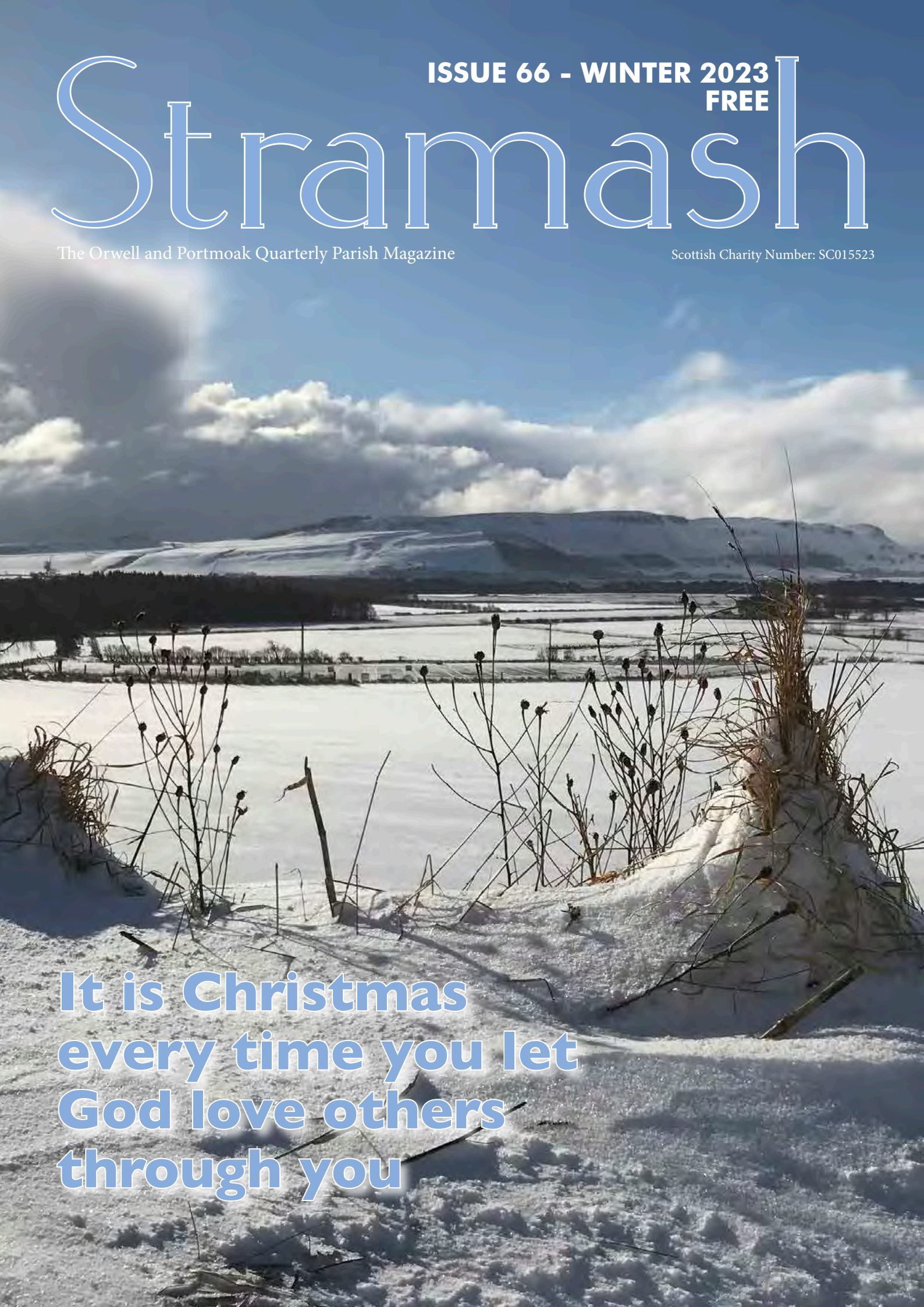


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Friends, we've become familiar with words like 'austerity' and 'pandemic' while we watch the world become seriously unstable in the Middle East and Ukraine. At home we have to deal with economic poverty and difficulties in healthcare. Forgive me for sounding like a newsreader – but I just want to position ourselves at the end of 2023 and enter the time of Advent before celebrating another Christmas.

Recently I've been looking into family trees, photo albums and talking with family members about their memories. Maybe this is what folk do as we get older or when we lose significant family members. What's become obvious to me is that you can't easily understand people without knowing about the times that they lived in. We've been through a lot in the past. There have been times of awful austerity (such as the General Strike), times of worldwide pandemic (such as Spanish flu) and times of great separation and loss (such as in World Wars). These difficulties also serve to highlight the courage and determination that many displayed in dealing with them.

'Advent' is the term we use to talk about living through dark days and clutching on signs of hope. Throughout December we will read biblical prophecies and signs of hope that were so relevant to those who lived hundreds of years before the birth of Jesus Christ. Even before Christmas, it is worth coming to church on a Sunday morning to see how hope can transform days of drudgery. Hope in God can help us put one foot in front of another. Faith in Jesus, even if it's tiny, makes a difference.

In visiting a museum, I recently came across some paintings by the Victorian artist Dante Gabriel Rossetti. They included a portrait of his sister, the poet Christina Rossetti, who posed for several of his works. Two of her poems got into the church hymn book and we now sing them as Christmas carols every year. They contain some beautiful and direct verses about hope in difficult times. They will be familiar to some of you.

In "Love came down at Christmas" she writes about the sign of Jesus' coming and ends with "Love shall be our token, Love be yours and love be mine, Love to God and all men, Love for plea and gift and sign." In "In the bleak mid-winter" she writes about the frosty winds and earth as hard as iron - but finishes with the verse: "What can I give Him, Poor as I am? - if I were a Shepherd, I would bring a lamb; If I were a Wise Man, I would do my part, - Yet what I can I give Him, - Give my heart."

I'm not sharing this to try to make you religious but to simply ask you to think about how you are dealing with the difficulties of our times. People of all ages can struggle with mental health issues. There's much going on that we can't easily or quickly change. What we can begin to change is what is inside – but that usually involves a relationship with someone we can trust.

Your friend and minister

Robert Calvert



Christina Rossetti

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EDITORIAL

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WOES OF A HARVEST

I sit here in front of the computer reflecting on our harvest for 2023. It has been a torturous few weeks trying to get 50 acres of spring barley harvested. 13th September was the start of harvest here at Tillyrie.

Weather was good, crop was ready and the combine was available (as we do not own a combine, neighbouring farmers with enough cereals to harvest to justify owning a combine help us with this task).

Just after lunch time the combine began to trundle round the first of three fields of spring barley to cut: two fields were for high nitrogen malt and the other is to feed our cattle over the winter. By around 6pm the field was finished and onto the next field.

This next field was barley under sown with grass and in the wrong conditions could be problematic for the combine. The grass was as tall as the barley and a thick sward.

We managed to get round the field once and halfway round the second time it began to rain; one of the conditions that makes harvesting barley challenging is rain; so the combine is parked until it is dry enough to cut again.

