

ISSUE 65 - SUMMER 2023
FREE

Stramash

The Orwell and Portmoak Quarterly Parish Magazine

Scottish Charity Number: SC015523



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THAT THEY
MAY HAVE LIFE,
AND HAVE IT
TO THE FULL**

John 10:10



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Friends, last time I wrote to you in Stramash was about spring-time and Ukraine. The different months and seasons keep changing. Personally, I like the month of August because it is easy to look at the night sky. Darkness falls earlier than in the middle of June but evenings can still be warm and balmy. It is a really good time to look up!

Since I was a little boy, I have found astronomy fascinating. I think that I got the bug from looking at a picture of the solar system in the Reader's Digest Atlas of the World. It was captivating. How far away these planets were and yet so very near compared to all the stars and galaxies in the universe. I remember getting my first telescope but over the years I found binoculars more useful. They are easier to operate and will show details of the moon.

Another reason why the night sky is so interesting is that it puts us in our place! We feel very small after a few minutes of looking up and through time. It is just as the Psalmist wrote: "When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?" (Psalm 8: 3,4)

An exciting sight in August will be the Perseid meteor shower. As long as the clouds stay away, is expected from 17 July to 24 August. The meteor trails (sometimes called 'shooting stars') will become more visible during the peak period between 12-13 August. Look up after midnight either on that Saturday or Sunday. The sky should be dark then as it is three days before the New Moon. Meteors are burning

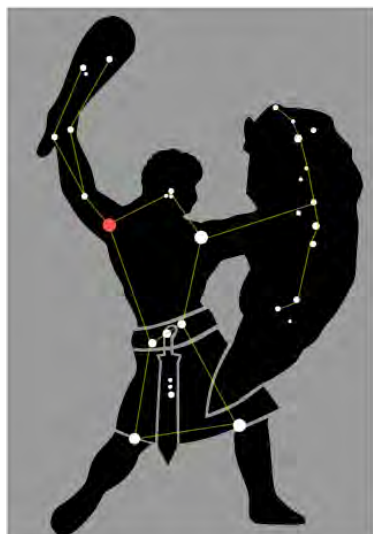
fragments of rock from a comet and it's possible we might see up to a hundred an hour!

But there is something more! The constellation of Orion is one of the most recognisable star patterns in the night sky. The Greeks named it after the mighty hunter in the sky and it is not difficult to see the three stars that make up the hunter's belt. Just below where there is a gaseous nebula is his sword. Two bright stars make up his shoulders with another above for his head and below two stars make up his feet. This constellation was known before Greek and Roman times and is mentioned three times in the bible.

"Who makes the Bear, Orion and the Pleiades, and the chambers of the south." (Job 9: 9) "Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades, or loose the cords of Orion?" (Job 38: 31) "He who made the Pleiades and Orion, who turns midnight into dawn and darkens day into night, who calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out over the face of the land—the LORD is his name." (Amos 5: 8)

One star in this constellation is about to become a supernova! Betelgeuse is known as a red supergiant and is between 500 and 600 light-years from the Earth. It makes up the left shoulder of the constellation Orion. This year in May and June, the star suddenly increased in brightness by 50 per cent! You will easily see it on a dark night, especially in the winter. It seems to be at the end of its life-cycle and is around eight million years old!

When this star explodes, it will shine as bright as a half-moon for more than three months. We should not



worry as it is so far away, life on Earth should be unaffected.

Your friend and minister

Robert Calvert

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Women who whittle

During Portmoak Festival, one hot Monday morning, I and a number of other participants made our way uphill from Portmoak Orchard to a small clearing among the trees. Here we took part in a wood whittling workshop run by Kiri Stone. The aim was for each of us to carve a small mushroom from a stick of silver birch. After explaining technique and safety tips, Kiri then explained each stage of making our mushrooms as we went along, step by step, demonstrating each step to us. It was all very clear and slowly our mushrooms started to take shape as we chatted. We had a nice cuppa and biscuit too while working. I found the whole process very enjoyable and somehow therapeutic, and was surprised by the end to have made a recognisable mushroom! Kiri then told us how to dry and oil our creations following this. In the end, one of us made a mushroom keyring, two of us stakes topped by mushrooms for our gardens and three mushroom ornaments. As you will see from the picture each one turned out quite differently. We all parted very happy with what we had made.

Kiri runs various woodland workshops for women and is based in Cupar. She did her degree in environmental science and has 10 years experience as a countryside ranger. She also sells some of her creations. If you think you would like to find out more about her workshops, you can find her on her Facebook page "Woodswoman" and for further information or to book a workshop you can email her on woodswomanworkshops@gmail.com. I would highly recommend trying a workshop - I would love to do another one!

TINA MART



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Bryophilous Fungi in the Portmoak/Scotlandwell area

I've recently moved into the area (just outside Scotlandwell) and one of my pastimes is identifying fungi and organising fungus events.

One event (held in April this year) was a workshop (based in Edinburgh) to learn more about fungi that grow on/parasitise mosses, and I invited a colleague from Bristol who is an expert in such matters to help.

We had one day available before the workshop, so we decided to explore various locations around Scotlandwell to find some samples, and we had somewhat more success than anticipated, including finding fungi both new to Scotland and to the UK.

For this reason, I thought some readers will be interested to know of the more important finds.

- 1st Scottish record (2nd British record) for *Bryoscyphus turbinatus* (fungus) growing in *Racomitrium heterostichum* (moss) on a gravestone at Portmoak Parish Church, just outside Scotlandwell.
- *Belonium coroniforme* (fungus) on *Lewinskya (orthotrichum) affinis* (moss) growing along a sycamore branch. 1st British record and found in Kalmagad wood.



