

The Herald

Castlehill Parish Church

Spring 2014



Editorial

In reading this edition of our magazine, you will probably have not failed to notice that there is a recurring theme of "light" throughout. At the very start of our Bible it is recorded that the earth was a formless void and that it was covered in darkness. The first thing God did was to say "Let there be light" and there was and God saw that it was good.

We have just finished celebrating Easter and the day after the crucifixion was a particularly dark day for the disciples, but after Jesus' resurrection they emerged into a world now lit by God's light where they would never stumble in the darkness again.

To be found on a plaque on the distinctive square shaped Port Ellon lighthouse on Islay are the words

*"Ye who mid storms and tempests stray in danger's midnight hour,
behold where shines this friendly ray and hail its guardian tower".*

May we always see God's friendly ray as it illuminates our path through our life.

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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 herald@castlehillchurch.org We are always pleased to consider any articles for the Magazine from members of the congregation, These can also be sent to the email address quoted.



From the Manse

New Life

It is a joy to share in so many school chaplaincies in the parish. The end of school terms makes for a busy time as the schools celebrate their end of term services, some of these held in the church. It is always good to join with all the pupils, staff, family and friends celebrating the times and seasons. At Easter, South Craig school welcomed baby lambs on the last day of term - a lovely way to celebrate the new life in the world around us and a fitting illustration of the message of Easter.

I particularly enjoy the Easter Hymn: **Now the green blade rises**, especially these lines:

When our hearts are wintry, grieving or in pain

Thy touch can call us back to life again

It is my prayer that you have been touched by the hope of the Resurrection this Easter.

Liz Crumlish

www.liz-vicarofdibley.blogspot.com



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Messy Church

We welcomed families to our Bunny Hunt before Easter and to our Messy Easter Celebration just after Easter. We have a wonderful band of willing volunteers getting creative with crafts, food, story telling and music.



Where are they now ?

Continuing our series on former students who trained for ministry at Ayr:Castlehill

Rev Quintin Finlay

Accidents happen!! Mostly we get hurt. But sometimes the accident is the best thing that happens to you in life.

As a student I had decided that I would spend my probationary year at Kirkwall Cathedral in Orkney where my parents came from, and then get a parish on the islands as my grandfather had done. The student committee at "121 George Street" were nicely fooled into allocating this post to me, but of course I would need to meet the minister first to get his agreement. But when I tried to get across to Orkney there was a huge storm raging for four days and all transport was cancelled. The minister of the Cathedral decided that, if I could not get across for an interview I was useless and of no interest to him. So, back to "121" to ask for another placement, thinking to myself that the last place I wanted to go to was some Clyde coastal holiday resort. [Ah the best laid schemes...etc.]

Now, as we all know God has a habit of doing things which He knows are best for us, even if WE don't agree. And so it was that I landed at Castlehill – and later in another Clyde coast holiday resort, [the most famous of them all??] Rothesay, for fourteen years.

Well, the minister at Kirkwall could not be bothered with a useless creature like me, but the minister at Castlehill [Michael Dickie] was more tolerant. Having said that; I arrived at my "digs" in Holmston Drive [with the Hannah family] on the last Friday in June 1974, and reported to the minister on the Saturday morning. Then I was introduced to the Church on the Sunday morning and evening, by which time Michael had got fed up with me, and went off on holiday. Surprisingly the congregation was still there when he returned in August.

Carefully Michael and the people of Castlehill [not least Freddie Burden, the Session Clerk at the time] formed me into a reasonable semblance of a minister. The regular need to prepare a service EVERY Sunday, something which none of my fellow students were asked to do, and a 50/50 share of the parish work and visiting, meant that I was very well prepared to take on a parish of my own after these two glorious, exhausting years at Castlehill. It was indeed an accident which did me good. Oh, and yes, like all young and single ministers I met a young lady with whom I fell in love; but, by accident we did not get married.

After Castlehill I was called to the little village of Kirkcovan in Wigtownshire and served there for five years; and then to Rothesay, North Bute, for fourteen years. I never quite reached the heights of my successor at Castlehill [Bill Hewitt], but did manage to be Moderator of Presbytery, twice, while in Rothesay.

Retiring early to look after an invalid mother, I was too old to return full-time to a parish, so have taken on several short locum posts in the Borders area

About four years ago I paid a visit to Castlehill on a weekday. The main door was open, but the one into the Church was locked. The cleaner was in the small hall, but she would not let me into the Church without the minister's permission. But she did not need to. I could just picture myself and Michael [5ft 8ins and 6ft 4ins] striding down that short aisle at 11.00 am with 700 or so people watching and waiting to see what we would get up to that Sunday morning. And what an atmosphere: the joyful singing, the gasps and laughter from so many people, the active organisations, and the lack of time to get bored. I wish all my Churches had been half as good. I still remember and think of many people of the Church; of course they are still to me as they were in 1976 when I last saw them. Their bodies will have changed, but their spirits will not have and that is what we really remember and how we know people.