After 109mm of rainfall and not very many dry days, the 3rd field of barley had “brackled” over due to the rain and wind. Unfortunately due to the damp and humid conditions the barley crop started to sprout in the grain head. So now this field is no longer suitable for malt.

On 3rd October (the first dry(ish) day available for a combine to work) we attempted to salvage the barley crop in the third field. We had to abandon after 3 hours of harvesting due to the growth of the sprouted barley heads making combining near to impossible.

More rain, humid conditions and I am now getting a bit anxious. We have some barley to sell for malt but nothing to feed cattle over the coming winter. Weekend of 7th & 8th October and the heavens opened with 93mm of rain falling on Tillyrie. We were lucky, other areas in Scotland were severely flooded with half to twice as much rain falling in the same time period.

But a change is afoot. The winds are ramping up, changes direction to be more northerly. A bit cooler but dry. Marvellous!! Crops and the land are beginning to dry up, slowly. So its back to the third field on 13th October (a Friday) and by mid afternoon the combine is going again

but because the weather has been kinder the crop is salvaged. Well some of it.

14th October and the wind is still in our favour so it is back to the second field and the combine salvages the barley (well what we could gather): harvest 2023 is completed by 4.30pm. We now have barley to feed to the stock. What remains in the field will feed the crows, pigeons, deer and other wildlife willing to pick through what's left.

I feel lucky that my harvest is in, albeit much left in the field. There are many farmers who have still some crops to harvest: some still to start harvest.

Leviticus 23:22 *“And when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field up to its edge, nor shall you gather the gleanings after the harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner”.*

What I have lost in potential revenue from these fields is the gains for the wildlife. With the right weather conditions to sow, grow and harvest cereals, harvests 2021 & 2022 were a breeze.

MARK THOMSON

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Who are Broke Not Broken?

The Broke Not Broken food bank has seen a steady increase in usage over the past few years. Over the past year we have given out 2478 food parcels, containing non perishable food plus fresh fruit veg and dairy items. The fresh items are the most expensive and that's why we include them. These parcels have supported 6635 people, 3123 of them children, a 20% increase on last year.

Currently around 80% people using the food bank are women and about 76% are families. Women are often the shock absorbers of a family with a low income. They sacrifice a lot to ensure their children get access not only to food and heating but also opportunities so they don't feel different to their peers.

We run a fortnightly women's group offering access to crafts, training, cultural experiences but mainly fun and friendship. We also run family away days during school holidays covering transport breakfast lunch and entry tickets, so families can access different locations and experiences without the stress of additional costs. These trips also allow for relationships to be made.

We also have a parents and tots group because we know being a parent is expensive. The group has access to a baby bank monthly to access nappies and formula, again incredibly expensive.

Other projects include a counselling service, energy support, and various winter projects including a winter clothing project, winter warmer parcels with a heated blanket slow cooker and butcher vouchers and a veg pack. We also make up and deliver almost 200 Christmas hampers around Kinross-shire.

All of these projects are referral based, meaning professionals refer families and households to us for this support. We have worked hard to build relationships with referral agents and the people using our projects. Trust is an important part of what we do.

Its also worth noting that the people we support are not 'other'. They are

us. Particularly now during a cost of living crisis we see more and more people coming to us for help having never had to ask for support before. And we see people who had already been struggling, through no fault of their own, having a much harder time as well.

Poverty is a structural problem. Its not about laziness, addiction or poor life choices. Its about unpaid carers, people who are ill with physical or mental health issues, people who face unexpected costs or changes in family circumstances unable to access enough financial support to afford the essentials. And in 2023 that means a smart phone and wifi. In rural Kinross-shire it often means a car. Poverty today is different from poverty 25, 50 or 100 years ago.

Ultimately Broke Not Broken is here to help people in our community where we can, without judgement and with dignity.

www.brokenotbroken.org
facebook: BrokeNot



Abseiling the Forth Rail Bridge

for Marie Curie

On a rainy Sunday afternoon in early October I joined a team of 8 volunteers to raise money for Marie Curie by abseiling down the side of the Forth Rail Bridge! It was quite a daunting experience to have to climb over the railing at the top of the bridge while holding on to a very wet rope that you slide through your hands all the way down! However, I was receiving great encouragement from my personal cheerleading team, my 2 granddaughters shouting "Nana, Nana" with great gusto!

Thankfully we all slid down safely and managed to raise over £3,000 for Marie Curie thanks to very generous donations from family and friends, with special thanks to the many donors in Orwell Church.

This has certainly been the most adventurous of my fund raising experiences over the last eight years. The most fun was the Swimathon with our 6 month old grandson on the team and the most enjoyable was the Open Gardens Day that our Kinross Fundraising Team organised, raising over £2,000.

We'd love to do it again in 2024, so do give us a call if you'd like to swim or open your garden for an afternoon next summer OR become a member of our fundraising committee! It's a very satisfying experience as Marie

Curie is a cause dear to so many hearts. Their nurses provide hands on nursing care, day or night, in the privacy of the patient's own home or in our Marie Curie Hospices in Edinburgh and Glasgow. They care for patients with ANY terminal illness, not just cancer patients, at no cost to the patient or family.



Having had the privilege of nursing for Marie Curie for 15 years until my retirement on my 70th birthday I can happily say those years were the most rewarding of my 50 year nursing career. It allowed me to give my full attention to one patient in the comfort of their own home, throughout the day or night, while offering much appreciated support to family members.

As care can also be provided early on in the diagnosis, I have many memorable experiences to share. A few include accompanying my patient to his daughter's wedding, taking another patient and his wife back to their favourite beach for an ice cream on a hot summers day, listening to the travelling tales of my 100 yr old patient in a caravan on Loch Gilthead and nursing a cherished gamekeeper under the close supervision of his ever loyal collie dog!

But most memorable of all was being with a lovely young man who was determined to remain in his new home for his final few days to celebrate his daughter's first birthday, with their loving family and their closest friends. The family and friends



were so very grateful for our care and support that they received, that they went on to raise thousands of pounds for Marie Curie, enabling many more patients and families to receive help when needed most. This is why I'll also continue to fund raise for as long as I can. So please continue to give generously to Marie Curie whenever or however you can. It could be by donating to a can on a counter, buying and wearing a daffodil, supporting a local event or remembering Marie Curie in your will.

Hopefully you will never need our service, but if you do, we will hopefully be available to support you and your family.

Marg Meade



PORTMOAK LADIES BADMINTON

Portmoak ladies badminton meet every Thursday morning in Portmoak Village Hall. We start at 10am and generally play on until after 12 noon – the Hall is booked until 1pm. The fees at present are £3 a session.

For the last few years we have had a very healthy membership, with an average of 10 players a morning. We have a break during the morning for coffee and a chat. It is a friendly group. Ages in the group range from late 50 years to over 80 years. One of our best and regular players is 83 years.

