm to be such a congregation.

This is especially significant because 2026 sees us celebrate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Castlehill as a congregation. We are already planning to make it a year to remember: many of you have already put forward suggestions of different activities which could be planned – if you have any further flashes of inspiration, it's not too late to submit them. Can I suggest that one of the best plans we can make for next year is to reach out to our community with invitation so that we can look forward to future celebrations whether alone or in union with others. There is much to remember with thanks, there can be much to look forward to with hope.

Every blessing,

Paul

### **DONATIONS FOR UKRAINE - CAN YOU HELP?**

TOOTHPASTE/BRUSHES/DEODORANT
SHAMPOOS/ BODYWASH/HAIRBRUSHES
SIMPLE READING BOOKS IN ENGLISH
COLOURING BOOKS/PENCILS/PENS/NOTEBOOKS
SANITARY PRODUCTS/UNDERWEAR/SOCKS
SMALL SOFT TOYS/PUZZLES/GAMES/PLAYING CARDS
CHRISTMAS CARDS/UNWANTED, UNUSED GIFTS

AND.....?

### **DISCUSSION GROUP**

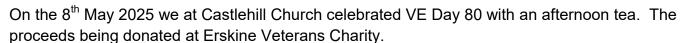
We plan to begin a Discussion Group this autumn after the September holiday. It is intended to be informal and challenging and if you are interested in finding out more, please speak to Paul as soon as you can.

A Sunday evening is a possible meeting time.

# 80 Years since VE Day

On the 8<sup>th</sup> May 1945 Britain and her allies celebrated the end of 6 long years of war against the tyranny of Adolf Hitler.





It was an opportunity for us as a community to come together to thank those who won us the freedom that we still enjoy today.

We had an afternoon of quizzing, eating and singing which was enjoyed by all who attended.

My sincere thanks to all who assisted in making this an afternoon to remember. There are a number of pictures from the event featuring on the front cover of the magazine.

**Margaret Graham** 

**VE DAY** 

# VJ Day 15<sup>th</sup> August

At Castlehill we came together to mark VJ Day. We enjoyed an afternoon tea, with strawberries donated by Kevin Kane from the fruit stall at the Wallace Tower on Ayr High Street. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed them and thanks goes to Kevin

for his continued support. Pamela honoured those who had served their country and we observed 2-minute silence. Those attending received an origami crane that symbolizes peace,

hope and a wish for a world without war, especially nuclear weapons. £315 has been sent to Erskine veterans from Castlehill Church.



Margaret Graham



### **ERSKINE VISIT**

On 9<sup>th</sup> June myself accompanied by Liz Boag, Martha Mullins and Marion Reid travelled to Erskine Veterans village to present the cheque for £750 from Castlehill Church to their representative Jordan Hogg.

Jordan very kindly escorted us around the premises ending with lunch in Harry's Cafe. If you wish to know more about the origins of Erskine a book 'A Century of Care' can be borrowed from us. It lists the history of Erskine since it started in 1916.





We also purchased 'My Life through WW2' by Jennifer McKeeman Project lead together with Park Mains High School pupils who researched for the project during a visit to Erskine Reid Macewen Activity Centre (ERMAC). In this book Erskine veterans share their stories and memories.

After our visit each of us agreed that all our organising and hard work was absolutely worthwhile for such a deserving charity which hopefully Castlehill Church will support in the future.

**Margaret Graham** 

### Meet the Teams

Do you ever turn up to church on a Sunday and know the faces of the people greeting you but not their names? Below we have introduced Teams 4 and 5, if you've learnt a new name go up and introduce yourself to them—chances are they don't know your name either!

#### Team 4:



**Christine Prout** 



Ian Queen



Marion Reid

Team 5:



Dorothy Jack



**Margaret Gerrard** 



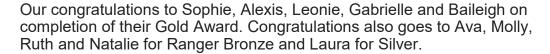
Nicola Murray



Sandra Struthers

### **GIRLGUIDING**

Guides and Rangers have had a busy Spring and Summer session.





The unit has been busy with outdoor challenges including outdoor cookery and jewellery making. We also painted tiny works of art. Some of the girls went to try raft building and wild swimming which was great fun and lots of laughs on a lovely sunny June afternoon.

June also saw us heading to Dailly for our residential weekend. We greatly enjoyed the green spaces, nature trails and village hospitality. We had a festival theme with hair wraps, tattoos and face painting. We are looking forward to our Autumn adventures!

