



LOCHEND & NEW ABBEY CHURCH NEWSLETTER

July 2026

LETTER FROM YOUR MINISTER

Summertime is the outdoor season. The long days invite us to explore the beauty of nature and to enjoy God's wonderful creation. Here in Scotland, we are especially blessed with magnificent scenery. I particularly enjoy climbing a hill – or even a Munro. It is always something of a purifying experience. The higher you climb, the more it feels as though you are leaving behind the dusty demands and whispering worries of everyday life, venturing into a quieter, purer world. Reaching the summit often brings a deep and satisfying sense of achievement.

Yet sometimes things turn out very differently from what we expect.

That was my experience when I travelled to Arran with a friend to climb Goatfell. As we set off, the weather was pleasant, and we were full of anticipation. The walk began well, but as we climbed higher, the mist gradually grew thicker. Eventually, it became so dense that we could hardly see anything at all. Then, as we rounded a corner, a fierce wind suddenly blew against us with such force that we could scarcely move forward.

My friend was an experienced mountaineer – he was Swiss – and even he concluded, indeed, shouted over the wind, that it would not be sensible to continue, especially as we were unfamiliar with the terrain. So, we had no choice but to turn back.

At first, I was naturally disappointed. I had been looking forward to the view from the summit, and we were left with the feeling that we had not really completed our walk. But afterwards, I began to see it in a different light. Perhaps it was better this way, because we had encountered something deeper: the mystery of the mountain.

The mountain taught us respect and awe. Nature is not simply an object for our enjoyment or our achievement; it has its own power and character. On that day, the mountain did not welcome us. Sometimes we learn more through disappointment than through success, for disappointment has the power to humble us.

The same is true of disappointments in our parish life. They can teach us a new perspective, because in the end it is not so much the circumstances that need to change; rather, our experiences may transform us, making us more aware of God's presence even in the wind that blows against us and brings our plans to nothing.

As Moses received the Ten Commandments from God on Mount Sinai, the Bible describes the event as awe-inspiring: there was a thick cloud and the sound of a loud trumpet. The people trembled and did not dare to approach the mountain. The story reminds us that God is not simply found where we feel comfortable or in control. Often, we encounter Him most deeply where we are challenged to leave our comfort zone and – when the way ahead is hidden in darkness – place our trust in Him, for God alone sees the whole picture.

Happy summer!

Yours,

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GLAN JONES – An appreciation of a New Abbey organist

At a time when most people would be enjoying a long retirement, Glan came to New Abbey Church to take up the appointment as organist. He remained in post till he retired in 2025.

Glan was born in South Wales in 1924 - his full title being Herbert Glan Jones - the son of a miner and part of a large family. He was brought up as a Baptist, and his father played the organ for the local choir. Glan began playing at home on a harmonium and later progressed to the organ. He told me he first played in the church at the age of 14.

The family moved to Birmingham before Glan reached working age. His first job after leaving school, was working as a butcher's boy. He then progressed to working for BSA, in the woodworking department where he gained his skills, making and finishing the butts for rifles. I remember him telling me that although he was in a reserved occupation, he volunteered in 1943, to join the Shropshire Light Infantry, because, in his own words, "My friends were going and I thought it would be an adventure".

It was during his time in the army, that Glan transferred from the Baptist church to become a lifelong, ardent Anglican. He told me initially it was much easier to find an Anglican service to attend, but it was his love of music and especially choral music that drew him thence.

On leaving the army in 1948, Glan was able to find an apprenticeship with an organ building firm and began training to build and tune organs. However, he related to me that on his very first day he was given a shovel and put in the back of a van. He was told he was to go and help dig as much of the organ as possible out of the rubble of what had been a large church hit by a landmine!

After gaining the necessary skills, he decided to branch out on his own. By this time the family was living in Birmingham and Glan managed to acquire an old Methodist chapel to use as a workshop. The only problem was that the workshop was 30 miles from his home - not a good long-term arrangement.



**Glan's last organ-build
in Westerkirk**



**Glan at the New
Abbey church organ**

At home his wife, Edna, had noticed in his trade journal that there was an organ firm for sale in a place called Kippford. They decided it was worth investigation and in 1966 they moved, with their children Margaret and Gareth, to what would become their home for the rest of his days.

The firm they bought was known as Solway Organs. Glan changed the name to H.G. Jones and Son and built up a reputation throughout the country as a fine organist and organ builder, even building an organ in Nigeria.

I first met Glan in my early 20s and then again later when he was appointed organist at Dalbeattie Parish Church and

I was playing at Urr Parish Church. With my interest in organs, I became involved, as a volunteer, in some of his tuning rounds. I helped him install his last organ at Westerkirk, near Langholm. At that stage he was 87.

Glan retired from New Abbey as organist at the age of 100. His was a long life, well lived. It was a privilege to have known him.

