

A photograph of a garden path lined with purple crocuses and green foliage. The path is covered in a dense carpet of purple crocuses, with some white ones interspersed. The path leads into a lush green area with tall hedges and trees. The lighting is bright, suggesting a sunny day. The overall scene is peaceful and beautiful.

# The Herald

Castlehill Parish Church

Spring 2020

Rozelle

## Editorial

Ten years ago this spring I started as editor of the magazine. In that time I have learned a lot, but never have I experienced the present uncertainties, or trying to put together an issue with so many unfinished items. Also hoping that it can be delivered to your door, as inside are what could be very helpful messages for many. Organisations having to shut down early, the Bowling Club with incomplete competitions. The Boys Brigade with no date for their Annual display, the Bunny hunt cancelled, where preparations were well advanced and most of all Public worship together suspended and much more.

But through all this the Church members have continued to keep in touch. Small groups phoning each other on a regular basis, and for the more technically minded social media connections. Paul with other ministers [all with Castlehill connections] produce a devotional booklet of daily readings, and he has facebook services from the manse each week. **If you would like to have a copy of these daily readings contact the office or your elder.**

Many of us have come closer together and there is a feeling that so many are thinking of others rather than themselves. Two or three phone calls every day to someone you know or perhaps have lost touch with is so worth while and in return there will be calls coming back.

We ask "God why are you not doing anything about the problems we are having." **In response, He asks every one of us exactly the same question.**

Take care and resolve to meet again soon in God's house to give thanks for his continual goodness to us. My prayers are for and with you all.

**Wellwood Grierson. Editor**

## **Castlehill Parish Church, 1, Old Hillfoot Road, Ayr KA7 3LW**

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<b>Charity Number</b>	SCO01792

## **Have your say**

If you have any comments to make on the Magazine, please feel free to do so by letter or email to [herald@castlehillchurch.org](mailto:herald@castlehillchurch.org) We are always pleased to consider any articles for the Magazine from members of the congregation, These can also be sent to the same email address.



Dear Friends

On Easter Sunday, on the road to Emmaus, Cleopas and his friend are described as confused, disagreeing, lacking understanding of all the Easter news they have received, life-changing though it was to become, and then we get the line:

“They stood still, their faces full of sadness.”

I write this on the weekend of Easter, a very different Easter from the one we had planned, because of the restrictions of Covid-19. But, maybe, we are understanding aspects of Easter that we chose to overlook in the past. Although our current national priority is to manage the pandemic, the national experience of by far the majority is self-isolation and, the experts are concerned, higher than usual levels of anxiety and a heavy sadness. An element of Easter we in the past have too quickly packed away with Good Friday feelings. So, if you feel them now, it's ok: it's clear that they are only one stage in the story, not the end. How and when may be uncertain just now, but we shall journey out of this time of lockdown.

Can I suggest that this is an opportunity for us to become aware of some of the things around us, that have been there all the time but which we were previously perhaps too preoccupied to notice? On TV this morning they highlighted that, with the vastly reduced traffic noise, the song of birds is so much more audible. I hadn't noticed that so I ventured out into the garden and can say it's true for Castlehill too. I also noticed amidst the lingering briars and weeds there are some beautiful blooms on some of the bushes: bright colours amidst all the signs of spring, which are also evident in the budding of the blossom on trees that must have been planted early in the history of the manse. New life is already around us: we must simply notice it by taking the time, from the abundance we have, to look more closely: whether you wander in your garden or are on your one walk a day or just open a window. Instead of being weighed down by the sadness of the situation in which we all find ourselves, we can lift our heads and look around us at the beauty of God's creation: it is, if you like, a sermon and a signpost: other indications of new life, and hope, and resilience await us. For the moment, take the words of Jesus, to his friends that first Easter: “Peace be with you.”

Although we have not been able to pen in dates for future activities, our regular activities are only postponed. We have two baptisms which will take place at the earliest opportunity. The dates of some weddings have changed, but they are not cancelled. Where funerals have taken place in lockdown restrictions, we shall take an appropriate opportunity to celebrate the lives of those we knew and loved with thanksgiving services. And I promise you, we shall have one of the biggest Castlehill get togethers there has ever been: whether it's a cream tea or whatever — it will be something that will bring us together literally: for the present we must focus on making contact 'virtually' by phone, by facebook, online or, however.