As well as being active and energetic we have a social side as well. We usually go out to lunch locally at Christmas and at the end of the season in June. We also have had a few trips away in the last few years. One of our members moved to Northern Ireland and this resulted in a 4 day trip to visit and play with her local badminton group. Then another member moved to Galashiels and we spent a day visiting. Now the next member planning a move is off to Australia, so who knows, I am not sure club funds will stretch that far!

Club funds do build up sometimes and although a little is used for social events excess funds are given to charity, including supporting the village hall.

As we have a healthy regular attendance we have revived the end of season tournament. It is a "Round Robin" doubles format with names pulled out of a hat. We always welcome new members and this year a member who had only joined 2 weeks before won the trophy. What a good start.

We are not sure exactly how long the Club has been in existence but it must be getting on for 50 years. Does anyone out there know?

JOAN SMITH



OASIS LADIES GROUP - SCOTLANDWELL

It's hard to believe that we are at the end of another year of Oasis.

We have had a successful year of interesting speakers and some great craft work.

The past programme started with Sylvia showing us some of her drawings and paintings, then guiding us in the making of bookmarks. What a talented lady she is and she kept us entertained with some of her stories.

In September Moira spoke to us about her school life which took her to many different schools, both home and abroad, as her father was in the forces. She attended twelve different schools, some of which she really enjoyed, whilst others not so much. Moira is a talented lady too and brought some beautiful pieces of her work to show us. Cushions, knitwear and stuffed toys. She told us it was her granny who sparked her interest in craft work.



Both Sylvia and Moira are members of Oasis and we thank them for sharing their stories with us.

At our next meeting we are bringing along a treasured gift and sharing why we like it so much. In November, Anna Garner is leading us in Christmas craft work.

We always enjoy our Christmas Celebration service, which this year is on Friday 15th December at 10.15am until 12.00pm. This is led by Rosemary Tolson, the church organist. Why not join us and enjoy singing some favourite carols.

The first meeting of 2024 is on Friday 26th January at 10.15am to 12.00pm. We look forward to welcoming you to any of our meetings, which take place on the last Friday of each month.

(Directions: 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

THE CURLERS' GRACE

O Lord, wha's love surrounds us a'
 An' brings us a the gither,
 Wha' writes your laws upon oor hearts
 An' bids us help each other,
 We bless Thee for Thy bounties great
 For meat, an' hame and gear.
 We thank Thee, Lord, for snaw and ice
 But still we ask for mair.
 Gae us a heart tae dae what's richt
 Like curlers true an' keen
 Tae be guid friends along life's road
 An' soop oor slide aye clean.
 O Power abune, whae's bounty free
 Oor needs and wants suffices,
 We render thanks for barley bree
 An' meat that appetises.
 Be Thou, oor Skip, throughout life's game
 An' syne we're sure to win
 Tho' slow the shot and wide the aim
 We'll soop each ither in.



The King Visits Kinross

On Friday September 15 King Charles III came to Kinross, flying by helicopter to land at Kinross House and driving by the golf courses and onto the High Street, to meet the Lord Lieutenant Stephen Leckie at St Pauls Episcopal Church.

Broke Not Broken was the first stop, meeting the members of the group who started this local food bank, and the King presented a hamper of food. The Church Hall, holding an Art Exhibition and the Church were visited, the visitors book signed, and the crowd outside delighted with a walk about, speaking to many.

From there, the children from the local school saw the King pass the Green Hotel on his way to the Kinross Parish Church Centre. There he unveiled a plaque commemorating the 40th anniversary of the Day Centre. The Rev Alan Reid invited

the audience to give three cheers to the King. The volunteers all met the King, and staff, while manager Nan Cook showed the King round. Nan has been there for 32 years, and had a BEM in the late Queen's Birthday Honours list in October 2020.

CHAS staff and volunteers were next to be introduced. The King



chatted to them all including two families helped by CHAS to support disabled members of their families. Milnathort's Lynda Millar, a volunteer for 16 years, and Christine Dawson were among those who spoke to the King. Lynda commented "I was a little nervous but he was very warm and put me at ease straight away. It was lovely to see him chatting to the children and families and learning how they were supported by Rachel House and by CHAS."

Then the King left, bidding farewells to the crowds outside and departed by car from the High Street.

The buzz in the town, and with spirits high, the visit was enjoyed by all, and was a very good way to celebrate the day of the 40th anniversary for the Day Centre.

DOROTHY THOMSON

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It's been another busy few months in the life of Messy Church at Orwell and Portmoak Church. For those who don't know about it, Messy Church is a form of church for all ages - children and adults - that involves creativity, celebration and hospitality. It includes a long creative time with crafts and activities that explore the biblical theme, followed by a short celebration time involving a story, song and sometimes games, ending with a sit-down meal together at tables. It's a church for people at all stages of their faith journey and of any age, and aims to introduce Jesus, to give an opportunity to encounter him and to grow closer to him. Messy Church runs in Orwell Church, usually on the last Saturday of every month during school term time, from 4pm to 6pm, although please note for your diary that our Christmas event this year will be on Saturday 2nd December instead of the end of November.

We celebrated the 10th birthday of our Messy Church in August, which we can hardly believe, and we feel incredibly fortunate to still have so many people coming along and having fun with us. A birthday cake was baked to help us celebrate and we all enjoyed a piece of that at dinner time! We also explored the story of blind Bartimaeus through our theme 'Trusting is believing' and

experienced in our activities what it might be like to not be able to see. We then heard at celebration time the story of how Bartimaeus persisted in asking Jesus for what he needed and didn't give up.

In September, we celebrated Harvest and heard and explored the parable of the rich fool. This man wanted to build bigger and bigger barns, to store up much more grain than he would ever need, and was really quite greedy. We reminded ourselves that we might be a bit like that sometimes, and gather up more than we need, but that God really wants us to share what we have with others. We gathered donations to take to the local food bank, Broke Not Broken, and we prayed that God would be with people in our own local area and in other places in the world who do not have enough food and resources. We also gave thanks for the producers, farmers and sellers who enable us to have access to the food we need.

As we write, our end of October event is coming up next weekend, and we will explore lots of activities to help us understand what it means to be salt and light in our community. Our Messy Church Christmas event on 2nd December will then round off the year. We now also have some dates for January to March next year (see below), and you can also find details of our upcoming events on the events page of the church website. If you'd like to come along and join in with the fun at any of our events, you'd be made most welcome!



Messy Church dates winter/spring 2023-24 (all at Orwell Church from 4pm to 6pm)

Saturday 2nd December
 Saturday 27th January
 Saturday 24th February
 Saturday 30th March

CARA CHALMERS



News from our sister church in Mombwe, Malawi

POSITION AND LEADERSHIP

Mombwe Congregation is found in the northern part of Malawi in Africa. Rev Tuntufye SV Gondwe, 45 is the parish minister for the congregation. Rev Gondwe is married to Tryness Msiska, 37 and they have three children namely Tawonga 12, and the twins Cornelius and Coliness, 8.