- *Octospora affinis* (fungus) on *Lewinskya (orthotrichum) affinis*, (moss) growing on a sycamore branch (Loch Leven RSPB reserve). 1st Scottish record. (Photo – the small orange disc just below the centre of the top photo)

The subsequent workshop attended by 10 people was a great success.

CAMERON DIEKONIGIN

Milnathort School Fete

On a glorious sunny afternoon on 3 June 2023 the school and playground were thronged with happy folk, enjoying the fair and the comradeship of the community. There were so many stalls, both outdoors and inside the school. Some were raising funds for school projects, like a trip to Borneo next year, and others just raising funds and enjoying the event. There were pupils dancing in teams, others kicking the ball at goal to the amusement of spectators round the back of the school. The teas ran all afternoon, busy refilling refreshments

and delicious scones and cakes in the shade of a marquee set by the front of the building.

A select and very professional team of young pupils were interviewing the dual Grand National winner Lucinda Russell and partner Peter Scudimore about training racehorses, and the ups and downs of the sport.

The local Fire Brigade with a beautifully turned out fire engine were talking to pupils and parents, and had a busy afternoon.



The lady I helped at the bottle stall had two children at the school, and the comments she made were good to hear, praising the education, friendliness and general school outlook. So good to know that the school's reputation has remained so well over the generations.

DOROTHY THOMSON



Nuclear Folly: A New History of the Cuban Missile Crisis by *Serhii Plokyh*

This is one of those books, which at first glance, we might be forgiven for thinking it will appeal only to serious historians. But we would be wrong. The account of the events in 1962 leading up to, during, and after the Cuban missile crisis is spell-binding for any reader.

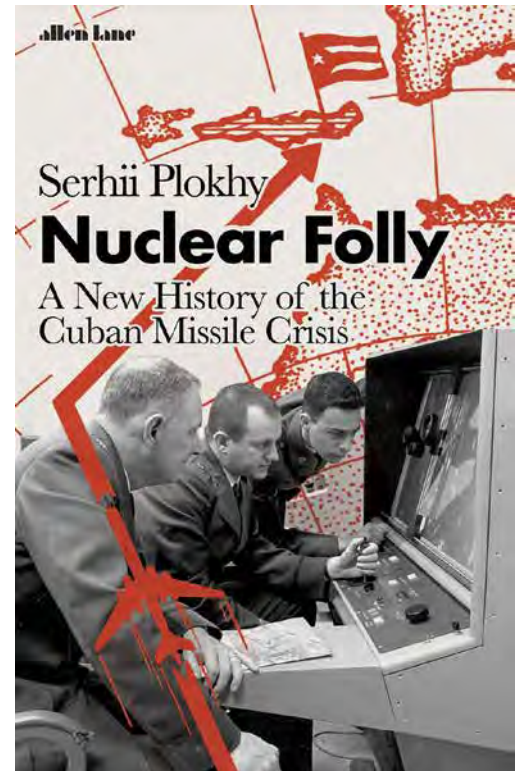
Plokyh had access to both American and Russian documents: minutes of meetings, secret tape-recordings made by President John F Kennedy; minutes of meetings in the Kremlin and lengthy letters sent to the USA by Nikita Khrushchev (apparently his shortest letter to Kennedy was 1400 words long).

The cause of the crisis is the positioning by the USSR of missiles, some intended to be supplied with nuclear warheads, on the island of Cuba, with the full acceptance by Fidel Castro, who had come to power in Cuba through a revolution, which overthrew a government friendly towards the USA. This the USA could not tolerate because Cuba was within its "backyard" and many cities in the USA, including Washington DC, were well within range of the missiles. In his account of the crisis, Plokyh goes back and forth between Washington and

Moscow, telling how one side is reacting to the moves of the other.

Tensions rise to a near dreadful climax when three Russian submarines are detected by American frigates in the Sargossa Sea, each armed with 12 torpedoes, one of which has a nuclear warhead, to be fired only on orders from Moscow. Both Kennedy and Khrushchev are genuinely afraid a wrong move could trigger a nuclear exchange, the outcome of which could end the human race. The commander of the Russian submarines was out of contact with Moscow and was readying to fire the torpedoes with nuclear warheads because he believed he was under attack by the American frigates. The Russian submarine commander, in fact, thought World War Three had begun. Mercifully, contact was made between the commander of the American frigates and the Russian submarines when the submarines were forced to surface because the crews were suffering so badly from heat exhaustion; temperatures were touching 45 degrees Celsius. (I don't think any of us living at the time realised how close we were to Armageddon.)

Plokyh's account is also fascinating as he tells his readers what happens when the crisis is over and nuclear war is averted, how both Kennedy



and Khrushchev back down from their belligerent positions, having refused on both sides to accept the advice of their more war-mongering chiefs of staff. Each leader, Kennedy and Khrushchev, has to have space to save face, and to agree not to make public certain agreements they had made, unknown to their immediate aides. Neither Kennedy nor Khrushchev could be seen to be the loser, although they both claimed to have won. If you remember the Cuban missile crisis, read this book. You will not be disappointed.