The Church still cares in and for Castlehill Parish and beyond. The Church is not closed, any more than her Lord is dead. The story is not finished: hold onto that fact!

**Paul.**



**Rainbow Services offers more than simply the delivery of Care Services. If you are looking for a service that lets you or loved one keep on enjoying life at home why not look at our website: [www.rainbowcareservices.co.uk](http://www.rainbowcareservices.co.uk) or**

**From the group who come to our coffee mornings these may be useful services that you can easily access.**



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- **Prescription Pick Up & Delivery** this service is for those who do not get prescriptions delivered already and is available only for those who are elderly or vulnerable
- **Telephone Befriending** for those who may be feeling lonely or isolated. The customer will be matched with a suitable volunteer and will receive a regular call from their volunteer
- **Signposting** - the **South Ayrshire Lifeline** team will be able to sign post customers to the appropriate local services
- **South Ayrshire Lifeline** website **[southayrshirelifeline.org](http://southayrshirelifeline.org)** offers information on local essential resources currently available including support lines and businesses that can deliver for example, butchers and bakers

**t: 0800 432 0510 | w: [southayrshirelifeline.org](http://southayrshirelifeline.org)**

Scottish Charity Number: SC028234

# Castlehill Church Bowling Club



Another successful season of our Bowling Club came to an abrupt end due to the coronavirus. Our numbers were slightly down this year due to illness of some of our regular members, nevertheless our tournaments took place and the twice weekly games were enjoyed by everyone.

Some of the competitions were not able to be completed, the mixed pairs and the points leagues, but they will be finished later in the year. The Annual General Meeting has been delayed until the autumn, so the present committee will stay on and the presentation of the trophies and the meeting will take place then as well.

The winners are listed below, but the cups etc. will not be handed out until the autumn. If there is an outing later in the summer, we will let everyone know, but at the moment this looks doubtful. Our thoughts are with all the members and their families at this time.

Champion of Champions	Winner	Rita Macey Lilley
	Runner Up	George Neill
Ladies Singles	Winner	Rita Macey-Lilley
	Runner Up	Liz Hunter
Gents Singles	Winner	George Neill
	Runner Up	George Johnstone
Ladies Pairs	Winners	Margaret Gerrard/Ann Park
	Runners Up	Dorothy Jack/Sheila McKenzie
Gents Pairs	Winners	Alex Smith/Wellwood Grierson
	Runners U	Sam Storrie/Robert Forrester

**David Kerr President**

## Coffee Shop

The Coffee Shop has continued through the winter months with good attendances despite some illness and inclement weather. This year we have had in attendance some representatives from South Ayrshire Connect, who have provided lots of useful information to the folks who came along. **At another place in the magazine there is an interesting article on one of the free services they provide.** But older traditions carry on particularly the celebration of anyone whose birthday is around the date of the coffee morning. Our photograph of one of the recipients, Sheila Nichol, shows the party atmosphere of these mornings. We will soon be closing for the summer, but come along if you can and remember to look for the announcements of the start after the summer.



## Social Committee

As you know we had to cancel the Beetle drive but we hope to have one in September. We doubt if the summer tea is still on but we will have to see. Looking forward to Christmas we have plans, which we are hoping will be supported with this and will keep you updated once we know how things develop.

**Liz Reid**

**We are always asking for items from the congregation, and we have two that might start the ball rolling. How about telling us of your favourite pet, exotic or not, and an unusual hobby.**

### **Exotic Pets and something a bit different**

I am sure that it is a similar story for many, when you are growing up you have a pet, just to make sure you can look after something else other than yourself and learn all about responsibility. Apparently when I was just a few years old I used to scream the place down as I was scared of dogs, so of course the family then got a dog which cured me. Tim was a wire-haired fox terrier and lived to a ripe old age of 14, I also remember we did have a budgie (unfortunately, we lost this one to Tim as we did not ensure it was back in its cage one day).

Fast forward to a few years ago, working full time and thinking it would be great to get some pets again, dogs were out of the question as I work in Glasgow. Never really liked cats plus family members are allergic to them anyway. What I thought would be great was to get a fish tank, unfortunately I did not fully appreciate the amount of work involved in order to set this up and then maintain. So to my surprise my boyfriend gave me something a bit different for a present for my birthday a number of years ago. I came home from a holiday to find a cage with two birds in it, at that time it was two Red Backed Rosellas, that we named Razzle & Dazzle. Very exotic, bright Red plumage with multi-coloured wings and tails and white cheeks.