Photo below shows Kirk Session Office Bearers. From left to right: Mr Noah Gondwe is our Session Clerk. His Deputy is Mr Clement Nkhana. The deacon's court Clerk is Mr Edward Mphepo and the Kirk Session Treasurer is Mrs Elizabeth Sato Mkandawire (bottom centre photo with her husband).



CONSTITUTION AND VISION

Mombwe Congregation has seven prayer houses with the manse situated at Emanyaleni vestry. Through God's grace and from the heart of His calling inside us, we expect our ministry to grow with deeper essence of understanding. We believe that God shall equip us with all necessary tools possible so that we can deeply understand His word, because when we do that, our faith also moves from one level to another. Our determination is to pursue higher and deeper into



understanding of His word. All we desire is to deepen our roots in Him.

MEMBERSHIP AND MISSION

In total, Mombwe has a membership of 900 including the Sunday school learners and the communicants. Each month all church members gather for worship and breaking of the Bread. Other important gatherings each month include Deacon's court, Guilds' meetings and Kirk session. During these meetings individual members travel from their homes to a designated meeting place. Some walk for more than 22km to reach a scheduled place. All these meetings start at 9am, up until 1pm ideally. The purpose of these meetings is to encourage preaching and teaching of sound doctrine, caring for the children, the orphans, the disabled members, the elderly and the widows. The centre of Mombwe mission is to nurture the flock and the entire community for spiritual and physical transformation for edification of the church and for the salvation of souls.



In this photo are women that were set apart to prepare and take care of utensils for the Holy Communion. From left to right: Jane Banda and Regina Shaba.



INFRASTRUCTURE AND PROJECTS

We thank God, all our vestries are nice looking and well furnished except for one main vestry at the Manse, which is under construction as a new project.

SUNDAY SCHOOL AND CHOIRS

Mombwe has over 250 members of Sunday school. These learners go and attend for their classes each Sunday starting 8am in all our vestries. We also do have more than 13 choirs during our congregational worship gathering. Below are photos that show some of the Sunday school learners seating and preparing to take their lunch during 2023 Easter gathering and the Golden Voices Choir:

REV TUNTUFYE SV GONDWE



Memories of Christmas past

As the TV adverts begin to remind us that Christmas - or Xmas? - is on its way, it is interesting to reflect on how the celebration of this event has changed over the years.

In Scotland, the main winter Holiday was Hogmanay/New Year and many marriages were celebrated at this time as most people, apart from the minister, would have a day off.

Christmas Day in the Fifties was a half holiday: the shops were open until lunch-time and most folk went out to work for the morning. In rural areas like this, animals had to be looked after and, on many a farm, the rhythm of nature meant the arrival of a calf interrupted whatever plans had been made.

Christmas time was a time for children: neighbours appeared with little gifts 'for the bairns' often sweets or a little book or toy. One lady remembered that a certain

elderly couple always visited the family on Christmas Eve - It was years later that she discovered that the new handkerchief that appeared in her stocking was a gift from these same neighbours.

The excitement of the Christmas stocking, or possibly pillowcase, on the end of the bed for Santa Claus to fill is well remembered. Most remember an apple (a shiny Canadian Mackintosh Red) an orange, a coin (real or chocolate), a little book, some small toys. One family always had a cinder in their stockings as a reminder that Santa really had come down the chimney!

Santa's reindeer were well supplied with carrots and Santa himself had a wide choice of mince pies, slices of cake, glasses of milk or of sherry.

Parties were not as common as today but one much anticipated event was the Sunday School party. There was a Christmas tree in the Church Hall

- not every house had a tree at that time, party games with prizes, a gift from Santa, party food including ice cream and jelly and a conjurer who thrilled everyone with his tricks.

People worked hard to ensure that children enjoyed Christmas: grannies knitted, dads worked in the evenings making toys and mums had to hide things and keep lots of secrets so that children would have surprises on Christmas day!

Towards the end of the term, school children attended a service in one of the three churches in Milnathort but unless Christmas day was a Sunday, the Church doors remained closed.

How things change!

PAT EADIE



McCaskie Farm Supplies are moving in late November from Drum to join us in the parish.

Orwell Farm is where the old Orwell village was sited, above the old church and manse and opposite the standing stones to the north. It removed to Milnathort in the early 1700s when Wades Road was built, and they were missing out on trade routes. Orwell Farm is on the road side between Milnathort and Chanel Farm with the Loch Leven Larder farm shop.

McCaskie's are a Scottish based firm and supply everything from agricultural needs, equine supplies, and hen, cat and dog necessities, not to mention a wide range of outdoor clothing. They will be a great blessing to livestock and arable, horses and other animals. For anyone with a need for waterproof or other clothes it will be a handy place to go for supplies.

May we wish McCaskie well with the move and a prosperous future in their new premises.

See Page 12

An American Schoolteacher's cry

After being interviewed by the school administration, the prospective teacher said:

Let me see if I've got this right. You want me to go into that room with all those kids, correct their disruptive behaviour, observe them for signs of abuse, monitor their dress habits, censor their T shirt messages, and instil in them a love for learning.

You want me to check their backpacks for weapons, wage war on drugs, sexually transmitted diseases, and raise their sense of self-esteem and personal pride.

You want me to teach them patriotism and good citizenship and fair play and how to register to vote, balance a cheque book, and apply for a job.

You want me to check their heads for lice, recognise signs of anti-social behaviour, and make sure they all pass the final exams.

You also want me to provide them with an equal education regardless of their handicaps, and communicate regularly with their parents in English, Spanish or any language, by letter, telephone, newsletter, and report card.

You want me to do all this with a piece of chalk, a blackboard, a bulletin board, a few books, a big smile, and a starting salary that qualifies me for food stamps.

You want me to do all this, and then you tell me I CAN'T PRAY?

IMPORTANT DATES FOR YOUR DIARY Portmoak Church building

As you have probably heard there has been a decision made to close several Church of Scotland church buildings across the country as they have become surplus to requirement due to falling rolls, severe financial pressures, and a more centralised form of worship. These buildings, although very precious to many of us, are very expensive to maintain and heat and in many cases require considerable refurbishment to meet the needs of modern congregations and communities. Unfortunately, Portmoak Church falls into this category.

We will hold a Joint Communion Service on 10th December at 10:30 in Portmoak Church.

This service will be followed by a short meeting for members of our congregation and regular adherents, where there will be the opportunity to vote on the decision that has been made to close our church building in Portmoak.

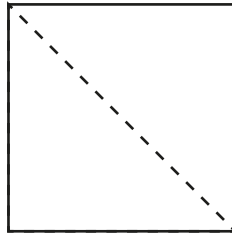
We will hold a meeting for members of the local community on **Tuesday 23rd January 2024 at 7:30 in Portmoak Church.**

This meeting will allow community and church members to put forward and discuss any constructive ideas they may have regarding the future sale/use of the Church building prior to it being disposed of.

