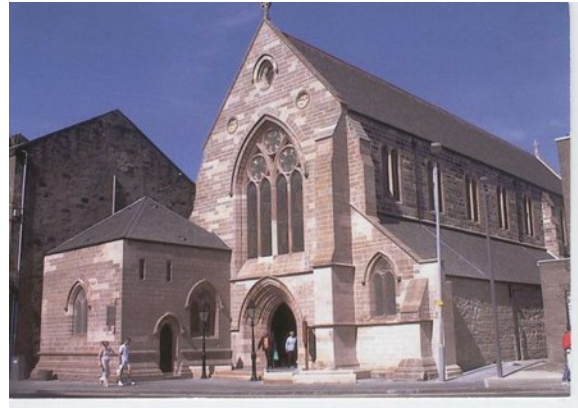


By the Way



The Magazine of St Augustine's Scottish Episcopal Church, Dumbarton

Issue No 4 February/March 2013 £1

Saving a School!



Kenny came back from The Gambia in January with some very bad news. The school which we run from Dumbarton was collapsing into the old soakaway, (sewer), and urgent work was needed immediately or the school would need to close its doors to the 90

children who depend on free education, the feeding programme and medical care. However, an appeal for the £5,500 needed was launched with incredible success! The school is still going strong and much more can be done than the essential work. (Story inside)

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From Kenny...

The beginning of the year has been rather strange for me, loping off to The Gambia for ten days to see how bad things really were, and consulting with staff, builders and of course Helen, our administrator over there.



My return has seen the launch of our School Appeal, and, of course, the meeting with the bishop in early February, reviewing our Mission Action Plan and looking to the future, and our development as a congregation. All this, plus other meetings and commitments mean that this year has proved to be rather stressful, and the result is that the February Edition of By the Way is incredibly late! (My apologies to those who provided copy on time!)

This edition is being compiled during the week which contains Ash Wednesday, and one of the manifold sins I will be confessing is the way that I deal with pressure, or don't deal with it, and instead commit the great sin of procrastination! I'm an expert in this field!

So the magazine gets left until tomorrow, when I'll get a clear run at it, then tomorrow's things get in the way, and things get put on the back burner again. Procrastination may not be one of the seven Deadly Sins, but it features boldly in my life and is something that must be dealt with. Maybe you are the same and find yourself doing things at the last minute and putting too much pressure on yourself as a result?

My Spiritual Director insists that I should be like the Mikado, and have a little list. Lists are good, not simply that we can see on a bit of paper what needs to be done, but also gives us great satisfaction when we tick things off as "done".

So Lent 2013 will be a *Season of Lists* for me, and I may even get the April Edition of By the Way out for Holy Week! It might even be more beneficial than giving up sugar or chocolate. It will be something positive that I will do to, hopefully, take off some of the pressure and give me more time to read or even to pray!

What needs tackling for *you* during Lent? Whatever it is, be positive, and see it out to the end!

Kenny

Pat Says.....

Did you make any New Year Resolutions this year, and if so how are they going after the first month or so?

While the sight of a new calendar or diary with the unfilled pages somehow gives us that challenge to "turn over a new leaf" and

resolve to make some improvements in our life - to give up smoking, take up a new interest, or perhaps do something to reduce all the extra weight put on over Christmas - we may not keep things up for long. Gyms probably recruit most of their new members in January, but how many people are still regularly doing their workouts after a month or two?

The trouble is that we are all frail human beings, and while there is early enthusiasm for self-improvement, the hard grind of keeping up exercise on a daily basis, or the temptation of just one more chocolate or cigarette gets too much for us. All the good intentions are there, but putting them into practice is another matter. Then when we do slip up we feel even worse than before we started.

While I have never been an avid maker of New Year Resolutions (therefore avoiding the risk of breaking them!), I am aware that there are many times when I need to reform because I make mistakes - when I say or do the wrong thing, or when I don't do something which I really should. That's when I find the words of the Eucharist, and in particular the Confession and Absolution so helpful. The service reminds us that God knows all about our frailties - that we constantly make mistakes in "thought, word and deed, and in what we have failed to do" - but we can have the slate wiped clean, say we are sorry and start again. This is certainly not an excuse to give up and never try to do better, but a way of dealing with failure. The Scottish Prayer Book recognises that the burden of our sins may be "intolerable" - although actually it is not always the big mistakes that get us down, but the little failures which can niggle away. The Confession and Absolution enables us to move on without getting into the downward spiral of feeling a failure. We can come away knowing that God does forgive us, in fact has forgiven us even before we ask, and that through Jesus we are being given the strength to start again in our efforts to live a Christian life. Isn't that marvellous knowledge to take into every new day? *Pat*



St James the Least of All

The Rectory
St. James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

Winter certainly exposes the difference between those of you who live in cities and us rural folk. While you bask in your centrally heated flat, with every modern convenience that could be imagined and complain about the half an inch of slush that makes your life so inconvenient, we country folk wear overcoats in our houses, open all doors and windows to let the heat in and battle through snow drifts, measured in feet, to get the morning paper.

Colonel Wainwright has acquired a new toy: a snow blower, of sufficient power that I believe it could clear the Antarctic. He kindly volunteered to clear the paths around the church. Working outwards from the church door, the path to the church soon became snow free. Unfortunately, he only realised when his job was complete that the blown snow then formed a ten foot drift under the lych gate. We now have to climb over the churchyard wall and negotiate buried gravestones before we can reach his pristine paths.

