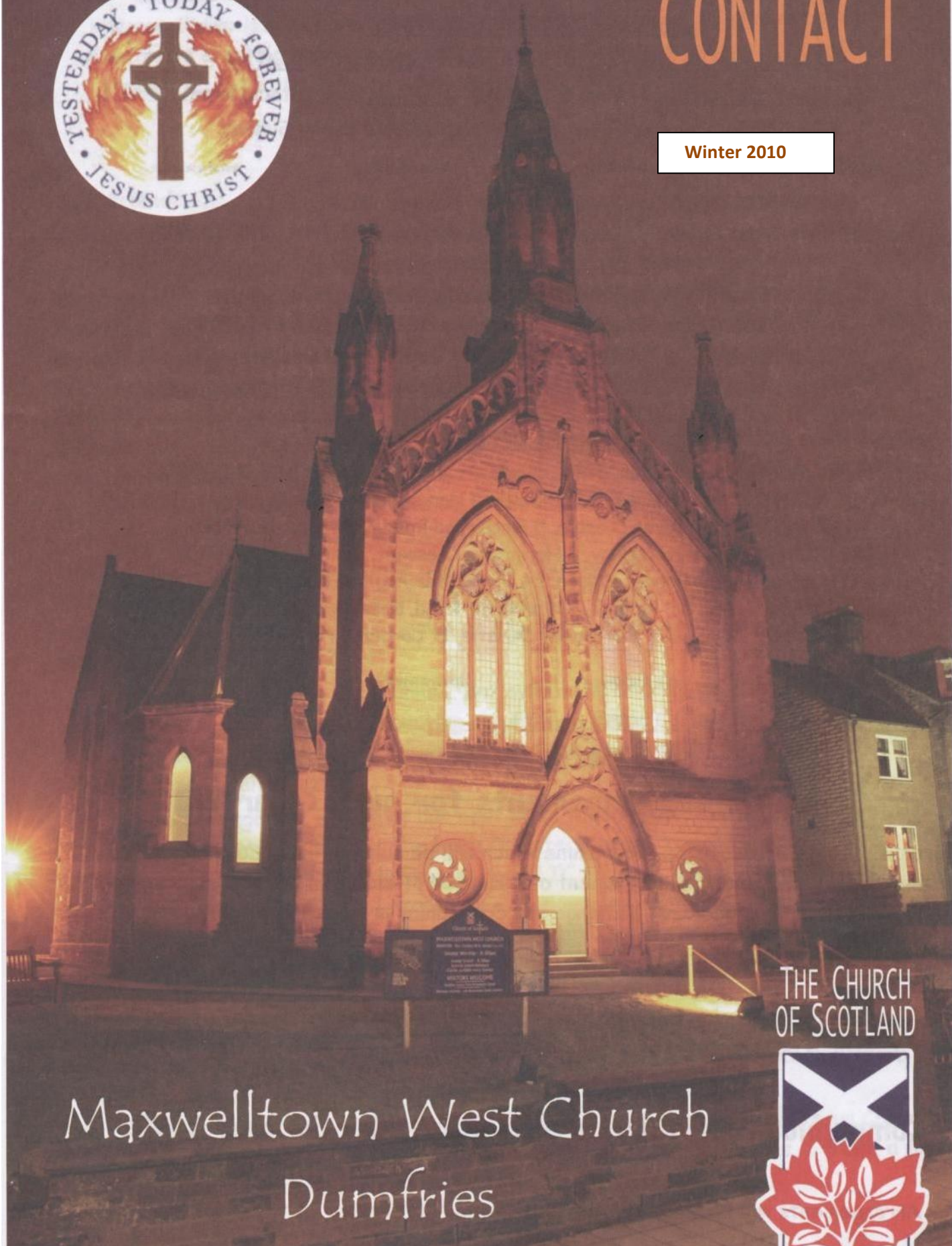


# CONTACT

Winter 2010



Maxwelltown West Church  
Dumfries

THE CHURCH  
OF SCOTLAND



**MAXWELLTOWN WEST CHURCH, DUMFRIES**

**SUNDAY SERVICES: 11am**

**COMMUNION SERVICES:** 5th December 11.00am and 3pm SUNDAY SCHOOL ( J-Max & K-Max) 11.00 am term time CRECHE is available during the morning service every Sunday. Tots 'n' Tunes (babies and toddlers) - committee room - 3rd Thurs. each month at 10am.