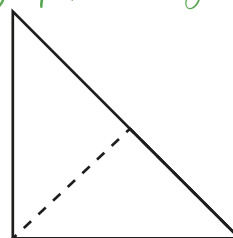
ORWELL AND PORTMOAK SESSION

Twister to Star

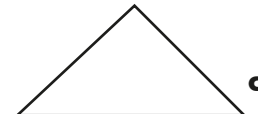
by Anna Garner



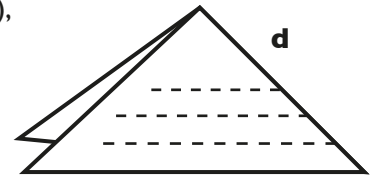
a



b



c



d

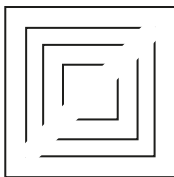
1. Fold your square paper (a) in half diagonally (b), fold in half again (c) to a quarter triangle of the original piece.

2. On the closed folded side cut 3 straight lines (d), stopping 1 cm from the open side

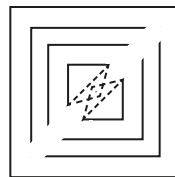
3. Open the paper out flat (e) and pull together the corners of the central square and faster together with staples or tape (f)

4. Turn over the paper (g) and continue to overlap the corners of each square (h), turning the paper over after each one, until all 4 are fastened

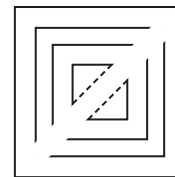
If you've made a twister (i) why not make 5 more to make a star! (j)



e



f



g



h



f



h



h



j

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Sat - Sun: 9am - 5pm

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Mandy's

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God gave you hair - let my angels help you style it

Thank you to everyone for supporting me this year.

I look forward to seeing you all again in 2024

Merry Christmas
from all at Mandy's

119 High Street, Kinross | mandyatjames@hotmail.com





The Kind Pantry has been up and running for almost three months and one of the commonest questions I get is 'How is it going?' I must admit, the first time I wasn't sure what to answer! Did the questioner want a blow by blow account of the finances? Had they just seen so many other businesses come and go that they wanted some reassurance about permanence or were they just asking if I was enjoying it? I think I have now honed the perfect answer. Financially, it is probably far too early to say but all is good so far. I am loving it! So many interesting customers, I just hope I am not coming across as too nosey. You all seem to be doing or have done amazing things, have good cleaning tips or recipes to share. They say good social interactions contribute to longevity, so without a crystal ball, I hope that answers the bit about permanence!

For those who have yet to discover The Kind Pantry, it is a refill shop on the lower part of the High Street,



Kinross. We stock staple foods eg pastas, rice, baking ingredients, nuts, herbs and spices, breakfast cereals etc. My best seller is the porridge oats! I take bread orders for The Wild Hearth Bakery, who deliver to Kinross twice a week. We also stock household goods, e.g. Faith in Nature shampoos, soaps and conditioners and FillRefill cleaning products. The beauty of these brands is that they accept all their own plastic containers back for reuse and they don't use sulphates or phosphates, reducing landfill waste and chemicals that might not be beneficial for our loch. We also have seasonal flowers (from The Flower Shed at Cleish) and the fruit and vegetables from local customers' gardens.

The Kind Pantry idea grew during the pandemic. I was already retired from my NHS career and working in a Farm Shop. The litter seemed more noticeable and I became aware of a creeping frustration in not being able to buy unpackaged food. Also I was feeling a sense of helplessness around climate change and just felt it would be better to direct that energy into something more positive, even if it is a tiny positive. I hope The Kind Pantry is convenient enough to feasibly give shoppers the choice of reducing waste. Although there is glassware for sale or paper bags if you are stuck, I am really encouraging you to bring whatever containers you have to fill up. It does involve a change of shopping habits, but a bit like when we had to start bringing our own bags to the supermarket. But we got there in the end!

Look forward to seeing you at The Kind Pantry.

MOIRA HOOKHAM



McCaskie
COUNTRY STORES

Commits to Kinross



In the heart of Fife, a beacon of commitment to Scottish farming is shining brighter than ever. McCaskie Country Stores, a family business with a legacy dating back to 1957, is set to open its doors to a brand-new store near Kinross in the winter of 2023. This expansion not only signifies a strategic move for the company but also stands as a resounding investment in the future of farming in the region.

Founded on humble roots as a small farm supply shop, McCaskie has transformed itself into a trusted and revered name in the Scottish farming community. The torchbearers of this family business, brothers Neil and Steven Rettie, now the third generation of leadership, are at the helm, steering the company toward a future teeming with potential.

The new Kinross store will be a one-stop destination for all agricultural and pet supply needs. The product range will span Farming, Equestrian, Dog, Cat, and Poultry products, and even extend to outdoor Clothing and Footwear. This diverse selection will cater not only to farmers but also to pet owners

and outdoor enthusiasts in the local area.

Located conveniently on the north side of the picturesque Loch Leven, the Kinross store's setting is nothing short of idyllic. It will be situated at Orwell Farm, where the scenic beauty complements the promise of quality and service that McCaskie is known for.

This expansion is a testament to McCaskie's unwavering commitment to invest in the future of Scottish farming. The company understands the challenges faced by the agricultural sector, including shifting regulations, environmental concerns, and economic fluctuations. McCaskie remains steadfast in its mission to be a reliable source of support, evolving with the industry's needs and demands.

Neil Rettie, the Managing Director of McCaskie, expresses his enthusiasm for this development:

"We are excited to establish our Kinross store as a natural progression from our esteemed Fossoway location. This development is a tangible investment in Scottish farming, and it exemplifies our enduring dedication to the agricultural community we hold in the highest regard. We look forward to extending a warm welcome to all at our new establishment by scenic Loch Leven."

This new venture by McCaskie is not just about expanding a business; it's about sowing the seeds of progress, sustainability, and community support. With a legacy spanning generations, McCaskie Country Stores is lighting the way for a brighter and more promising future for Fife farmers and beyond.

For more information and updates about McCaskie's journey and their new Kinross store, visit their website at www.mccaskie.co.uk

Scam

One Tuesday, the phone went and it was a friend saying she had an email from me saying I was in trouble with my health and my phone was off, could they help me. Having reassured her it must be a scam, I asked her to let others in the church know and spread the word.

I then emailed six of my bridge playing friends, and six relations to let them know and spread the word the email was a scam. Then my granddaughter came and changed my password. Five friends had phoned meanwhile, mainly saying it was a scam and was not like me. One mentioned we had a landline and both husband and I mobiles, so it had to be a scam. I relaxed at this point and went on with life.

I remembered Ruary had been scammed when on holiday years ago, asking for help as he had lost his wallet and passport while abroad. We were all horrified at the time.

I had a very busy week, and was expecting the readings from Harry for Sunday, and other important emails. On Thursday I noticed no email had come since Tuesday, so having phoned Harry for the readings, I took my computer to the Fife Computers shop in Kinross, opposite Hunters Butcher shop on the main street.

Kevin Celentano at Fife Computers was very understanding and I left the laptop for a cleanup. I felt humiliated at being scammed and angry with the folk trying to get money from my friends. Even as far away as Kent, cousin Diane had an email.