I was saddened to learn that Quintin Blane had died last November. He was a member of Castlehill when I was there, and subsequently became a minister. He came across to Rothesay one summer on camp with his B.B. Company from Barrhead, and they paraded to my Church with band and flags. What a great Sunday that was for me, to be re-connected with Castlehill.

And then, of course, There was the Session Clerk, Freddie Burden, who knew my father [they were both in the pharmacy business]. He however had no influence in me coming to his Church, but isn't it strange how God organises that sort of connection. Sometimes we think that God has deserted us; and then someone from the past 'phones up to ask you to write an article for the Church Magazine, and all these hundreds of Christian people come flooding back into your life. He is always with us, wherever we are.

Quintin Finlay



A word from our organist...

How time flies, it seems like only yesterday that I was writing the Christmas article, and now by the time this one is printed Easter will be over! Indeed this feeling was made worse when, in the car the other day I heard a well known radio personality announce joyfully that it was only 200 and something days till Christmas. The less said about that the better!



Since my last note the choir has suffered a further loss with the sad passing of Bob Cairns. I was always amazed that although Bob was so quietly spoken he had a beautiful bass voice which could permeate the female voices of the choir with ease. Not long after Bob's funeral I was listening to a recording of the choir singing Amazing Grace and in the last verse Bob's voice comes through the recording, clear as a bell over the soprano's, despite being outnumbered 5 to 1. Bob was a faithful member of the choir for many years and he is missed by all at our Friday night practices. We give thanks to God for Bob's contribution to the music of Castlehill.

In other musical news I am very grateful to Liz Kelly for agreeing to play once a month for me on a Sunday. Liz has played the organ in many churches throughout Ayrshire and has lots of experience in performing music and in taking choirs. She will be a welcome addition to the musical team at Castlehill and will provide a welcome change to my dodgy notes!

At a recent choir practice one member asked if the choir would be singing All in the April Evening this Easter, to which I responded "as it was, tis now and forever shall be, Amen." At significant points in the church calendar such as Easter or Christmas it is very easy to get caught up with the procedural elements of the occasion, such as buying presents, sending cards, or over eating. I find it particularly easy to break these festivals down to a series of dates; a tick list of things to do; and services to attend. It is also very easy from a musical point of view to wheel out the same "classics" year in year out to save having to really think about the significance of the season.

This Easter, as well as the classic "All in the April Evening" the choir sang a modern hymn "See What a Morning" by the Composers Keith Getty and Stuart Townend. This lively piece of music tells of the glory and excitement of Easter Sunday morning when it is revealed that Jesus has risen from the dead. The music is bursting full of energy and gets feet tapping and people humming away at the catchy tune. I find that hymns such as this, are a great tool in stopping me reducing Easter to a procedural list and instead allows me to reflect in new ways about the amazing truth that we celebrate on Easter Sunday. I hope that as you listen to the choir or the organ on a Sunday morning you are able to find the same rejuvenation that I do.

With best wishes
Christopher

How Pure Is Your Heart?

When I first read the verse "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God" it made me think about what the phrase "pure in heart" truly means. This took me on a journey of self-discovery and I realised that not only do we have to be true to ourselves in our everyday lives but also true to each other and most importantly true to our calling as Christians. I have always been confident in my faith. This has enabled me to be more forthcoming and therefore allowing God to lead me into situations that I may find uncomfortable. It is not easy being a modern day disciple, society has placed Christianity in a box and in not allowing it to be opened they deprive themselves of the blessings that knowing the Holy Spirit brings. The conflict between faith and the lack of it has made it more difficult to be a true follower of Jesus Christ. With God's help we should be able to accept and overcome any challenge and be strong enough to invite others to share in his many blessings. How pure is your heart?

Allan Jack - Eastern Promise

I've spent over a decade all told in Saudi Arabia. Because of that, I know what it is like to live under Sharia Law. Some folk are of the opinion that British (English and Scots) Law should incorporate aspects of Sharia. To them I say, "No, No and thrice NO!" And may I add, "Never!" to that? This story may shed some light on why.

One of my work colleagues met and fell in love with a nurse. He was a Brit and she was Finnish. They were living together (totally illegal in Saudi) and were being hassled by the local cops when they were out in a car together (also not allowed in Saudi). The relevant laws are 1) No sex outside marriage and 2) If a couple are in a vehicle together they must be married OR be relatives that can't marry i.e. siblings, mother and son, aunt and nephew, etc. Needless to say a great many ex-pat romances hit the same problems. Our couple decided that, seeing they were in Saudi, they would get married under Sharia Law. Every time I tell this story, people ask why they did it that way. I've got no real answer. Perhaps just to be different and/or experience something totally different.