Gordon Kinghorn

KIRK SESSION NEWS

Service of Introduction and Union for Maxwelltown West & New Abbey

Because of the extensive reorganisation in this area of the Church of Scotland, services to mark the union of parishes have been taking place across the expanded Presbytery for many months, often long after new arrangements have come into force. Our turn came on Tuesday 5th May at 7.00pm in photograph shows our Minister, by Mrs Gillian Lynn, Moderator Linford, Minister at Troqueer necked microphone insisted on



force. Our turn came on Maxwelltown West church. The Rev Johannes Wildner, flanked of Presbytery and Rev Tim and Caerlaverock. The long-not being left out of the picture!

Food bank collection

As school holidays approach, food banks find more demand than usual. We still collect non-perishables for First Base in Dumfries. As well as food items such as tins, dried goods and UHT milk, toilet rolls and toiletries are also welcome. Any donations can be placed in the boxes on the back pew of the church.

Redecorating

You may have noticed that the rear vestibule, toilets and kitchen in the church have been repainted. This is all thanks to Ron Thomas, one of the elders from Maxwelltown West. We are very grateful to him for carrying out this work and appreciate the improvement it

has made to these areas.

Service in Beeswing

On Sunday 19th July, our service of worship will be held in Beeswing Memorial Hall, instead of in New Abbey church, at the usual time of 9.30am. All are welcome.

Bible study group

The study group held its last session on 10th June. It will now take a break for the summer and resume in the Autumn when the topic will be the prophet, Isaiah.

Joint service and BBQ

On Sunday 21st June, a joint service of the two churches was held at 11.00am at Maxwelltown West church. It was followed by a BBQ in the manse garden thanks to the generosity of Rev Johannes. It was an opportunity for



both congregations of the united parish (see the top story) to meet together in one location.

On the longest day of the year, the weather set fair, the sun shone, the rain held off and everyone had a most enjoyable time of worship and fellowship, as these photos show.



Perhaps, in more senses than one, a heavenly banquet in the superb corner of God's kingdom that is SW Scotland.

FAVOURITE HYMNS

Collective singing is an essential part of many religious traditions. It lies at the heart of the broad Christian tradition, albeit the Church of Scotland only published its first hymn book a little over 150 years ago. The current New Abbey church has good musical acoustics, and congregations sing enthusiastically accompanied by the organ, sympathetically played.

In a new series, we look at hymns that hold a special place for one individual. Whilst this may be a church member, it doesn't have to be. The editor would be very happy to receive contributions from anyone. We start with Catherine Lye, New Abbey church's recently retired Kirk Session Clerk.

How Great Thou Art

O Lord my God! when I in awesome wonder
consider all the works thy hand hath made,
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,
thy power throughout the universe displayed:

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,
'How great Thou art, how great thou art!'*

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,
'How great Thou art, how great thou art!'*

When through the woods and forest glades I wander
and hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;

when I look down from lofty mountain grandeur
and hear the brook, and feel the gentle breeze,

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,
'How great Thou art, how great thou art!'*

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,
'How great Thou art, how great thou art!'*

And when I think that God his Son not sparing,
sent Him to die - I scarce can take it in,
that on the cross, my burden gladly bearing,
he bled and died to take away my sin:

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,
'How great Thou art, how great thou art!'*

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,
'How great Thou art, how great thou art!'*

When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation
and take me home - what joy shall fill my heart!

Then I shall bow in humble adoration
and there proclaim, my God, how great thou art!

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,
'How great Thou art, how great thou art!'*

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,
'How great Thou art, how great thou art!'*

Catherine writes:

I am not alone in choosing *How Great Thou Art* as my favourite hymn. It was selected as the favourite

hymn of all time in a poll carried out by BBC Songs of Praise in 2019.

It has a long and complicated history and has had many translations, additions and subtractions before arriving in its current form in 1949.

The original version was a poem in Swedish by Carl Boberg written in 1885. It was based on Psalm 8, and he got his inspiration from the experience of walking home through a storm and experiencing the calm weather thereafter. Our version comes thanks to Stuart Hine, a missionary who heard the hymn while working in what was then the Soviet Ukrainian SSR in 1930s. He translated and paraphrased it and was inspired to add verses 3 and 4 as a result of his experiences during his missionary work in Ukraine (v3) and among the refugee Polish community in the UK after WW2 (v4). It became popular because of the Billy Graham Evangelical crusades in the 1950s.

I associate *How Great Thou Art* with that other favourite of Scottish congregations, Psalm 121 – *I, to the hills will lift mine eyes*. Praising the greatness of God when looking at the landscape and world around us is something about which I feel strongly. The steadfastness of God and his enduring love for us is reflected, not only in the creation of our world, but also in the sacrifice of Jesus at the crucifixion, his resurrection and the promise of a homecoming after our lives are over. *How Great Thou Art* eloquently expresses these aspects of our faith.