**MINISTER:** Rev. Gordon M A Savage, M.A., B.D. Maxwelltown West Manse, 11 Laurieknowe, Dumfries DG2 7AH During Rev. Savage's illness, The Interim Moderator is Rev. Donald Campbell, St George's Church Pastoral care will be provided by the Rev. Colin Sutherland **ASSISTANT MINISTER:** Rev Sandy Geddes, M.A. B.D. **CHILDREN'S & FAMILY WORKER;** Mrs Rachel Lyagoba

**Congregational Office Bearers:**

SESSION CLERK: Mr. T Bryden

CLERK TO DEACONS' COURT: Mrs. E Riddick

ORGANIST: Mr. S Crosbie

TREASURER: Mr. D McNay

CHURCH OFFICER: Mr. R Wilson

FABRIC CONVENOR: Mr. B Riddick

EDITOR OF 'CONTACT': Dr. S Christie

**Congregational Register:**

**Deaths**

29th July: Mrs Jean Weatherer    28th August: Mrs Madge White    30th August: Mrs Muriel Watson

27th Sept: Mrs Janet McDowall    6th October: Miss Nancy Frost    22nd October: Mr Alex Thomson

**New Members by Profession of Faith Admitted on 5th September:**

Miss Charlotte Braidwood    Mrs Sharon Fyall    Mr Allan Marr    Mrs Katie Marr

Miss Kelly-Jane Martin    Mr Robert Shepherd    Mrs Linda Vaughan

**New Members by Transfer**

Mrs Dorothy Mairs

## **From our Interim Moderator**

Christmas comes but once each year but I can hardly believe that it will be here in just a few weeks. Soon it will be Advent, the time of year when we are encouraged to prepare for Christmas.

As we travel through Advent towards Christmas Day, no doubt we will follow the same old traditions - traditions that often have more to do with our secular world than our Christian tradition. How refreshing when someone comes up with an idea for celebrating an alternative Christmas. Like those who decide not to buy and send Christmas Cards but instead to print a home-made card on their computer and give the money they would have spent to a good cause. Like the couple who went one further than simply not sending Christmas cards. They went to their next door neighbour and rang their doorbell. When the neighbours opened the door they explained their visit, "*We're saving on postage by hand-delivering our Christmas cards this year, and dropping in for a bit of lunch and a cup of coffee.*" Like using Christmas to celebrate the birthday of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"*But wait a minute,*" I hear you cry, "*surely that is what Christmas is all about, celebrating the birthday of our Lord Jesus Christ!*" EXACTLY! Yet, for much of our society, Christmas has become a pagan festival, which brightens our dark winter's nights, so much so, that to find those who celebrate the true meaning of Christmas is to find an alternative Christmas compared with the very secular celebrations we see all around us.

May you and yours resist the temptation of focussing only on the secular traditions, instead keeping your eyes fixed on Jesus, and may you celebrate his birth, the one who is God's son, Saviour. May you all have a Blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Donald Campbell, Interim Moderator

## **Editorial**

I must start with an apology and an explanation for the disaster of our last cover. It was a failed attempt to economise and at the same time to offset the lack of a coloured cover. As the saying goes the rest is history. Rest assured it won't happen again. The whole issue of the production of Contact is under review. Hopefully the position will be clarified in time to report the revised procedure in the next edition.

As you will see from Muriel's letter other changes are afoot. "Team Donkersley", as they are affectionately known in our household, are retiring after many years of quiet efficient service putting the final touches to Contact. I know these ladies are allergic to fuss but a final sincere "thank you" is in order. I have from time to time used the phrase "silent minority" to refer to those within our Church who quietly carry out tasks on our behalf. Their place is assured.

David McNay's report below makes encouraging reading regarding finance. It must give Val Coltart and Patricia Jardine particular satisfaction after their Herculean efforts - two more members of our silent minority. I note the paradox-they were anything but silent while the work was going on. Yet again I find myself extending Christmas greetings in October. Please forgive me and put it down to the modern disease of "deadlines"

S C

### **The Session**

The Kirk session met on the 15th September under the chairmanship of the Interim Moderator, the Rev Donald Campbell. Several routine items of business were transacted.

One item, "Planning for the future," will require further discussion at our next meeting. This is an initiative from Presbytery which requires us to produce our vision statement for the use of Church buildings. It requires a three month census to find our current level of activity. If the Session Clerk should be seen counting heads on a Sunday that will explain his mysterious leaning over the balcony each week.

We welcomed seven new members who joined by Profession of faith on 5th September. Reports on our Kenya activities were received (reported in detail in this edition). It was noted that there will be a future concert by Brightons Church Praise Group in aid of funds for Kenya. It was also noted that our "Souper Sunday" had helped the national total for the Church of Scotland HIV/Aids Project to exceed one million pounds.

T B

### **Deacons Court**

The Deacons court met on the 23rd of September. The treasurer's report centred on the results of our recent Celebration of Giving. The overall picture is complex and a final assessment remains some way off. There has been a significant rise in the number of members contributing by direct debit and accompanying "Gift Aid". A note of caution was injected - our expenses are going up too.