This plan got them out of their immediate problem because they could get a letter from the nurse's employer saying that they were 'engaged' and so were allowed to drive around together unsupervised. However, the plan had other associated problems.

In Saudi Arabia, EVERY woman has a man who is responsible for her. This leads to hilarious consequences. For instance, a lady was flying from Riyadh to Dammam and wouldn't switch her mobile phone off as the plane was landing despite numerous requests from the crew. On disembarking she was detained while the authorities established who her responsible male was. He was in Riyadh so he had to get on another plane and on his arrival in Dammam, HE was arrested and she let go! But I digress.

Our bride-to-be's father lived in Finland and he wasn't going to fly out to Saudi so a 'surrogate' father had to be found. Guess who got the job? Yes, me! Somewhere I have a document (in Finnish with an English translation) transferring the father's right to hand over his daughter in marriage to me. It has innumerable stamps from every conceivable government department both in Finland and Saudi. That solved that problem.

Next problem was that we had to get an appointment with a local judge. Weddings in Saudi, although the celebrations can be extremely lavish and can be held on separate days for males and females, are not held in the mosque. The couple actually goes to court to have the license drawn up. However, nothing is ever simple and we had a couple of false starts. On one occasion, we were told that the judges weren't 'doing' weddings on that particular day; they were only doing murderers and rapists! We were standing in the bleak corridor waiting for this news when the door of one of the courtrooms along at the end opened and two prisoners walked out in chains. Obviously, they had been found guilty and they shuffled along in their shackles. A couple of aspects of the scene struck me. One was that they were going to be executed the following Friday, for certain, and that gives one a very peculiar feeling at the back of the neck and secondly, the guards never laid a hand on either prisoner. They knew that they would take their time but the guards had all the time in the world.

This postponement (again) had created another problem as we had been assured that the ceremony would take place that day and the (now not so) happy couple had laid on a big party for all their friends. The still not married bride was in floods of tears as we drove away from the court and she was inconsolable. To be honest, none of us was particularly happy as we went home at the end of the day.

Imagine my surprise when the phone rang and the groom told me that the party was going ahead. Then he asked me if I had a bible. Bibles are banned in Saudi and many have been confiscated at the airports. However Dorothy had brought a small Gideon New Testament and he asked me to bring it along.

When we arrived the party seemed to be going along nicely and the mood had certainly lifted. I was dragged into the kitchen and asked if I knew the marriage ceremony. Stunned I replied that I thought I could remember it. Right, now I was going to 'marry' them in a totally unofficial ceremony. Coupled with readings from 2nd Corinthians about two becoming one and love is, I acted as a minister. They even exchanged rings. Everybody had a great time and it certainly boosted the atmosphere.

A few days later, we tried again at the court and this time we were taken into the anteroom of the judge's chambers. His assistant, a Mutawah (one of the religious police – a whole separate story), was extremely pleasant and spoke remarkably good English. A scribe faithfully noted down all the terms for the marriage. Then, for the only time in the whole procedure, he turned to the bride and asked her if there were any conditions to the marriage. Both bride and groom just wanted to get on with it and shook their heads. However, I realised that this was the only chance a Saudi bride has to put her stamp on the relationship. She can ask for anything and the groom can like it or lump it. So I put forward that the contract should have that she would be allowed to work. I didn't want her to get into any trouble at her hospital. Eventually the contract was finalised and we all signed it. Then we went into the courtroom to see the judge. His first remark was for the bride to cover her face so she sat through her very brief wedding ceremony looking through a black curtain. As the judge spoke only in Arabic we couldn't really follow what he was saying but he inspected the documents we had brought along and asked the groom and me to shake hands. This signified that I was handing over responsibility for my 'daughter' to her now husband.

However this story had one more twist.

Later on in the year, because I had only a few days of vacation left, I flew home on the night of Christmas Day arriving back in Scotland on Boxing Day.

It turned out that only one other chap was traveling across the causeway to Bahrain Airport with me in the provided limousine. He was an American but very quiet which was unusual. Even while we were waiting for the driver to get his visa organised, he was extremely taciturn. Because the roads and the causeway were very quiet, we arrived at the airport well in time. In fact the booking-in desks weren't even open. The airport itself was quiet and so we started up a conversation. He asked me what I did in Saudi so I told him and then I asked him what he was doing over there. You could have knocked me down with a feather when he replied, "I'm a Catholic Priest!"