I cannot sing this hymn without remembering good family friends who were great hill walkers. Reaching the summit of Snowdon, Dorothy looked at the view of the mountains and surrounding landscape and spontaneously began to sing this hymn. To use the refrain from another old hymn - when looking at creation 'how can I keep from singing'.

NEW ABBEY GUILD

Our Daffodil Tea in March marked the end of the current session of Guild meetings. Held for the first time in the larger room of the village hall we are so grateful to all those who supported us and especially to our colleagues from MaxWest.

At our business meeting in April, we made just one change to our committee and appointed Hazel Hubbert as Treasurer to replace Margaret Shuttleworth who has served in that role since time immemorial. Margaret's 38(!) years of service were warmly appreciated.

Themes for 2026/27

Although our secretary, Eleanor Kinghorn, was unable to attend this meeting she had sent a list of possible speakers to approach for the next session, all of which were considered helpful and appropriate. Each fits neatly into next year's theme entitled *Beyond the Walls* - the last of the series of three, which started with *Sure Foundations* followed by *Living Stones* under the umbrella theme **Let us Build a Home**.

The themes range from 'The Covenanters' through to 'Life in the Manse', 'the work of Christian Aid', 'the Church of Scotland's Crossreach service' and 'the work of Street Pastors'.

Guild projects

The most recent figures we have received about the money donated to Guild projects are as follows:

- | | |
|---|------------|
| 1) Bibles for Bairns , Scottish Bible Society | £53,952.89 |
| 2) Operation Hope, Egypt (a voice for persecuted Christians) | £41,305.80 |
| 3) Bear, Bulgaria (building a Christian Church) | £45,694.34 |
| 4) Crossreach (Church of Scotland) | £66,330.71 |

This last project is labelled *Playful Beginnings*. It supports children with additional needs and parents struggling with the early years of parenthood.

We start our new session on the last Tuesday in September, at 2pm and, as always, all are welcome! As last year, we will be joining forces with the

MaxWest Guild for our rededication service in Guild Week.

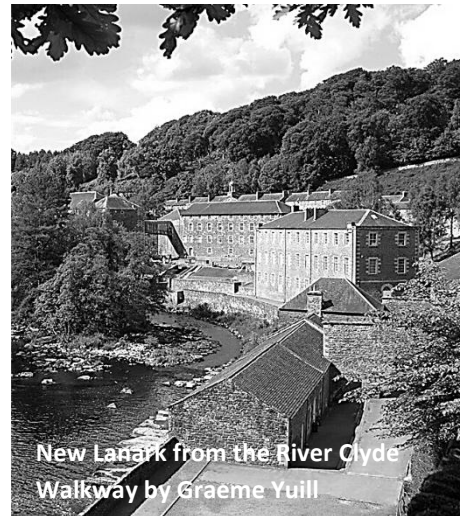
I conclude with this tribute to our oldest Guild member, no longer able to attend meetings as she is now in a care home, but who is fondly remembered having just reached the milestone age of 100.

Margaret Wilson had just retired from farming at Auchengray Farm when I arrived at Barlay with Bjorn in 1984. Since Bjorn had bought Barlay in 1968, he had known Margaret and the family at Auchengray for much longer than I had, and I soon felt as if I had known her longer too. She has been such a committed Guild member, and we wish her well as she moves into her 11th decade.

Glennys Ardin - Convenor

NEW ABBEY 65 CLUB

In May, members and friends enjoyed their outing to New Lanark. The weather was reasonable and it was



a most interesting day trip to one of Scotland's foremost heritage museums.

Built in 1786 by Robert Dale, it was unusual for a cotton mill

of its time, as it provided housing for its employees and made sure they, and their families, had access to educational and medical facilities. In terms of social care, it was well ahead of its time.

On **Tuesday October 27th** at 7pm in the Village Hall, Alison Burgess will talk to the club about various aspects of New Abbey's History. This meeting is open to all. **Please note this is a change of date from the one originally issued.**

Christine Hutton

CHRISTIAN AID

TOGETHER WE CAN TURN HOPE INTO ACTION



For those who may never have read the Christian Aid report before, here is a brief summary of what we do:

Christian Aid is an international charity, founded by churches in Britain and Ireland more than 80 years ago. We work in partnership with a network of churches, organisations and people of all faiths and none. Together, we deliver vital programmes of work and raise awareness and funds to help drive lasting change for disadvantaged and impoverished people all over the world. Our supporters, among whom we in New Abbey are part, give act and pray to support millions of people globally.

With partners and communities in Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean, we're supporting people experiencing poverty, the effects of climate change and those affected by humanitarian emergencies. In a humanitarian emergency arising from a natural disaster, such as an earthquake or serious flooding for instance, Christian Aid partners are often the first to respond, while an official response is still being coordinated.

An important part of our work is to promote peace in areas of conflict and sustainability for those who are impoverished, supporting them to find the ways and means to be able to support themselves and their families against all the odds.

By turning our hope into action, we're hoping and helping to build a fairer, more peaceful world.

Every year, Christian Aid holds a national fund-raising week for a particular project. This year the project was urban farmers in Kenya, providing people with the means to grow food for themselves in towns or cities frequently lacking green spaces.

Through New Abbey church a total of £265 was donated towards the project. Our plant sale in June raised a total of £597, making a total of **£863**. Thank you so much.

How can YOU turn hope into action?

By donating money, gift-aided if possible. Envelopes are found at the back of the church every Sunday, so your donations are anonymous.

Alternatively, you would be very welcome to attend a Christian Aid event, such as our annual **Coffee morning on 12 September from 10–12 noon in St George's Church Hall, George Street, Dumfries.**

Then in the autumn there is a **Harvest Appeal**, and later a **Christmas Appeal**.....a constant list of appeals, just as there is a constant need for our support for some reason somewhere in the world.

Thank you for donations you may have given, and in anticipation of your generous support if you have not already donated this year.

Eleanor Kinghorn

VENEZUELA EARTHQUAKE APPEAL

Before you turn the page, there's one more appeal, currently the most immediate and urgent of all.

Few, if any, of us can have failed to hear the news and see the pictures from the neighbourhoods in Venezuela that were the subject of not one, but two



earthquakes on 24th June. Entire buildings were reduced to piles of rubble and roads were rendered impassable with great scars running through them.

Families lost everything –

relatives, homes, security, livelihoods.

With their partners in Venezuela, Christian Aid has begun to channel funds to those most affected by the disaster and for whom the present is desperate, and the future is difficult to imagine.

The home page on Christian Aid's website

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/appeals/emergencies/venezuela-earthquake-appeal>

provides easy links to ways in which the aid effort can be supported.

Alternatively, you can use one of the envelopes at the back of church. Even the smallest donation will make a difference.

MISSION PARTNERS

The Church of Scotland mission partners are the church's overseas personnel. They work in various roles with partner churches in several countries throughout the world. They are recruited by the Church of Scotland in response to requests from these partner churches. Gary Brough was our Presbytery's mission partner. Mission partnership enables congregations to hear news, and be supportive, of the work of the church abroad. We received regular newsletters from Gary during his time in Malawi.

Gary was appointed to work with the Church of the Central Africa Presbyterian General Assembly in Malawi as a Capacity Development facilitator, helping Synods in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe with developmental work. He signed up to spend 3 years in Malawi but stayed for 7. Gary, his wife, and three daughters lived in Mzuzu, in northern Malawi.

He developed and worked on several projects including the Emerging Leaders Programme to ensure continued leadership in the church. He was also involved with the development of 'Firmly Planted', a community-based agroforestry initiative with the ambition of making a sustainable impact across Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Agroforestry presents opportunities to challenge food insecurity, de-forestation, climate change and youth unemployment. Support for the project came from the sale of used stamps and the Guild.

Returning to Scotland, he has taken the position of Director of Programmes at the Scottish Bible Society. As yet, there is no information about a new mission partner for the Presbytery of the Southwest. However, we thought it might be of interest to share a couple of extracts (one this Newsletter issue and one the next) from Gary's blog as he returned to this country.

This Is Not Just Like Malawi

4th April 2026

Self-awareness is a gift. Not to each of us, but to those around us. A cross-cultural experience, even a short one, can often boost our self-awareness. But only if we let it. Too often, though, we settle for the performance of reflection rather than the real thing. We come back with polished phrases about what "they" have taught us, when what we really mean is that we have briefly noticed ourselves. "It showed me how much we take for granted," we say, as though we have uncovered a profound truth rather than finally spotting comforts that were always wrapped around us.

It is a privilege to have the opportunity to share about life and work in Malawi. But it is also fraught with dangers. Even after seven years, our insights are clouded, our perspective skewed. Yes, race is a barrier to understanding culture, but so are the quieter protections we carry without thinking: a foreign passport, access to money, the possibility of leaving, the knowledge that for us many crises remain interruptions rather than traps.

So now in Scotland, when we hear, or even find ourselves saying, "well, things are hard here too," it is worth pausing. Hardship is real in many places, but not all hardship carries the same weight, nor does everyone face it with the same protections.

The current fuel price shock is a global challenge. To see queues at filling stations, empty pumps and rising prices is not unfamiliar in Malawi. Seeing it happen here in the UK might make us say, "This is just like Malawi." But it isn't. Fuel shortages do not stop at the pump. They push up food prices, disrupt transport and trade, and make access to healthcare and work even more fragile.

To be a student in an under resourced school, a patient in an understaffed hospital or a driver on a potholed road in the UK may give us a point of contact, but not a claim to understanding. Those experiences, real as they are, do not automatically qualify us to understand what such hardships mean in the lives of others. At best, they may make us more careful listeners and less confident interpreters.

“Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.” – *James 1:19-20 ESV*

What if hardship made us more careful listeners, less inclined to rush to speak, and especially less eager to speak in anger? If our hardships don't lead us to

vent our frustration, could they make us slower, gentler and more attentive to the hardships of others? Could we be moved in compassion to have anger toward the systems that create poverty and not just the circumstances that demonstrate poverty? Would self-awareness like that help produce the righteousness of God?

NEW ABBEY CURLING CLUB

New Abbey Curling Club finished the season on a high following another very successful year on the ice. The club celebrated with its annual End of Season Social and Awards Night at the end of March, bringing members together for an enjoyable evening of good company, laughter and recognition of achievements throughout the season.

The awards night is always one of the highlights of the club calendar, providing an opportunity to celebrate the efforts and successes of members both on and off the ice. A wide range of awards were presented during the evening, recognising individual performances, team achievements and contributions to the club. We would like to extend our sincere thanks to Southernness Golf Club once again for their excellent hospitality and for helping to make the evening such a success.

Although the curling season has now come to an end, the work behind the scenes continues. The club

committee are already busy planning fixtures, competitions and events for next season to ensure another enjoyable and successful year for all members.

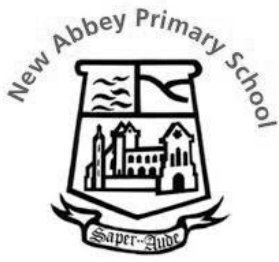
New Abbey Curling Club is always keen to welcome new members to our friendly and thriving club. Whether you are an experienced curler or completely new to the sport, we would be delighted to hear from you. We also look forward to welcoming back our returning members when the new season gets underway in October.

If you are interested or just want more information, please contact Ross at newabbeycurlingclub@outlook.com and we get in touch with you.

Nicole Weymouth
Club President - New Abbey Curling Club

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NEW ABBEY SCHOOL

Hello everyone.

Here's a wee summary of some of the things we've been up to during Term 4 at New Abbey Primary.

In April, our P5-7 children enjoyed a day at The Bridge with Scottish Opera. New Abbey and Calside pupils worked together to produce The Dragon of the Western Sea. Then, our families were treated to a performance. It was fantastic!

In May, we held our Sports Day at Abbey Vale FC. The weather was kind it went smoothly. We had a New Abbey themed week. We are incredibly lucky to have such beautiful, historic surroundings as well as people and places that want us to visit.

Our week consisted of:

- 1) **Shambellie House** – photography, crafts, quilting and a fascinating talk with Alison Burgess on local history using the 'Hairy Chest'!
- 2) **Sweetheart Abbey** and the **Corn Mill** – We were treated to interesting tours and now our family crest designs are on display at the Abbey.
- 3) A sponsored walk to the **Waterloo Monument** to raise money for the SSPCA and DG Canine Rescue. It poured, but we were still smiling! We raised £846!

Later that month, our football team participated in the small schools' Cairn Cup tournament and we won! Our team of superstars didn't lose a single game! We will host next year.

P6/7 completed Bikeability training in school and around Kindar Drive and have all achieved Level 2. So important to be road safety aware with a busy road weaving through our village. We entered two teams in Active Schools' Spring Relay Competition and won silver medals. Quite an achievement in the heat!

Also in May, P1-4 performed Scottish songs to their families after 10 weeks of 'Ram Tam' singing with the Youth Music Initiative. Then, they had three weeks of Gaelic singing with a specialist visitor. P5-7 were invited back to Shambellie to participate in their Quilt Fling. This time the theme was Japan – their designs look beautiful! The Community Council

kindly invited our children to plant the village hanging baskets again which are looking great.

We hold an art competition each year and this time the theme was our local area. The children created wonderful pictures and models of everything from the Abbey to the shop, to the hanging baskets, to the Monument! The four well-deserved winners got lots of art materials.

Our very own Alexa won the Rotary Club's Young Photographer Competition with a spectacular photo of a mushroom taken from below. Meanwhile, our Sophie won Gold in the Guid Nychburris Handwriting Competition.

Nearer the end of term, P1-4 will have a day trip to Dumfries, visiting the Ewart Library, the Robert Burns Film Theatre and the Catherine Street Park. P5-7 will visit the Tongland Hydro-Electric Power Station and the Kirkcudbright Museum. Finally, we will all go to Mabie Farm Park for fun together.