Miss Margison, ever helpful in the worst sense of the word, decided to unfreeze the pipes in the church hall. A blow torch was not the ideal solution, although the resulting burst did make some rather attractive ice sculptures round the kitchen equipment. The village badminton team that uses the hall has now temporarily changed sport to ice hockey.

Inevitably, congregations have soared. There is nothing like adversity for making people want to prove they have the moral fibre to overcome it. Much satisfaction seems to be obtained on discovering who has not dared venture out, which is taken as judgement on their strength of character. The Prentices upstaged most people by arriving on a sleigh. Mr Prentice was warmly wrapped in a travelling rug, while his wife pulled it. As her husband explained, he couldn't possibly let the pony work in such conditions.

What I momentarily thought was applause during my sermon was merely people keeping their hands warm and the hymns were drowned out by the stamping of feet. Our organist complained that the cold made his fingers so numb that he couldn't play properly – although I didn't notice that things were much different from normal. No, my dear nephew, you continue to fret about your church heating dropping to temperate from

tropical and a few flakes of wet snow obliging you to close your car park for health and safety reasons. We shall continue to triumph heroically over adversity and return home after Mattins, knowing we have proved our Christian commitment in being utterly uncomfortable.

Those parishioners of yours who won millions on the Lottery and moved into this parish have created quite a stir. It was perhaps a little unwise of them to tell everyone the reason why they had become so wealthy. While most of our parishioners also do the Lottery, few would ever admit it in public. (Since your friends arrived, the entire PCC is buying ever more lottery tickets, but from the shop in the NEXT village, to try and keep it secret.)

However, your family still have much to learn about our country ways. Buying the old Dower House was impressive; and spending a small fortune re-stocking the gardens was certainly commendable. But someone should have told them about cattle grids. It must have been quite a shock for them to wake up one morning and find the thirty sheep from the neighbouring field had wandered in for breakfast.

Their brand new purple Ferrari has certainly brightened up the country lanes around here. The noise it makes as it roars up behind you quite quickens the pulse. Mrs Beamish had been suffering with low blood pressure for months; she says she is quite cured now. The Colonel, who is all for the community supporting the church, then asked if the new-comers would drive the bishop around on the day he came to do his tour of the parish. The Colonel thought that an open-topped purple Ferrari would make a great bishop-mobile; and the new-comers were so kind to agree. What a shame that they decided to accomplish the several miles of parish lanes in record time: the bishop barely even saw the several farmers that they nearly ran down. His new nickname in this parish is: The Purple Peril.

The new-comers have installed security lighting, which is understandable. But now I wonder how much sleep they are getting, as the rabbits, foxes, and badgers who live in their grounds keep it flood-lit for much of the night. Meanwhile, the Colonel is grumbling about the effect of light pollution on his young pheasants in the woods nearby.

But these little inconveniences apart, I am sure they will soon feel at home. I feel confident that by the third generation, they will be properly settled in.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

Smile-lines

Why God made mums

These were the answers given by some seven year-olds...

Why did God make mothers?

1. She's the only one who knows all the passwords we use online.
2. Mostly to clean the house, I think.
3. To help us out of there when we were getting born.

How did God make mothers?

1. He used dirt, just like for the rest of us.
2. I've heard it was some amazing experiment on men that got out of hand.
3. God made my mum just the same like he made me. He just used bigger parts.

What ingredients are mothers made of?

1. God makes mothers out of clouds and angel hair and one part of mean.
2. They had to get their start from men's bones. Then they mostly use string, I think.
3. They have a lot more hair than dads, are softer to hug, and wear woolly jumpers.

Why did God give you to your mother, and not to some other mum?

1. We're related.
2. God knew she likes me a lot more than other kids' mums like me.
3. Other mums wouldn't understand about me being afraid in the dark.

What kind of little girl was your mum?

1. My mum has always been my mum and none of that other stuff.
2. I don't know because I wasn't there, but my guess would be pretty bossy.
3. They say she used to be nice.

What did your mum need to know about your dad before she married him?

1. His last name.
2. She had to know his background, like has he put anything too disgusting on Facebook?
3. She needed to check out his bank account, to make sure he could buy her clothes.

Why did your mum marry your dad?

1. My dad makes the best spaghetti in the world. And my mum eats a lot.
2. She got too old to do anything else with him.
3. My grandma says that no one will ever know.

Who's the boss at your house?

1. Dad is, because mum says so. She just helps by reminding him what to do each day.
2. Mum. You can tell by room inspection. She sees the stuff under the bed.
3. Dad was, until Mum found what he had written on Facebook about Granny.

What's the difference between mums & dads?

1. Mums work at work and work at home and dads just go to work at work.
2. Mums know how to talk to teachers without scaring them.
3. Dads are taller and stronger, but they panic when the dishwasher overflows.

What does your mum do in her spare time?

1. She takes my brother to football and my sister to violin lessons.
2. To hear her tell it, it's like she pays bills all day long.
3. I think that must happen during the night, because then she just lies there and sleeps.

What would it take to make your mum perfect?

1. On the inside she's already perfect. Outside, I think some kind of plastic surgery.
2. Diet. You know, her hair. I'd diet, maybe blue.
3. She would understand why the dog needs to sleep with me at night.