Roll on a few more years and we have two cages and four birds. One cage has two peach faced Love birds who we have called Bill and Ben, they are identical. So we had to put rings on different legs so we could tell them apart. In the other cage we have two pineapple Conures called Cookie & Woofie. As you can see from the photos, they are all green, with multi-colourful heads and tails. They keep us entertained when we let them out, not all at the same time though. They like to go onto the centre light and hang down from it. They have worked out how to get to this and a few other places about the living room. You can see them trying to work out where to go next and they can certainly make a bit of noise with chirps and cheeps. Although I am sure that it's a different language between the Conures and the love birds. As you can see from the photos, they are bright and colourful birds.



**Sheelagh Whitton**

### **Seniors Afternoons**

Despite a terrible afternoon of snow, hail and storm a wonderful if limited attendance of members turned out for an excellent afternoon's entertainment. The Crossraguel Choir from Kirkoswald battled through to provide a great selection of music and recitations. Their conductor, our organist, Liz Kelly, escaped from school duties in time to lead their final songs.

Sadly we had to cancel our meeting on 14th April when we were looking forward to entertainment by the Ayrshire Ukulele band. However we have booked them for our meeting in October. A reminder to all our regulars, bring along a friend and if you have never been, come along you will enjoy the afternoon.

Take care over the summer, and we look forward to seeing you all again.

**Wellwood Grierson**

## Breakfast Club

The success of opening up the Men's Breakfast Club to a St Andrew's breakfast was repeated when we had a Burns' Breakfast on 25<sup>th</sup> January, which was well attended and enjoyed by everyone who came along.

We continued along the usual lines on the last Saturday in February with Tom McLeod leading the worship. They are worthwhile mornings and in the February meeting Tom showed us a plaque which was thought provoking as are all his addresses. Come along, when we hopefully start again in the autumn, on the mornings of the last Saturday in the month at 9.30 a.m.

**This is the plaque: -**

*In this house...we do real...we do mistakes...we do I'm sorry...we do fun...we do hugs...we do second chances...we do happy...we do forgiveness...we do really loud...we do family...we do love!*

## Forehill Primary School

### @6s and 7s

In January an invitation was sent by Forehill Primary School to go along to their @6s and 7s Café on 21<sup>st</sup> January. This was the 3<sup>rd</sup> opening of their café and lunch menu was a Scottish Theme – Scotch Broth (75p), Haggis neeps and tatties – served on a homemade tattie scone (£1.50), Cranachan (£1) or Snowball (£1) followed by tea/coffee/juice (50p). Note: Vegetarian option was available on request). 5 Members of the congregation took up the invitation along with other members of the local community.

This initiative is like 'work experience' but within the confines of the school. They work as a team and forward plan everything required for the day - preparing the menu; costing materials and agreeing prices for the menu; each member of the team on the day has a specific role to do e.g. waiter; serving; cashiers and washing up. They promote 'employee' of the month and one of our own Junior Section BB boy was the current holder. One of our members commented that they thoroughly enjoyed their visit and would love to visit again.



Above we see the satisfied customers and the excellent "Staff"

## Forehill, Holmston & Masonhill Community Council



Last Autumn FHMCC said we would give you a splash of colour this spring and this was done in Lochlea Drive, St Andrew's Street, Lothian Road and Shavin Brae. The pictures don't do justice to how lovely they look but I was not able to catch them in full bloom as that would have meant non-essential travel.

I know we all have other concerns just now but we hope these blooms will give you some cheer - spring is here just the same as every year. Keep safe everyone and look after you and yours. Best wishes from everyone at Forehill, Holmston & Masonhill Community Council. "





## The little book that can be a BIG help

A little book called **All About Me** could make a big difference when it comes to keeping all your important information in one place.

Produced by Voluntary Action South Ayrshire (VASA), the aim of the free booklet is to enable people to record and find important information about their life, without having to sort through file after file.

For example, where do you keep your will, which electricity supplier do you use, which company insures your car and where are all the papers relating to the car? Where are all your key documents such as birth and marriage certificates?

Many people have documents in different places and with different people. Banks, solicitors and independent financial advisers are quite likely to hold some paperwork.