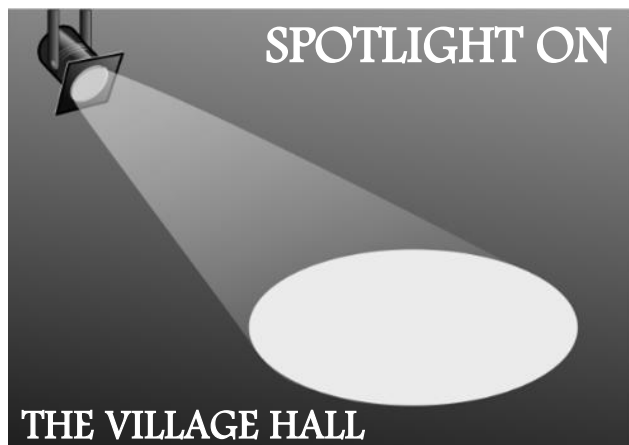
On Monday 29th June at 9.15am, we will have our End of Term Leavers' Service at New Abbey Church. All are welcome.

If you'd like to see more of what we get up to, you can follow us on Facebook. Just search New Abbey Rockstars. We wish you all a relaxing summer when it finally arrives!

On a final note, I write to let you know that I will leave New Abbey Primary at the end of this term to become headteacher of Cargenbridge Primary from August. I am excited about the new role but will be very sad to leave New Abbey. I have treasured every moment here. Thank you for making me feel so welcome. It's a very special place.



Helen Anderson
New Abbey Primary Head Teacher



Village communities require many elements to remain vibrant. First, they need people, a number of whom are willing to engage in activities, not just for their own benefit, but for that of the wider group.

Alongside the people sit the organisations – the shop, the pub, the school, the church, the doctor's surgery, sports' clubs and so on. Not every village has all these; some have none; but community life is richer when there are at least some.

And then there's the communication. Once it was

word of mouth, direct conversation, the landline, the written word, the printed document, such as this newsletter. Now it's interactive social media in all its myriad forms.

Finally, there are the spaces in and on which people gather, and activities happen – eg the village square, the football ground and, of course, the village hall. In New Abbey, we are blessed with all three including a fine and well-run example of the village hall. This is its story.

The past - a little history

Spotlight's starting point is 1892. A close up of the engraved stone on the gable end that can be seen from Main Street gives some clue of its origin¹. In that year, the original part of the current hall was constructed for the Odd Fellows, a not-for-profit, mutual friendly society that currently has around 300,000



members in the UK. In its heyday in the branches covering the country. It built Hall where members could meet to each other help. Yet, as time went amalgamated and the buildings were

In many ways, the original building was also blessed with meeting halls wider use. The advent of the bowling excellent green created a new dimension to were improved and, with a financial contribution from the club, the current lounge was constructed to the rear of the original hall.

19th and 20th centuries, the society had local premises, such as the New Abbey socialise, share their needs and offer on, membership diminished, branches sold off for other uses.

served the village well, but New Abbey owned by other groups and available for club in 1975, and the installation of its the village hall. Around 1990, the hall facilities

The present – how does it work now

The Village Hall offers excellent facilities for the many clubs and events held there, as well as being the home of



The original Odd Fellows Hall

the local bowling club. It recently completed a move to become a registered charity, so that it can more easily seek out grant applications to widen its offerings to the community and ensure it remains a successful village hub.

In more recent years, New Abbey Village Hall has shifted from being run by a committee to becoming a charity run by trustees. Many of the committee members made the transition to trustees – of which, we have ten – Bruce H, Bruce M, Christine, Hazel, Heather, Isla, Jemma, Lorna, Lorraine and Sue. Each of our trustees brings their own knowledge, experience and enthusiasm which helps with making the hall a success – from applying for

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funds and grants, to using practical skills to aid in the upkeep and maintenance of the building. We are all volunteers giving our time to promoting, maintaining and improving the facilities that the village hall has to offer. Over the past two or three years we have focused on making long-lasting improvements to the hall which not only provides updated fixtures and fittings but also makes the hall more accessible and welcoming. Physical upgrades to both the main hall and lounge have included new white goods (with the addition of hot water boilers) in both kitchens; new made-to-measure curtains, carpets and chairs in the lounge; and new lightweight sturdy tables, blinds and curtains in the main hall.

As well as these changes, we have tried to make the hall more user friendly by adding a key safe for more flexible access, updating the noticeboard on the main street (with the welcome addition of magnetic fixings rather than rusty old drawing pins!), new signs and user instructions dotted around the building, and new wheely noticeboards that can be utilised by hall users to advertise their events outside the hall. We have received positive feedback on these improvements and are always keen to know if there are other areas where we can make enhancements.

At the AGM in 2025, it was formally proposed that the price of the tickets for the 150 Club (otherwise known as 'The Hall Draw') should be increased from 50p to £1 each – this came after the idea had been banded about for several years. We decided to take the leap, and the 500 Club was born (with only a couple of teething problems). This has meant bigger prizes for monthly winners and a bigger income towards the upkeep of the hall.

We have received many other suggestions for the types of events and activities that people would like to see in the village hall.....some have been successful, others not, but it has not deterred us from trying new things! Our most successful activity just now is undoubtedly the Gentle Exercise class on a Tuesday morning – you asked for an exercise or dance class in the hall. We tried Zumba.....and then we tried ballroom dancing.....but neither of these classes were justified as numbers fell. Then along came Gentle Exercise. This class has a very loyal following and will hopefully continue for a long time to come. We are always happy to try and provide classes, activities, events etc that people would attend. However, this becomes a bigger task when these activities are not taken up by the community. They cannot be sustained.

Running a village hall is not without its challenges, particularly in the current economic climate. We have spent a lot of time over the past few years discussing and debating the hiring fees for the hall – wanting to ensure that the facilities remain affordable and accessible for the local community and beyond, whilst also needing to guarantee that we can cover the expenses incurred in running the hall. We have reverted to having an hourly flat rate for the hire of the hall or lounge, which we hope and believe suits most of our hall users. However, we always welcome feedback and do our best to respond accordingly.

The drastic increase in energy prices has put pressure on our resources. Funding from Nithsdale Area Committee and generous financial donations have meant we have been able to keep the prices for hall hire at £15 per hour for the last few years, but it is something that we continue to monitor and may have to increase in the future. As well as having several successful funding applications to the likes of Nithsdale Area Committee and Coastal Benefit Fund, we have been truly astounded by the generous donations that have been given to the village hall. It means so much to us to know that members of the New Abbey community believe in and support our efforts.

The future – what might it hold?

As we look to the future, our main goal is to try and make the hall more energy efficient. We have taken the first steps in this long process, but it will take considerable time and money to make lasting improvements that will benefit the building and its users for years, if not generations, to come. The hope is that we, as trustees, will be



able to apply for funding that is specifically for our type of facility to make these upgrades, but we will still need to look for additional funds to make up the shortfall.

We are forever grateful for the words of encouragement and support that we receive from the community, so thank you. There are several ways that you can support New Abbey Village Hall, such as:

- ✓ coming along to support our activities and events
- ✓ signing up to join the 500 Club
- ✓ hiring the hall or lounge for your next birthday party, club event or wedding
- ✓ sharing our posts on Facebook
- ✓ giving us your suggestions on what you would like to see or do in the hall

There is both hard graft and vision here from the trustees. In the end, if we want a thriving village hall, we have to support it. The only question is 'will we?'

A POETIC REFLECTION

In the September 2025 edition of the Newsletter, we included a poem by Peter Brown, who has lived at Loch Arthur for over 30 years. Despite, or maybe because of, the many challenges in his life, Peter has a talent for expressing himself through poetry. Whereas the previous poem, Spaceman, posed the existential question 'Who am I?', this one – written in 2012 - captures something that so many of us experience at some point during our lives, not least perhaps as we grow older.

Loneliness

Loneliness is like a grasping predator
Which having so expertly entangled the precious mind
Within its strong embrace
Now proceeds to cling to that very same mind like an unwanted visitor
And with a cynical professionalism casually twist
What should have been
Since the intelligent first flicker of ancient history
A vital gift
Into an unwanted curse
Because that
Which with such seemingly crucial importance came into being
When at the distant dawn of human history
Evolution began those first plodding steps down the aisle
With the ordained gift of creation as its patient partner
And all through that long history
Has been referred to as the human mind
When entangled by loneliness
Can tragically shatter
And leave the shattered pieces
On the crumpled pillow of a hospital bed
In some austere institution
After what was a last desperate attempt to escape
From the despair of a dark loneliness
Passing pedestrians
Could only spare a few scarce minutes
To glimpse
Or even perceive.

THE VILLAGE HALLS

NEW ABBEY VILLAGE HALL

Our hall has been busy these last couple of months with bookings and events.

One was myself and Scott's wedding. We're finally Mr and Mrs Robertson. It was perfect. We got married at Loch Kindar and then came to the hall for a lovely meal in the lounge and a party in the main hall at night. I loved the way we decorated it exactly the way we wanted it to look. It was beautiful without spending all our savings on a 'venue'.

We also opened the hall for the Scotland v Morocco World Cup game. I was amazed to see so many people come out at 11pm. It's just a pity we lost.

You may have all seen our superstate cyclist is doing a gruelling 2-month long challenge of 100 miles a day to raise funds for four charities. One of them is our hall. We are so grateful to be picked. We had a football fundraiser in May to raise money for it. A great day was had by all and it was very competitive. There will be a lot going on over the next couple of months between New Abbey and Kirkbean halls to raise funds. So, please keep an eye out for this.

Last weekend we had a superhero fun day for people who are neurodivergent. This was thanks to funding from Youth Beatz. We are so grateful to have been able to provide such a great day. The silent disco and sensory room were a huge hit.

We run our club once a month. This was an idea from my son. He wanted to run a club in his words "for people like him" to come along to without any judgement. So please get in touch if this is something you are interested in. Recently, I heard someone say that there is a place in this world for everyone. What a lovely sentiment.