If you could change one thing about your mum, what would it be?

1. She has this weird thing about me keeping my room clean. I'd get rid of that.
2. I'd make my mum smarter. Then she would know it was my sister who did it and not me.
3. She'd be more relaxed about me not doing my homework.

Best

The reporter was interviewing the town's oldest woman. "And what do you find is the best thing about being 104?" he asked. "That's easy," she said. "No peer pressure."

Dumbarton London Corner School

I had been made aware of the fact that there were problems with the building before my annual trip to Serekunda in The Gambia, but what I found shocked me to the core and made me want to despair! The building was literally cracking up and falling down into the old soakaway, and the implications for the children's health and safety became paramount.

There were three options. 1) We bought some land and built an entirely new school which would cost £40,000+, 2) We tried to repair the immediate damage at a cost of £5,500 with lots more on the agenda that needed done, or 3) Just close the school.

Closing the school would mean an end of the free education, the feeding programme and medical care for our 90 pupils, and an end of nearly 11 years of hard work. Buying and building afresh was totally beyond us, and so the second option was the only real possibility.



I came back to Scotland with one thought in mind, and that was raising the money to save the school. It was fortuitous that the Diocesan Clergy Conference was held during the next week, and I was able to alert fellow clergy of our predicament. The response from congregations and individuals within the Diocese has been amazing. The congregation of Castle Douglas sent us a bumper cheque for the £5,500 we desperately needed, and others sent us cheques for very generous amounts. Individuals, too, from congregations, people we have never heard of, sent us money, and before we knew it we had double the money we needed!

My Facebook friends, and Church Magazine subscribers were equally generous, as donations tumbled in from all sorts of unexpected sources! The local community gave generously too, and before we

knew it, God had matched the Castle Douglas money and a little bit more!



This means that a myriad of other jobs that needed done can now be completed too, things that we were putting off until next year, after a planned new fundraising drive. The whole building needs a new roof as the corrugate is full of holes and makes everyone and everything rather damp during the rainy season. The playground had been affected by the crumbling foundations and we can now resurface that. The children's toilets desperately needed upgrading, and that can now be done, together with a new Staff toilet that was high on my list of priorities for 2014.

Some play equipment can now be bought, together with some new badly-needed text books.

The whole place can be painted and the school kitchen can be given a facelift. We will still be able to squirrel away some of the cash for a ring-fenced Building Fund, just in case we come across any more disasters!

I don't know how to express my gratitude adequately. The school and the children there mean so much to me and a great number of other people too, who give by Standing Order or through Paypal on a monthly basis.

It is no secret that we have stopped young children dying through the daily protein they are given and by the antibiotics and anti-malaria treatments which we ensure they have when necessary. A lot of people

from all over contribute a small monthly amount to ensure that all this, with free education, continues in this the poorest part of Serrekunda.

Many of the children in the area can still be seen wearing binbags or simply naked in the streets. The housing conditions are dreadful, and food is sometimes in short supply.



I am just delighted with the response, and "Thank You" doesn't seem to be enough.

One of the main reasons for keeping the school going was the reports which had been coming in at the end of 2012. The Gambian Education Department had held a review of what was being offered in privately run education and had closed down over 40 schools in the larger area because of poor educational standards. However, our little school was given an A+ Rating, and one of the Inspectors said that it was the best school in Serrekunda, offering an excellence in curriculum and teaching standards.

This was no great surprise to us as we ensure that our teachers are of the highest standard. We pay for them to go to Gambia College if they don't already have the highest of qualifications, and one of our teachers was top of his class this year.

Our curriculum follows closely what children in the UK are being taught and comes with UN accreditation. We use stuff like Jolly Phonics

although providing the required textbooks and tapes etc can be a huge drain on our resources.

It all costs about £1,200 per month to run, but we just seem to get by on an annual basis! God is good, and so are our regular sponsors!



Our Teacher-in-Charge, Sulayman Saidy, has so much enthusiasm and talent and he brings out the best in everyone.

So a massive load of gratitude to all who have helped save our school! 90 hungry mouths and minds will echo that! We go on in confidence that what we have is excellent, and will soon have a building which matches the dreams and aspirations of a committed staff and a rather special administrator!



A mixed selection of pics this month! Clockwise from above left, our weans playing Giant Ludo in The Gambia, Up on to the chairs for The Star O' Rabbie Burns, New Year Kareoke in The Rectory, Tim proves to be too big for the Rectory ceiling at the Bells, and Janette organises the wummin in Rabbie's life excellently! On Page 9, Fran and Frankie meet Kenny at St Andrew's Lamin underneath the St Augustine's Dumbarton banner! There were too many pics to include this month. Apologies to those whose pics have failed to appear.

Hats Off to the Knitters!

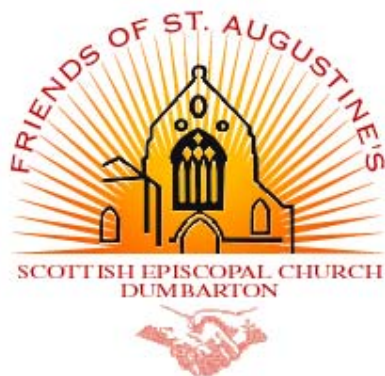
Although in the past we have given some of Margaret White's knitting to individual mums in The Gambia, we had accumulated quite a large quantity of beautifully knitted hats, vests, cardigans and blankets. January is cold for Gambians as well as for us and we knew that there would be babies that would benefit from Margaret's kindness.