Christine, Angie and Rhian

Towards the end of the last session, the girls were busy and glad to be outdoors. Monday night Brownies had a sponsored walk down through Rozelle to Burns Cottage, this was to raise money for their Pack Holiday at the beginning of October. Monday night Guides had



another terrific overnight at the church hall in Dailly and the girls had great fun with a Friday night walk round the ruined castles and a duck race with plastic ducks down the river. It was very wet on the Sunday but they enjoyed doing crafts, hair and temporary tattoos. Tuesday night Rainbows and Guides had a joint sleepover and camp and units finished with an end of term games night and party.

We have now started our new session and looking forward to the term ahead with activities planned. Tuesday night Guides and Brownies started their session with a Foodbank shop and donated a substantial amount of food to the Church Foodbank. Monday night Guides had arranged a visit to the alpacas but unfortunately this had to be cancelled due to wet weather but I am sure it will be re-arranged for some point.

Rachel and myself have stepped down as District Commissioners and we would like to thank the Leaders, Paul and the Church for their support during our term. This role has now been passed to Beth Askwith who is a Leader with the Monday Rainbows. We would like to wish Beth well and hope she will have the same support that we had.

We have had a couple of new volunteers. Girlguiding at Castlehill is continuing to do well with the number of girls, Leaders and Volunteers.

Again, I would thank everyone at Castlehill for the support that they give us.

Linda McClurkin





We hope everyone had a lovely Summer whether you were away or at home. Over the Summer months the Foodbank has been quite busy and the trend seems to be we are needed more than ever.

We are very grateful to everyone who has donated either money or goods, as continued support is very encouraging. We received two large donations this Summer, the first from Forehill School Summer Service, £209.56 and secondly from the funeral retiral collection of one of our volunteers, Catherine Main, £350. Words cannot express our immense gratitude to both and encourages us to carry on doing what we do.

The Tuesday Guides and Brownies have come up trumps again with a fantastic donation of goods, some of which are in the photo on the right. We have managed to pack some away but still have plenty left. Thank you and hope you had a great night shopping



A huge thank you to all!

### **Margaret Gerrard**

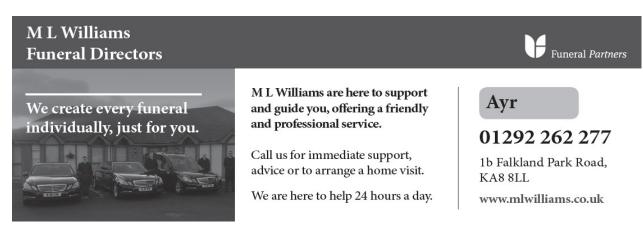
# **Social Report**

We have a show coming up in September 27th, a great night planned with many artists from singers and dancers to a comedian and lots more - a great way to spend a Saturday night. Tickets are available on a Sunday but you can pay at the door. Show starts at 7pm, doors open 6.30pm. We hope you can come and support this event. The money raised will go to church funds.



The Christmas Fayre will be on November 29th 10am-12pm with the usual stalls and more! We hope to see you there to start your Christmas shopping and have a tea and mincemeat pie when finished.

The Social Committee



We finished our last session on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> May when we held our THEBOYS annual display and awards presentation. It was well attended by BRIGADE the adventure begins here

On Friday 29<sup>th</sup> August we held our annual enrolment evening. Each of our three sections welcomed new members which is encouraging.

The first big event of the session will be our dedication service on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> October. At the dedication service we will be presenting our first King's Badges, we should be presenting 8 King's Badges and a President's Badge. It will be a very proud moment for the 17<sup>th</sup> Ayr and for me as Captain.

Following the dedication service, we will be holding our annual Soup & Sweet lunch to raise funds for the Company.

Two of the King's Men have already undertaken officer training at Carronvale, the Scottish National Training Centre. The training is one week this Summer and another week next Summer. We are very proud of the two young men who made this commitment to giving back to the 17<sup>th</sup> Ayr as leaders within the Company, thanks to Matthew Doolan and Fraser Murray.

Two other King's Men, who were not available for the Carronvale training, are undertaking officer training delivered by the local joint Ayrshire Battalion training. Caleb Black and Connor Graham will also become officers in the 17<sup>th</sup> Ayr. We are delighted to have four of our eight King's Men training to become leaders in the Company.

We have another change in the staffing of the 17<sup>th</sup> Ayr. Now that I am retired, my time commitment on Fridays will not be as it has been for the last 45 years as I take advantage of my new found freedom. Graham Watt, currently a lieutenant in the Company Section, has agreed to take on the role of Officer in Charge of the Company Section. Thanks to Graham for agreeing to fill this position.

On Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> June Margaret Graham and I were invited to the South Ayrshire Volunteer Awards in the Town Hall. This is an annual event which celebrates the work of volunteers in South Ayrshire. A vast number of organisations were represented at the awards. It was a very well organised event which paid tribute to a large number of volunteers. Margaret Graham was awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award for her near to 30 years of work in the 17<sup>th</sup> Ayr. I was awarded a Special Recognition Award for my 45 years service to the 17<sup>th</sup> Ayr. We are both very proud of our awards.



After the session was finished the Junior Section had a sleepover in the Main Hall. This is the second year we have done this. Part of the

reason is to encourage boys who are not confident in staying away from home to try it before we take them away for our annual "camp" in November. During the weekend they enjoyed a chippy tea on Friday evening, followed by a games evening, finished off with a film. On Saturday the boys enjoyed a treasure hunt round the streets of Ayr town centre. They also spent time in Castlehill Woods den making. The whole weekend was a success.

At the last session meeting we received approval to have our old colours installed in the sanctuary. These are the colours which went missing for 23 years. We have had them framed and will have them installed in an appropriate location within the church.

Next year is when we are due to return to Romania for the seventh time. As plans are formed and fund raising events are planned we will keep you informed.

lan Queen, Captain





A member of our community has asked on behalf of their family -

My elderly parents are in a very dangerous part of Ukraine right now, and we are hoping to bring them to the UK through the "Homes for Ukraine" scheme. Unfortunately, we can't host them ourselves as we don't have a spare room. If anyone in the community has a spare room or empty flat and would consider being a host. The UK government offers £350 per month as a thank-you to sponsors. Also, their parents will be able to partially pay for utilities.

Please contact the church office: 01292 431143 or email office@castlehillchurch.org

# **Castlehill Church Bowling Club Outing**

Bowls were rolling left and right,
Some down the middle and some took flight!
Some made a journey short and smooth;
Some rolled far and into the groove;
Others bumped and twisted and turned
Wandering to rinks from which they were spurned.
Some were like magnets drawn to the Jack,
Others clustered away at the back.
Some left the bowler's hand with intent,
but never got to where they were meant.
Some left at random with no control,
Yet ironically became the winning bowl.

The bowlers themselves were mixed on the green. The experts, the beginners and those in-between; Though all said, "Don't worry, it is just a game!" Some who were losing seemed to be in real pain. The winners, of course, sedately were pleased Not wanting to gloat; but happy to tease. The skips now – they had a really hard time Trying to keep the rest of us in line... They pointed to the left; they pointed to the right; They wiggled their arms and kept their players in sight! Oh dear, they should not have wasted their time Though we all understood their efforts in mime; With the best of intentions and our eyes on the goal, We tried to obey as we let the ball roll... It cut its own path, and the skip would then sigh, As he tried to be gracious, saying, "Really good try!"

# THOUGHT AND PRAYER



Andrew Graham: 01292 261486

### **COFFEE SHOP**

Has it drained its last dregs? I'd rather think that we can begin after the September weekend, with the volunteers we have and the hope that a few more may join them. If not, there is the prospect of my coffee not being served up! This is too important a fellowship group to let it die so join those already involved and we shall plan ahead.

**Paul** 



### **Finance**

This is an update on the church finances because our monthly income continues to be less than the expenditure.

Our gas and electricity supples continue to be part of a contract the national Church of Scotland has. Over the winter months it cost £2,500/month for gas and electricity.

We recently installed new radiators in the Main Hall which will be more efficient than the previous ones. This cost £6,574.03. To date routine maintenance has cost £12,835.34.

Each congregation makes Giving to Grow contributions to the national church and this year we were due to give £62,372. This should be paid by 12 monthly payments of £5198 but I arranged to pay £2,500 each month and payments of £8093 every 3 months and so far have been able to fulfill these payments. Last year Presbytery dues were £1,289 but we have not been told yet what we have to pay this year.

As well as electricity and gas our costs for salaries, insurance for church and manse, cleaning church and halls, garden maintenance, manse council tax and the council emptying the bins have all increased. Repair and maintenance of the church, halls and manse is ongoing.

I claim Gift Aid each month and once a year claim on the Gift Aid Small Donation Scheme and the Listed Places of Worship Scheme which lets us claim back VAT charged on eligible work done on the premises. I also claim under the Scottish Government Water and Sewerage Charge Exemption Scheme each year.

We have some groups which hire our halls and they are charged monthly. Church groups, local community and charity groups are not charged for using the halls but give a donation when they can.

