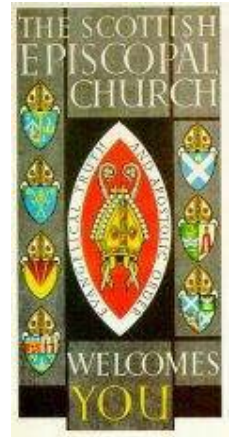




En-Guage-ing Hobby Uses “New Look” as a Platform for A Heartfelt Plea!



Bill Kean has been a St Augustine's member for a good few years, coming to us when the St Columba's Clydebank building was closed some time ago. Now that the congregation in Clydebank has been dissolved, there is further sadness for many of the Bankies. A more faithful Episcopalian you would find hard to meet, but Bill has another great passion - making models, especially of ships and model railways.

You probably can't teach your grandmother to suck eggs, or a Bankie about ships, but Bill has a problem in the railway department.

Many spares for his railways are very hard to come by, and he is often frustrated by the lack of availability of parts - bits and bobs that you may have lying around your loft or your garage or whatever.

For those in the know, everything is in 00.00 gauge.

If you can help Bill in any way, or know someone who would be willing to help, please contact the Rectory, 602261, or Bill himself on 0141 562 8682. He would be delighted to hear from you!

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FROM KENNY.....

I came back from The Gambia full of the joys, although it had been a hard-working three weeks after all the upheaval that the school has gone through of late! Don't ask Gambians to tell you what is happening in one sentence if it can take them half-an-hour, but this can, of course be highly entertaining at times!



I was impressed most of all with what has kind of become our sister parish over there, St Andrew's Lamin. Fr Jimmy and his band have been toiling away, and this year have experienced quite a growth in new members. This is a little bit out of the ordinary since the newest members have little or no English, and now at least part of the sermon is repeated in Wollof! It fair adds on to the 3 hour Eucharist that is the norm, but nobody seems to mind too much! The Bishop of Gambia have labeled them his "Evangelical Parish", simply because they are having to evangelise to new Christians, and bible studies have had to be started in the local language!

There were startled faces when I announced in church on my return that it was my intention to have a Year of Evangelism in St Augustine's, with an emphasis on increasing our numbers and bringing new people in. Not that numbers are falling. Numbers are holding up despite the number of deaths we have experienced of good, faithful people over the last six years, but I felt it was time we had a bit of a push!

Of course, the word, "evangelism", can mean very different things to different people. To some it conjures up images of knocking on doors and cold calling folk in an evening, to others it means getting out into the street with a soap box! To others still, it means quietly sharing faith, either in words with those we love and trust, or in what we do in our lives for Jesus, in the form of service to others. For some, it might mean a bit of all of that, and some other stuff thrown in!

I have heard it said that we should first "evangelise" ourselves, and concentrate on the growth of **our** faith as much as anything else, before we can reach out to others in the first place! That's a fair point.

So, how are we going to go about this? I suggested that one way is simply inviting a friend to come to church with you from time to time. After all, if we all brought someone, our numbers would double overnight! It helps, however, if that person is not commit-

ted to another church in the town. We shouldn't openly be "sheep-stealing", although the Macaulays were renowned for this in the past!

Two days after this announcement about the Year of Evangelism, I opened a letter from the Diocese which was perhaps more than coincidence. I, and two others from our parish have been invited to a three day conference in March. It's a mission course called *Leading Your Church into Growth*. This course is first and foremost designed to encourage the Church and to equip its members to lead the local church into growth, which is just what we are after. Of course I joked that it was a three day event for those of us who are failing, but, joking aside, it may just be heaven sent!

The Mission Core Group has invited clergy and lay people from 20 congregations in the diocese to attend. The course deals with seeking a vision in what can seem like a wilderness, with establishing positive leadership, examining possible mission strategies, looking at worship as mission and the church as a caring community. What is most impressive about *Leading Your Church into Growth* is that it builds on the inherited tradition of the congregation rather than trying to create a new tradition. We hope that this will make a difference to the life of charges in the diocese, but I'm certainly hoping to take much of it on board to help us in St Augustine's to make this Year of Evangelism count!

At the same time we will be preparing for the new hall building work to start in October, and when this is up and running in 2009, our life will be enhanced with an extremely important tool for mission and evangelism. Buildings can be a burden as the "old-timers" in the congregation well know, but they can also be a great blessing! I'm sure that the hall will strengthen our service to the town centre community, and be a wonderful asset to us as we seek to grow!

I was interested to listen to someone tell me that they weren't sure about being confident enough to ask someone to come to church with them, but very often, folk who have stopped going to church just need someone to go back with, rather than stepping in alone. You do that bit, and the Holy Spirit can be relied on to do the rest, I'm sure!

Meanwhile, use the remainder of Lent to deepen your faith and commitment to Our Lord, so that on Easter Morning our Alleluias will be more deeply felt than ever before! That should be our very first step in this Year of Evangelism!

Kenny

The Fag End!



It had to come! The realisation that cigarette smoking is no longer socially acceptable, apart from not being too kind to his health or his pocket! Kenny has pledged to give up the fags at last!

This will be no mean feat, as he has been regularly smoking 40-60 every day, and has been a smoker since the ripe old age of 14, when it was cool to smoke, and actually attracted the sort of females he wanted to attract at the time! Now cometh the hour.

Kenny has approached this sensibly, by setting a date, March 3rd, by which time all the support systems, like the Smoking Cessation Group, and the incentives will be in place!