All this information about where things are can be kept together in the **All About Me** book.

The **All About Me** book can help people to put all their affairs in order and in a step-by-step process they can enter the relevant information about their life in their own time and include details of family, friends and your final wishes.

The whole point of the **All About Me** book is to for people to complete it at their own pace in the peace and quiet of their home and it is theirs to keep and update

Marie Oliver, Chief Executive Officer of VASA who have produced the little book, hopes local people will find it helpful. Marie said: "We have engaged with people across South Ayrshire to find out what would help them to make plans and prepare for the future. The **All About Me** book has been produced in response to what people wanted and felt would be easy to use.

"The **All About Me** book is yours to hold on to. Once you have completed it you should keep it in a safe place where you can access, use and update it."

If you think the **All About Me** book would be useful for you or someone you know, you can get a copy from the South Ayrshire Life shop at 57 Newmarket Street, Ayr. You can also pick up one from the South Ayrshire Life team when they visit the coffee morning in the Castlehill Church North Hall every Tuesday morning from 10am to 11.30pm.



Two of our boys have successfully completed their Queen's Badge, Andrew Miller and Stewart Veitch finished their two year journey with a weekend course at Dumfries House. We will present them both at our dedication service in October.

We are delighted to welcome our newest officer to the 17th Ayr. Sharon Reid has successfully completed her officer training and has joined our

staff. We thank Sharon for her willingness to volunteer and congratulate her on successfully completing her training.

It was with great sadness that we learned of the death of Doug Wilson. Doug had been suffering from cancer for two years and recently suffered a relapse. Doug's whole life was dedicated to the Boys' Brigade. He was a Captain in Hamilton, London, St, Neots and Coynton. He organised an annual camp to Kirkham near Blackpool for decades. Doug worked for the Boys' Brigade running their supplies department. When he retired, he and his wife Christine, retired to Dalrymple. He then went to various churches where there was a BB Company and settled on Castlehill. He joined our staff and helped in the Junior Section. While attending our BB on a Friday he started to help the Coynton BB who meet on a Wednesday. He then became Captain at Coynton. One of the notable things he did there was to change the Company name from 12th Ayr to 1st Coynton to give the Company more identity with the local community.

The Boys' Brigade has lost its most dedicated member I have ever known. I am glad Doug chose the 17th Ayr, the Boys' Brigade will miss Doug, our thoughts and prayers are with Christine at this time.

Ian Queen



# World Day of Prayer 2020

On Friday 6 March it was a privilege for Castlehill Church to host the 2020 World Day of Prayer.

Members of The Guild and the church took up the challenge set by Rev. Paul Russell of delivering the service. We used the material distributed and set by W.D.P Scottish Committee as a bases for the service.



Women of Zimbabwe prepared the service this year using the text from John 5:2 - 9 "Rise! Take Your Mat and Walk". People throughout the world are invited to think about the difficulties and unrest experienced in their country over many years. We are called to act in Love for Peace and Reconciliation.

As an alternative to the "mat", Guild members knitted prayer squares in Red for Love, White for Peace and Yellow for Reconciliation. Visitors to the Service were invited to take a prayer square as a reminder of this World Day of Prayer 2020.

Members of Castlehill Church were delighted to be joined by men and women from churches throughout the district. The collection on the day, from the congregation of about 75-80, was £355.96 and will be sent to WDP Zimbabwe.

Following the service all visitors were invited to enjoy tea, coffee and biscuits.



A thank you is extended to everyone who knitted prayer squares, decorated the church, helped & participated in the service and organised the refreshments.

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## **And now a Hobby that is something a bit different**

I think I might be a bit different than most women, I like to think I can forget my age and still be as fit and agile as I was in my 20's. Including continuing my interest in motorbikes which I have had for years. It started off back in the 90's when I was riding pillion with my brother, going to Knockhill to watch the British Super Bikes. I decided at that time that I could do this myself, so in my 30's I went off and got my license to ride a motorbike.

I had a Kawasaki GPZ500 at that time, which was a bit of fun back in a time when the roads were a bit quieter. A few years ago after being away from bikes for a while, we heard about a place that had electric bikes, so off we went and I did a taster session. Well that got me hooked again. After that I went and did a few sessions on motocross bikes which lead me to get my current bike which is a Honda CRF250. It's fun, keeps you fit and you definitely do not think about work!