Two events this year to write in your diary:

- **Race night with children's entertainment - Friday 14th August**
- **Live music night with Dave Against the Machine - Friday 25th September**

Do get in touch if you'd like tickets – details are under 'Local Contacts' on page 8.

Finally, we held our AGM recently and everyone on our committee offered to stay on again this year. We have a great wee team and everyone has a vital

role. As we are all volunteers with a work and home life. Everyone's part they play, large or small, makes it so much easier for all of us. I look forward to seeing what the coming year brings for all of us.

Lorraine Sweeney

BEESWING MEMORIAL HALL & LINDESAY MEMORIAL FIELD

The latest meetings of the Hall and Field committees were held on 16th June. The main items for discussion included in the Memorial Hall agenda were – 'Hall Fabric and Maintenance' and 'Social Events'.

The committee put significant effort into organising social events; duties for the BBQ on 4th July were shared between the committee members during the meeting. Ideas for future events were also discussed, and the following events were agreed:-

- **Saturday 8th August – Beetle Drive, 6:30 for 7:00pm**
- **Saturday 12th September – Quiz Night 7:00 for 7:30pm**
- **Saturday 31st October – 'Spooky' Bingo**

There will be a bar from 7pm to 11pm.

Hall fabric and maintenance matters are regular agenda items. Members of the committee have obtained quotations for maintenance work; tenders for replacing the last of the original windows and external painter work were received. The committee agreed to award contracts for these works which will be completed this year.

The next **committee meetings** will take place at 7:30pm on Tuesday 28th July in the Memorial Hall.

Two **Sunday Morning Church Services** are scheduled to take place in the Hall, rather than New Abbey, on 19th July and 25th October – both at 9:30am.

Lucy continues her **Yoga classes** in the hall on Monday evenings 6pm; contact Lucy on 07 950 702 165 for details.

The hall is available for private hire – contact Melanie Brown for bookings: 07 754 144 608 or Melbrown50@btinternet.com

Richard Lye

EVENTS

July

Sunday 05 July	09.30am	Morning worship - Rev Johannes Wildner	New Abbey church
Sunday 12 July	09.30am	Morning worship - Rev Johannes Wildner	New Abbey church
Sunday 19 July	09.30am	Morning worship - Rev Johannes Wildner	Beeswing Memorial Hall
Sunday 26 July	09.30am	Morning worship - Rev Liz Mack	New Abbey church

August

Sunday 02 August	09.30am	Morning worship - Rev Johannes Wildner	New Abbey church
Saturday 6 August	06.30pm	Beetle Drive	Beeswing Memorial Hall
Sunday 09 August	09.30am	Morning worship - Rev Johannes Wildner	New Abbey church
Friday 14 August	TBA	Race night with children's entertainment	New Abbey village hall
Sunday 16 August	09.30am	Morning worship - Rev Victoria Linford	New Abbey church
Sunday 23 August	09.30am	Morning worship – Worship Group	New Abbey church
Sunday 30 August	09.30am	Morning worship - Rev Liz Mack	New Abbey church

September

Sunday 06 September	09.30am	Morning worship - Rev Johannes Wildner	New Abbey church
Saturday 12 September	07.00pm	Quiz Night	Beeswing Memorial Hall
Sunday 13 September	11.00am	Joint service & lunch - Rev Johannes Wildner	New Abbey church
Sunday 20 September	09.30am	Morning worship - Rev Johannes Wildner	New Abbey church
Friday 25 September	TBA	Live music night	New Abbey village hall
Sunday 27 September	09.30am	Harvest Thanksgiving - Rev Johannes Wildner	New Abbey church
Wednesday 30 September	07.00pm	Bible Study Group	Manse - 11 Laurieknowe

October

Sunday 04 October	09.30am	Morning worship - Rev Johannes Wildner	New Abbey church
Wednesday 07 October	07.00pm	Bible Study Group	New Abbey church
Sunday 11 October	09.30am	Morning worship - Rev Johannes Wildner	New Abbey church
Wednesday 14 October	07.00pm	Bible Study Group	Manse - 11 Laurieknowe
Sunday 18 October	09.30am	Morning worship - Rev Johannes Wildner	New Abbey church
Wednesday 21 October	07.00pm	Bible Study Group	New Abbey church
Sunday 25 October	09.30am	Morning worship - Rev Johannes Wildner	Beeswing Memorial Hall
Tuesday 27 October	07.00pm	Over 65 – Alison Burgess	New Abbey village hall
Wednesday 28 October	07.00pm	Bible Study Group	Manse - 11 Laurieknowe
Saturday 31 October	TBA	'Spooky' Bingo	Beeswing Memorial Hall

November

Sunday 01 November	09.30am	Holy Communion – Rev Johannes Wildner	New Abbey church
Wednesday 04 November	07.00pm	Bible Study Group	New Abbey church