Not one to miss an opportunity, it was suggested by Tina Kemp, a journalist at the Lennox, that he should seek sponsorship, and raise some cash towards the New Hall Building Project! She has even written an article in the local paper, so, once it's in the paper, he has to do it! No excuses! We're sure the nicotine patches will be ordered in time!

If you would like to give Kenny that little bit extra incentive, and help towards the new hall fund, there are sponsorship forms posted around the church buildings for you to sign up. Alternatively, you can pledge cash through email, on the back page, by telephoning the Rectory, or through Kenny's Blog on <http://frkenny.blog.co.uk>. The Blog should also record his daily progress!

All support to stay off is welcome, especially prayer! No monies will be due until September, when six months smoke free should be a decent platform to stay stopped! We wish him luck!

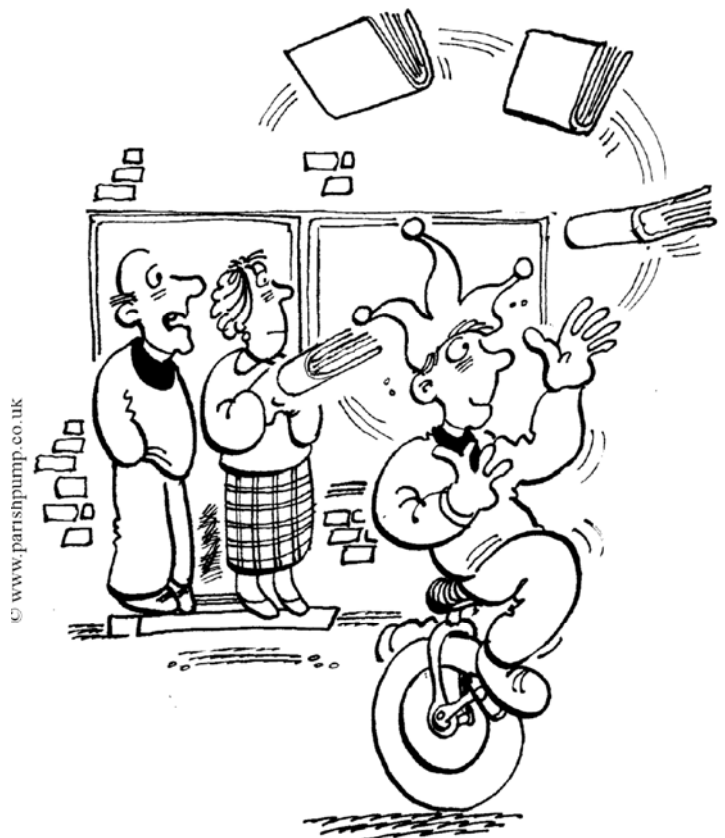
The String Game Car for Spanish Television

In early December, Canon Philip Noble from St Ninian's, Prestwick, was phoned by a Spanish TV company, asking if he could help them with a commercial. They had the idea of making a car out of string and wondered if it was possible to make string figures to represent the various parts of the car. Philip, who co-founded of the International String Figures Association some 30 years ago and still is very active in it, said "Yes".

Two days teaching the actors and dancers (with the help of his younger son Stephen) and then four days filming in Prague in mid January followed. The resulting commercial can be seen at

<http://youtube.com/watch?v=ZB7MFM0HDWg>

Canon Phillip, who stars in the commercial, has used clowning and other imaginative ways to preach the message of the Gospel for many years, and at one point tried to teach Kenny how to juggle without much success! He has a wonderful talent, and it's fantastic to see it recognised by Audi! Whether we'll see the advert on British TV or not is up for grabs, but if you want to, Kenny or Robin will be delighted to show you the video in the Parish Office if you don't have a computer.



...I think I must have missed that module when I was at theological college!

St James the Least of All...

March 2008

Happily, the Scottish Episcopal Church still retains some singular parish clergy. Take the parish of St James-the-Least in an un-named Diocese, for example. Here the elderly Anglo-Catholic Rector, Eustace, continues his correspondence to Darren, his nephew, a low-church curate recently ordained...

The Rectory
St. James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

We have just returned from our annual parish three day retreat at St. Epiphanius' Priory - although the chick pea soup lunches and kidney bean casserole dinners ensured it was a far from silent retreat. We had the usual attendees: those husbands who see it as an opportunity to stop their wives talking, however briefly; those wives who can keep their husbands temporarily from the nineteenth hole at the golf club; and those who want to see if it could be a suitable community to persuade an inconvenient relative to join.

It can come as quite a shock for first-timers; the ladies are appalled to discover that there is neither a coffee shop nor hairdressers and the men that there is no bar or billiards table. The resident community certainly frowned on the four male members discovered silently pushing a car down the drive late one evening before starting it at the main gates as they escaped to the nearest pub. Those of us who are older hands know to bring our own supplies - carefully wrapped, so that the clinking of bottles is not too obvious as one ascends the main staircase. The near universal retreat to bedrooms before lunch and dinner is less an opportunity for quiet reflection and more one for a restorative sherry.

The more experienced also know that temperatures in the house make Siberia appear tropical. All the movement and hand waving during Services is less charismatic enthusiasm and more an attempt to maintain blood flow to the extremities. The series of addresses given by an aged member of the community are most useful for planning the weekend shopping list. That some of our party fell asleep during the addresses was excusable; that the person giving them also occasionally did so, was not.