Faye knew just the place - the maternity clinic in Serrekunda. It's situated just behind the busy market area and there are always many mums there, either giving birth or bringing their babies for check ups.

The staff at the clinic were delighted with the bags full of knitting that we were able to hand over and have asked for more. At the time there were several ladies in labour (we could hear them) and their babies would be the first to receive the warm vests, hats and blankets which would otherwise be unavailable to them.

We handed everything over to the medical staff but you will see a lady in the middle of the photo not wearing white. She's one of the cleaners who work continuously to keep the clinic as clean as possible. She too wanted to be included. **Fran**





Friends Events in 2013

The Friends Exec met this week to discuss what we will be offering our members and friends up until October.

Some of these events are only ideas at the moment and could be subject to some changes although we will do our best to stick to the dates and basic ideas.

We have already planned in the Community Fair in September so we have plenty of time to plan for a really special day this year.

- **The Midgie Concert** has been moved to Friday 22nd March at 7.30pm. The tickets will cost £6 which will include nibbles and a free drink during the break. Tickets will be on sale from February 22nd.
- **A Night at the Theatre:** This is on 1st March and we will supply a buffet tea in the hall at 5.45pm in the hall before walking to the Denny Civic Theatre to see the DPT performance of 'The Slab Boys'
- **April Event** on 16th April at 7.30pm. This will be called '**Brains, Bangers and Bingo**'

BRAINS – Will this be the last Brucehill final of **BRITAIN'S BANGERS** - Better Together with a Roll and Butter and good blether. **BINGO** - A break away bash for the bored, bewildered and bamboozled.

- **May 12th (Sunday) at 5pm: The Friends AGM** this year is entitled 'In the garden of Eden'. There will be a deliciously wicked chocolate buffet and a saintly healthy buffet of fruit and everything good.
- **June 14th at 7.30pm The All Sorts Choir** are coming to their spiritual home i.e. St. Aug's to give us an evening of music with summery sparkling wine to wash down strawberries and cream.

- There will be no event during July.
- **August 10th:** This year we are bringing back the **Friends bus trip**. For 'Spirits, Spirituality and Shops' we are going to Edinburgh to visit Real Mary King's Close to see some local history. Then we will visit St. Giles Cathedral and after a little time at the shops we will be having High Tea at a venue to be decided
- **September 7th** will be the **Annual Community Fair**.
- **October 26th:** this year we are having a **Pantodine** event. More details later.

We hope to see as many of you as possible throughout the year so keep your eyes open for the inevitable list, and information on the notice board in the hall and in the future magazines and pewsheets.

Linda

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76 Main St, Alexandria

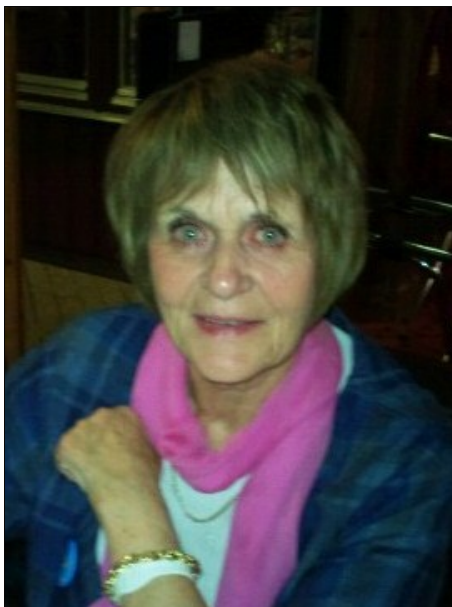
01389 753376

Gift Day

At St Augustine's-tide last year we didn't have a formal Gift Day, so the Vestry have decided to ask you all to consider Mothering Sunday as our Gift Day for 2012-2013. This was the traditional way for our congregation to give a special gift to Mother Church for all it means to us.

The Bishop was concerned that our parish is running with a shortfall of almost £1,000 per month, and this is a way of trying to bridge that gap.

Please give a special gift on Mothering Sunday to St Augustine's. We have a wonderful ministry, but it does need supporting!



Wait Till I Tell You

The Gossip Column

Janette looks back at the Festive Season, the horrible winter weather, the Burns Night 'ongauins' and looks forward to an early Spring of concerts and theatre.

GANGNAM DANCING AND A REAL 'WEAN' IN THE MANGER.

At St. Aug's in the olden days there were numerous Christmas events all tailored to the different groups. There was a separate 'do' for the Sunday School, the Choir, the Guild and the A.Y.P.A. However, in the St. Aug's of the 21st millennium it all happens on the Sunday before Christmas and we're all in it together with the Carol Service included for good measure. We know the date is getting closer when the Church Christmas tree is delivered and Maggie and Ricky argue over its quality and what it will take to suitably decorate it.

But an event that caters for tastes from babies to pensioners is no small feat – so planning is paramount though rarely embarked upon! Sharon gets elected boss since she is aged somewhere in the middle and following her recent experience at DPT, has the voice to control the action. The party games are not strictly for the children so 'Pass the Parcel' needs to be closely monitored. The children are keen to dance and soon all but the unfit are dancing gangnam style. Nothing but the latest in crazes at St. Aug's! Whatever happened to 'Bee Baw Babbity'?