REV DUNCAN STENHOUSE

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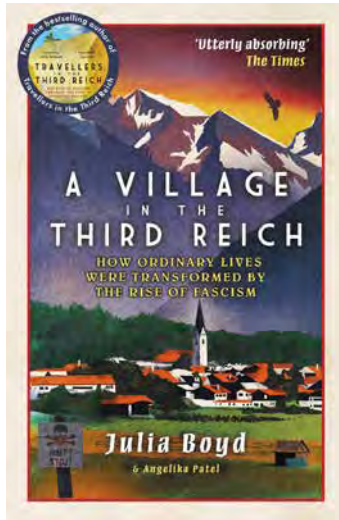
KARENA JARVIE

A Village in the Third Reich
by Julia Boyd and Angelika Patel
Published by Elliot and Thompson

Oberstdorf is a beautiful village high up in the Bavarian Alps. For centuries people lived quiet, simple, neighbourly lives. The only “disturbance” to the tranquility of the village in modern times was the welcome appearance of winter sports enthusiasts.

The village was far from the towns and cities where history was made, that is, until the rise of Adolf Hitler and the Nazi regime in the 1930’s.

Julia Boyd, the principal author, co-operated with Angelika Patel, whose grandparents lived in Oberstdorf all their lives including the Nazi period, to write this absorbing account of how the lives of the villagers were transformed by the all-encompassing evil grip of the Nazi regime.



Jewish and Christian families who had lived as neighbours, who had gone to school together, who had played together, became estranged and suspicious of one another. The local mayor was replaced by a member of the Nazi party, but mercifully, he was one who could turn a blind eye to some breaches of the strict rules imposed by the Nazis, or at least, not impose the death penalty when, according to the rules, he ought to have done so.

The news of the successes of the German forces during the war is welcomed by the villagers (some of their number had been called up to fight) but as the fortunes of war begin to turn against Germany, the mood begins to change, from confidence to uncertainty, and to anxiety. Attitudes to fellow villagers change too. Those who were never in favour of the Nazis begin to come more to the fore.

Eventually news comes of the imminent defeat of Germany. Fears arise that the village might be taken by the Russians. However, contact is made with the French forces, believed to be within striking distance, urging them on to capture Oberstdorf before the Russian advance. The prayers of the villagers are answered as a unit of the French Army, flying the tricolour appears at the gates, but their liberators were strange-looking Frenchmen; they were from Tunisia.

Many villagers had never seen a black person, let alone ones wearing “exotic” dress.

I recommend this book to anyone interested in life in Germany during World War Two. Its great appeal to me is the fact that the book is not about war leaders or politicians on the world stage, nor about city life in wartime, but about ordinary people in a remote part of the world trying to come to terms with changing circumstances and relationships as national and world affairs affected their hitherto undisturbed, peaceful lives.

DUNCAN STENHOUSE

Common Grounds

Common Grounds is a Charitable Organisation run completely by volunteers.

We open every Tuesday and Saturday from 10.00am till 12.30 pm in the Guide Hall, Milnathort for tea/coffee and home baking.



Donations are all that is asked for and the money raised goes mainly to African Charities as well as other foreign charities on the principle of improving children’s education, health care and farming methods so as to be self sustaining.

In 2000 Common Grounds opened its doors for the first time, originally in a house in South Street, following on from a fulfilment of a dream of a lady living at the top of Milnathort, Mrs Elsie Pope. She would send money to a friend in Africa to support friends who were struggling to make a living and wished she could do more to help them.

A committee was formed and Charity status obtained in

2003 and within two years they were able to send £1,000 a month to African Projects.

In 2005 Common Grounds moved to its present address so that more people could be accommodated and this enabled us to hold Project Lunches approximately 3 times a year. A speaker from one of the charities is asked to attend to update everyone on what our money has been spent on, usually with slides, followed by homemade soup and traybakes. Anyone is welcome to attend and again only donations requested.

New and old friends are always welcome to our coffee mornings for a chat and friendship or just to meet up with friends.

ELAINE MATTHEW

Children's Craft Corner

Picnic cup

Made from a waterproof material such as kitchen foil, greaseproof or waxed paper, this cup will hold a liquid without leaking through an open edge.

ANNA GARNER

Use a 15-20 cm (6-8 inch) square of paper.



Fold in half along a diagonal.



Fold top corner of front layer to bottom edge.



Unfold again.



Bring the 2 ends of the line created together and fold.



Join the lower right hand corner to the middle corner on the left, like this and fold.



Fold down single layer of top flap down and fold.



Fold back layer of top flap behind and fold.

The cup is complete!



Decorate your cup if you wish.



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The King's Maundy Money

Two members of Orwell and Portmoak Church, Dorothy Thomson (and husband John) and Allan Dearing (with wife Fiona), were both honoured and humbled to receive invitations to attend, with a companion, this year's Royal Maundy Service at York Minster held on Maundy Thursday, 6th April 2023, and to be Maundy Recipients. The names were submitted to the Royal Almonry Office by the Church of Scotland, but our retired minister Angus Morrison is suspected to have been involved.

The word Maundy is derived from the Mandatum (instruction) given by Christ to his disciples at the Last Supper when after washing his disciples' feet he said to them "You are to do as I have done to you" (John 13:15) and at verse 34 gives a new commandment "Love one another. As I have loved you, so must you love one another". In England by the fifth century church leaders were washing the feet of the poor on Maundy Thursday, but not until the 12th century is there a record of a king (John) giving alms to the poor. Changes have developed over the centuries and today, instead of gifts of food and clothing being distributed to the poor, the recipients of Maundy money are men and women who have rendered significant Christian

or community service, the number of each equating to the age of the Monarch, and the gift to each the number of pence also being equal to the age of the Monarch. The pennies are symbolic (though technically legal tender) and in denominations of 1p, 2p, 3p and 4p.

So this year 74 men and 74 women attended the Maundy Service and received from His Majesty King Charles III, a white pouch containing the 74p. In addition each attendee received a red pouch containing a £5 coin celebrating His Majesty's forthcoming 75th birthday and a 50p coin, commemorating the 75th anniversary of the Windrush generation.