During one stroll round the gardens, I noticed clouds of smoke coming from behind the hedges near the chapel. My hope that it was parishioners experimenting with incense to be used in church on our return was soon crushed when I found it was a group of hardened parishioners topping up their nicotine levels. Seeing them nervously huddled in the shrubbery made one think of schools and bike sheds. I now find it difficult not to picture them all in short trousers and wearing caps.

And so we return, knowing that we have done our bit once again for the spiritual vigour of the parish and also knowing that three days of vegetarian cooking will mean a long queue at the village butchers tomorrow morning.

I hear your vicar has appointed you magazine editor; I wonder what you have done to so offend him. Our own magazine editor has only held her post for the last 30 years because she is deaf, has no phone and always spends the fortnight after the publication of each issue on a remote Scottish island.

I think that your hope of now being in charge of an organ that will convert the entire parish to Christianity within a couple of editions may be a little optimistic. Most recipients of the magazine use it for finding the phone number of the local plumber or undertaker - or both if there was a major burst in the pipe.

If you want to keep any piece of information utterly confidential, then publish it in the magazine; that will ensure that everyone will remain wholly ignorant of it. On the other hand, if you accidentally transpose the names of the ladies responsible for the altar pedestal and lectern on the flower rota, it will be spotted within seconds of publication. It is also be helpful so people can consult the staffing rota to find out who took the collection a little too aggressively at Evensong the previous Sunday. The reports of the meetings of the monthly groups are also useful for reminding those who attended what happened, as they slept blissfully though most of it.

I would suggest you keep the first page which lists all the church officers with their phone numbers - although do omit your own number, so that complaints will have to go to someone else. It also seems to be a tradition that while all the digits of every number will be there, they are generally published in an incorrect order. This gets people to talk to one another as they phone round trying to find out the correct number for the treasurer.

If you submit any articles yourself, then I would suggest that your final paragraph does little other than repeat the penultimate paragraph, since when it is printed, the final few lines of any article are invariably accidentally omitted. My final piece of advice is to omit any deadline for submission for the following month. Such information only ensures that everything will be sent in the week after your requested date.

I wish you many happy hours deciphering illegible script and checking up on tea rotas.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

Rotas for February

Sunday March 2nd.

11am Eucharist.

Readers: M. Wallace & G. Kennedy.

Intercessions: Margaret Hardie.

Chalice: Fran Walker & Janette Barnes.

Sidespersons: Jean Kilpatrick & V. Perrin.

Sunday March 9th.

11am Eucharist.

Readers: L. Macaulay & Robin Nelson

Intercessions: Tim Rhead.

Chalice: Robin Nelson & Vernon Perrin.

Sidespersons: Margot Rhead & L. Jenkinson.

Sunday March 16th. (Palm Sunday)

11am Eucharist.

Readers: Margot Rhead & F. Walker

Intercessions: (None on this Sunday)

Chalice: M. Hardie & Tim Rhead.

Sidespersons: Ronnie Blaney & David Dyer.

Easter Day March 23rd.

11am Eucharist.

Readers: J. Barnes & Colleen Bell

Intercessions: Vernon Perrin.

Chalice: B. Barnes & M. Wallace.

Sidespersons: C. Ashman & Tim Rhead.

Sunday March 30th.

11am Eucharist.

Readers: Margot Rhead & F. Walker

Intercessions: Maggie Wallace.

Chalice: M. Hardie & Tim Rhead.

Sidespersons: Ronnie Blaney & David Dyer.

Flower Rota: March 22nd

Maggie Wallace and Team

March 29th: L Macaulay & S McMartin

Happy Days

I used to think when growing old
I'd do it with some style.
I'd never grumble, never groan
Yes, I'd do it with a smile.
But now I find as years tick by
I get grumpier on the way,
I whinge and whine and tut and sigh
a new moan every day.

Why can't I make a phone call
and speak to someone on the end?
It's press one for this, and two for that
it drives me round the bend.
We never see our money
everything is done by card instead,
no wonder half the country
is always in the red.

They're ripping up the countryside
to make more roads and zones,
only to fill them up again
with miles and miles of cones.
Our dentists are all private,
the National Health is in a mess
and quite what's happening in our schools
is anybody's guess.

The crime rate's getting higher
yet never a policeman on the street,
they're all sat behind computers
instead of on the beat.
The council tax gets higher,
rates rising every year
What do we get for our money?
Well! less and less, I fear!

All these things are progress,
well, that is what we're told
no wonder I am grumpy
now that I'm getting old.
Give me back the old way,
back to a slower pace
then I can grow old happier
with a smile upon my face.

Richmond Architects

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The Friends of St. Augustine's

Castle Terrace,
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Wait till I tell you.....

Janette looks back on the Festive Season and the long dreary months of January and February.

THE TURKEYS ARE A WINNING TEAM.

At the Friends' Christmas Party on December 16th the Turkeys beat the Angels, the Stars, the Greetings, the Snowflakes and the Hollies by solving our seasonal Murder Mystery about a Vicar who was bumped off in his Santa Suit as he delivered gifts to the poor. So, congratulations to the Turkeys - Jessie, Esther, Mary, Vernon and Dee - you will soon be appearing on CSI! After this mental exercise everyone got physical with a riotous round of Musical Chairs, refereed by Sharon and David with much pushing and shoving and moving of chairs. Dee, still on a winning streak managed to get her bum on the very last chair and win the prize. Suddenly, the sound of Sleigh Bells coming from the direction of Poundland heralded the arrival of Santa. In came the man of the moment struggling with badly fitting red trousers and accompanied by his lovely assistant Fairy Roberta fresh from a nearby Christmas Tree. There were gifts for all as well as the opportunity to sit on Santa's knee and ask for a dream to come true. Happily Vernon has now recovered! Music was provided by the Rowatts, Gillian, wee Rachel, Ricky and Ghislaine and the superb buffet was the work of the Friends' Exec with a little help from M&S - see that brandy sauce!