I knew that Aramco had their own Catholic and Anglican priests but this guy was extra. He had been between parishes in the Chicago diocese when the archbishop had picked him out to give help to the resident priest over the Christmas period. Practicing Christianity (or any religion other than Islam) is banned in Saudi although many people of faith do so in the secrecy of their own homes. A great proportion of the Aramco workforce comes from the Philippines and a lot of the nurses employed in the Aramco hospital are Irish. Both communities are mainly Roman Catholic and there is a number from the Protestant faith also. Attending Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve was a VERY popular event and help was needed on the priestly front. So here was my traveling companion heading home at the end of his stint.

I wondered how he was described on his visa application as 'Priest' probably wasn't mentioned! It seems he came in as a 'Special Teacher'.

Although this story took some time to relate, the check-in desks were still not open so he asked me what I got up to in Saudi when I wasn't working. I don't know what made me do it (probably his story) but I told him the saga of the Saudi marriage. He then asked me a strange question. Was I a member of the church? I told him that I wasn't a Catholic but a Scots Presbyterian. Was I baptized? Of course. Then came the second jaw-dropping statement. Well, in the eyes of God, he said, I married them!!!!

It just shows you should never to joke about things you may not fully understand.

Situations Vacant

Castlehill Church is looking for a **Treasurer** and a **Property Convenor**.

If you feel you would like to help with either of these tasks, please speak to the Minister.

Reader in Training

On Easter Sunday we bid a fond farewell to Christine Stewart who has been at Castlehill for the last six months as part of her training for Readership in the Church of Scotland. Christine successfully undertook her Final Preaching Assessment on 27th April. Once she has completed her remaining academic assignments, she will be set apart as a Reader by the Presbytery of Ayr.

Christine writes: **Life is Full of Surprises:**

I've been reflecting recently on the fact that life can and does take some unexpected turns. Much of the reason for this is that when I was much younger, I used to come to this area frequently as I had an aunt and uncle in Caledonia Road, and then another aunt and uncle came to stay in Alderbank. I never guessed then that I would have such close links with Castlehill Church.

I can hardly believe that I am coming to an end of my six months training with you, and can only thank you for the warmth of your welcome, the support I have enjoyed and the encouragement I have received in response to my efforts to learn to lead worship with a congregation. You have enabled me to sense a great freedom that allowed me to present The Gospel afresh and share the Inexhaustible

Love of God with you – a love that can and does meet our deepest need. I will really miss the time with the children (and the young at heart) in 'Sharing the Week'. Don't they just remind you of the wonder of all that life has to offer, and how important it is to appreciate it?

As for Tuesday mornings – that is one fellowship that I love –with special mention of meringues and flapjacks, and let's not forget "Wee Stinkers". That's just something else in which I can never hope to match the skills of 'The Grumpy Old Men' (winking smile) or the Rev. Liz Crumlish. It goes without saying that I owe both her and Idris many thanks for cheerfully engaging in extra tasks on my behalf, especially Liz who has smiled patiently through my many questions and need for reassurance.

May you all know God's blessing as you continue to love and serve Him.

Christine Stewart



Birthday Celebrations



Jim Roy recently celebrated his 85th birthday.



Margaret Irvine was 90 years young!



Rosemary Ash celebrated her 80th birthday

Bowling Club AGM



The A.G.M. and prize giving was held on 31st March 2014 with 36 members present. President David Kerr welcomed everyone and explained the rules for the unusual ways of bowling for the fun games. Each rink represented football teams, so there was great rivalry and hilarity, with the Hibs team ending the winners. We were then joined by our minister Liz Crumlish and having said grace we enjoyed a lovely tea served by the ladies. After tea the A.G.M. was opened with the minutes of 2013 read and approved with no matters arising. The president gave a report on the progress of the club but was saddened by the death in August of club member Jim Rae. One or two new members have joined up and we now have over 40 members who

have enjoyed the social activity. Competitions were heavily contested and completed on time, so it has been a very successful year. The finance report was given by treasurer Helen Lynch and the club remains in a healthy position. It was decided to donate £1,000 to the church funds. Helen Lynch stepped down as treasurer after 8 years and Moira Alexander was appointed as the new treasurer.

Election of Office Bearers for 2014-15

President David Kerr
Vice-President Michael Hardie
Treasurer Moira Alexander
Tea Conveners Monday: Joan Martin & Sheila Mackenzie
Wednesday: Betty Taylor, Elise Henderson & Helen Lynch

Michael Hardie then presented Helen Lynch with gift tokens and a patio rose for her good work as treasurer.

Subscription fees remain at £4 with tea money remaining at £1

All the dates for the coming year were arranged and we moved on to the prize giving for 2013-14 with our minister Liz presenting the prizes.