On arrival, even during the security checks, we were made to feel most welcome, and during the long wait from arrival till the start of the service was an opportunity to chat to officials, volunteers and fellow guests from a cross section of Christian service and learn of their experiences and challenges in their field. Alas there was a downside in sitting so long – the temperature seemed little above freezing. Dorothy commented "I was so cold I thought I would be warmer in my coffin" and Fiona was unable to take off her coat to show off her new dress. It was noticeable that the volunteers were wearing long

woollen cloaks and the Archbishop's robes were heavy and warm.

The service itself was full of pageantry, commencing after the arrival of the King and Queen Consort and four colourful processions through the Minster. The theme of the service was the Last Supper and Christ's message to love one another and to help those in need. The two lessons were taken from the Gospels of John 13 and Matthew 25 and during the service His Majesty presented the Recipients with the Maundy Money, taking their hands in his and thanking each of them for their service and for making a difference to the lives of people in their local communities. During this time the congregation were entertained with sacred music and wonderful choral singing.

The whole experience was uplifting, emotional and memorable and an occasion those attending will treasure all their days.

ALLAN DEARING





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Kinross-shire Agricultural Society Show 2023

Picture the scene, 12 August 2023 at RSPB Loch Leven and the 193rd Kinross-shire Agricultural Society Show.

The sun is up, a slight breeze blowing from the west, dry under foot, cattle, sheep, goats and horses being judged, as are the various classes in the SWI marquee, the entertainment stage blasting out local talent(s), and families and friends mingling around the show fields.

To get the show ready for the big day takes planning. Like all previous shows the planning for the next show starts immediately after the last. The Kinross-Shire Agricultural Society (KAS) will have monthly meetings to discuss all requirements required for the upcoming show. Judges to be invited from around the country; Premium List to be compiled and onto KAS website and social media; number of gates required for livestock; barriers for show rings; marquees to hire; sound systems; toilets; convenors and stewards for the showing sections; rosettes; prize money; car parking; personnel on the gates; show programmes; sponsors; entries for the show classes; free buses to the show fields from Kinross and surrounding villages.

These are just some of the subjects discussed and organised at the monthly committee meetings. The days leading up to the show are the

busy time, erection of the sheep, ponies, goat & cattle pens; barriers in place for the main ring, livestock and horse show rings; marquees erected; trade stands measured and pegged; sound systems in place and tested; generators for the Secretary's tent, Arts & Crafts & bar arrive and placed; signs for the access gates, livestock & horse sections erected. Whilst all this is going on a prayer for good weather is always on our lips.

For me, the main attraction for the show is the livestock. From year one it has always been local farmers bringing their livestock to the show and forever hopeful of the red rosette. The bragging rights are theirs until the next show. For many of today's competitors it is a hobby away from the farm, competing at many local shows throughout the summer months, a break away from the farm chores. This year there will be the launch of a new fleece competition. There will be four classes of wool to be judged with the overall champion winning a shepherds crook. This will be judged in the Children's Education Area. Once all judging is finished it's off to the bar for the competitors, except for the designated driver, for some liquid refreshment to discuss the day's judging, farming, politics and the obligatory leg pulling. All things considered you will see the hard work of the show committee, the stockmen and women and the trade stands have to offer on show day.

Proverbs 27:23 "Know well the condition of your flock, and give attention to your herds." I believe this quote is very apt for our society today as it is for the livestock owners past and present.

But it's the families coming to the show day that create the atmosphere. Whether they are competing or just at the show for a day out, seeing the show fields buzzing with parents and young kids walking around the trade stands or inspecting the livestock or watch the horses showing or jumping makes the day.

Make a date in your diary, 12 August 2023, RSPB Loch Leven the venue.

MARK THOMSON



SOUND & VISION

Come and enjoy an evening of 'Sound and Vision' with music from Tullis Russell Community Band and visionary delights from Composite Photographer Julie Close from Portmoak. Saturday 16th September at 7.30pm in Orwell Church. Tickets £6, to include tea and coffee, will be available from Orwell and Portmoak Church Office, Milnathort and some members. More information will be available (Church Facebook page and website.)

It promises to be a moving and interesting event.

Rosemary Tolson
07738984740
01577 531527



“Walk into my Parlour” The end of an era

Until quite recently almost every community in Scotland had its own Registrar, but, of course, like so many other aspects of life nowadays, the registration of births, marriages and deaths is centralised and computerised.

The last Registrar for Milnathort and Portmoak was Sandy Smith who is still a very active member of the community and well-known to many of our readers.

What follows is the gist of a chat Sandy and I had when he recalled his life as a part-time Registrar.

Unless you have had occasion to register a birth, death or marriage or to participate in a civil marriage ceremony within the Milnathort Registration District, you may not have visited 21 Church Street, the house and place of business of William Alexander Stuart McNeil Smith

(or “Sandy” as he’s usually called), the sole surviving “Parlour Registrar” within Perth & Kinross. As Sandy put it, “we are a dying breed”.

Whoever did walk into Sandy’s parlour or his tiny registration office was certain to receive a warm welcome and a friendly and reassuring smile.

Traditionally, within small villages, the Registrar operated from his house; the parlour, which was usually the best room in the house, being set aside for registrations and civil marriages.

Up until 1977, Orwell & Portmoak Parishes had separate Registrars but in that year they merged to form Milnathort Registration District. Sandy became Registrar in the early part of 1994 and his was a “manual office” with Sandy completing the Registers by hand “in the same way as has been done since 1855”. Prior

to standardisation in that year, when registration in Scotland became compulsory, “Parish records were very much the responsibility of the incumbent Parish Minister or Session Clerk, with the result that, prior to 1855, the reliability and completeness of records varied considerably”.