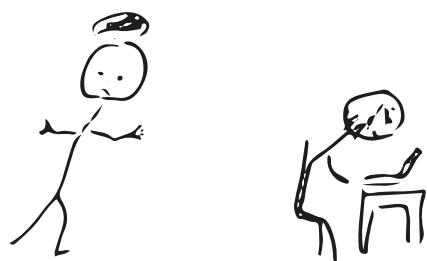


The sermon on Sunday was on forgiveness, the parable of the servant who was let off his debt, and then went out and throttled a man who owed him money. I can forgive people I know, and have met in life, but as I said to the minister I could strangle the scammers if I could lay my hands on them. The disruption to my life, then the inconvenience of no laptop for almost a week and the stress of it all made me angry.

Kevin at Fife Computers phoned on Monday to say the laptop was ready. When I went to collect it I asked why I had no emails after the scam. He told me the scammer put them into a black hole so nobody could email me to ask how I was, as they hoped to get money from them meanwhile. He had reinstated the missing emails. When I thanked him for being so quick to repair the laptop he said that time is of the essence in such matters.

It took a while to catch up on work, and after some time I calmed down and got my confidence back and life has got back to normal. Thanks to Fife Computers of Kinross who have helped me over the years, but never at such a humiliating time, for his sympathy and assurance that I was one of many who are scammed. So if you are unlucky enough for it to happen to you, do not despair, change your password (or get a grandchild to help!) and go to a good computer shop like Fife Computers.

DOROTHY THOMSON



THE COLD WITHIN

By James Patrick Kinney

*Six humans trapped by happenstance
In bleak and bitter cold,
Each possessed a stick of wood,
Or so the story's told.*

*Their dying fire in need of logs
The first woman held hers back,
For on the faces around the fire
She saw that one was black.*

*The next man looking 'cross the way
Saw one not of his church,
And couldn't bring himself to give
The fire his stick of birch.*

*The third man sat in tattered clothes
He gave his coat a hitch,
Why should his log be put
To warm the idle rich?*

*The rich man just sat back and thought
Of the wealth he had in store,
And how to keep what he had earned
From the lazy, shiftless poor.*

*The black man's face bespoke revenge
As the fire passed from his sight,
For all he saw in his stick of wood
Was a chance to spite the white.*

*And the last man of this forlorn group
Did naught except for gain,
Giving only to those who gave
Was how he played the game.*

*The logs held tight in death's stilled hands
Was proof of human sin,
They didn't die from the cold without,
They died from the cold within.*



A view from on high

If you were to decide where to build the world's tallest tower, you probably wouldn't choose an area prone to earthquakes.

However, that is exactly what happened in 2011 when the Tokyo Skytree reached its full height of 634 meters (2,080 ft). It was then, and still is, the tallest tower in the world. Built using some of the latest earthquake-resistant technologies as well as an ancient Japanese method, Tokyo Skytree is a broadcasting tower as well as a popular tourist attraction.

Because Tokyo has so many earthquakes, there are very few tall buildings around. This makes the Skytree stick out even more. The highest point visitors can go to is just over 450 metres but even from there the view is incredible. Perhaps the most outstanding view is of Mount Fuji about 100km away to the southwest. You can also see a mountain range nearly another 100km to the north. And in between the mountains, there are houses and buildings in all directions as far as the eye can see.

This area between the mountains and the Pacific Ocean in Japan is known as the Kanto plain – home to the Greater Tokyo Area, which is the biggest metropolis in the history of the world. And so as you walk round the viewing gallery of the Skytree, you can see the area where over 40 million people live and work. There is also a part with a glass floor so that you can look directly down on the world below.

I went up the Skytree during the pandemic, when there were very few tourists, so I could take my time admiring the view and spotting the various landmarks. At the same time, I wondered how many of the over 40 million people know Jesus, or have even heard of Him. So I afterwards I did some research. In that area I could see from the tower:

- There are a little over 2,600 churches – that is just under 1 church for every 16,000 people.
- Most churches are small, so out of the 40+ million people living in this area, an average around 130,000 would have been in church on a Sunday. That's about 0.3% of the population of the area.



It was a reminder to me of the vastness of the task in Japan to give everyone a chance to hear and understand the good news of Jesus. It truly is daunting. It can be tempting to say that the task is too hard and that we should give up.

But then I remember Jesus' small group of disciples who turned the world upside down as they went around telling people that Jesus had died for them and had risen again. The task for them was vast too, but by the power of the Holy Spirit, they changed the world. And so after 25 years in Japan, and thanks to the support and prayers of friends and family in Scotland I am still here, still working alongside the Japanese church to help in this huge task of spreading the good news of Jesus throughout Japan.

LORNA FERGUSON



Dear Friends,

Many of you will be aware of the major readjustment of parishes across the whole of Scotland at this time, with unions of congregations and closure of church buildings underway in every corner of the land.

Let me take this opportunity to update you all on developments in our own area.

Last year the congregations of Cleish, Fossoway, Kinross, Orwell and Portmoak agreed to enter into a Parish Grouping (which will take in Arngask in due course) with a view to working more closely together and, in the words of the agreement, 'to do separately as congregations only what we cannot do together'. As well as regular meetings of the ministers and session clerks of all the churches, representatives of different areas of church life have been co-operating with their opposite numbers in other congregations and that is bearing fruit in many ways.

The closure of Arngask Church in Glenfarg has now been agreed and a number of people from there are now worshipping at Orwell. As you will see elsewhere in Stramash, the process towards the closure of Portmoak Church will be progressing in the coming months.

The next stage will be for the congregations of Cleish and Fossoway to agree a Basis of Union with Rev Lis Stenhouse continuing as minister there. As part of that union, the closure of Cleish Church will be progressed with regular worship taking place at Fossoway Church in the Crook of Devon. The Kirk Sessions of Kinross and Orwell & Portmoak have begun to look at what our future relationship might be, and have set up a joint vision group to consider the practicalities of being a united charge by the end of next year under the continuing ministry of Rev Robert Calvert and myself with worship taking place at Orwell and at Kinross.

In due course the aim is for there to be a united charge of Kinross-shire with one Kirk Session, three places of worship, and two full-time ministers with additional ministry support. We are also exploring funding streams for a project which would involve appointing a full-time pioneer minister to work as part of Kythe in encouraging younger people to grow as disciples of Jesus. We will also be looking at how Christian fellowship and discipleship may be fostered in the communities where there is no church building and how we can continue in our day the work begun by St Serf in sharing the Good News of Christ with the people of our communities.

Please pray for all of those involved in these various discussions (*which are time-consuming and sometimes draining*) and pray for an openness in all of us to the leading of the Holy Spirit as the right shape and style is found for the Church of Jesus Christ in Kinross-shire for the next century.