Prize Winners 2013-14

Bill & Betty Duncan Plate – Ladies Singles

Winner Rita Macey – Lille

Runner –up: Sheila Mackenzie

Gents Singles Championship

Winner David Yates

Edgar Grierson Quaich Ladies Pairs

Runner-up John McDermott

Winners Helen Lynch & Linda Telfer

Wellwood & Margaret Grierson Salver – Gents Pairs

Runners-up Isabella Kerr & Jean Hunt

Winners David Kerr & John McDermott

Ina Walker Trophy – Mixed Pairs

Runners up Ian McLeod & Harry Lorimer

Winners Jean Hunt & George Johnstone

John Thomson Rose Bowl – Monday Points League

Runners-up Liz Hunter & David Kerr

Winner David Kerr – 30pts

Kerr Rose Bowl – Wednesday Points League

Runners-up Roy Wilson, Joan Macfie, Harry Lorimer – 23 points

Winner Harry Lorimer – 28pts

Runners –up Jean Hunt & David Kerr – 23 pts

The president then thanked Michael & Helen for all their support in the running of the club & all other members for their help when required.

David Kerr President

A Welcome Light at a Time of Darkness



Maggie's Centres are for anyone who has a diagnosis of cancer and their families and friends. They offer practical, emotional and social support at a time when life as you know it completely changes. All the Centres are staffed by Cancer Support specialists, Benefits Advisors, Nutritionists and Psychologists. They also run several different courses/ workshops to help you cope throughout your cancer journey. They are usually built in the grounds of the Hospital that delivers your treatment so that you can have easy access to their support.

My initial contact with Maggie's was in 2004. I was an Oncology Nurse working with the palliative care team in Edinburgh at the Western General Hospital. Along with the Palliative Care Social Worker we contacted Maggie's with the idea of setting up a Children's Cancer Day. We wanted to help support Children who had a Parent, Grandparent or any relative undergoing treatment for cancer.

Unfortunately after my initial involvement I was diagnosed with Breast Cancer. I started using Maggie's for my own support. They were amazing. I was able to use the centre in Edinburgh for help in coping with the initial shock of my diagnosis, throughout my treatment and beyond. I made use of their Relaxation sessions, Nutritional Workshop and I joined the Young Woman's Group where I met other younger woman with a cancer diagnosis. They also helped me deal with the difficulties of getting back to work and coping with my ongoing fear of my cancer recurring.

Amazingly I am now 10 years cancer free and over the last few years have been more involved in the Children's Cancer Day.

We usually organise four Saturdays a year and the children visit different areas of the Edinburgh Cancer Centre. We start the day off in Maggie's where the children usually of primary school age meet up and we spend some time making name badges and getting to know each other.

Our first visit of the day is to the Radiotherapy Treatment Floor. Here the children get to see the CT Scanner where their Parent's Treatment is planned.

Some of them bring a favourite toy to be scanned and the Radiographers are able to explain the process using their toys!! This can often open up lots of interesting questions. They then get taken to see one of the Treatment Machines where we have a really good interactive Session. There are lots of buttons to push and Lasers to see!!

The next part of the day is an informal chat with the Chemotherapy Nurse. She lets the children see some of the equipment used to deliver Chemo. They are able to have their Temperature and Blood Pressure taken, they also get to see syringes, needles and venflons which are all part of the Chemotherapy Treatment. Throughout both visits we chat about how the different Treatments work, why their mum or dad have certain side effects and what they can do to help. The last part of the day is a nice lunch at Maggie's then some time doing Arts and Crafts. This can be the time when the children get to know each other better and we can sit with them quietly ready to answer any questions or just be there to help with some of the more elaborate creations!!

At this time the Parents come back and can spend some time with each other discussing how to support their children through this difficult time. This session is always facilitated by Maggie's Psychologist.

The day usually ends around 2pm with the Children very keen to tell their mums and dads all about their day.

Although it can be very tiring and emotional I feel very privileged to be involved as I know it can help families become more open and communicative about their Cancer Journey.

Julie Grierson

Stewardship

Castlehill Parish Church of Scotland: Ayr Balance Sheet

January 2013 - December 2013

	Period	Year to Date
Current Assets		
Investment Funds	(24,000.00)	5,240.76
Cash	34.48	214.43
Bank Account	83,798.48 1	17,039.96
Taxation	60.80	0.00
	59,893.76	122,495.15
Current Liabilities		
Taxation	0.00	448.00
	0.00	448.00
Current Assets less Current Liabilities:		
	59,893.76	122,047.15
Total Assets less Current Liabilities:		
	59,893.76	122,047.15
Capital & Reserves		
Unallocated Figures	841.47	841.47
Fabric Funds	(4,611.00)	10,626.59
Reserve Funds	0.00	25,753.94
Youth Church Fund	126.00	5,067.88
Organ Fund	(2,535.00)	8,550.50
Music & Flower Funds (1.00)		713.41
Allocated Purpose Funds	75,150.68	79,570.75
P & L Account	(9,077.39)	(9,077.39)
	59,893.76	122,047.15

As you will see from this statement of account, we had a deficit last year of over £9000. Weekly offerings last year slightly exceeded those of the previous year. However, as you know, costs have risen.