CHRISTMAS DRAW AND PARISH LUNCH.

Unlike the Friends' Christmas Bash this was a much more serious affair and held after Church on the 23rd. After all, there were big prizes on offer as well as the Piskie Club bonuses. Delicious home-made soup was consumed at breathtaking speed before Barbara and her little helpers stepped up to the sacred drum to do the necessary. Naturally, all winners were commented upon (with pleasure or otherwise) but those who went home empty handed were not downhearted - there's always next year and Christmas Eve was just round the corner.

A GUID NEW YEAR

Kenny and Linda invited everyone to the Rectory for Hogmanay so 2008 was welcomed in traditional style. The Merry Widows brought a plethora of exotic drinks, Ghislaine and Ricky brought the music, the practical brought more food to add to an already groaning table and the unattached brought that excited anticipation that comes with the advent of a long awaited Leap Year! Kenny instructed Faye, a natural born First Foot, on our strange Scottish customs shoving him outside after the bells clutching the necessary offerings. *'Jist knock the door, I'll welcome you in and then you get tae kiss a' the wimmen.'* Happily Faye did not run away - he performed his duties with style and panache. Linda and Kenny left the country on New Year's Day without hearing from the neighbours!

JANUARY IN A GHOST TOWN

The Dumbarton streets were deserted throughout January with the only signs of civilisation being dead umbrellas and discarded carry outs. Have they closed the town cen-

tre already, we thought? At Saturday coffee single figures were recorded and a profits warning was issued. The January weather was atrocious with wind, rain, sleet and flooding. The population of Dumbarton appeared to be in hibernation. The big storm of the 8th/9th sent slates and tiles flying, tree branches through fences and demolished countless Sky dishes. As well as the diabolical weather there was an increase in winter ailments and the Health Centre was the busiest place in town. Do I sound like a moaning Minnie? If it wasn't for having to walk these perishing dogs.....!

GOING DOWN, DOWN, DOWN.

The month may have started happily with drinks going down but it progressed further downhill in a rapid spiral as Blue Monday approached. Blue Monday, officially the most depressing day of the year, was held on the 21st Jan when we faced in misery our broken resolutions, our Christmas bills, and news of increased energy charges. How was it for you? But there was worse to come! It had to be renamed Black Monday as down went all the shares on the world's stock markets. That day most of us were thankful that were not rich enough to have many! In the headlines political reputations were also going down as reports of sleaze far outnumbered reports of decision making. In the retail world sales were certainly going down and shops were being left with rails full of unwanted garments. But by far the most serious downward trend involved Jeremy Paxman's underpants which became the subject of an E-Mail to the Chairman of M&S. What has happened to quality these days?

THE SERMON ON THE COUNT

On Sunday 27th the Reverend returned from sunning himself on Paradise Beach. He saw the count of those who had been getting up for services during January, did a quick calculation and *gied us a' laldie!* Things are going to have to change, he threatened, and discussions will take place at the next Vestry Meeting. Naturally we went home greatly uplifted. If that was the 3rd Sunday in Epiphany I couldn't wait for Lent! He's calmed down, though, the soul!

IT'S GETTING BETTER

Yes, February is nearly over with Valentines, pancakes and 'nae council tax', and here's the March magazine already! And with Lent half way through and Lent being the Anglo Saxon word for Spring we shall surely see better days. After all.....

*'Tis dogs' delight to bark and bite
and little birds to sing.*

*But if you sit on a red hot brick
it's the sign of an early Spring!*

And a ten ton US spy satellite will land somewhere on Earth in the next few weeks. This object is the size of a small bus and could do serious damage. Would it be wrong to pray that it lands on our dilapidated St Auggie's Hall sometime during the night? Just think on the compensation!

Janette

News from Tim

Christian Aid lunches will be on Thursdays until March 13th. St. Augustine's were responsible for Feb 21st with St Patrick's. Lunches will be at Riverside hall from 12 to 1.15. please support us. Then, of course, we have...

Church Walks 2008

An interesting and varied programme of walks has been arranged to suit those who enjoy good company and fine scenery. Walks are not difficult and are 4-6 miles, so please come and bring your friends, weans and dogs. The first walk is on Saturday March 15th, meeting at 1.30 pm at Firkin Point car-park north of Inverbeg. Lifts can be arranged. See Tim or Rosemary for more info.

March 15th Firkin Point, Loch Lomond
April 12th Allander Way, Milngavie
May 10th Balmaha to Millarchy Bay
June 7th Ardlui ferry and West Highland Way
July 12th Kilcreggan via ferry
Aug 16th Helensburgh Upland Way and Duchess Wood
Sept 6th Mugdock Country Park
Oct 4th Drymen to Buchanan Estate

When I ask you to listen to me

When I ask you to listen to me and you start giving advice, you have not done what I asked

When I ask you to listen to me and you begin to tell me I shouldn't feel that way, you trample on my feelings.

When I ask you to listen to me and you feel you have to do something to solve my problems, you have failed me, strange as that may seem.

Listen, **ALL** I asked, was that you listen, not to talk, to do, just hear me.

When you do something for me that I can and need to do for myself, you contribute to my fear and weaknesses. But, when you accept as a simple fact that I do feel what I feel no matter how irrational, then I can quit trying to convince you and can get back to the business of understanding what is behind this irrational feeling.