Those who came without their tea are now looking longingly at the party food, attractively presented in the smaller rooms. Will the buffet never open? Then right on cue the music stops and food is announced. A delicious selection from Iceland is available and everyone gets 'tore in'!

Next a rumour is unleashed that Santa has been sighted somewhere over Bellsmyre. No, pay attention! The **star** was sighted over **Bethlehem**! Santa is heading for a certain grotto at the back of the

Church. Everyone processes expectantly into the Church to await his arrival. He is accompanied by Elf – or Gavin in seasonal employment – and soon the magic begins. There are presents for all the children - and how the Grannies love to see the tentative approaches of those who still believe.

But the organisers have to move him on and get into Carol Service mode with lighted candles and the Allsorts Choir - at last in position! A Nativity Play is on the programme and Anne Dyer's Girls' Group has been rehearsing for weeks. They make a splendid entrance in costume with all the familiar Bethlehem characters represented. Anne and her helpers ensure that everything runs smoothly. At last, when the atmosphere has been duly created, we are all asked to close our eyes and imagine being present in the stable. Then with all the skill of Dynamo: magician impossible, the doll in the manger is replaced by a real live baby. Awww! Surprise, surprise! Now that's theatre!

A miracle in the form of a glass bauble is hung on the tree to remind us all of what happened in the stable over two thousand years ago. As the last carol brought the evening to a close there were more than a few tears and everyone went home enriched with the real spirit of Christmas.

AT THE RECTORY FOR THE BELLS.

It's becoming customary now for St. Aug's people to assemble at the Rectory on Hogmanay to await the New Year. There's a selection of music, karaoke and quizzes to while away the minutes of the old year. There is also a delicious array of food and glasses of bubbly for the toasts. Tim has been given the task of first foot this year and exits into the street at the appropriate moment with his first footing ac-

coutrements. Midnight strikes - R.I.P.2012! The door is knocked and in he comes to wish everyone all the best for 2013.

Since no one has overindulged on the booze there is no gossip. No one can say *'Did you see the state o' hur – up at the minister's hoose, tae!'* Kenny organises that everyone has a lift home- even travelling via the Vale and Castlehill – before returning to think about packing his case for the Gambia.

DECISIONS! DECISIONS! DECISIONS!

Let's hope we don't all lose our marbles before deciding on all that's expected of us now and into the immediate future. The big decision, of course, is the referendum (yawn, yawn) with even the politicians struggling with 'do you agree or not agree - that is the question!' The 'yes' and 'no' camps are both 'giein' it laldy' while we struggle with whether we want to say we belong to a small independent European state (like Moldova, perhaps?) or that we have a passport stating that we are citizens of the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland with all its history, power, influence and EEC membership. (*Eh? - Ed*)

But wait a minute, if we opt for 'No' to Independence, our esteemed Prime Minister wants us to make another decision about staying in the EEC. Indeed, we have two mind blowing decisions to cope with when we're having a difficult time agreeing who is best on that Sunday skating programme on the telly. And soon we'll be expected to come up with decisions on the new series of 'Britain's Got Talent'.

There might be a dog competing that needs our support in the phone-in. Oh, and there's more. The Council has been sending a budget bus round the area asking for our views on how to save £2.7million. Have they been wasting our money?

But it's power to the people and a'that and a'that! Did you suggest closing two public toilets in the Vale, spending less on next year's Christmas lights or cutting up the council staff credit cards? But wait a minute -even the Church is at it. Send in your views on the relocation of the Music Group..... that'll be right!

Our 'heids will be ferr nippin' with all this 'deciding'. And just think - if you completely crack up you could end up putting Alex Salmond in the Dancing on Ice Final and voting for the Brussels bureaucrats to empty their own bins! Am I being ridiculous? Well, the politicians started it! Thank

goodness we won't be asked to join a phone- in for a new Pope!

ANDY NEARLY WINS IT!

Sunday 27th January was the final of the Australian Grand Slam and Andy had been playing superbly right up until it was time for us to leave for the Eucharist. Would we return to see him win his second slam? We hurried home in a state of excitement in time to see Novak Djokovic raising the trophy high in the air and Andy having to settle for runner up. Never mind, 'gaun yersel', Andy, - you made us all proud to be Scottish. But the tennis coverage quickly changed to Sunday Politics and those of us who didn't get to our remote controls on time had to listen to the smart Alec BBC commentator introducing one of his guests with *'she has tweeted with more frequency than Andy Murray loses Grand Slam finals'*. I suppose he thought that was funny? And this tactless, untimely remark came from the lips of a fellow Scot, also called Andrew! Boo! Boo!

A WEE TASTE OF BURNS

The weather had been awful for much of the preceding week with warnings of snow and blizzards. Members of the Friends' Exec stressed over whether folks would be able to get there and what they would do with all the haggis if they didn't! But on the 20th all was well. The attractively decorated tables soon filled up with tartan clad Burns' fans and the delicious aroma of Haggis emanated from the kitchen. Not a horse burger in sight!

The haggis was duly addressed, totties and neeps mashed and even the 'spinsters of the parish' couped a wee tot of whisky over the great chieftain! It fairly brings out the flavour!