We found a brilliant place that you can go to in Glasgow called iMotoX, so we are now there regularly for a couple of sessions round track 3. It is set up and is suitable for kids of all ages, I mean from the age of 4 upwards and they have three tracks set up so that anyone can go and have a shot. They have all the protective gear and you do not need to have a license to ride a motorbike either.



Definitely worth a go, if not for you perhaps the children or grandchildren would love to have a go. If anyone is interested to go it is open every day and into the evenings. You don't need to worry about the weather as it is undercover in an old factory unit.

This is our group, I might not be as quick as the guys but I have just as much fun and we all have a laugh with the staff.

**Sheelagh Whitton**

## **Finance**

The church financial year ended on 31 December 2019. Members of the Congregational Board and Kirk Session are Trustees of our congregation and due to the coronavirus situation could not meet to approve the Annual Report and Financial Accounts. This was done instead by a "virtual" meeting when the ten of the seventeen pages which had the financial details were scanned and emailed to Trustees who could then give approval by email. The Finance & Stewardship department in Edinburgh gave authorisation for this to be done. When we can meet again 4 copies of the report will be signed by our session clerk, Douglas Owens, and me. They will be passed to the Examiner to be approved and then a copy will go to the Accounts Inspection Committee of the Presbytery of Ayr and a copy will also go to Church of Scotland headquarters in Edinburgh. Following approval by the Accounts Inspection Committee a copy will go to the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR).

At 31 December 2019 there was a deficit of £8,344 in the General Account. The amount given by Standing Orders and the amount of Gift Aid claimed were less than in 2018 but the amount given by the open plate and Free Will Offering envelopes was more. Fabric expenditure during the year was £9,071 and heating and electricity costs were £6,944.81. We were able to claim a Gift Aid refund of £12,275.

During the current situation our income will drop substantially. No services are being held therefore offerings via FWO envelopes and the open plate are not being received. Hall lets by outside groups have been cancelled and we have lost that income. If you would like to change to giving by Standing Order please contact Margaret Devlin, Tel. 445118, who will give you the relevant form.

If you are a tax payer and use a standing order or FWO envelopes or the Wee Kirks to give money to the church we could claim 25% of the amount given back from HMRC if you sign a Gift Aid Declaration form. Contact Margaret Devlin for a form and they can also be downloaded from the church website [www.castlehillchurch.org](http://www.castlehillchurch.org) under the publications section. Completed forms should be returned to Margaret.

**Margaret Devlin**

# The Guild



The Guild has had a very successful session with many varied speakers and activities. Speakers took us around the world showing slides and telling of their experiences and adventures. Closer to home we had a talk on Dumfries House about the projects and developments going on there. Another talk was on bees and we learned how clever these little creatures are in carrying out pollination.

A demonstration on Spring flowers from our own Stella Nixon made flower arranging look easy. The ladies have shown their support by a constant number coming every week. The new session will start, hopefully, on 7<sup>th</sup> October and everyone is welcome.



Members of the guild committee presenting a cheque for £240 for the Kris Boyd Foundation to Andy McLaren. The monies were raised at the previous weeks coffee evening.

**Dorothy Jack ,Secretary**

## Fabric Report

We have a few repairs required on the outside of the manse which we hope to get done soon. There are quotes in and will go ahead as soon as we can. We will be looking for volunteers for an outdoor clean-up morning, though when that will be we have no ideabut, we will let you know. The main hall will need a few touch ups done to keep the paint work fresh also a couple of repairs on the floor.

**Liz Reid**

## Girl—Guiding

Guides have been busy with a night out at Monkton Lodge for dinner in January

February we celebrated Thinking Day with a service in church and the following week at county event where Guides went round the world in Threads Of Guiding.

We also went to Heads of Ayr Farmpark with the Brownies for a fun filled afternoon in “little critturs barn” seeing all the animals and in the play area

Unit time has been busy with girls doing activities on skills for “my future and be well”.

Rainbows and Brownies continue to work on interest badges and unit meeting activities. There was to be a district sleepover at the Loch Lomond Sea Life Centre in May but unfortunately, this has had to be cancelled due to the present situation. It will be re-arranged for later in the year.

Unfortunately Guiding is suspended for now due to the coronavirus but we will continue our adventures at a later date

**Christine and Angela District Commissioners**

# Belleisle Conservatory



## History

The conservatory in Belleisle Park in Ayr is a listed building in the records of Historic Scotland. This means that it is a greenhouse of special historical importance and is part of our collective heritage.

**1879** – It was in 1879 that the first conservatory was built in Belleisle Park, Ayr. The owner of the estate at that time was William Smith Dixon, a famous ironmaster from Govanhill, who had bought Belleisle as his country house retreat. Dixon commissioned James Boyd and Sons of Paisley to build a red cedar conservatory close to an established walled garden in the grounds of the estate, the statue is thought to date from at least this time or earlier.



Original Conservatory built in 1879

**1886** – The second owner was another leading Scots industrialist who bought Belleisle Estate. This was George Coats of the Paisley thread manufacturing family. Coats and his family spent part of each year living in Belleisle and part in their London townhouse in Berkeley Square.

**1926**– Belleisle Estate sold to the Burgh of Ayr for £25,000. The Burgh Council under Provost Gould was far-sighted as they set about developing Belleisle incorporating a hotel, two golf courses and laying out the rest of the park for the use of the public.

**1955** – The Conservatory rebuilt by Messrs MacKenzie and Moncur. By the early fifties, however, the conservatory was causing concern as it had become increasingly dilapidated during and after the war years. It was clear that the conservatory had become such an important feature of the park and of the town that the Council decided that it had to be replaced in spite of the cost. The total final bill came to £2968-9s-2d. This major reconstruction was, in effect, a resurrection of the conservatory and it led to a second golden age in its popularity. At this time an observation bee-hive was installed and planting displays updated.

**2005** – The Conservatory closed. At the beginning of the new millennium the conservatory was again in decline. Despite the best efforts of continually dedicated staff, a combination of vandalism and limited investment in repairs caused the conservatory to be closed to the public in 2005. South Ayrshire Council simply could not afford to repair and maintain it. In 2005 sadly the building was boarded up and fenced off.



**2010**, A local community group was set up with the objective of having the conservatory restored. The organisation was called Belleisle Conservatory Limited and became a registered charity. A committee of dedicated volunteers was established and within a year obtained from SAC a lease of the conservatory building and its surrounding lawns. Belleisle Conservatory Limited (BCL) could now begin the herculean task of raising money to pay for the building's restoration. A subsequent estimate of the total cost of restoration was £583,000. There was unqualified joy when HL announced that they would award the conservatory a grant of £400,000. BCL, with the help of many local business, grant funders and sponsors however had to raise the remaining £183,000

**2016** – Belleisle Conservatory opened to the public in July 2016 and was filled with beautiful flowers. The Belleisle Conservatory volunteers have not only restored the conservatory, they continue to be involved in its maintenance, have the ongoing task of caring for the plant collection and are forever renewing the floral displays. One would have thought that such a group of volunteers would then rest on their laurels but this is far from the case. The Belleisle Group also strive to make the conservatory part of the community and thus far in 2019 there have been events ranging from musical evenings to craft fayres, from school visits to weddings. Duke of Edinburgh Award candidates have held meetings as have the Ayrshire Beekeeping Association and in 2019 alone there were in excess of thirty groups using the conservatory, many of these on multiple occasions.

Funding such an enterprise presents ongoing maintenance challenges and the Group continually strive to meet the challenge of raising £41,000 per annum. This includes care and maintenance, heating, electricity, purchasing materials and flowering plants to name a few. To reach this goal each year, the group hopes to attract many members, patrons and sponsors. The group also hold many events, collection cans are out in the conservatory and in local shops and the group also welcomes donations.

This iconic building is open to the public 365 days a year from 10 am – 4pm in Summer and from 9am – 3pm in Winter. Entry to the conservatory is free.

**Please support Belleisle Conservatory**



Sadly, there will be no Spring collections due the present circumstances. We look forward to visiting you all again in October. If your Wee Kirk is full, hopefully you will have a spare jar. In the words of an unnamed Superstore “every little helps”, Stay safe and take care over the summer.

**Wellwood Grierson.**

**WE ARE PRETTY RESILIENT AT CASTLEHILL CHURCH AND SURELY THIS SHOWS WE ARE PREPARED FOR ANYTHING.**



# A Wonderful Story

March 12<sup>th</sup> I went to work as I would on most days without any expectation that this day would be in any way different to the average working day. That changed at 10.55 when I received this email

**Hi,**

***One of my colleagues recently passed away and was a member of your organisation, his name was Dougald Donnelly. Whilst sorting his belongings out we discovered two banners from your organisation. It would be our intention to return them to you.***

**Kind regards**

**Hugh McCormick**

Attached to this email were two images, one of the 17<sup>th</sup> Ayr Queen's Colour and the other of the Company Colour. Both of which had been stolen from the church in 1997. At the time we had no idea who might have wanted to steal the colours, which were of great value to the 17<sup>th</sup> Ayr but to no one else. That turned out not to be the case.



Dougald Donnelly was in care as a young boy at St. Leonards Home for boys. Like a number of other boys from the home, he was a member at 17<sup>th</sup> Ayr. Dougald was seven years older than me and I have no memory of him. I did meet him however. He arrived at Castlehill Church on a Friday evening in the late 90's. He was a bit dishevelled and not completely "compos mentos". I wasn't sure what to make of him. He told me about being a member in the 60's when he was in care. He told me he had come down from Glasgow to visit Castlehill Church because his time at the Boys' Brigade was the happiest time of his childhood. He just wanted to sit and remember the happy times he had had in the hall. Dougald spent an hour or so in the hall and then left. 23 years later I found out his name and a great deal more about his life. I attended his funeral at 2pm, the same day I got the email.

Dougald had a troubled life with mental health issues. His working life began in Iona, where he claimed to be the founding and only member of the Iona Ayr United supporters club. He then worked at Ibrox as a groundsman before working for Glasgow City Council in children's homes.

He retired in 2016, his mental health had deteriorated by this time. He unfortunately died on 5<sup>th</sup> February with no known family. The social work was only able to conduct his funeral having received substantial donations from a Rangers supporters club and his trade union.

After the funeral I spoke to the retired Church of Scotland minister, John, who conducted the funeral and who worked with Dougald in the Iona Community and had remained friends all this time. I also spoke to Dougald's social worker. The principal thing I wanted them to know was that I didn't regard Dougald as a thief, he had wanted a memory of the happy times he spent at Castlehill, and no matter how misguided the act of removing the colours was, it was a means to tangibly hold on to his happy memories from his childhood. The other very important thing I wanted them to know was that I felt a great sense of closure. Having had a 23 year mystery solved brought a great deal of closure for me.

The important thing for anyone who works with young people to know is, the work which we do is so important. We may not know the importance of the impact we have on any individual while we work with them, we just have to have faith that we are making a difference. Most boys who go through the Boys' Brigade will benefit from their membership of our organisation, others will be changed by their membership. Boys like Dougald are changed positively by their membership. It now seems perverse to say the importance to Dougald of the Boys' Brigade can be measured by his desire to have a permanent reminder of his time with us by removing our colours.

God Bless you Dougald, I wish I had known you in life.

**Ian Queen**

## Baptism

16th February 2020

Coco Sher Sloan      Glendale Crescent

## Funerals

### December

Marion Young      Dalmellington Care Centre

### January

Anne Kyle      9 Hawthorn Drive  
Marion Agnew      Queens Nursing Home  
Gordon Hewitt      Latterly, Beattock  
Anne McCreadie      Woodlands Cresc.  
May Farrow      Caledonia Road  
Tracy Kell      Orchard Avenue

### February

William McCallum      Queens Terrace  
William Kell      Orchard Ave.

### March

Hannah Lapsley      Glendale Cresc.  
Edward Uriarte      Roman Road  
Jillian Boyle      Glenmuir Place  
Douglas Wilson      Primpton Av. Dalrymple  
Nancy Gordon      Victoria Court

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### To Daffodils

Fair Daffodils, we weep to see  
You haste away so soon;  
As yet the early-rising sun  
Has not attain'd his noon.  
Stay, stay,  
Until the hasting day  
Has run  
But to the even-song;  
And, having pray'd together, we  
Will go with you along.

We have short time to stay, as you,  
We have as short a spring;  
As quick a growth to meet decay,  
As you, or anything.  
We die  
As your hours do, and dry  
Away,  
Like to the summer's rain;  
Or as the pearls of morning's dew,  
Ne'er to be found again.



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