And when that is clear; the answers are obvious and I don't need advice.

Irrational feelings make sense when we understand what is behind them.

So, please listen and just hear me.
And, if you want to talk, wait a minute for your turn;
and I will listen to you.

ANON

Your right hand reached down to me

Augustine of Hippo (354 - 430), our Patronal Saint, became one of the most influential theologians of all time, but he began his days seeking inner peace as a pagan philosopher with a great appetite for sexual passion.

What evil have I not done by actions; and if not by my action, then by my words; and if not by my words, then by my will? But you, O Lord, are gracious and merciful. Your right hand reached down to me in the depths of sin, and from the bottom of my heart you drew out the faith of my corruption. And this deliverance was not according to my will; rather your will began to make me will such a deliverance...

Instantly your yoke and burden, dear Christ, felt wonderfully sweet, so much sweeter than those vain delights which I had forsaken. Indeed it was a joy to me to be deprived of those joys which earlier I had feared to lose. For you, O Lord, cast them away from me, and in their place you yourself entered me, bringing joy which is sweeter than any earthly pleasure. Your joy is clearer than any light, yet it is more mysterious than any secret; it is higher than the highest honour, but does not flatter our pride.

Thus my mind became free from the biting cares of worldly honour and riches, it became free of spiritual filth, and I no longer felt the insatiable itch of lust. I prattled like a child to you, my tongue speaking freely to you - you who are my light, my wealth, my salvation, my Lord and my God.

Good News

Come April 2008 your basic rate of income tax will fall to 20%

Bad News

Come April 2008 your Church's Gift Aid income will fall by 11%.

Don't let your giving fall as your income increases.



It was good to see Hannah and Katy back at St. Augs for the Scottish night. I am sure you will all agree that they are both looking well and we hope to see more of them in the future!



Hogmanay party revelers at the Rectory enjoyed seeing Faye being a novice first foot as we welcomed 2008 with champagne and music. Whether it is Hogmanay or the Scottish Night, we can depend on great music from Ricky and Ghislaine.



Like magic, the cloth for the school uniforms turns from black to yellow after just a short time in the Gambian sunshine.



Mariama and a pupil rinse the cloth after the it has been dyed 'yellow'



The children's toilets are now clean and tidy and new black bins are emptied of school rubbish every morning to make the environment healthy for our children.



The School Trip - the children excitedly board one of the buses, and later enjoy an afternoon on the beach..

Dumbarton - a Community or a Shopping Mall?

The Denny Civic Theatre was opened in 1969 made possible by a gift from the Denny Family. Since then it has been used by DPT, Musical Groups, Pop Groups, Dancing Schools and a variety of different organisations. It has proved to be one of the Town's most successful facilities throughout the many Town Centre redevelopments. And DPT has brought 'live theatre' to Dumbarton for almost 60 years with the Denny Civic helping enormously in widening its appeal at really affordable prices. Indeed, many local children had their introduction to the theatre at DPT Pantomimes (which have been sell outs since 1974), before progressing into the professional arena or simply to becoming regular theatre-goers.

We were therefore relieved when we received reassurance in January that the Denny had escaped the Budget cuts. However, at the full Council Meeting on 30th January we were stunned at the answer to our formal question about the Theatre's future. And we have received confirmation in writing 'the draft plan shows the redevelopment of the Denny Civic Theatre site as required for retail purposes'. Retail purposes! Dumbarton people need more retail units like they need a hole in the head!

And the letter went on 'the master plan also shows the potential for the development of community facilities on the site to the rear of the Old Academy Building elevation'. What does this potential mean? Is it a new Theatre or an after thought? Should we be concerned? Do the Councillors and the Property Developers understand that **being a community is the most valuable benefit offered by a small town? It is a unique selling point. Without it Dumbarton would be simply a shopping mall surrounded by housing estates.**

On 8th/9th February there was a presentation of the Master Plan and many local people and Theatre users attended to voice their concerns. It was held in an empty retail unit formerly known as Ethel Austin's - now doesn't that say it all? Whatever happened to poor Ethel?

Many people are unconvinced that a large 'anchor store' will draw shoppers to our ailing Town Centre. And to sacrifice our Civic Theatre for this plan is difficult to accept. A further letter from the Council has been received stating that they **do** agree that

Dumbarton should continue to have a Theatre. They go on to say 'they believe this redevelopment gives us the opportunity to explore options to provide a new Theatre'. Great! As long as the option is not a badminton court with a collapsible stage and stacking chairs!

Thanks to the generosity of the Denny Family we have become used to so much better. The Denny Civic is the only proper Theatre between Oban and Glasgow so please go along to any future public consultations and make your views known. Don't leave it too late or Dumbarton Town Centre could become another wasteland of failed shopping units. Shopping is in the doldrums just now and more new units will not solve this problem. Even our senior citizens are not frequenting the Town Centre. They are off to more exciting venues with their free bus passes and staying out all day to avoid the increased heating bills.

In DPT's first ever Panto in 1974 the opening scene was set in our Town Centre with the locals fighting to keep the Giant from ruining their lives. Remember? We need to fight now for a town centre with a theatre that Dumbarton can be proud of and one that will truly serve our Community. Tell the Property Developers and the Councillors what we really really want - go on, we're worth it!

Janette

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This year, again, we will be sharing Holy Week Services with the different churches in Dumbarton, who are open and willing to share in some of our Liturgies and practice during this most important of weeks. Please come along to as many of these services as possible, and give your support to those hosting, and those who have prepared material for your benefit!