We have been fortunate this year in receiving a generous legacy.

However the age of our buildings means that some major expenditure is liable to be incurred in maintenance over the next few years.

We ask you to prayerfully consider your church offerings in relation to other expenses you incur.



The Guild

We have come to the end of another Winter Season at the Guild but despite the inclement weather we managed to have an African safari and a trip to Peru. The ladies continue to be very interested in the projects that the Guild supports. Both with their attendance at the meetings and ,by collecting their “pennies” over the summer , we are able to give a donation to each of the six projects that the Guild supports every three years, the two projects this year having been Passage from India and Mary’s Meals. Ruth Anderson also gave us a very informative talk on bees and bee-keeping and we now all know the derivation of the phrase – “The Bees Knees”!. So the Guild is the place to be to keep yourself informed and up to date. We are looking forward to our summer night out –time to catch up with everyone again.

We wish everyone a good summer and look forward to starting back in October when we hope we will welcome back existing members and of course welcome any new members.
The Guild Committee



The Silver Alms Plate

A few years after Margaret and I joined Castlehill Church we noticed the Silver Alms Plate in the vestibule. I was intrigued to see that the writing on the Plate showed the wording “Associate Congr. Whithorn 1795”. Since we are both from Whithorn I inquired if anyone could tell me anything about it and how it had come to the Church. Having asked a few of the older members of the Church and Session without any positive results, I resolved to find out more.



So how did we come to have this silver Plate in our Church? When our Church was in the process of being formed St. Ninians Parish Church in Whithorn entered into partnership with the new Church. The decision to do this was made in 1956 and at that time both Margaret and I were members of the Church in Whithorn. I cannot truthfully say that we remember anything about it as, it would have been a Session matter although probably brought to the attention of the members of the Congregation and Castlehill was not a name that had any significance for us at that time.

By 1962 we had left Whithorn but at the annual business meeting and congregational social of the Church in that year the Alms Plate was presented to Mr Munro and three elders of Castlehill, Mr Jim Girvan, Mr Bob Dunlop and Mr Willie McClements with the good wishes of Whithorn Parish Church. The Plate itself belonged to the United Presbyterian Church, which was formed in Whithorn in 1795. The first minister was a Mr John Smith from Auchinleck, a further Ayrshire connection. The United Church in Whithorn was joined with St Ninians Priory Church during the early forties and the building lay unused for many years. When it was eventually converted into a garage the Alms Plate was found and passed to Whithorn Priory Church. Both Margaret and I passed the old Church building almost every day for many years and never realised the plate lying in there would be discovered by us when we joined Castlehill Church. It serves as reminder of the Church where we joined as first communicants and where we now find ourselves.

This type of Alms Plate was to be found at the entrance to the Church to receive the giving's of the Congregation and preceded the method of passing the plate along the pews, however we reverted to using it at the Church entrance and it can be seen in the Church vestibule every Sunday morning. Have a look the next time you are at church.

Wellwood Grierson

Kids' Page - for the young at heart!

Did you have a nice Easter? I bet you had some chocolate Easter eggs. In the UK we mostly have chocolate eggs as a symbol of Easter. In other countries the chocolate can take different forms. It might take the form of a hen or chickens.



In German-speaking countries, children look to the Easter Hare or Easter Bunny to bring them eggs. This comes from a pre-Christian tradition.

On normal Sundays and also on Good Friday, we ring our church bell.

In many European countries, the church bells are rung every day at 5 o'clock in the afternoon to remind people to say prayers before the end of the day. However, the church bells are unusually silent on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and the Saturday before Easter. This is to mark the sad time in Holy Week before the joy of Easter Sunday and the Resurrection.

Children are told that the bells have flown to Rome to be blessed by the Pope and that on Easter Sunday they come back full of little Easter eggs. The eggs fall out on the way and the children go into the gardens to hunt for them. So, now you understand why, for example, in France and Belgium, you can buy bells made out of chocolate.

BTW Do you ever have a treasure hunt looking for little Easter eggs in the garden? It's fun! You should try it next year.