All entries and certificates were handwritten by Sandy, unlike the majority of records elsewhere in Scotland which were computerised. Sandy submitted information on registrations weekly to the Senior Registrar’s Office in Perth, where it was entered into the central computer system.



Before becoming Registrar, Sandy’s background was in commerce as a Company Director. He also worked for two separate periods with a firm of Chartered Accountants, retiring finally in 2007. As a result, Sandy, who worked part time as Registrar, was available by appointment at mutually agreed times during the day or in the evening or weekends, unlike many other Registrars who operated on fixed office hours.

It used to be the case, explained Sandy, that an “event” requiring registration had to be registered within the district where the event occurred, although this was later extended to include the district of residence, but now “any event anywhere in Scotland, requiring registration, can be registered anywhere in Scotland”. As a consequence, Sandy found his registration services increasingly in demand - and not only from those

people who prefer a handwritten certificate to a computerised one!

Sandy can recall some remarkable events, such as the year 1999 during which he registered 50 births, including one family of triplets and one of twins. Although the majority of births registered by him took place at Ninewells Hospital, Dundee or Perth Royal Infirmary, one of the more unusual births was “on the M90 Motorway, next to Glenfarg Village, heading for Dundee” and another was “at Loch Leven Health Centre”.

There is no doubt, however, that one of Sandy’s most pleasant

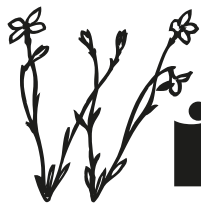
“Parlour” memories is of conducting the marriage of his own daughter Amanda, 29 years ago. Amanda later was Sandy’s official Assistant Registrar. He did not comment on her handwriting!! He also had the honour of registering the birth

of his first granddaughter, Kayleigh. The family connection further took place when Sandy married his second daughter Debbie in 2009. At the time it was reported that it was most unusual for a father to marry 2 daughters as a Registrar although many ministers had had that honour. This event required special permission from Registrar General because it took place out with the “Parlour” in an approved wedding venue.

Sandy served the community for over 18 years retiring in 2012 when he commented he was registering the births of children whose mother’s births he had registered when he began in the service.

He reckoned he had gone full circle and has in his office the brass name plate for REGISTRAR for the PARISH of ORWELL, as a reminder of his experiences in that role.

DUNCAN STENHOUSE



Kinnesswood in Bloom

Wildflower Project

In May 2022 we became aware of the Queen's Jubilee Fund, which was offering grants to groups in Perth and Kinross for environmental projects. Norma applied for money to buy wildflower seed bomb kits for each class in Portmoak Primary School and to make a wildflower information board. Our budget was £500 but in the end we received £750 to spend on this project and school related projects.



with their wildflower board on an environmental day and displayed their findings to parents at an assembly.

The whole school usually gets involved in providing art work for the Portmoak Festival. The classes all chose to go along with the theme of "Wildflowers". Norma, with the help of local crafting friends, introduced the P6/7 class to weaving and they all produced a woven hanging with buttons and stitches sewn on as wildflowers. P5/6 learned about Zentangle with Norma and made black and white zentangle flowers.

Wildflowers of the area

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complete
info
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Gillian painted flowers for her own information board. This is temporarily displayed in the bus shelter but will be moved to Benarty View.

Portmoak School Primary 6 class were asked if they might like to do a wildflower project for their John Muir Award. Their teacher was very enthusiastic, especially when Gillian offered to teach the children the necessary painting skills. It was a

great coincidence that there were 14 in the class, just the right number to fit on their own information board. The results were excellent and the children followed up by writing about the flowers they had chosen. Primary 6 were presented

It would be good to highlight the wildflowers found in the Portmoak area. Luckily we have a wildflower expert, Patsy, who chose to write about 20-25 flowers commonly seen in Portmoak. She not only identified the flowers but wrote about their uses in the past, and stories about them.

We decided to ask local artist, Gillian, to paint 14 of the flowers to go on the information board. Our IT expert, Gordon, suggested they would have to be photographed in order to achieve a good standard. Stewart, was duly contacted and delighted to do this for us. The pictures were sent to Gordon and he designed a beautiful information board.

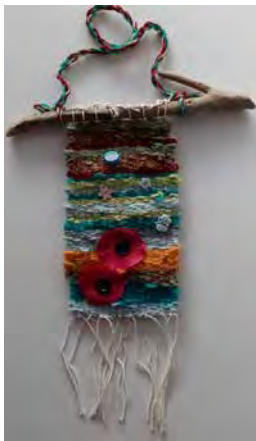


great coincidence that there were 14 in the class, just the right number to fit on their own information board. The results were excellent and the children followed up by writing about the flowers they had chosen. Primary 6 were presented



P4/5 learned new skills with Gillian to make beautiful watercolour wildflower landscapes. P2/3 worked with Anna and friends to make felt pictures and even learned to sew on buttons. Christina, the class teacher taught her P1/2 class how to produce paper collages which were amazing. They learnt many skills, drawing, painting, cutting and tearing before glueing their flowers on to





the background. All the work was labelled and framed if necessary. The resulting art work was stunning and made a fantastic exhibition at the Portmoak Hall for the festival fortnight. We had

great feedback that it was the best exhibition ever.

It's hoped to make a permanent display of the art work in the newly refurbished bus shelter. Bill has agreed to be the photographer this time.