Holy Monday. (March 17th)

7pm URC Church. Preacher: Revd Robert Watt.

Holy Tuesday. (March 18th)

7pm West Kirk. Preacher: Revd Danny Cheyne

Holy Wednesday. (March 19th)

7pm Riverside. Preacher: Revd Archie Ferguson

Maundy Thursday: (March 20th)

7pm St Augustine's. Passover Meal, Eucharist of the Last Supper, Stripping of the Altar, and Watch until Midnight. (Come and go as is our usual practice)

Good Friday: (March 21st)

11am Procession with Crosses from the usual three places in Dumbarton.

12 Noon: Service of Witness. (Outside the Pound Shop)

2pm: The Last Hour at Dalreoch UF Church
(There will also be a Last Hour in St Augustine's)

7pm: St Andrew's Bellsmyre: Preacher TBC.

Holy Saturday: (March 22nd)

8pm: St Augustine's - Lighting of the Paschal Candle and renewal of Baptismal Vows

Busy Week

Kenny will be spending most of the week beginning March 10th on Diocesan business. There is the conference mentioned in his letter from 10th-12th March, inclusive, and then Diocesan Synod on Saturday March 15th. Please remember both of these events in your prayers!

Vestry

The next Vestry Meeting is on Thursday 6th March at 7.30pm in the Upper Room.

Study Group

This Group continues to meet in The Rectory on Tuesday evenings at 7.30pm for an hour. We're ploughing our way through the Christian Faith, from an Episcopalian angle, and every session is "stand-alone". This means you can opt in or out, come to as many or as few as you like, or can manage, if you have other commitments. The group is fairly well-attended, but there's always room for a few more!

Andrew Faust

After a cancer scare, pre-Christmas, it's wonderful to report that Andrew has now been given the "all-clear", and is planning to visit Dumbarton on March 4th for a wedding. He sends his love to you all, and hopes to see some of you during his short visit.

Healing

We continue our Healing Services on the first Sunday of the month at 6pm in the church. This is attended by folk who are not St Augustine's people, with a few from our congregation coming along. It is a quiet, meditative service, and worth attending, even just to drink in the peace and serenity which our building imparts on such occasions. All are welcome. The next service will be on Sunday 2nd March, and again on April 6th. Dates for your diary!

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Christian Basics: Why the Cross?

The cross is the badge of the Christian. Yet it was the cruellest form of execution known in the ancient world until it was eventually banned in the 5th century AD. Paradoxically as a horrifying instrument of torture and death, it is also a symbol of love and peace.

The cross is a picture of violence, yet the key to peace;

a picture of suffering, yet the key to healing;

a picture of death, yet the key to life;

a picture of utter weakness, yet the key to power;

a picture of capital punishment, yet the key to mercy and forgiveness;

a picture of vicious hatred, yet the key to love;

a picture of supreme shame, yet the Christian's supreme boast.

The cross really is the key to everything!

Quotes

The face of Jesus must be very near our own when the thorns from his crown of suffering are pressing our brow and hurting us. Anon

Of all the things that will surprise us in the Resurrection morning, this I believe, will surprise us most: that we did not love Christ more before we died. J C Ryle

By death I shall escape from death. - James Montgomery

The cross is the resting place for sin, the tomb for self and the throne for our fears. - Harold St John

Christianity is a religion about a cross. - Leon Morris

The cross is the centre of the world's history. The incarnation of Christ and the crucifixion of our Lord are the pivot round which all the events of the ages revolve. - Alexander MacLaren

The crosses we bear are not supposed to be heavy enough to crush us, ...but they are heavy enough to bend our knees.

God grades us on the cross, not the curve.

Smile Lines

Final farewell:

An old clergyman lay dying. He sent a message for his accountant and his solicitor to come to the hospital. When they arrived, they were ushered up to his room. As they entered the room, the clergyman held out his hands and motioned for them to sit on each side of the bed.

The minister grasped their hands, sighed contentedly, smiled, and stared at the ceiling. For a time, no one said anything. Both the accountant and the solicitor were touched and flattered that the old man would ask them to be with him during his final moments. They were also puzzled because the minister had never given any indication that he particularly liked either one of them.

Finally, the solicitor asked gently, "Why did you ask the two of us to come here?"

The old minister mustered all his strength, then said weakly, "Well, Jesus died between two thieves, and so that's how I want to go, too."

Did Noah fish?

The Sunday school teacher asked his class: "Do you think Noah did a lot of fishing when he was on the ark?"

'No,' replied one logical youngster. 'How could he, with just two worms?'

Observations on modern life

~ A bus station is where a bus stops. A train station is where a train stops. On my desk I have a work station.

~ A flashlight is a case for holding dead batteries.

~ A good scapegoat is nearly as welcome as a solution to the problem.

~ A gross ignoramus: 144 times worse than an ordinary ignoramus.

~ A journey of a thousand miles begins with a cash advance.

~ Did you hear about the dyslexic, agnostic, insomniac who stayed up all night trying to decide if there really is a Dog?

~ Why do they lock petrol station bathrooms? Afraid that someone will clean them?

Dumbarton/London Corner Nursery School, The Gambia The School trip 2008

Last summer 5 year old Guy Rose did a sponsored walk to raise funds for the nursery school in The Gambia run by our Dumbarton based charity. Guy raised £350 and some of this money was earmarked for a school outing for the children. It has been several years since we were able to afford to take the children out for the day and so this was a very special treat.