Yours in Christ,
Alan

**Rev. A.D. Reid
Interim Moderator**

Christmas Bazaar
Saturday 18th November
10am - noon
in Orwell Church
Stalls & Refreshments

Also supporting Christian Aid

CAROLS AT THE CROSS
 PRESENTED BY MILNATHORT IN BLOOM
 ORWELL & PORTMOAK PARISH CHURCH
 MILNATHORT TOWN HALL COMMITTEE

MILNATHORT CROSS
SUNDAY 17TH DECEMBER AT 6PM

**BRING YOUR VOICE
 TO SING ALONG WITH US
 AND SHARE IN REFRESHMENTS**

**DONATIONS TO LOCAL CHARITY
 PLEASE BRING A TORCH**

KIRKYARD TALES

During the past few years volunteers from Kinross (Marshall) Museum have been recording inscriptions on memorial stones in the old kirkyards of Kinross-shire. In 2023 surveys in Orwell and Portmoak Parish churchyards have revealed not only a wealth of social history but also fascinating stories highlighting the activities of individuals in times past. David Munro, who led a 'Kirkyard Tales' walk through Portmoak Parish churchyard in May 2022, here delves into the surveys carried out in Portmoak and Orwell and the stories that have subsequently emerged.

The kirkyard surveys being carried out currently by Kinross Museum volunteers were prompted by numerous enquiries made by individuals researching their family history. Often the details to be found on these memorial stones augments information to be found in historical documents.

For many years, a survey of the Monumental Inscriptions in Kinross-shire by John and Sheila Mitchell in the 1960s provided a useful synopsis of inscriptions, but only on memorials prior to a death before 1855, the year when compulsory births, deaths and marriages came into force. Some stones were lost under long grass or ivy and, for the most part, complete copies of inscriptions were not made by the Mitchells for all memorial stones.

The present surveys are therefore an attempt to make a more detailed and complete record, correcting the occasional mistake and omission in the Mitchell surveys. Today's volunteer surveyors record on a form all the information needed and photographs are taken for inclusion in a data base being developed on a museum computer.

The graveyard surveys only provide us with about three centuries of information, a time period that often dovetails with the greater part of available written or printed sources. Both Orwell and Portmoak kirkyards date back to the 1720s, Portmoak churchyard opened in 1722 and Orwell churchyard first came into use when Orwell Parish Church was moved from the lochside to the Ba' Hill, Milnathort, in 1729.

While the memorial stones yield varying degrees of information, the emergence of an interesting story often depends on further research. The story of James Fisher's body being 'snatched' from Portmoak Kirkyard, but later reburied, is told in some detail by David Beath in his 1902 book *The Bishopshire and its People*. The displaced Fisher memorial stone at Portmoak provides information on various members of the Fisher family but no mention of the tale that explores the mistaken lifting of James Fisher's body following his burial in February 1837 at the age of 42.

Another example of a fascinating story augmented by documentary research can be found in an enclosure at the rear of the church hall at Orwell Parish Church which contains memorials of the Thomson's of Ballingall to the west of Milnathort. The memorial stone to the left remembers one of the family, Colonel John Thomson, who served with the Honourable East India Company Service (HEICS). His death in April 1839 at the age of 53 is noted on the memorial as taking place "on his march to Kabul with the army of the Indus." This intriguing statement encourages further research, revealing the 'Great Game' context of this epic march comprising 21,000 British and Indian soldiers.

There are many more instances of kirkyard tales emerging from amidst the memorial stones in the old burial grounds of Kinross-shire. The surveys currently being carried out by Kinross Museum volunteers will no doubt add to the rich heritage of local stories already uncovered.

DAVID MUNRO

Left to right: Kinross Museum volunteers surveying memorial stones in Portmoak Churchyard; The Thomson of Ballingall enclosure in Orwell Parish Churchyard. The death of Colonel John Thomson (HEICS) is noted as taking part "on his march to Kabul with the army of the Indus."; The displaced Fisher family memorial, including a notice of James who died in February 1837. His body was mistakenly 'snatched' but later recovered and reburied in Portmoak Kirkyard.



News from Portmoak Primary School

MacMillan Coffee Afternoon

On Thursday 28th September we had a very successful open afternoon for our families to come into the classrooms to meet the teacher and see the learning that has been taking place. Families were then invited into our hall for coffee and cakes to support raising money for Macmillan Cancer Support. The P6/7 class organised the event by ordering in the ingredients for each class to do some baking, planning other fundraising activities for the children to take part in and organising resources needed for the event to run smoothly. We were thrilled with all the cake donations handed in on the day and it was lovely to see our families come together. We raised a fantastic sum of £888.

Harvest Church Service

On Friday 6th October the whole of Portmoak Primary School walked to the church to come together for our end of term harvest service. This was led by the P3/4 class who shared their learning about harvest festivals in different countries around the world. The class also talked about things that we are thankful for, such as the fantastic work that Kinnesswood in Bloom do to help us keep our school grounds looking beautiful. The class then finished off by sharing acrostic poems they had created with lots of harvest themed words before performing a lovely harvest song called Thank You for the Sunshine.

**LOUISE GORDON
HEADTEACHER**



HAIL THE HOLY DUSTERS

The house of God welcomes
All who cross its doors
But it is the Holy dusters
Who clean the pews and floors

The Vicar may preach his sermons
The organist play our tunes
But it is the Holy dusters
Who weild the pans and brooms

The Devil of Dirt is excluded
When the noble brigade get thru
The work may be humble and lowly
But so were the fishermen too

Then offer a prayer of thanksgiving
For those behind the scene
Who give in love their labour
That God's house may be clean



Volunteer Drivers

Kinross-shire Volunteer Group and Rural Outreach Scheme

KVG/ROS have worked quietly for over 40 years delivering a vital service for the residents of Kinross-shire and Glenfarg, providing volunteer drivers to help residents attend health appointments in hospitals and local health centres, and while we knew we had the support and recognition of the community, it



the presentation to Norma Denwick, one of the founding members of the organisation, and Ena Bowen gave a vote of thanks on behalf of the clients.

It never ceases to amaze me how our volunteers continue to provide this first class service, even through difficult times like COVID and the Cost of Living Crisis. This Age Scotland Award gives us the acknowledgement that we are delivering an important service and one which we know is making a difference. I am so proud to be part of this organisation and trust it will continue to serve the community for another 40 years.

DAVID AIRD
CHAIRPERSON KVG/ROS



came as a very pleasant surprise to be recognised nationally for an award from Age Scotland.