The kitchen operated like a clockwork 'pudden' with Margaret H, Margaret S, Chrissie, Roberta, Connie and Annette in full control. Ghislaine and Ricky kicked off the entertainment with some Burns favourites while the kitchen staff, who also acted, scuttled off to change into costume. The story of Rabbie and the lassies was being told and fellow Celt, Linda was assisting me with the narration in spite of the unfamiliar language.

First Maggie appeared as Jean Armour in an outside- in shower cap and shawl, to be confronted by Roberta as Highland Mary, recently descended from her statue in Dunoon. Then the mysterious Mary Morrison arrived, played by Chrissie, who also declared her part in the poet's love life.

Naturally, Jean was 'ferr pit oot' and even more so when in walked Nancy, also known as Agnes or more romantically as Clarinda, an Edinburgh 'wum-man' to whom Burns vowed eternal affection with 'Ae Fond Kiss'.

Nancy was played by TBag O'Neill recently released from the RAH! Aye, our national bard certainly kept a lot of lassies happy! But there was one that he didn't fancy – Mrs Willie Wastle. According to his description, this unfortunate lady must have been the ugliest in the land and Margaret Swan had to portray her in a false face! The lassies hurried off again to prepare for more acting while a further musical interlude featured more of Ricky and Ghislaine with the special appearance of Kenny singing 'A Man's a Man for a' That'.

Soon the actresses were back, in school uniform this time, to help us reminisce over the Burns Competitions of the '40s and '50s at which children learned to compete even if only for a cardboard certificate!

The evening was brought to a close in traditional style with 'Flower of Scotland', 'Auld Lang Syne' and 'The Star o' Rabbie Burns' with all who had two functioning legs getting up on the chairs for the chorus! Great wee night!

WHAT SHALL WE DO WITH DUMBARTON HIGH STREET?

Once again Dumbarton is in the news over the dejected state of the High Street. Oh dear! The fact that we're not alone is small comfort. And if no one comes up with a solution soon apart from allowing it to be a town centre car park and bus blocker what will become of it? Could it be swallowed up by the Scottish government, eager to improve on its climate change targets, earmarking it for a line of wind turbines stretching from Caulfields all the way to the Clipper?

NEW CAT IN TOWN

TBag O'Neill has a new pet – a mini cat called Beauty. In size it is not much bigger than Minnie Mouse but she assures me that one day it will be a fat cat and take its place in Newton feline society. Meanwhile it leaps around like 'a bat out of hell' and is in danger of drowning in one of her many tea mugs that are rarely empty!

WHO'S SORRY NOW?

What about that Lance Armstrong admitting to the world that he took performance enhancing drugs to help him get on his bike and win all those titles?

Why did he want all those yellow jerseys? So now he's sorry for cheating and wants to be the good guy again. OK, we're supposed to forgive and after all, he didn't get the better of Scotland's Sir Chris in the velodrome. He wasn't even in the velodrome! But do you think those performance enhancing drugs would help me get to the bottom of my ironing basket in which items lurk from last year's summer holiday?

GRAND OLE ST.AUGGIE'S.

This is the title of Ghislaine and Ricky's latest concert scheduled for 22nd February in the Church. It will feature music and food from both sides of the Atlantic – Country and Celtic, Hot Dogs and Pies.

Yes, there are burgers on the menu but Roberta, our Catering Expert, has assured us that the burgers will have their origin in Crosslet Rd and be transported by First Bus to the Hall. No horses will be involved in their creation! Oh, and the Allsorts Choir will make a guest appearance. There will be the opportunity to dress up and have a go at a little line dancing.

All money raised will be for Church funds. Tickets, at the fully inclusive cost of £6 will be a mandatory purchase for all who encounter Ghislaine in the next few days! You have been warned!

LOOKING FORWARD TO.

An early Spring, the return of the Midgies on the 22nd March – the band **not** the insects! A Night at the Theatre on the 1st March, with High Tea. And last but not least, preparations for a special Easter at St. Aug's when we shall welcome a Bishop.....and, hopefully, a donkey! Watch this space.

Janette

Tina's Traumas

I defy any of you to go 24 hours without a wee. It's impossible, even for the most disciplined of us. We begin the day confident we can be Wee Free (is that a theological possibility for a Piskie?) but before long we find ourselves succumbing. All of us, it seems, need to wee. It flows quite naturally.



But that should come as no surprise. After all, the word 'wee' (what else did you think I was talking about?) is an integral part of the Scottish psyche and culture. It features, together with 'scunnered' and 'wabbit' and 'blether' and many others in the annals of the Association of Yodel Expressions Regularly and In General use in Homeland Talk (Scotland) - better known as AYERIGHTS. And quite right too.

Where would we be without wee? Have a wee cup of tea. I could go a wee curry. Wait a wee minute. Och, the wee soul. She's had a wee baby (and I bet she's relieved, one inevitably wants to respond).

My sister who is a linguist says no other language she speaks – and she speaks a few (she's the brainy one) – has a word like wee. It's one of the things she misses about living in Scotland but which she has successfully exported among her German-speaking friends in Switzerland.

Yes, even the best of us are caught out by the need to wee. "Any chance of a wee article for By the Way?" was the request which glided into my email inbox the other day from your esteemed leader. So, that'll be for the wee space on the left hand page, Father K? None of us is immune. And that, in my humble opinion, is something to celebrate. For it's such a wonderfully expressive word is wee. It conveys a sense of warmth and friendliness, familiarity and affection, even among strangers. Its appearance in a sentence no matter how small embodies a sense of belonging. It's never used to judge or condemn – and that's something to be grateful for when words are all too often used as weapons.

Which leads me nicely into the wee God bit. "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us." (John 1: 14).

It was with a wee gesture of a wee baby in a wee town that God banished all judgment and condemnation and said to all people "You belong". *Wee*, indeed, are God's people, there's no doubt about that. Yet *we* are His people called to live by the Word, to share its invitation to life in all its fullness and to do great things through it. A fair wee challenge, my friends. But a big God with whom to face it.

Tina Kemp

Christian Aid Lent Lunches

These take place in Riverside Halls on Thursdays during Lent from 12 noon. Please support them. St Aug's is responsible for Thursday Feb 28th. If you can help or make soup please see Tim Rhead as soon as possible.

Cursillo

There is a Diocesan Ultreya here on Tuesday, March 12th at 7.30 p.m. Ghislaine will be the speaker. All are welcome. If you know very little about Cursillo this could be your chance to find out.

Anyone who is interested in going to the Ultreya in Ayr on Wednesday, 20th March, please contact me on immediately, so that we can work out transport. All arrangements will be on the basis of "weather permitting".

Evelyn.

Dinner for The Gambia

Maggie is arranging a Dinner in the Hall on March 9th for the Dumbarton London Corner School. The cost will be £20, which for a 3course dinner is indeed excellent value....6-30 for 7p.m. Let Maggie know if you are coming!

Mission Action Plan

After an excellent meeting with Bishop Gregor when we shared with him our progress through the last year, it is time to sit down again and work out what our upcoming goals will be. The Vestry and its sub-group will be meeting with our facilitator, Anne Tomlinson, soon, so expect new plans and initiatives to be on the table for after Easter. It is hoped that we can produce a little booklet for the congregation shortly, outlining what was reported back from last year. It was hoped to put this in the Magazine, but space is preventing us this month.

Holy Week

Holy Week, 24th - 29th March, will be rather special this year with Bishop Gregor joining us on our pilgrimage from Palm Sunday through to Easter Day. As yet, definite times and venues have still to be confirmed, but you will have a final list of everything that's happening in time for you to participate fully. Please make a special effort to join us this year, and make the most of having +Gregor with us on the way.

I'm still looking for a donkey for Palm Sunday!

Sunday Rotas

Sunday February 17th

11am Eucharist

Readers Margot Rhead & Morag O'Neill
Intercessions Maggie Wallace
Chalice Barbara Barnes
Sidespersons Ronnie Blaney & Margaret Swan

Sunday February 24th

11am Eucharist

Readers Ghislaine Kennedy & Evelyn O'Neill
Intercessions David Rowatt
Chalice Peter Cairns
Sidespersons Linda Jenkinson & Tim Rhead

Sunday March 3rd

11am Eucharist

Readers Fran Walker & Linda Macaulay
Intercessions Tim Rhead
Chalice Sharon Rowatt
Sidespersons Ross Elder/Maggie & Gavin Elder

Sunday March 10th

11am Eucharist Mothering Sunday

Readers Sharon Rowatt & Gavin Elder
Intercessions Margaret Hardie
Chalice Tim Rhead
Sidespersons Roberta Mailley & Chrissie Ashman

Sunday March 17th

11am Eucharist

Readers Tim Rhead & Janette Barnes
Intercessions Margot Rhead
Chalice Margaret Hardie
Sidespersons Ronnie Blaney & Linda Jenkinson

Sunday March 24th *(Subject to change)*

11am Eucharist Palm Sunday
Readers David Rowatt & Peter Cairns
Intercessions Linda Macaulay
Chalice Maggie Wallace
Sidespersons Margaret Swan & David Ansell

A MOMENT IN TIME

As we arrive in the village, the rain starts; it is a cold grey day, but all around the hills are white with snow. We climb uphill past the wee school and over the main road to join the quiet lane up the glen. Here, we take a path through woods of oak and birch trees. The rain has now stopped and the trees gleam with moisture and there are patches of snow on the ground. This is a beautiful place, so near to a main traffic route and a busy tourist attraction, but a peaceful relic of Scotland's natural forest cover.

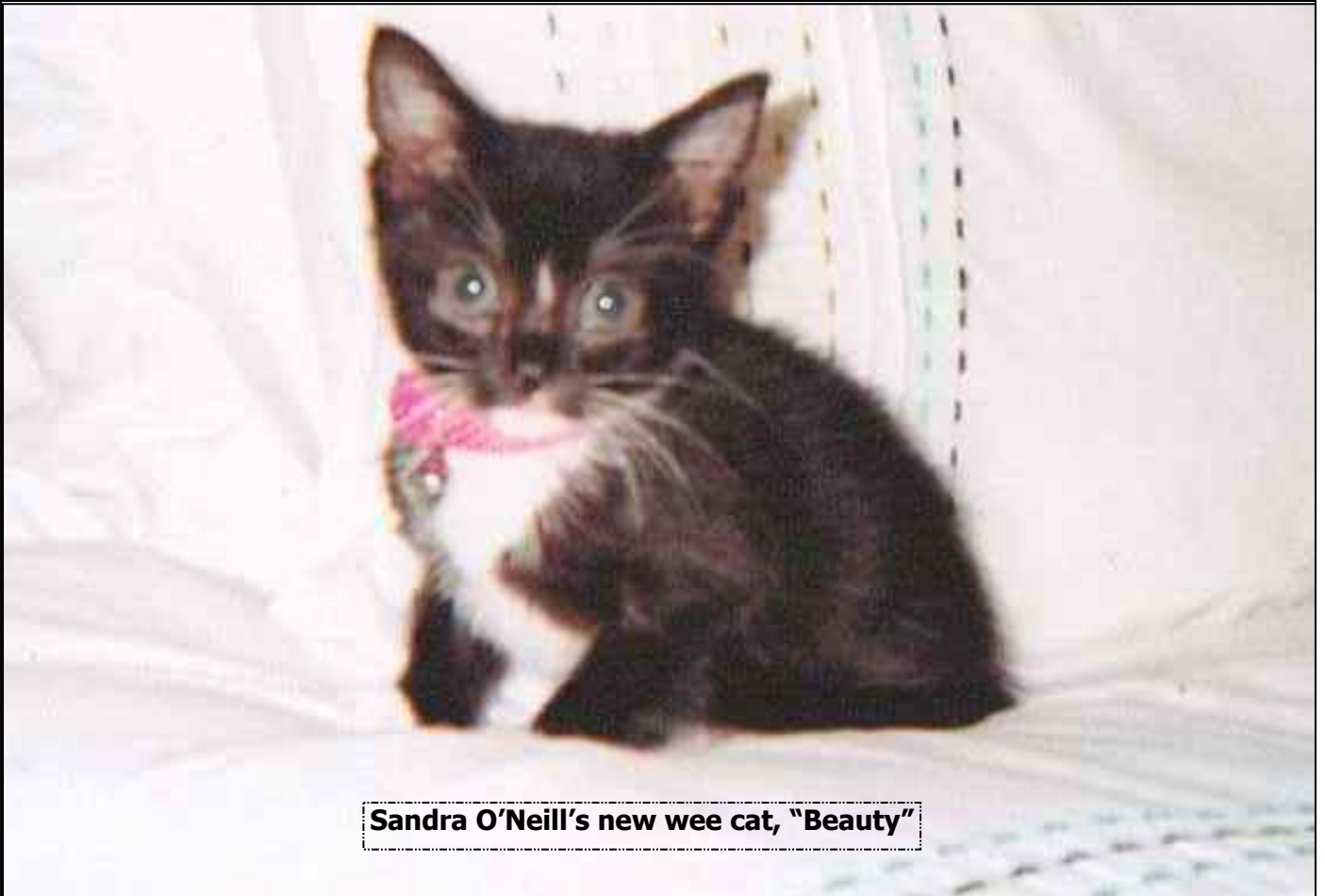
The path descends past piles of old slates, discarded by quarrymen of long ago; then we cross the river on a timber footbridge. The fast flowing water is translucent, reflecting the blue-green stones which cover the river bed. Across the river, we see some old quarry-workers cottages, partially hidden by trees. We go underneath the by-pass and come to a stone bridge where the old road crosses the river, and continue along the riverside path with a field on our left. A small flock of fieldfares fly out of the trees; these are colourful thrushes from Scandinavia which spend the winter here, grey and chestnut with a distinctive call.

Ahead lies Luss Parish church; it is not very old dating from 1875, but there has been a church on this site for over 1,500 years. Over the church-yard wall we see the eleventh century Viking hog-backed grave. This is indeed a place of ancient memories, but I am pleased to see it is not living in the past.

The tradition of pilgrimage which died out with the Reformation has been revived in recent years. We cross the river on a bridge built by army sappers in 2006 and enter the glebe owned by the Church of Scotland, which is now crossed by several pilgrimage paths, constructed by international teams of young people.

At the entrance stands a magnificent wooden carved Celtic cross, some twenty feet high, dedicated to St Kessog. As we approach, the sun bursts through the cloud and shines through the arms of the cross, symbolic of the resurrection of the Faith in this special place.

Tim Rhead



URC News

First of all let me say that from the time we came to worship in the halls in November 2012, we have felt a feeling of warmth and welcome, the kindness shown and all the help given has helped us to feel at home and settle in.

We will be sharing with St. Aug's for the World Day of Prayer. Maggie and I have worked well together and are looking forward to the service on Friday 1st March at 2pm.

Our organist Ken will be playing for the service. He plays the occasional backing music which is recorded for use by the Allsorts Choir. We are always being invited to join in activities that the Friends of St Augustine's have arranged.

Some of us are looking forward to our High Tea & Theatre Night. Our Moderator joined us at one of our morning services and was impressed by the way everything was set up and the social fellowship afterwards.

We are all looking forward to meeting the Bishop and sharing the Easter Service. Thank you all once again for your Christian love and fellowship

Cathie Watters, URC

Important

Many apologies that much material for this month's magazine has not been used. Much of that has had to do with space and a fair level of Editorial incompetence at the end! Please don't stop sending stuff in and a wee reminder that you sent an article earlier can often be helpful!