This was truly a community effort and we hope that the end results will educate people a bit more about the wildflowers of the area. There are

QR codes on each wildflower board so people can find out more.

Some members of the Happy Hookers craft group made a quilted wildflower meadow. Mary created the backdrop using bits and pieces of fabric donated by members. Margaret and Fiona crocheted the flowers and other members sewed them on to make a very colourful picture.

Meanwhile, Kinnesswood in Bloom have been sowing patches of wild flowers around the village and you can already see a good display in several areas.

This has been a fantastic project for the village, which started in a small way but grew to involve a great number of people and showcase many different skills.

NORMA SMITH

Wedding in Portmoak Church

On 30th June Rev Robert Calvert married Clare Alexander and Toby Lawes in Portmoak Church.

Clare is the younger daughter of Nicholas and Rose Alexander of Kinneston, who grew up at Kinneston and was baptised in Portmoak Church. Toby Lawes is a racehorse trainer from Surrey.

The reception was held in a marquee at home at Kinneston.



OASIS LADIES GROUP - SCOTLANDWELL

Hello, we hope you have had a good Summer, despite it being such a wet July.

Oasis Ladies Group are entering into their 18th year and we look forward to a new programme, which we are in the throes of arranging at the moment. We are a small group of welcoming ladies and recently the group has grown, which we are delighted about.

In our last session we had a great morning making felt pieces which we turned into cards and pictures and some made flowers. This was led by Margaret and the work she brought along was lovely. We especially liked her sheep in hills and fields.

We also had a morning painting glass. What fun that was. Everyone was eager to have a go and some of the

glass jars we painted were beautiful, considering we are all amateurs.

Cath Stewart was the speaker at one of our meetings. She told us of her father's life when he felt called to minister to the travelling people. It was a fascinating morning and Cath brought along some slides of her family and the people her father was ministering to. This gave us an insight into how these people lived. In fields where there were families with no facilities and living in makeshift tents.

We try to make our programmes as varied as possible, ideally a speaker one month and a craft the following month. Our first meeting of the next

session takes place on Friday August 25th at 10.15am until 12.00pm and is entitled Bookmarks for Bookworms. Sylvia will be showing us some of her work and then we will have a go!

Our meetings begin with coffee and a lot of chat, then we share a word for today and a short prayer before beginning our activity.

Everyone is welcome at our meetings, those of faith or no faith, young or older.

Please join us if you are free on the last Friday morning of the month. We would love to see you.

(Follow the path from the front door of Portmoak Church, to the left round the building and you will come to the New Room). You will be most welcome.

AVRIL ROGERS



A Second Grand National Win for Lucinda

On 15th April 2023 Corach Rambler won the Grand National, from a field of 40 runners. It was a rare second win for trainer Lucinda Russell and jockey Derek Fox.

The horse was bred by Paul Hillis at Wellington Bridge in Ireland. He owned the dam and called her Heart N Hope and put her in training. She ran, and having named her so, did not give up hope until she did have success, and he then sent her to the local stallion Jeremy. The resulting colt foal was sent at 4 years to John Martin Walsh to be point-to-pointed. This he did starting in September 2020 between the flags. He was too immature at 4 but filled up into his strength and won in the next year and was second in his only other race. Then he was sold for £17,000 at Goffs November Sale.



Lucinda and partner Peter Scudamore (who is also her assistant trainer), were at the sales to look for talent for the stables. Looking in to a dark box, the horse inside made no attempt to come forward, and was quite nervous at sudden movements. Peter saw potential, so Lucinda bought him for her father who was ill and wanted to win the Buccleugh Cup, a classy Novice Hunter Chase run at Kelso.

His breeder asked for a share of the horse, so a change of plan, and Corach Rambler was syndicated and filled all 7 shares from an advert at £3000 per share. The folk in the

syndicate ranging from a man who had just lost his wife, a young lad at university to a person who had never had a racehorse before. Strangers to each other who became good friends over the years and meet regularly.

Corach Rambler settled in and grew in confidence as he got used to his surroundings. He ran in 3 hurdle races, placed 2nd in one and winning the other two, staying on with courage.

He was then turned to Steeple Chasing, and on his debut was 3rd at Perth in September. Then he went to Aintree in October winning by 6 lengths. In December the course was Cheltenham where he won again.

In February 2022 the venue was Ascot where he fell 5 fences from home. Then he returned to Cheltenham where he won the Ultima Handicap Chase. It was his jockey Derek Fox's first Cheltenham Festival win, he was thrilled.

In 2023 the horse and jockey returned to Cheltenham and won the same race for a second time. This made them favourite for their bid at the Grand National.

At home Peter rode Corach Rambler out as always, his lass Lori Walsh looked after him, and rode him when Peter couldn't. The weights were right for him to carry in the national when announced, things looked good. Then disaster, Derek Fox who had ridden him in all his races had a crashing fall the week before, damaging his shoulder. The resulting wait went to the wire, and he only passed the medical at Aintree the day before, enabling him to ride in the race. Shades of 5 years ago with One For Arthur when a similar injury happened just before the National!

In the race Derek gave the horse a classic ride, lying midfield until near four fences out and creeping nearer until going clear at the last. He was



challenged in the run in, holding on to win by 2.5 lengths. It was everybody's dreams come true.

Sadly Peter Russell died on 30th January but nobody would doubt how proud he would have been. Lucinda, Peter, Derek, Jamie Duff, Lori and all the media were thrilled with the result and being there for the moment. When interviewed and asked if they were celebrating in Liverpool that night, Lucinda replied that they were travelling home, as there were horses to feed at 6 in the morning.

A few days later there was a big party of owners, staff and friends celebrating and making much of Corach Rambler at Arlary.

Looking to the future Lucinda is working with Michael Scudamore, who is moving his operation at Eccleswall Court, near Ross-on-Wye to North Kilduff one of Lucinda's stables. His brother Tom is taking over the present yard to break and pre-prepare horses for racing, having retired from being stable jockey to David Pipe. Preparations for this change are ongoing at the moment at North Kilduff near Drum.

Jamie Duff (assistant and travel head lass who has been with Lucinda since she started in 1995), Blair Campbell (Assistant and ex stable jockey), Derek Fox stable jockey for the last 12 years, (who also breaks the horses in and rides out all day when not racing) and all 60 of the staff she employs are a great credit to her and the stables she has developed over the years.

In August she is to be presented with the Keys of Perth for her input to the area. How proud her father would be of all she has achieved.

DOROTHY THOMSON

Kintsugi: creating beauty from brokenness



Recently I broke my favourite mug, a gift from a friend a few years ago.

Not only was it a reminder of our friendship but it was also the perfect size for my daily mug of coffee.

Most Japanese bowls and cups are made from clay. A Japanese meal usually comprises several different items, each in their own bowl or small plate. So a typical household in Japan has a plethora of small bowls and dishes.

The earthquake and tsunami of 2011 destroyed many houses and their contents, including many earthenware dishes. One Christian lady was helping to clear out a park and began saving some of the pieces of broken pottery, wondering if she could make something beautiful out of the devastation.

The next year she started to gather a group of women to make accessories out of the broken pottery. With help from some professionals, the women learned how to make beautiful necklaces, earrings and other items and started to sell them. The Nozomi Project

was born (Nozomi means “hope” in Japanese). Not only were the women able to make beautiful accessories, but it also became a source of income when so many local businesses had been destroyed.

There is another Japanese way of bringing beauty out of brokenness – the art of ‘kintsugi’. Rather than throwing away broken pottery, the pieces are put back together with gold lacquer. In some ways this might seem strange – the repair with gold usually costs more than the original item and the lacquer accentuates rather than conceals the break. But yet this is the beauty of kintsugi - it embraces the brokenness and highlights the imperfections, resulting in something unique and valuable.

In this world we are surrounded by brokenness and experience it in our own lives too. Yet Psalm 147 verse 3 tells us that God “heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds”. God is like the master kintsugi artist. When we are broken, he doesn’t toss us aside or

get rid of us. Rather, in his grace he puts the broken pieces back together, and in the process creates something beautiful.

Jerry Sittser’s wife, mother, and one of his daughters were killed in a traffic accident. Three years later, he wrote the book, ‘A Grace Disguised: how the soul grows through loss’. He talks often in the book about the brokenness which resulted from such a tragic loss. Yet, by the end of it he is able to write:



“The supreme challenge to anyone facing catastrophic loss involves facing the darkness of the loss on the one hand, and learning to live with renewed vitality and gratitude on the other. This challenge is met when we learn to take the loss into ourselves and to be enlarged by it, so that our capacity to live life well and to know God intimately increases...Loss can function as a catalyst to transform us. It can lead us to God, the only One who has the desire and power to give us life.”

May this be true in our lives too.

LORNA FERGUSON

Discovering Milnathort's Railway

Walking along South Street in Milnathort towards Kinross, you'll come to the bridge over the North Queich.

Just before the bridge, on the left-hand side, you may have noticed a metal upright that is actually a section of railway track. This formed the signpost for Milnathort railway station and is one of the many reminders of the railway in Milnathort. Some are more obvious than others, but if you know where to look . . . More of that later.

Milnathort had a railway station for a long time. It was opened in 1858 and was closed to passengers in 1964 – 106 years later - and finally closed to freight in 1970. But rather than dwell on its death, let's look at its life.

Milnathort station was on the Fife and Kinross railway line. This line was originally only single track, but with the opening of the Forth Rail Bridge in 1890, it was upgraded to double track. It was a substantial station with three sidings, a goods shed, goods area and a crane. As Milnathort was, and still is, in a

busy agricultural area, it was very conveniently situated besides the auction mart. The mart is long gone, but we're reminded of it by the road names around where it once stood – Auld Mart Road, Lane and Wynd. The station saw the regular and frequent transport of livestock, meat products from Cunningham's Bacon Factory, flowers and fruit from the nurseries of J & J Telfer and others, and trout from Loch Leven to name but a few. It employed many staff and would have been a hive of activity. Certainly, all these businesses were badly affected by the station's closure.

The transportation of livestock could present certain challenges though. In February 1864 a bull escaped from Milnathort railway station and ran up the railway line towards Mawcarse. Newspapers at the time reported that "Instant chase was given, but the infuriated animal rushed on for about two miles, till, on nearing Mawcarse Station, it observed a train coming up. This apparently increased the bull's fury, for he at once bent down his head and prepared to do battle with the approaching engine.

His boldness, however, was short lived, for in a few moments the train came down upon him, and, as may be supposed, he was killed on the spot. No injury resulted to the train or the passengers." Now, I've told this story to farmers who know a lot more about livestock than me. They're very sceptical that a bull would be daft enough to do battle with a steam locomotive and that it's more likely it was killed accidentally. However, the story was picked up and published by well over a hundred newspapers across the length and breadth of the UK. I suppose this shows that even in the days before the internet, a news item could "go viral" and that then, as now, the media won't necessarily let the facts get in the way of a good story.

Continuing our walk, bearing left down the minor road we pass Station Cottage. The road curves to the left and standing on the left-hand side of the bridge, looking down at the Queich, we can see further evidence of the railway in the form of sections of railway track that've been used to shore up the bank.