Money from the congregation is received by standing order, the Free Will Offering envelopes or is put in the offering plate on Sundays. Some people increase what they give each year and we hope more people would feel able to do this. We realise the current financial situation in the country and things like winter fuel allowance no longer being paid to everyone might mean some people have to give less to the church and we completely understand this. We are grateful for everything members of the congregation are able to give.

Margaret Devlin, Treasurer

# **CASTLEHILL BOWLING CLUB**

We had our annual bowling outing to Girvan on 26<sup>th</sup> July and again the sun shone the whole day. Everyone enjoyed the games and the tea afterwards. Prizes went to Marjorie Neil for "first toucher" and she also figured in the winning rink with Alan Jack and Harry Lorimer. There was a booby prize as well, but their names are protected. We had 33 attending, and the group photo below show the happy bunch. Sadly, due to sudden illness seven friends were unable to attend which was disappointing for them and us.



#### **Wellwood Grierson**

Marjorie Neil has "first toucher"



Winning team: Harry Lorimer, Alan Jack and Marjorie Neil with our President George Neil



# **Fabric Report**

We have had a few repairs and some painting done over the Summer but there is still more to do. We did have an outside clean up but will need another one in September, date to be arranged. We had the back gutter repaired and roof check done. The main hall has got new radiators, hopefully this will make the hall warmer in the winter months. Outside we are getting the wall repaired. It needed some support and rendered. Someone has already caught the pillar before the work was complete. The main hall floor will be repaired, sanded and varnished in October.

The Fabric Committee

# **Winter Activities Afternoons**

In Castlehill Church we have our Warm Spaces afternoon every Thursday in the Winter from 2pm to 4pm. We begin again on Thursday 28th of September. The aim of our social group is to combat loneliness within our local community in a safe and friendly environment.

Members of our group play cards and dominoes, undertake crafting activities, do jigsaws or just read a book. Critically everyone enjoys the chat and many friendships have been formed. If you are free on a Thursday afternoon please come along and enjoy the company of others while enjoying a cup of tea and cake. You will be made very welcome.

If you require further information, please contact myself, Liz Hardie on 07969438159. Hope to see you there.

Liz Hardie, Lead

### The Guild

#### "Whose we are and Whom we Serve"



Over the Summer months plans were ongoing to provide an interesting and varied programme for the forthcoming session. Some of the topics are Woman's Aid, Chair Pilates and Alloway Railway Tunnel (from conception to completion). We have 24 weeks of interesting and exciting speakers, so come along and see for yourself.

The Guild starts on 1st October with our opening social featuring "The Quiggs".

For anyone new who would like to come along to the Guild, we meet on a Wednesday evening at 7.30 pm in the North Hall of the church where you will be made very welcome.

**Dorothy Jack, Secretary** 

### THE BURRELL COLLECTION

The Guild outing to the Burrell Collection in July was very enjoyable. The trip was extended to church members, friends and family. Nearly 40 participants enjoyed the weather which was almost perfect – not too hot nor too cold.

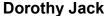
The Burrell Collection consists of 9,000 items collected by the shipping magnet and art collector, Sir William Burrell, who left the whole collection to the City of Glasgow Corporation in 1944 so that the public would have access to it. Although there are 9,000 items in the collection only about 6,000 are displayed at any one time. There are some permanent items with the others being rotated in and out of storage.

Our group split into three and were taken around to some of the main exhibits by three tour guides who explained the items in detail and from which part of the world they came from.

The museum was closed in 2016 for refurbishment and reopened again in 2020 in a magnificent building at a cost of £68.25 million. Well worth a visit.



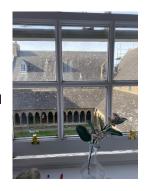






### A Week Spent in Iona Abbey

Probably many of you have been to the island of lona - a day trip across Mull from Oban. Once there you probably walked uphill through the village to lona Abbey. It's now a historic monument in the care of Historic Scotland and open to the public. Through headphones the visitor is taken on a narrative tour of the Abbey buildings, the museum and the archaeological remains in the grounds - with music and sound effects to bring past centuries to life. The key figure is Saint Columba (521-597) who travelled from Ireland with 12 companions and established a monastic prayer cell here in 563 AD. This early Christian community flourished as others joined the monks. In time an abbey was built sustained by a surrounding community which was largely self-sufficient. However brutal Viking raids and changing times spelled decline until only ruins remained. The Abbey itself was restored between 1902 and



1910. In 1938 a Church of Scotland minister, the Reverend George Macleod (who died in 1991 at the age of 96) took a group of unemployed labourers from his charge in Govan and ministers in training to work together to restore the cloisters and other monastery buildings. This was the beginning of the Iona Community - which describes itself as "an international, ecumenical Christian movement working for justice and peace, the rebuilding of community and the renewal of worship." Some current members, associates and volunteers host those who stay in the Abbey.