If someone asked you why we use eggs as a symbol for Easter, what would you say? Have you ever thought about it? For some people, eggs are a symbol of new life. For Christians, this means a new life in Christ after his Resurrection.



On Easter cards, you may see pictures of chicks or young lambs. This is because Easter falls in springtime and is also the time when lambs are born. In other countries, they make lambs out of ice cream or cake for special religious occasions to remind us that Jesus is the Lamb of God.

In Italy they make a cake in the shape of a dove but in Spain it is traditional to eat cod fritters! Maybe Spanish children envy us our Easter eggs!

Have you ever tried rolling real eggs? Ask mum or dad to hard boil some eggs for you. It's fun to paint the shells. Then you can go with your family and friends to a hill and roll the eggs down a slope. See how far they roll before they crack! Then, if they're not too damaged, you can eat them and enjoy a picnic together.

Some people say that egg-rolling reminds us that, when the women went to Jesus' tomb on Easter Sunday, they found that the stone had already been rolled away and Jesus had risen from the dead.



UNIFORMED ORGANISATIONS

GIRL GUIDES

Hello from Castlehill Guiding :)

Castlehill Rainbows, Brownies and Guides have been very busy this year with lots of badge work and outings going on.:

17th A Guides had a trip to London to the Hogwarts Studio.

As well as this, a number of 17th A Guides gained their Baden Powell Awards and Commonwealth awards which were presented at our annual thinking day service in February at church.



This is my first year as district commissioner since Janette Rankin, leader of 17th B

Guides has taken on her new role as county commissioner for Ayrshire. Well done Janette.

17th B Guides are planning another trip to Switzerland so watch this space for fundraising events that will be going on.

Brownies are 100 years old this year and as a district Brownies are having a Fun day at Nether Auchendrane on the 3rd of May. There will be various activities from through the decades of Brownies so watch out for us in the Ayrshire Post.

The Rainbows are having their summer trip to Troon beach, travelling by train. Let's hope the weather is kind to them.

All units have healthy numbers but we would really like some more leaders so if anyone is interested or has a spare few hours a week to volunteer get in contact with me on 07446364815.

Rachel Richmond



BOYS BRIGADE

As we approach our display, which marks the end of our year, it's time to reflect on another year in the life of the 17th Ayr.

I can only class it as another good year. In the last twelve months we have revisited our friends in Romania producing more great memories, we had another memorable visit to New Lanark Youth Hostel and we presented eleven Queen's Badges.

In competitions both the Company Section and Junior Section have enjoyed success: The company section won the 7 a-side football tournament and came third in the swimming gala. Since the last magazine was published we have had success in the Basketball which we won, we were beaten semi-finalists in the volleyball and came third in the cross country. Currently we are third in the Battalion championship. The Junior Section came second in their competition winning seven individual medals. Their final competition was the outdoor day at Fullarton Woods which finished with a barbecue.



One of the highlights since the last magazine was our Christmas event where the Company Section and Junior Section came together for our Christmas event which was a very interesting visit from the Jiminy's Jungle. They brought a lizard, a tarantula spider and the star of the show a fifteen foot Albino Burmese Python. Adults and boys alike were both terrified and excited by the animals.

At the beginning of March we had three of our young men complete their Queen's Badge. We look forward to presenting Colin Moore, Jack Graham and Rory Stuart with their badges at our October dedication service.



On Friday 20th June two of our number will be carrying the Queen's Baton on its relay through the Commonwealth. Our Captain Ian Queen will be running 200metres as will Gavin Drysdale. Captain Queen was nominated for his work with

the Boys' Brigade and Gavin was nominated for his success in being a four times gold medallist and four times world record holder in race running at the International Wheelchair and Amputees Sports Federation 2013 World Games.



The last event in the Battalion calendar was the annual church parade which this year went to Coyllon Parish church on Sunday 27th April.

Our own finale is our annual display to which we extend an open invitation to anyone who would like to attend: It is on Friday 16th May at 7pm, we would love to see you.

Castlehill Church Bowling

The Christmas Party this year was held on Mon. 9th Dec. with 36 members & guests present.

Everyone had been saddened by the passing of Ian McLeod's wife Trudy in October, but pleased that Ian was back with us at the party.

As the president welcomed everyone a round of applause was given to Wellwood Grierson, as he hopped into the hall, on one leg, the first time he had been at the bowling since his hip operation in Sept.

Then the rules of the fun games of bowling such as, left hand, both hands, through the legs etc were read out to the members.

This year the skips of the 6 rinks were ladies and the other members were asked to take a ticket into the ladies animal sanctuary. The first 3 ends of bowling were between the Ants and Apes, Bees and Bears, Cows and Cats, with the winners moving on. After 9 ends of bowling amid great hilarity, the Christmas tea was served by the ladies and we were joined by our minister Liz, who said grace.