A 1955 view of Milnathort station.
(Hamish Svensson Collection)



Near the bridge is the modern Station House building and across from this we can see the infilled tunnel entrance through which the railway continued, curving southwest to Kinross Junction. A lady I know who, as a young girl, lived in one of the houses across the road from Milnathort station told me that the sharpness of the curve meant the train's wheels made a loud screeching noise as it travelled towards Milnathort. She and her sister would be having breakfast and this noise told them they had about three minutes to eat up and run across the road to catch the train to school. We can still see the traces of this section but need to observe it from the air. Google maps enables us to do this very easily and if we look at the satellite photo of the field immediately to the west of the station site, we can just see the faint image of the old railway track. The image is visible

because the track went through a cutting at this point. When the cutting was filled in after the line was closed, a trace was still left.

From the tunnel entrance we can see the remains of the platforms of the station with the riveted ironwork needed to support the structure over the Queich. It's terrific that the platforms remain and I hope they'll be preserved as a reminder of the station.

Continuing our walk through Auld Mart and on to the Core Path running by the side of the golf course, we're actually walking on the trackbed of the double track railway. It's difficult to imagine that at one time steam locomotives, then diesel units, thundered along a path where now the loudest noise is birdsong or the occasional "Fore!" from the golf course.

The railway continued over the Back Burn, (where the wooden footbridge is now) and if we continue walking and look under the last large tree on the right before the track would've crossed Burleigh Burn, we can see two concrete uprights. These would've supported the battery box that provided power for the signal post that once stood there. Beyond Burleigh Burn the track curved gently northeast.

Walking on the Core Path just before the signpost to Burleigh Sands we can see, on the left-hand side under a tree, another remnant of the railway. A short upright, again made from a section of track, is what's left of a gradient marker. This was a sign that indicated the steepness

of the gradient and its direction. I photographed the marker in 2013 when it was more or less complete, but the actual sign was removed a few years ago, leaving only the upright. You can see from the photo that it's indicating an upward gradient ahead.

The line continued on towards Arlary and the station at Mawcarse, just after which it split to form the Inverkeithing and Perth section, passing Cuthill and on to Glenfarg station and then further onward, taking passengers and goods to their destinations all over the country.

It would be fascinating to travel back in time to see Milnathort railway station, to observe the arrivals and departures of passengers, livestock and goods. It must've been a noisy, bustling place. Whilst we can't time-travel, we can get a sense of it by going online to the National Library of Scotland digital maps collection – a fantastic resource. You can find it here: maps.nls.uk/geo/explore. The digitised maps have one brilliant feature in particular; the viewer can superimpose the current satellite view of the map area, so by simply sliding a button, we can see how things looked when Milnathort railway station was in its heyday. Pretty close to time-travel, wouldn't you say?

KEVIN HENEGHAN

I'm always looking for photos and film of Milnathort station and railway. If you do have any such images I'd be delighted to convert them to digital and return the original to you along with the digital file. You can contact me at kevin@rockpool.co.uk

DIARY DATES

August

- 6th **All-age Joint Service**
Orwell Church - 10.30am
- 12th **Kinross-shire Agricultural show**
RSPB Loch Leven - 9am - 6pm approx
- 13th **Joint Service**
Portmoak - 10.30am
- 20th **Service**
Portmoak - 10am
- Service**
Orwell - 11.30am
- 25th **Oasis Ladies Group**
Portmoak Church new room - 10.15am-12noon
- 26th **Messy Church**
Orwell Church - 4-6pm
- 27th **Service**
Portmoak - 10am
- Service**
Orwell - 11.30am

September

- 3rd **All-age Joint Service**
Orwell Church - 10.30am
- 10th **Service**
Portmoak - 10am
- Service**
Orwell - 11.30am
- 15th **Tea and a Blether**
Orwell Church Hall - 1.30-3.30pm
- 16th **Sound and Vision** (see page 8)
Orwell Church - 7.30pm
- 17th **Service**
Portmoak - 10am
- Service**
Orwell - 11.30am
- 24th **Service**
Portmoak - 10am
- Service**
Orwell - 11.30am
- 29th **Oasis Ladies Group**
Portmoak Church new room - 10.15am-12noon
- 30th **Messy Church**
Orwell Church - 4-6pm

October

- 1st **All-age Joint Service**
Orwell Church - 10.30am
- 8th **Service**
Portmoak - 10am

Prayer Corner

A Summer Prayer

*Long warm days...
The pace of life slows...
A time for picnics and rest in the shade...
Lord, help me to rest a while
in the cooling shade of your presence.
Slow down my restless heart
and fill me with
gentle compassion for all your people.*

Author unknown

Service

Orwell - 11.30am

15th Service

Portmoak - 10am

Service

Orwell - 11.30am

20th Tea and a Blether

Orwell Church Hall - 1.30-3.30pm

22nd Service

Portmoak - 10am

Service

Orwell - 11.30am

27th Oasis Ladies Group

Portmoak Church new room - 10.15am-12noon

28th Messy Church

Orwell Church - 4-6pm

29th Service

Portmoak - 10am

Service

Orwell - 11.30am

November

5th All-age Joint Service

Orwell Church - 10.30am

Bonfire Night!

12th Service

Portmoak - 10am

Service

Orwell - 11.30am

17th Tea and a Blether

Orwell Church Hall - 1.30-3.30pm

19th Service

Portmoak - 10am

Service

Orwell - 11.30am

24th Oasis Ladies Group

Portmoak Church new room - 10.15am-12noon

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29th September: Autumn Evening
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