I was a guest there for 6 days at the end of September 2024. It was a themed creative week (many have no theme simply providing space to experience living in community - and there is an option for a 3-day stay too). This week offered opportunities to do art, make bread, write and listen to poetry, sing new songs and participate in daily worship in the Abbey at 9am and 9pm. Worship draws on several Christian traditions; is inclusive as far as possible; and concentrates on Community priorities of healing, justice and peace. Living in community involves sharing in some communal tasks for 30 minutes each day: my role was to serve tea/coffee with home-baked scones or cake during breaks in the programme. As the Abbey is an ancient monument restrictions apply and space is limited. It is not possible to have en-suite bedrooms (apart from a few allocated to people with specific needs). I was sharing a bedroom with two others in the Abbot's House. Meals are in the Refectory and are tasty, largely vegetarian and as sustainable as possible. Special diets are competently catered for.

Staff, volunteers and guests hailed from Britain, Ireland, continental Europe, parts of Africa, Australia, Canada and the USA which made for some interesting and colourful conversations! Each week someone from the Community leads a pilgrimage round places of spiritual, historical, cultural or religious interest which visitors to the island join. There's a rather demanding off-road version which I've completed previously (but my knees are past it now) and a shorter one keeping to the tarmac. Some chose to go on an optional boat trip to Staffa to view Fingal's Cave. They were rewarded with good weather and multiple sightings of seals and dolphins too. Those who chose to stay on land might have spent time in the lona Community Welcome Centre with its extensive range of books and gifts; or visited local craft shops or tea rooms; or cosied up in the Common Room; or walked past tall Celtic crosses, small isolated farms and rocky outcrops to a pristine white-sand beach. Wherever you are the Hebridean scenery is stunning! But a warning....the WIND is strong and almost constant. Warm layered clothing is a must. So is waterproof gear - though for us it only rained heavily on one day excluding when we left on the early ferry on Friday.



Some people visit Iona for a holiday or book a private retreat. Increasingly cruise ships call and their passengers crowd the village for a few hours. At night a soft quiet descends and, with minimal light pollution, the dark skies are spangled with stars.

lona is widely acknowledged as one of the world's "thin places" where the boundary between heaven and earth, the seen and the unseen, is perceived to be fluid. You do not need to stay in the Abbey to experience something of this. However staying there inevitably brings you closer to how mediaeval Benedictine monks lived out their faith and experienced the divine. We said this blessing one day in our worship: 'The light of God to lead us. The power of God to hold us. The joy of God to heal us. The grace of God to caress us. The love of God to bless us'.

#### <u>lona</u>

If you've never been to this island it's time -

to risk a choppy 10-minute crossing from Mull but it might be beautifully smooth (and maybe you glimpsed a rainbow over passing islands between Oban and Craignure). The iconic outline of the Abbey grows clearer, beyond the village, beside Dun I the island's highest point.

It's time to descend the ramp onto the slipway and set foot on Columbia's sacred isle.



Pamela Turner

### **Weddings**

Lewis Weir and Jodie Dunlop 4th July 2025

#### <u>Funerals</u>

May August

Alistair Tedford Holmston Crescent, Ayr Nancy Hoggit Ellisland Square, Ayr

**June** Tom Farrell Birch Road, Ayr

Shona Cowan Treebank Crescent, Ayr

Our thanks goes to the following people for donating flowers to the church between May and August:

Barbara Mossie, Eileen McGilp, Margaret Gerrard, the Choir, Sandra Struthers, Joan Macfie, Brian Christie, Jackie Christie, Allison Smith, Pat Colquhoun, Margaret Graham, Elza Anderson, Jean Hunt, Hamish Wilson, Marion Reid, Liz Reid, Liz Hardie, Moira Alexander and Sheena Gray.



Frances Russell, Stella Nixon, Catherine Holland, Allison Smith, Margaret Gerrard, Lyn McDermott, May Harris, Margaret Grierson, Margaret Devlin, Liz Hunter, Moira Alexander and Elizabeth Reid.

There are still a few spaces available for anyone looking to donate flowers,. Please contact Stella Nixon for further information.



We regularly report on the flower committee and the excellent job they do in presenting the flowers each

Sunday. But what else do they do? Well, we caught them having a quiet lunch together. The reason of course was to discuss their plans for the next few months. We are sure the results will be brilliant as usual.



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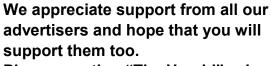
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# gordon Shanks

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