The Finance Committee requested and received approval for increases to charges levied for weddings and funerals held in the Church. There was extensive discussion of the future production of Contact, not least the matter of the cover. There was support for an attempt to continue with colour. The possibility of outsourcing the production of a colour cover, printing and stapling is under review. Hopefully a decision will be forthcoming in the near future.

E R & S C

## **Stewardship Programme 2010 - Report on Financial Progress**

I am aware that by the time you receive this it will have been 6 months since our Stewardship Programme came to a conclusion with our very successful Member Gatherings and well over a year since the inception of our activities commenced, with the first meeting of our Planning Group having been held in September 2009. I therefore felt it was important to update everyone, from a financial point of view, on the progress made so far with your responses.

It will take a good few months more before we see, and can quantify, any difference in increased income coming through from the commitments made by members to our Weekly Freewill Offering envelopes, Standing Orders or the Gift Aid Declarations, the benefits of which will take longer to materialize. However I can already see that the number of members with recorded giving, i.e. giving by way of Envelopes or Standing Order, has increased by 30 to 313 representing a more than 9% increase. The overall percentage of our congregation members who now have recorded giving has risen from 44% to 48% and the number of members having signed Gift Aid Declarations for these commitments has risen by 28 to 220 representing an increase of over 14%. There are also additional Gift Aid Declarations held for members who give periodic donations by cheque.

I am conscious that percentages and numbers paint a complicated picture. In order to establish a clearer pattern of our actual income, it may be helpful to know that the total income our church received from our Sunday Offerings and Standing Orders in July, August and September 2009 amounted to £13,506 and for the exact same period this year i.e. after our stewardship programme, amounted to £18,130. Early indications are therefore very positive and if this figure is annualised, it equates to an additional income of some £18,500. Such an outcome will obviously stem the outflow of funds we have been encountering in recent years and should hopefully enable our Finance Committee and Deacons Court to make some recommendations and decisions on such issues as whether to start replenishing the £30,000 in funds drawn recently from the Fabric Appeal Fund for the substantial Manse roof repair carried out this year, or to place funds into our Reserves, as and when surplus funds become available for any future worthy projects.

May I finish by saying that the success of our Stewardship Programme will undoubtedly make my job a little easier as we move forward but it has been the result of a lot of work put in by a lot of people. Everyone has worked tirelessly in pulling everything together and it is great to see the endeavours of so many being rewarded. I am not usually one to single people out for special mention but I would on this occasion wish especially to thank our Consultant, Edith Scott, for her invaluable input and our very own Val Coltart and Patricia Jardine for their efforts in coordinating matters. Thank you all very much for your ongoing contributions which are very much appreciated in continuing to help in ensuring the financial future of our Church is secure, at least in the short term.

D McN Treasurer

## **A Tale of Two Elders**

As we stood together that Sunday on 13th June 2004 and took our vows and were duly ordained elders of Maxwelltown West Church, little did we know that exactly 6 years later we would again stand together and deliver presentations to our congregation at the Celebrations of Giving on 13th June 2010. Patricia and I have been on an incredible journey that has been sustained by our deep love and commitment to our church.

Our friendship began those six years ago as we shared a room when we undertook an elders' course at the Church of Scotland's Carberry Tower in East Lothian. What an amazing weekend that was as we both met so many interesting people from all walks of life, who had come together to understand more of what was expected of us all as new elders. Together we attended workshops and wonderful services of singing and prayer in Carberry's beautiful little church. It was a truly inspiring weekend and we came back to Maxwelltown West full of energy and drive for our work ahead.

We were both fortunate to be given full Districts and so we began to fulfil our roles as elders as we busily set about establishing relationships with the members on our District lists. I know that we both find this aspect of our elders' duties rewarding especially when visiting the housebound or elderly. We are both ever mindful of the vital link we are providing between them and the church. We both diligently attend Session meetings and it was at one such meeting that the Stewardship programme was decided upon. As we both felt strongly about the survival of our church, we had no hesitation in putting ourselves forward to be part of the Planning Team, and indeed ended up jointly chairing the whole programme. Now the fun really did begin.

Patricia and I also share a great love of the outdoors and we are also keen on keeping fit. It seemed natural, therefore, to try to combine these interests and so began a 10-month period in our lives when we decided to go out running together and conduct our many stewardship meetings on the hoof, so to speak. This proved to be a great success as we pounded the streets of Dumfries all the time discussing the many issues that had to be dealt with as the programme developed. So successful were these running meetings that we decided to enter the Women's 10K run in Bellahouston Park, Glasgow on 9th May 2010. We were delighted that we completed the run in under the hour - a truly great experience, as over 13,000 women took part.

Shortly thereafter, the Stewardship Programme came to fruition and the Celebrations of Giving took place over 3 days in June in Maxwelltown West Church. We are confident that the programme will be a success and that the future of our beloved church will be sustained. