

ALYTH PARISH CHURCH



AUTUMN/WINTER MAGAZINE 2024

The Manse
Cambridge Street
Alyth



Dear Friend

I'm writing to you at the end of August and it's still pretty hopeless weather! What a shame for the children's holiday, for campers and barbequers! But the forecast is promising a good start to September so I hope that by the time you get the Newsletter there will have been a lovely "Indian Summer".

I hope you have managed to enjoy a break away or a day here and there despite our unpredictable climate.

I'm also writing to you when, very sadly, I'm getting ready to leave our beautiful Parish. I shall miss it so much - and also having the privilege of being the Parish Minister.

From the moment I came here 12 years ago I have been overwhelmed by the friendliness and kindness of everyone. I can't thank people enough. And the wonderful folk who have been such an amazing help in the positions of responsibility in the Church are fantastic. All of them are volunteers and we all owe them so much.

Apart from anything else, it's been great fun as well.

And when I've made one of my numerous mistakes, people have been so forgiving and tolerant!

I'll be so sad to leave but the good news for me is that we'll be living only a wee way away and so, like the proverbial bad penny, will be able to turn up to some of the great events that take place in our community.

I'd like to wish all blessings on our Church, and everyone involved in it, and the wider community for the future. I'm sure they will both flourish. Thanks to everyone for such a fabulous time in my life.

Yours in Christ,
Mike



A QUICK MINUTE FROM THE SESSION

We are all faced with some big decisions in life, some are very easy to arrive at and some less so and can cause a lot of thought and deliberation in arriving at what we think will be the right decision.

12 years ago, we had a big decision to make when we asked Mike to become our minister, the decision to ask him was an easy one, that's not to say that a lot of thought and deliberation had not taken place to arrive at this important decision, but it was in the main a very easy decision to arrive at. He came highly recommended, and we were extremely happy that he accepted our invitation to do so.

12 years on, and Mike has made a big decision, and as we are all aware that is to retire from being our Parish Minister in November of this year. Whether this was an easy or hard decision, it is without doubt one that he gave a lot of thought and deliberation to.

Before Mike accepted our invitation to become our Parish Minister I received an unsolicited letter from a Session Clerk of one of Mike's previous charges, this was in support of Mike's application and gave a very personal insight into what we could expect from Mike as a Minister! It's safe to say that everything that was contained within this letter, has come true and we have all benefited from enjoying having such a special person as our Minister for the last 12 years.

Mike is, without doubt, a very special person, and one of the endearing qualities that was espoused about Mike, was that he had this uncanny ability to get people to take on roles within the Church and little did I know that I would fall under his spell, when he asked me if I was willing to become Session Clerk!

It's a decision that I made 10 years ago and one that I certainly do not regret. We have had a lot of fun and I am only too happy that the decision that Mike has made is the right one for him and his family. If I was to have to write a letter of reference regarding Mike, it would be that he is without doubt an exceptional individual who gives tirelessly of his time, to everyone in the Parish, regardless of whether they are members of Church or not, a more caring, loving individual you would be hard pressed to meet, and I am proud to call him a friend.

Mike's last service will be on the 17th of November, where we will formally take the opportunity to mark his service to our Parish and we wish both him and Lesley all the very best for his retirement and future ahead.

*Steven Tait
Session Clerk*

THE CLOCK

Our church clock and bell were installed when the church was built in 1840. They are powered by gravity using two weights that are approximately 1/4 of a ton each. Each weight had to be hand wound up every 7 days for the last 184 years. For the last 30 years Bruce Maxwell has volunteered to carry out this winding, regulate the timing and service the clock. During Covid in 2020, when access to the church wasn't possible, the clock stopped and the bell no longer rang. Once access became available, the clock was again started. However, long term there were no volunteers to wind the clock and bell so the church board decided to instigate a project to automate them. It was during the process of getting technical specifications and quotes in place that we discovered the clock had been made by a famous clockmaker, Benjamin Lewis Vulliamy. He was clockmaker to King William IV and Queen Victoria, making many of the internal clocks in Buckingham Palace, Windsor Castle and other Royal Palaces. There was a good article about the clock in the March 2024 edition of the Alyth Voice which gave more information on Vulliamy. However, we still do not know why the church has such a famous and expensive clock installed in 1840!

When we discovered that our clock was made by a famous clockmaker, and probably cost around 25% of the total cost of building the church, we decided to keep as much of the original clock and operating system as possible. The company selected to carry out the work was Cumbria Clock Company from Penrith. Two electrical motors were installed, one to lift the clock weights and one for the bell weights. All of the weights were no longer required so some of the original clock weights were used for the new motors to lift. Therefore, the clock and bell are still driven by gravity but the weights are no longer manually lifted. The original weights, which are not required, will be left in the lowered position.

The project also included a complete dismantling of the clock, clean, refurbishment, rebuild and installation of a 'night silencer' system so the bell no longer strikes during the night. This work was completed on the 2nd of August 2024. A regulator will also be fitted in the near future to keep the clock to time and to change the hour twice a year. The additional electrical supplies up to the clock tower were installed by local electrician Lawrence MacFarlane. Cumbria Clocks will now service the clock on an annual basis.

The total cost of the project, before VAT, was approximately £12.3k. Funding has been fully met by the award of grants. It took nearly a year of much form filling and progressing to complete the grant process. The grants were as follows:-

Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust £3k,

Alyth Development Trust £2k,

Drumderg Wind Farm £6.75k

Alyth Community Council £0.5k.

Alyth Development Trust also paid for a professional to help with the Drumderg application.

The experts believe that the clock is good for another 180 years (they don't make them like that anymore!) The church Board and Session would like to thank all the people over the years who have wound up the clock and bell weights and serviced them and especially to Bruce Maxwell who has done it for the last 30 years.

We can now look forward to the clock operating and the bell striking on the hour (daytime only) for many years to come, maybe even another 180 years.

*John Smith
Fabric Convener*



A BIG THANK YOU TO JOHN

As you will know our Kirk clock has been electrified and it's great to hear it chime again on the hour. This could not have been done without all the time and effort given to the project by John Smith our fabric convener. He has been working tirelessly on the project for over a year, be it accompanying horologists to see our clock, acquiring grants so we could afford to progress, up to finally seeing the project done and dusted. It is wonderful for the church and the Alyth community as a whole to be able to hear the clock chime once again. Well done John !!

On one of the walls up the steeple there is a lot of graffiti. If you look closely, you see signatures from years gone by, part of the history of the church in many ways, as these people have obviously been working in the church or visiting.

David Ferguson
was up here doing
the Bell on the 7th day
Fast day 1877
15/3

William Ogilby Feat
1881
Joe Clark

James Anderson
1881. 8th July

Annie Anderson
1892

18th 1881
James on rotation
Phazel 1st
26 June 1894
John Walker
Slater
Alyth

Ts W Mann
6 Nov 1913
J pennycook
6 Nov 1911

Demom Milne
Church Officer
High Parish Church
19.11.11

DONALD SIM
1st BB Coy.
ALYTH 1913-6

MEDITERRANEAN BUCKET LIST

Last year Margaret and I went on a cruise to America and Canada. We enjoyed it enough to plan another this summer. We had a number of Mediterranean cities on our bucket list, so, having chosen carefully, off we set.



We flew to Barcelona. First on our list was a visit to the Basilica de la Sagrada Família, the modern cathedral designed by Catalan architect, Gaudi. Work started in 1882, and it is of course spectacular, and unfinished. The columns which surround the main spire are finished, but they are overshadowed by the derricks. The use of different stone is

imaginative and everywhere you look, the carvings are creative and seem modern even though they must have been designed 150 years ago. I wonder at the technical ability to calculate the necessary size and depth of the foundations to support all the building work, of different weights and stresses; all this needed to be calculated before any work could start. Across the doorway in tall letters is carved IESUS NAZARENUS REX IUDEORUM. It's Latin, so I wonder how many people would understand or even notice.

We travelled inland by coach to Aix en Provence through the glorious French countryside. After a refreshing white wine and crepe we visited the small Museum Granet, where there was a huge collection of pre-reformation paintings. Almost uniquely religious, there were gruesome blood curdling images of mutilation, torture, severed heads, and dead babies. Were these really there to inform and educate, or just simply to scare folk? They certainly scared the life out of me.

In the centre of St Tropez there is a modern metal sculpture called The Struggle. A man stands with a rope around his waist, he is the centre of a tug of war between an angel and the devil.

Everyone visiting the north west of Italy seems to want a picture of themselves leaning against the tower of Pisa. This bell tower stands at one end of the church there, and a huge Baptistry stands at the other end, this is where the sacrament of baptism takes place, a swimming pool ready for full immersion. The bright white marble contrasts with the vibrant (and obviously well-watered) green grass of the surrounding square. Tucked away in one corner is a statue, lying on its side is the fallen angel.



We arrived in Florence. Of all the wonderful buildings in this city, the great basilica in the Plaza Duomo is among the greatest on earth. It is a dazzling building of white, pink and green marble rising into the azure sky. Although we arrived before 2 pm visiting had been suspended because there were so many people queuing and booked to go in. We passed the church of Santa Croce, but

there, high above the entrance, we were baffled to see a huge Star of David. Regardless that this is a great Catholic Church, it had been designed by a Jew!

We didn't set out with any plan to tour churches or undertake any sort of pilgrimage. However, it's difficult to remain unmoved by the tremendous imagination, inspiration and energy of artists, designers, architects and builders when it comes to Christianity, but we were still amazed by the significant and lasting influence of religion in all its many facets.

Submitted by Derek Colley

THE TOURISTS' PRAYER



Heavenly Father,

Look down on us, your humble, obedient servants, who are doomed to travel this earth taking photographs, mailing postcards, buying souvenirs and walking around in our drip dry underwear. We beseech you, O Lord, to see that our plane arrives on time, our luggage is not lost and our overweight baggage goes unnoticed.

Give us this day, divine guidance in our choice of hotels. We pray that the 'phones will work and that the operator speaks our tongue, that there are not messages waiting from our children which would force us to cancel the rest of our trip.

Lead us to good, inexpensive restaurants where the wine is included in the price of the meal. Make the natives love us for what we are and not for what we can contribute to their worldly goods.

Grant us the strength to visit museums, the cathedrals, the palaces, and if, perchance we skip a historic monument to take a nap after lunch, have mercy on us for our flesh is weak.

Dear Lord, protect our wives from 'bargains' they don't need or can't afford. Lead them not into temptation for they know not what they do.

Almighty Father, keep our husbands from looking at foreign women and comparing them to us. Save them from making fools of themselves in nightclubs. And above all, please do not forgive them, for they know exactly what they do!

And when our journeys are over, grant us the favour of finding someone who will look at our holiday snaps and videos and listen to our stories, so our lives as tourists will not have been in vain. This we ask in the name of Cosmos, Thomson, Travelsphere, Thomas Cook etc.

Submitted by Janey MacFarlane

*No matter how you feel
There's usually an upside
To focus on and heal
Share things with each other
For their thoughts can reassure
Then go forward with courage
Feeling more secure.*

Little Boys' Prayer

*Dear God
Take care of my family
Take care of the whole world
Take care of yourself
Or we're all sunk!*

Submitted by Janey MacFarlane

RUSKY



You have a bonnie furry face,
The tamest o' the feline race
When walkin' you are fu' o' grace
And dainty care
Oor hame would be a poorer place
Withoot you there
Your coat feels smooth and soft as silk
Your teeth and whiskers white as milk
I've yet tae meet ane o' your ilk,
Aristocrat
Your bodies's sleek as golden silk,
Sophistocat
Your eyes like liquid amber mead
Licht up wi' love or is it greed
Whenever you require a feed
Lean meat, nae fat
Puss, you'll get everything you need
You're a tam cat

You our and wheedle roond my feet
In the early mornin' when we meet
Your affection nearly mak's me greet
But then I sigh
For when I meet you in the street
You'd pass me by
Your fickle heart's an irritation
Only open door's an invitation
To lock you in's a great temptation
Tak' care I micht
O' Rusky, whar' in a' creation
Do you ga'e at nicht?

You're claws like daggers, when they're oot
And you're jist too fond o' trailin' aboot
But that'll stop without a doobt
As well it micht
We're ga'en tae ha'e you seen aboot
Next Thursday nicht.

Submitted by Elma Mitchell

THANK YOU!

£13,408! Wow! With the donations & customers, this in the Kirk Shop this year. involved. It never ceases just how much "stuff" Hall over the setting up the Friday night, we felt literally no floor space at put another box down by 8 also a significant number of carried down the stairs at each other and laughed, few weeks before "will there be enough stuff"!



help of many volunteers, magnificent sum was raised A very big thank you to all to amaze the fundraisers comes into Airlie Street weekend and this year, on overwhelmed! There was the door and nowhere to pm! Of course, there were boxes and more items to be from storage. We looked did we really say out loud a

Once 8 pm arrived and doors shut, the gang who were there to help, welcomed the kettle going on for a quick cuppy and we made plans for the next day's 8.30 am start! Enthusiasm is a wonderful thing and we returned raring to go on Saturday morning. As in previous years, we were delighted to welcome new faces to our team, always a bonus and as the saying goes "many hands make light work"! More donations appeared and sleeves rolled up, we got stuck in emptying boxes, displaying toys, arranging furniture, washing dishes, literally just putting things down vaguely where they were meant to be! By closing of doors time at 11 am we were definitely ready for a cup of tea!

Fuelled by our cuppy, we returned to the job in hand and by 12.30, lunch was in sight. We don't go home for lunch as it wastes time and we were very grateful to Ruth Jolly who once again provided rolls, ham, crisps and a choccy biccy to keep us going throughout the afternoon. More emptying of boxes, re-arranging and pricing took us to 4 pm and we felt enough's enough and decided to call it a day. Let's have a long lie - we will meet at 9 am Sunday morning! Sunday was much the same as all day Saturday, and by lunchtime we were very pleased with the way everything was looking. By 3 pm the final details for Monday morning were in place, and as was the case for Andy Pandy "time to go home"!



The rest of the week - well we all know how that went! Thank you to one and all, near and far for helping to make the 2024 Kirk Shop the success it was. The "workers" were humbled by an exceptionally generous donation from a member of the congregation who insisted on paying for all our filled rolls from the Singing Kettle for the entire week. A huge "thank you" from us all, it was very much appreciated and made us aware of how much that person appreciated our efforts. Special thanks also to Lawrence MacFarlane for his help in the electrical department and to Richard Nicoll and John Smith who willingly use their cars and fuel as well as their trailers for collections, deliveries and skip runs. We certainly couldn't be so obliging to our customers without you and we know from feedback you are very much appreciated indeed.

At the end of the Kirk Shop, many items unsold went to various other charities, including Thrifty One and also Homestart and Buttons & Bows and we are grateful to Jean Campbell for organising this. John Smith and Lawrence MacFarlane, after a skip run later on the Saturday afternoon, went round the charity shops in Blairgowrie delivering several boxes of unsold CDs/DVDs, "new stock items" for each! Yet again Alyth Church is seen helping others in need and it is very much a way of out-reach to the wider community which is very important too.

Well, the t-shirts have been put away - but not for long! We are holding a Christmas Kirk Shop again this year with teas/coffees. This will coincide with the Winter/Christmas Market on 23rd November. More details will be announced nearer the time. We look forward to seeing you there for the usual bargains and banter.

Submitted by Audrey Young

A water bearer in India had two large pots, each hung on the ends of a pole that he carried across his neck. One of the pots had a crack in it, while the other pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water.



At the end of the long walk from the stream to the house, the cracked pot arrived only half full. For a full two years this went on daily, with the bearer delivering only one and a half pots full of water to his house.

Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments, perfect for which it was made. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection and miserable that it was able to accomplish only half of what it had been made to do.

After two years of what it perceived to be a bitter failure, it spoke to the water bearer one day by the stream. "I am ashamed of myself, and I want to apologize to you. I have been able to deliver only half my load because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your house. Because of my flaws, you have to do all of this work, and you don't get full value from your efforts," the pot said.



The bearer said to the pot, "Did you notice that there were flowers on your side of the path but not on the other pot's side? That's because I have always known about your flaw, and I planted flower seeds on your side of the path. Every day while we walk back, you've watered them. For two years, I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate the table. Without you being just the way you are, there would not be this beauty to grace the house."

Submitted by Liz Norrie

OUR MINISTER



A VERY SPECIAL MINISTER







Thank you Ross!

PATIENT BANK PROGRAMME

Every Friday during term time I attend a class in Dundee. We're a small group but have lots of chat and laughs about many things! I overheard two of my friends there discussing ailments. A common thread when we're getting on in age! However, I thought I misheard when one lady said she was having angina this week, and assuming something was wrong, I asked if she was ok. Laughing she replied - don't worry, it's not real, I'm fine! Confused I asked her to explain. She told me that she volunteered as a pretend patient at Ninewells Hospital.

Interested to know more, I made enquiries for myself. I contacted the hospital and went along for my first training session. I was introduced to the concept of volunteering to be a Simulated Patient. A group of us watched a video explaining the process. An experienced 'patient' was attending a 'GP appointment' with a trainee doctor. Working from a script, the 'patient' had to explain their symptoms then the student medic had to ask relevant questions to attempt a diagnosis or next steps. We were then shown round the medical school facilities which I have to say were first class. One room which I found particularly interesting was where students had the opportunity to maybe practise taking blood or giving injections. False arms were laid out on separate tables!!

A few weeks after the initial training session I returned for a second time. This session gave us the opportunity to have a go at being a patient with a trainee medic. I was given a script beforehand which I tried my best to remember!! I'm not sure who was more nervous - the second year student or me! It certainly made me aware of how much information our GPs have to glean from a ten minute appointment! It was a really informative experience for me. What appealed to me about this type of volunteering is that you are contributing to the training of future medics; helping them gain experience to interact with their patients in the future. I can also choose when and how often I want to attend future sessions, this fits in better with my retired lifestyle!!!



If this is something that might interest you then you can find out more about the Patient Bank Programme online.

Submitted by Margaret Colley

A SENIOR'S VERSION OF FACEBOOK

For those of my generation who do not, and cannot, comprehend why Facebook exists: I am trying to make friends outside of Facebook while applying the same principles. Therefore, every day I walk down the town and tell passers-by what I have eaten, how I feel at the moment, what I have done the night before, what I will do later and with whom. I give them pictures of my family, my dog and of me gardening, standing in front of landmarks, having lunch. I also listen to their conversations, give them "thumbs up" and tell them I "like" them. And it works, just like Facebook. I already have 4 people following me: 2 police officers, a private detective and a psychiatrist.

Submitted by Liz Norrie

RITA, A YOUNG GIRL IN AN AFRICAN CHILDREN'S CHOIR BASED IN KENYA

A year or two ago I wrote about Busie Malall in the Church Newsletter. Busie was a member of the African Children's Choir which visited Alyth in 2005 and I decided to sponsor her. Just as lock-down hope she found a job and is doing well.

Now I sponsor Rita from Kenya who was only seven when I first heard about her. She is part of the African Children's Choir in Kenya. At that time she had just started to learn to read, write and speak in English and her first letter to me was really only a few words. Now she is in Grade 6 and is tri-lingual. Her first language is Luhya - I think largely spoken in West Kenya but she studies both English and Swahili at school. English and Swahili are the official languages of Kenya - the latter is spoken all over East Africa. She is, of course, very keen on singing and dancing.

Rita lives with her family in the Kibera area of Nairobi. Kibera is Nairobi's largest slum - perhaps with nearly 1 million people who have little access to the basic necessities such as electricity, clean water, sanitation and sewage disposal. I will leave you to imagine what a "flying toilet" might be!



Rita goes to Kicoshep Primary School. Kicoshep means Kibera Integrated Community Self-help Programme. A free lunch is provided for all children. The school is an oasis of education, nurture and possibility for 350 Kibera children. Kicoshep also provides health, vaccination and outreach programmes to help with the many problems in the area.

Easter is an important time for Rita and her family. They go to Church and then make a good meal at home.

This year they had chapattis (flat bread) and chicken. About two months before Christmas we are asked if we can give an extra donation - so that Rita and her family can be given Christmas presents. Last year Rita was given a new set of bed linen and the family a food parcel and perhaps soap. Other gifts might be dinner ware or a solar powered light source.

Some time in the future the Choir will visit Europe and/or North America, where they will see a completely different world, as well as telling these countries something of Kenya. I hope that Rita, like Busie, will do well and be part of Kenya in the future.

For a little more information on Rita's school and her area go to kcefund.org; Kicoshep School or Kibera, Nairobi.

Submitted by Dorothy Lothian

A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

PERTHSHIRE BRASS BAND

CANDELIGHT CAROLS

Sunday 8 December 2024

In Alyth Parish Church

(Time to be confirmed)



*When the power of love
overcomes the love of
power, the world will
know peace.*

Jimi Hendrix

*True humility is not
thinking less of
yourself: it is thinking
of yourself less.*

C S Lewis

*Every time you smile at
someone, it is an action
of love, a gift to that
person, a beautiful
thing.*

Mother Teresa

*Pray, not because you
need something, but
because you have a
lot to thank God for.*

*If you judge people you have
no time to love them.*

Mother Teresa

LEARNING FROM BEES

For a long time it had been an aspiration of Sarah and me to look after honey bees. Not so as to necessarily collect honey. More so to encourage pollination and protect the honey bee from decline. Wasn't it Einstein that said that if bees became extinct then human beings would follow within four years? It was the sort of 'project' we'd thought we might do when we retire.

For the last few years, Sarah's sister has allowed a beekeeper to keep his 8 or 9 hives in her large garden. One day they got talking and the beekeeper had heard that there were often swarms of honeybees in May and June near where we used to live. He suggested that a bait hive be placed in our garden. We agreed, not thinking for a moment it'd work.

Three days later we saw a few bees scouting out the hive and a week later a swarm of 15-20,000 arrived at the hive, which Alistair had stupidly placed beneath our living room window. Our neighbour heard the noise of the swarm overhead and saw it land in our garden.



Trying not to panic, we spoke to the beekeeper. He was very excited and rather than come and take them away, he suggested we set up a proper hive in the garden. And that's how we got started with the bug.

Here's what we've learned from our beekeeping journey:

Females do all the work!

Colonies can only survive if each bee plays their part, scouting, cleaning, guarding, protecting, nursing, feeding, warming, foraging, sharing, storing, serving ...

Bees are a joy to watch.

They work hard.

They love the sun and warmth.

They prepare for the long term.

They serve the queen.

They look out for each other.

They feed each other.

They can welcome outsiders into their colony.

They move on to new pastures rather than stagnate in the same place.

Might there be something in all of that that we can learn from?

It's such a joy to simply be sitting in the garden watching the bees come and go into their hives. A sunny day means it's a busy bee day. The bees have been waiting for such days for a while as the weather hasn't always been so good. But today everything is fine with the world and the bees are dancing, some for the first time and some perhaps for the last.

When young bees emerge from their cells they spend the first few days on house cleaning duties. Firstly, they clean out their own cells, then go to other areas in the hive wherever there is need. They then spend a few days feeding larvae with Royal Jelly before helping to seal the cells over with wax so that the larvae can pupate.

It's only after having performed these essential duties for the colony that young bees will venture out of the hive to make orientation flights, short flights allowing them to lock into the location of the hive so that they know where to come back to once they start to forage for nectar and pollen.



It's these flights I'm watching today in the sunshine, and it looks like the bees are dancing, happy in the warm sun.

I suppose the Bible has lots of examples of people dancing in worship, like David before the Ark or Miriam with her tambourine. Worship can take all sorts of different forms and what might be one person's idea of worship might not be another's. Whatever the form or the style, perhaps the thing that all worship has in common is that it is an attempt to give worth to the Source of Life that is greater than we are and to whom all creatures owe their very existence and every breath.

Made for worship,
We might sing joyfully.
We might sit silently.
We might dance exuberantly.
We might bow reverently.
We might stand, awestruck at a sunrise.
Or lie prostrate, under the stars of night.
We might ponder a leaf,
Watch the bees dance in the garden,
Or touch the hand of a dying friend.
Whatever we do as worship,
God is glorified
and Love grows.

Thank you for making us feel so welcome here in Alyth.
Sarah and Alistair Cowper



The Bumble Bee Cannot Fly

According to laws
of aerodynamics
the bumble bee cannot fly;
Its body is too
heavy for its wings
and that's the simple
reason why.

But the bumble bee
doesn't know this fact,
and so it flies anyway
for all to see.
Remember this when you're
losing faith or hope
God's proof that the
impossible can be.

A. S. Waldrop



Board Coffee Morning



Brass Band Recital



Palm Sunday



Easter Day Hill Walkers



Easter Eggs donated to Ninewells



Burnside Court

LINDA AND PETER'S 2024 MOTORHOME TRIP TO ISLAY DISTILLERIES

On Sunday the 12th of August Peter, Emily, myself and our two dogs (Dyson and Loki) set off on our trip to Islay. We had a nice meandering trip down to Kenacraig, stopping off at Tarbet overnight, for the ferry crossing. The motor home was on the deck, but the car was on a mezzanine ramp above our heads. It was a nice smooth ferry crossing for Peter and me, but Emily sat out on the outside deck, eyes fixated on the horizon but managed not to be sick.

A quick run down to the island to Port Mor, our campsite, where we got ourselves set up, Emily in the tent and Peter, I, and the dogs in the motorhome. The midges soon found us so after smothering ourselves in midge repellent, we walked the dogs and discussed our plan of attack on the distilleries. A little later we had a nice meal at the Port Charlotte Hotel, dressing up for the occasion. BIG Mistake!!!!!!!

On the way the midges attacked me giving me fifty bites on my, (repellent coated) legs and feet and another thirty on my arms. Honestly, I counted them in the morning.

Tuesday, we visited the Bunnahabhain Distillery, all with covered arms and legs and me wearing a hat and net, looking like a dumpy beekeeper, but safe. Peter and Emily had a good tour around the distillery while I occupied the dogs, and we had a nice lunch. Bottles were bought and we were in good cheer. After the visit we returned down the single-track potholed road and after visiting a pottery where more money was parted with, went on a trail of discovery down to Port Ellen, returning to the campsite for the night.

OH! the ITCH the ITCH !!!!!!!!, my night was spent rubbing cream on my bites and eating anti-histamines, the other two had had sufficient whisky to knock them out, but the dogs got plenty of head torch led walks.

Wednesday was Kilchoman Distillery Day where more whisky was drunk and bottles and gifts bought and then a Messer trek up narrow single-track roads to see the Kildalton Cross, one of the earliest Christian crosses still in its original position. We then went on and visited an old woollen mill which was still weaving cloth on a loom that was made in Huddersfield where we came from, and we had a splendid natter with the current weaver. We also spent more money on matching dog collars for our two boys, then back home for tea and bed.

OH! THE ITCH THE ITCH !!!!!!!! the midges have got me!

Thursday, we woke up to the rain, mist and wind and were wondering if my planned activity of a cruise to see the wildlife would go ahead. So, we had a cooked breakfast in the campsite café and waited.

Fortunately, the weather cleared, and we set off at lunch time to Port Ellen and I boarded my boat to go around the coast. The sun even came out for me! I went up the coast and saw Ardbeg, Lagavulin and Laphroaig Distilleries from the sea, a sea eagle being mobbed by seagulls, seals, and red deer.



The deer had swum over from the mainland onto the little islands and were happily eating grass. The sea was quite rough when we were stationary, but it was an enjoyable experience. Peter and Emily visited Ardbeg, Lagavulin and Laphroaig Distilleries from the land side.

OH! THE ITCH THE ITCH !!!!!!! the midges still got me!

Friday was spent on Jura visiting the distillery and craft shops. More money was spent, again on whisky and gifts.

We returned to Kinacraig on the early morning ferry and returned home via Killin on Sunday morning. And YES, the gift of the ITCH from the midges has still got me! *Linda and Peter Messer*

CHRISTMAS CARDS

There is a list of folks I know
All written in a book,
And every year at Christmas time
I go and take a look,
And that is when I realise that
These names are a part,
Not of the book they're written in,
But of my very heart.

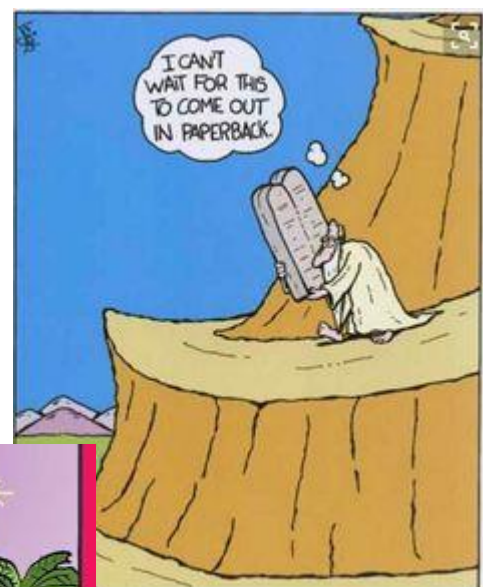
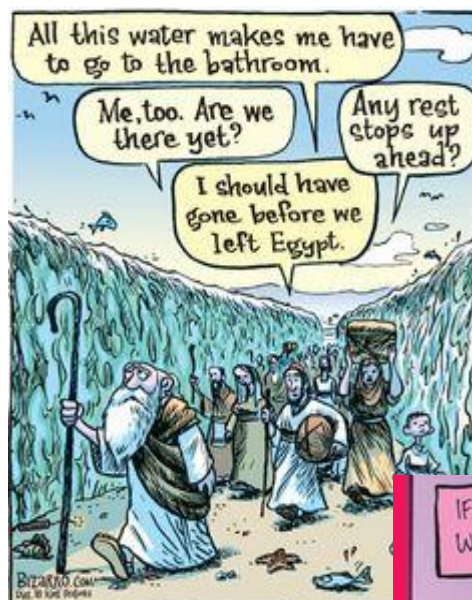
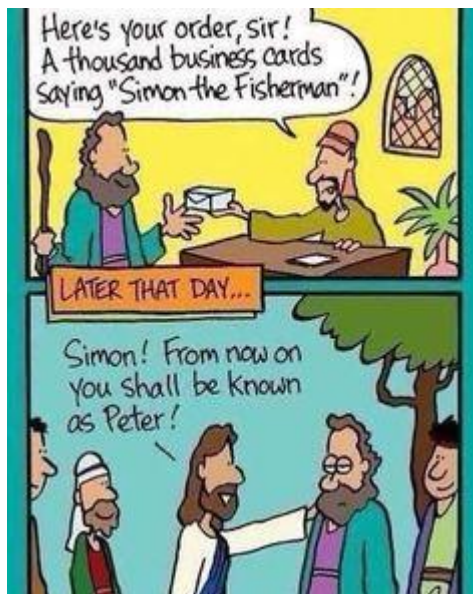


For each name stands for someone
Who has touched my life sometime,
And in that meeting they've become
The 'Rythm of the Rhyme'.
I really feel I am composed
Of each remembered name,
My life is so much better
Than it was before you came.

So never think my Christmas cards
Are just a mere routine
Of name upon a list,
Forgotten in between.
For when I send a Christmas card
That is addressed to you
It is because you're on that list
Of folks I'm indebted to.

And whether I've known you
For many years or few,
In some way you had a part
In shaping things I do.
So every year when Christmas comes
I just realise anew
The biggest gift that God can give
Is knowing folk like you.

TIME FOR A LAUGH



MY MOUNTAIN ADVENTURES - VOLUME 2 - DAVID ROBERTSON

Cuillin Ridge Traverse - Skye - May 2024

I, along with three colleagues from work, decided to tackle the famous Cuillin Ridge on Skye in May this year. We had hired guides and travelled to Skye on the Thursday, with the intention of completing the full ridge traverse over the next two days, with an overnight bivvy high on the ridge.



For those unfamiliar with the Cuillin Ridge, simply put, it is the hardest mountain challenge in Britain bar none. It requires both physical and mental strength, good navigation skills, the ability to scramble and climb and the equipment required to tackle the challenges ahead (hiring a guide is most advisable!!).

We stayed at Sligachan Campsite at the northern end of the ridge and headed to Glenbrittle on the Friday morning to begin our challenge. An excellent path took us across the hillside, soon swinging round the base of Sron na Ciche and into Coire Ghrunnda. This corrie is very impressive with huge slabs of rock. It was a muggy, claggy day so the views were limited and the heat made the climb up the corrie tough going.

Once on the ridge, we now had the task of making our way to the top of the Munros, eleven on the ridge in total. We roped up in groups of three and donned helmets to provide extra protection from falls and falling rocks. First up was Sgurr Nan Eag. From there, we traversed over to Sgurr Dubh Mor, Sgurr Alasdair and then Sgurr Mhic Choinnich, passing the Great Stone Chute on the way and traversing some very difficult terrain including Collie's Ledge. four down, seven to go.

Next up, Sgurr Dearg with its' summit - The Inaccessible Pinnacle. It is notorious as the most difficult of the Munros, requiring a rock-climb and an abseil (and suitable experience or help from an expert) to complete the ascent. Although pushing me to the limits of my comfort zone and abilities, we were on the top of the In Pinn and abseiling off the far side before I knew it! A great feeling knowing that we had succeeded where many fail.



Next up, and our final Munro of the day, was Sgurr na Banachdich. From there, we descended to a bivvy site for some food and a well-deserved rest. Water was scarce and it took some time for us to locate a source and top up our bottles for the night and the next day. Thankfully no midgies to be seen and we all managed at least some sleep! The views of the ridge and down over Loch



Coruisk from the bivvy site were spectacular!

The next morning, with 5 Munros to tackle, we were up and on our way early. The first Munro of the day was Sgurr a'Ghreadaidh. Then on to Sgurr a'Mhadaidh. The next major obstacle was crossing An Caisteal. This involved leaping over three sizeable gaps with huge drops below, should you fail to make it over! Then an abseil off the north side to continue on our way to our next Munro, Bruach na Frithe.



Reaching the summit of Bruach Na Frithe left us with two Munros to go. By this time the legs were starting to go and severe fatigue was setting in. Our route traversed round the next Munro and brought us to a bealach between number ten Am Basteir and number eleven Sgurr nan Gillean. Here we could leave our rucksacks, covering them with stones to prevent any ravens making off with our possessions as commonly happens up there. Some have been known to take a liking to car keys!

We made our way to the summit of Sgurr nan Gillean first which signalled the end of the ridge traverse and involved some steady scrambling and a bum slide or two on the descent. By the time we reached this summit, I was pretty much done in. On reaching the bealach again, I had to bail out. Another Munro was just a step too far for me, especially with a 3-hour trek back to the Sligachan Hotel still to tackle. I was disappointed and left the ridge feeling like I had let myself down. It took me 2-3 days to appreciate what I had accomplished and am proud of the physical and mental effort it took to complete the traverse, even if I did have to skip one Munro. I'll be back to tick that one in the near future and put to bed that wee niggle I have at not doing the eleven Munros.

Submitted by David Robertson



When you sleep
I hope its sound
May you always land
On solid ground

Be true to yourself
No matter the stress
Be kind and listen
To those you love best.

May you greet the day
Full of faith and hope
And always live
With courage and hope.

Life is a journey
With it's tears and laughs
So enjoy it
As long as it lasts.



KIRK XMAS SHOP



Airlie St Hall

23 November

10 am - 4 pm



Teas and coffees will be served



CHRISTMAS



Every time a hand reaches out
To help another ... That is Christmas
Every time someone puts anger aside
And strives for understanding
That is Christmas
Every time people forget their differences
And realize their love for each other
That is Christmas
May this Christmas bring us
Closer to the spirit of human understanding
Closer to the blessing of peace!

When you look at a snowman
It's three snowballs round
He is reminding you
That in God, Three in one is found.
The bottom reminds us of
God the Father
He's our strong rock and foundation
Creator of all living things
People, tribes and nations.
The middle shows us God the Son
With his arms spread open wide



Who died on the cross for each of us
Our sins Jesus' blood did hide.
The head reminds us of
God the Holy Spirit
Who is our counsellor and friend.
He speaks to our hearts and minds
Transforming us into the
Likeness of Him.
So, in the midst of wintertime fun
A snowman you do see
It's a loving reminder
Of the Blessed Trinity.



Drawn by Jilly Henderson, Alyth

www.alythparishchurch.org.uk
Alyth Parish Church of Scotland Scottish Charity No SC000540