The day started with a busy time loading the two buses, a 'gillie-gillie' (a minibus) and a larger bus which carried the rest of the party. Enough food and drinks were loaded onto the top of the buses to feed the 50 children and teachers and cooks and off we went for what was an adventure for the children and an experience for us. While Kenny drove his own jeep along with the cooks, I traveled in the gillie-gillie with Tina and Mhairi who were staying with us for a week. With five adults and 15 children it was a bit of a squash and in Scotland, the health and safety folk would not have been happy. However, in this poor third world country it is acceptable and not unusual.

After a journey with a few stops to retrieve the plates and lids from the food containers on the top of the buses (as they flew off down the road behind us), we arrived at our first destination which was called Sanamentering. Sanamentering is a holy place of pilgrimage for 90% of Gambians, being the place in The Gambia where Islam first came to the country. Islamic missionaries arrived there, and it is now a place where many Muslims will go on pilgrimage, and is one part of The Gambian coastline that will never be developed, but will remain untouched. There is a little mosque there where people will visit, sometimes for days at a time, praying and asking God to grant them special favours.

Next stop was the crocodile pool at Gunjur which is also a special place of pilgrimage for many Gambians, especially for women who have not been able to have children of their own. There is a belief that by washing in the waters of the pool, a woman can become fertile, and have lots of babies! Crocodiles, though, are rarely seen there in modern days although there are still some around. It is said that a very special white crocodile lives in the pool, but some Gambians think this is a myth.

There was a distinct lack of crocodiles the day we visited, but no one was complaining! And so we went to the beach at Kartong. There the children were fed and we had lots of fun running around by the sea. There were races and ball games and lots of laughter with the children obviously enjoying the whole experience. Eventually it was time to leave and as Kenny, myself and our friends headed off home in our own transport we waved goodbye to 50 very happy if tired children and teachers.

The children had been told about Guy and his kindness, and all said thank you in unison. The teachers also send their love and thanks and Aunty Caroline, the new Headmistress was delighted that this day of fun for 'her' 5 to 7 year olds was made possible by a boy of the same age in Scotland.

Photos are on Page 9.

An Irish Ghost Story

This story happened a while ago in Dublin, and even though it sounds like an Alfred Hitchcock tale, its true. John Bradford, a Dublin University student, was on the side of the road hitchhiking on a very dark night and in the midst of a storm. The night was rolling on and no car went by. The storm was so strong he could hardly see a few feet ahead of him. Suddenly, he saw a car slowly coming towards him and stopped. John, desperate for shelter and without thinking about it, got into the car and closed the door, only to realize there was nobody behind the wheel and the engine wasn't on!! The car started moving slowly. John looked at the road ahead and saw a curve approaching. Scared, he started to pray, begging for his life. Then, just before the car hit the curve, a hand appeared through The window and turned the wheel. John, paralyzed with terror, watched as the hand repeatedly came through the window, but never touched or harmed him. Shortly thereafter John saw the lights of a pub appear down the road, so, gathering strength, he jumped out of the car and ran to it. Wet and out of breath, he rushed inside and started telling everybody about the horrible experience he had just had. A silence enveloped the pub when everybody realized he was crying and wasn't drunk.

Suddenly, the door opened, and two other people walked in from the stormy night. They, like John, were also soaked and out of breath. Looking around, and seeing John Bradford sobbing at the bar, one said to the other. 'Look Paddy.....there's that idiot that got in the car while we were pushing it!!!!'

Put Some Drama into your Life



Get a ticket for DPT's next Production at the Denny Civic on 27th February to 1st March 2008. The play is '**Big Maggie**' by John Keane and is set in Ireland in 1963. It tells the story of a middle-aged mother who takes control of her grown up family's lives following the death of her husband. There are moments of humour, moments of sadness and a good story line. You will also meet some interesting characters - Big Maggie is certainly a one-off! Tickets are great value at £3.00 and available soon from Janette or Sandra. Of course, our own "Wee Maggie" is just back from South Africa! Welcome home Maggie!

Easter Message from our Primus:



I PRAY that your love will keep on growing and that you will fully know and understand how to make the right choices. Then you will still be pure and innocent when Christ returns. And until that day, Jesus Christ will keep you busy doing good deeds that bring glory and praise to God. *Philippians 1.9-11*

THERE was, as usual, a lot of comment about the way that Christmas should be celebrated.

Representatives of non-Christian faiths encouraged the Church to get on with its celebration because that made room for all to celebrate. Churches were filled at Christmas services as folk remembered that Christ is the centre of it all.

At Easter, although the hot cross buns and chocolate eggs made their appearance in supermarkets in mid January; there probably will not be quite the same debate – or increase in worship attendance for that matter – that we experience at Christmas.

Yet Jesus remains the focus of Easter. The hot cross bun carries a pastry cross to remind us of Jesus' death on Calvary, commemorated on Good Friday each year. The eggs are a symbol of new life as Jesus rose from the dead the first Easter morning.

Those two events together give meaning to each other. Had Good Friday been the end, that would have told us one thing.

Had there been an Easter event without the preceding Passion, that too would have changed the nature of how Christians experience and talk about God.

The fact is that they go together and give us the content of our proclamation that God is love – so completely love that there was no end to God's commitment; and also that it is the urging to life of love that shall in the end overcome everything that tends towards death.

It is hard to grasp this shocking idea that because of Jesus there is life after death and that death-defying life is given in him.