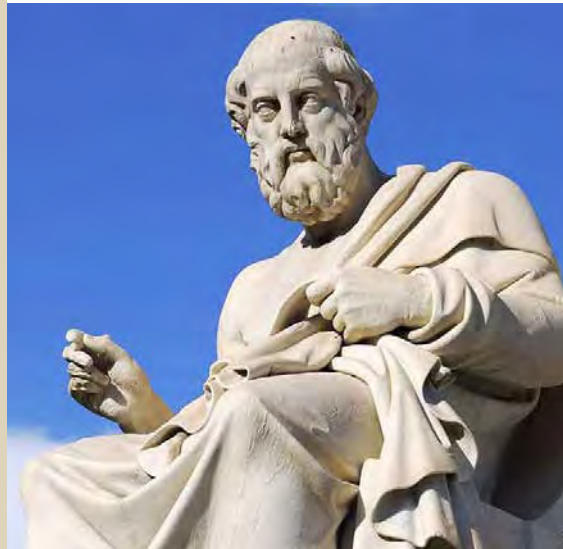
The award for 'Services for Older People 2023' was presented to KVG/ROS on Sunday 1st October in Orwell Church, where we held an afternoon tea for our Volunteers, some of our Clients, and representatives of local organisations, who have supported us over our 40 plus years. Stuart Purdy, Chair of Age Scotland made

Plato's Philosophy

Is there nothing new under the sun, so far as human behaviour is concerned? Note the author and when he lived!

People lose a sense of shame. Rudeness is taken as a sign of sophistication. People pursue the pleasure of the moment. They lose respect for leaders. The young no longer defer to the old, and the old behave as though they were young. The difference between the sexes is blurred. People get irritated by the least touch of authority and they dislike any rules which inhibit their freedom to do as they like.

The above passage was written by Plato, the Greek philosopher, when speaking about the democracy of Athens in **"The Republic"** (circa 400 BC)



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The Helpful Padre

An English lady of title had been suffering from a nervous breakdown and having been recommended to stay at a small German village in the mountains went to inquire about the rooms. Having remembered that she had omitted to ask if there was a WC attached to the house she wrote to the schoolmaster as to the particulars of the WC.

The schoolmaster did not understand the meaning of the abbreviations "WC", so he consulted the local Padre, who also had little understanding of the English language. They concluded that the lady was a devout Christian and wanted to know the whereabouts of the Wesleyan Chapel, so the schoolmaster wrote as follows:

Your Ladyship,

The WC is situated 7 miles from your lodgings, in the centre of a forest amidst beautiful scenery, and is open on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays, which is unfortunate if you are in the habit of going regularly, but you will no doubt be glad to hear that a number of people take a packed lunch and make a day of it. As there are a number of visitors in the Summer, I advise you to go early. The accommodation is good. There are 80 seats newly upholstered in plush velvet. Should you at any time be late there is plenty standing room. A bell will be rung 10 minutes before the place is opened and I especially advise you to go early on Thursday, as on that day there will be an organ accompaniment. The acoustics are exceptionally good on the premises and even the most delicate sound is audible. I shall have great pleasure in reserving you a seat.

PS My wife and I have not been for three months and it pains us very much, but it is a long way off. Hymn sheets are provided.

Clear A Path For Jesus

Clear a path for Jesus,
He's coming to your door,
With a gift for everybody,
Of a love you can't ignore.

He came to us at Christmas,
So each year we celebrate
A gift to share with others,
Of a love - so very great!

Prayer Corner

Clear a path for Jesus
And welcome him inside,
To bring you love this Christmas
And all-year-through besides

RUARY MACLEOD



A Midnight Meditation For Christmas Eve

Heavenly Father, it was on a night such as this that you sent your angels through a silent starry sky to tell the shepherds of our Saviour's birth, that Christ the Saviour of the world is born in Bethlehem.

O come to us, in the stillness of this midnight hour; touch our understanding with your Holy Spirit, and grant us peace in our hearts as we await once more the coming of the Christ-child.

In this precious moment, when heaven and earth meet silently as one, may we reflect upon the mystery that You should leave the realms of endless glory to be born a vulnerable human child in our messy, noisy finite world.

Amen



November

- 17 **Tea and a Blether**
Orwell Church Hall - 1.30-3.30pm
- 18 **Christmas Bazaar**
Orwell Church - 10am-12noon
- 19 **Service** Portmoak Church - 10am
Service Orwell Church - 11.30am
- 24 **Oasis Ladies Group**
Portmoak Church New Room 10.15am-12noon
- 26 **Service** Portmoak Church - 10am
Service Orwell Church - 11.30am

December

- 2 **Messy Church** Orwell Church - 4-6pm
- 3 **All-age joint service** Orwell Church - 10.30am
- 5 **Guild Friendship Group**
Orwell Church Hall - 2-3.30pm
- 10 **Joint communion Service**
Portmoak Church - 10.30am
Followed by meeting and vote for church members and regular attenders
- 15 **Oasis Ladies Group**
Portmoak Church New Room 10.15am-12noon
Tea and a Blether
Orwell Church Hall - 1.30-3.30pm
- 17 **Service** Portmoak Church - 10am
Service Orwell Church - 11.30am
Carols at the Cross
Milnathort Town Hall - 6pm
- 24 **Service** Portmoak Church - 10am
Service Orwell Church - 11.30am
Evening service - Carols and readings
Portmoak Church - 6.30pm ✨
Watchnight Service Orwell Church - 11.30pm
- 25 **Christmas Day!**
- 31 **Kinross Network united service**
Cleish Parish Church - 11am

January

- 7 **All-age joint service** Orwell Church - 10.30am
- 9 **Guild Friendship Group**
Orwell Church Hall - 2-3.30pm
- 14 **Service** Portmoak Church - 10am
Service Orwell Church - 11.30am

- 19 **Tea and a Blether**
Orwell Church Hall - 1.30-3.30pm
- 21 **Service** Portmoak Church - 10am
Service Orwell Church - 11.30am
- 23 **Public meeting** Portmoak Church 7.30pm
to discuss future use of the building
- 26 **Oasis Ladies Group**
Portmoak Church New Room 10.15am-12noon
Bereavement Service Orwell Church - 3pm
- 27 **Messy Church** Orwell Church - 4-6pm
- 28 **Service** Portmoak Church - 10am
Service Orwell Church - 11.30am

February

- 4 **All-age joint service** Orwell Church - 10.30am
- 6 **Guild Friendship Group**
Orwell Church Hall - 2-3.30pm
- 11 **Service** Portmoak Church - 10am
Service Orwell Church - 11.30am
- 16 **Tea and a Blether**
Orwell Church Hall - 1.30-3.30pm
- 18 **Service** Portmoak Church - 10am
Service Orwell Church - 11.30am
- 23 **Oasis Ladies Group**
Portmoak Church New Room 10.15am-12noon
- 24 **Messy Church** Orwell Church - 4-6pm
- 25 **Service** Portmoak Church - 10am
Service Orwell Church - 11.30am

March

- 3 **All-age joint service** Orwell Church - 10.30am
- 5 **Guild Friendship Group**
Orwell Church Hall - 2-3.30pm
- 10 **Service** Portmoak Church - 10am
Service Orwell Church - 11.30am
- 15 **Tea and a Blether**
Orwell Church Hall - 1.30-3.30pm
- 17 **Service** Portmoak Church - 10am
Service Orwell Church - 11.30am
- 24 **Service** Portmoak Church - 10am
Service Orwell Church - 11.30am
- 30 **Messy Church** Orwell Church - 4-6pm
- 31 **Service** Portmoak Church - 10am
Service Orwell Church - 11.30am

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