After tea Liz presented Santa Tea Lights to the winning rink of Bees – J. Hunt (skip), J. McDermott, M. Hardie, L. Hunter, H. Lorimer with a score of +7 shots.

The booby prize of smarties went to the Ants – S. McKenzie (skip), F. Russell, D. Jack, J. McCrossan, R. Wilson, A. Smith -7 shots with much improvement required.

The enjoyable afternoon was rounded off by vice-president M. Hardie giving a vote of thanks to the president for organising the fun games and to the ladies for a lovely tea.

David Kerr, President



One of our oldest members, Miss Janetta Ireland who died last Easter at the age of 104 bequeathed a legacy of £75000 to Castlehill Parish Church.

On April Fool's Day, the ladies at the Coffee Club dressed up and sang Christmas Carols to greet guests!

Look out for details of our summer time afternoon teas.





Match the picture with the clue

- [a] On the Road to the Isles.
- [b] On an island near Ayr.
- [c] Very local
- [d] Built by Dumfries Town Council in 1749
- [e] Pass it going "Doon the Watter"
- [f] Most southerly
- [g] This is now a hotel
- [h] Used to have a castle and a chapel

Entries to the office or to Wellwood Grierson 8A Glenford Pl. Ayr by 16th June 2014
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Parish Registers

Funerals

November

Sara Hunter
Norman McSwan
Margaret McClurkin
Leslie McInulty

Windy Hall
Glenfairn
Berelands
Dalmellington Road

December

Margaret Lobban
James Lucas
William McIntyre
Margaret Brown
Mary McKay
Robert Clark

Orchard Avenue
Kincaidston Drive
Craigston Avenue
Bracken Park
Hillfoot Road
Anderson Crescent

January

William Caven
Helen Wilson
Caroline Hamilton
Tom McClymont

Glenconner Road
Annfield Glen Road
Hillfoot Road
Belmont Crescent

February

Caroline McMeekin
Jean McArthur
Graeme Gardiner
Lottie Robertson
Peter Crawford

Glendale Crescent
Cumbernauld
Hawthorn Drive
Peggieshill Road
Peggieshill Road

March

Jack Steele
Irene Scott
Bob Cairns
Janice McFadyen
Agnes Hillhouse
Ursula Forwell

Dalmellington Road
Cumnor Hall
Forehill Road
Blackhill Street
Millbrae Court
Redford NH

April

Jenny Grant
Margaret Owens
Annie Armstrong
Neil Rowan
Millie Hastings
Ian Wighton
Peter Maxwell

Kincaidston Drive
Bathurst Drive
Holly Bush
The Mount
Burnbank Road
Holmston Gardens
Belmont Avenue

Baptisms

29th December

Alex Findlay Lauchlan
Gillian Hunter McPherson Lauchlan

Camphill Place
Camphill Place

6th April

Jude David Sloan

Racecourse Road

20th April

Finlay Andrew John Hynds

Blackhill Street

Weddings

22nd December

Cheryl Thomson and Thomas Entwistle

14th February

Emma Peddie and Hugh Irvine

5th April

Lee Ann Kelly and Gary Grindrod

12th April

Katrina Dalziel and Christopher Hall

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From the Prayer Group

Unfortunately our prayers are not always answered the way we would like. A mother overheard her small son praying earnestly "Lord you know I thank you for many things, but today has not been one of them" Most of us have much to be thankful for, but we also know times that are anything but good.

Sometimes, unfortunately, those are the only occasions that we pray, and many do not know how and when to pray. It is not only by closing your eyes, or sitting in the pew in the Church that prayers are expressed. Each Sunday we see the flowers in the Church, they are given as prayer of thanks for someone remembered, delivered as a prayer to someone in need, a source of comfort and love. A kindly deed to a neighbour a friendly touch to let someone know you are there and you care.

We can all pray in our own way, God will always be there to listen



Seniors Afternoons



During the first half of our session we had two successful afternoons of entertainment. Willie Stewart provided a humorous and musical interlude to brighten up the dull February weather and Peter Christie made a welcome return in April with old chart toppers of the 60's and 70's amongst other well known tunes. There was even dancing in the aisles!!

Our thanks are again due to the ladies of the coffee shop who provide us with tea on every occasion. Due to ill health and some of our members passing on, attendances have gone down slightly. Everyone was asked to think of a neighbour or friend who would enjoy these afternoons, and bring them along next

session. Details will be in the order of service and a syllabus will be available for anyone who wishes to find out more. This is not just for Church members but for anyone in the parish or outside to come along. We try to make transport available for those who have difficulty in getting around. We look forward to welcoming you on Tuesday afternoons.

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