'Love is stronger than death,' say the words of a prayer by Archbishop Tutu and this gives us cause to hope against hope that, in spite of the truly terri-

ble hurts that people inflict on other people; in spite of the fact that our own human life is limited by physical death, there is a continuing reality in which the love of God is finally and ultimately expressed.

May God give to each of us that sense of trust in his love that we may find fulfilment in this life and, in the world to come, life everlasting. †*Idris*

Read the Label

A label from a laptop bag that is made by a small American company for overseas customers:



And, for the few of us who don't speak French, here is the translation:

Wash with warm water.

Use mild soap.

Dry flat.

Do not use bleach.

Do not dry in the dryer.

Do not iron.

We are sorry that our President is an idiot.

We did not vote for him.

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Dumbarton/London Corner Nursery School

Our trip to The Gambia this year was a wonderful experience after the disappointments that we have been through last year. It was proof that sometimes good can come from bad and getting Aunty Caroline Lusack as the new headmistress after problems with Kabs and Mr Conteh is what has made such a difference to our nursery school.

If you look at the pictures on page 9 you will see how good the building is looking, with everything clean and painted white with educational drawings and information everywhere.

The appreciation of Aunty by the local community was obvious on the Prize-giving day when so many of the parents and local folk came along and many of them wanted to speak to voice their gratitude to all of the Dumbarton sponsors and supporters, and to Aunty Car herself who has made such a difference. I will be doing an update for our sponsors and will put it in next month's magazine, but I can't let this month pass without mention of the things going on in and around the nursery school.

Aunty was concerned about the variety and the quality of the school uniforms, with some being made of such thin material that they are almost see-through. With the adult education class now able to do tie-dye, it was decided to purchase good quality cotton material and tie-dye it the Dumbarton black and yellow of the uniforms. These will then be made up by the adult education class and the uniforms sold to the parents for a nominal sum of money.

Kenny and I spent an interesting late afternoon watching the first of the material being dyed yellow, from mixing the yellow dye powder with another dye powder and caustic soda and watching the mixture turn black, to watching the now black material hanging on the fence and turning a wonderful shade of yellow within 15 minutes of sunshine. You will see what I mean in the photos on page 9.

It wasn't only the school that gave us pleasure this year, we were able to show around a new friend Father Rob Warren, the Episcopalian priest from Penicuik in Edinburgh who was visiting The Gambia with his daughter from Canada.

Tina Kemp and Mhairi Halliday spent another week with us this year, and although it was a busy time, with school visits, the trip, meetings with GTS and visiting a site of a possible new school building, there were so many moments of laughter and pure hilarity as we lived through the days in this country where nothing goes quite right, things easily fall apart and the local roads would rattle your teeth out if you stayed too long. You may have read a series of articles in the local paper, The Lennox Herald by Tina and found out more about the school and the ways Dumbarton folk and beyond are helping the local community. If you live away from Dumbarton and would like to read these excellent articles, please contact me and I will send them on to you.

If you would like to help the children by paying a monthly amount of £5 or more, or donating cash or maybe doing a sponsored event, then please contact me on the numbers on the back page.

Linda Macaulay

Friends in February

Friends started 2008 in real Scottish style with an Evening of song with Lenny and Myra.



The usual stalwarts of the Church Hall cooked up a fine meal of traditional Scottish fare with mince and potatoes, stovies, cloutie dumpling, tablet, shortbread all washed down with the usual mix of wines and juices.

We were entertained by Kier Mailley who recited a Burns poem, Ricky and Ghislaine who sang several Scottish songs and throughout the evening Lenny and Myra sang a range of songs from traditional Scottish, Burns, old favourites and by the end of the evening had folk up on the tables and standing for The Star o' Rabbie Burns and Auld Lang Syne. With the help of a Scottish raffle, we raised £350 and so everyone was delighted with the event.

'The Full Monty' was postponed, simply because it was scheduled a little too closely to the Scottish Night and folk were fair weary after their exertions!

However, the Executive have since met together, and a fine programme of events have been organised for the coming year.

April 16th: Pyjama Party: come along in your pyjamas for a typical 'girlie' evening with comfort food, manicures, pedicures, Indian head massage, underwear fashion for sale, a soppy film and quiet music. Men come at their own risk!

May 18th: Friends AGM followed by Cheese & Wine..

June 21st: Car Treasure Hunt

August 9th: For the **annual bus trip** we are off to Glasgow this year. See St. Mungo's Cathedral and the People's Palace and round off the day with high tea and even a sing-song on the bus home maybe!

September 24th: Benidorm Bingo. A chance to wear your sombrero and drink Sangria along with a few games of bingo and a raffle. It may be your lucky night.

October: The big event this year is 'A Night with the Stars'. An 'Oscar Winning' Dinner in the Church with a chance to come as, or with, your favourite movie star or movie character. Date to be arranged.

I hope to see you at these events, and remember, there is a discount for Friends members, so why not consider joining this year at the end of May, after the AGM.

Linda

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Dumbarton Churches Together

This year's **Spring Festival** will be held on the weekend of **11th to 13th April** and the programme will be similar to previous years. On Friday the 11th there will be a **Concert** in St. Augustine's and on Saturday 12th a **Ceilidh** in St. Patrick's Church Hall with music by **Voicebox** who played at our concert for Shadrach. There will be an excellent supper and tickets for this event are in big demand.

On Sunday 13th the Festival ends with a **Big Praise Night** back at St. Augustine's. Please support these ecumenical activities and put the dates in your new diaries now. More details will be published in the next edition of this magazine and on your pew sheets.

Janette



"Easter coming so soon after Christmas has almost turned Anthony into a regular churchgoer."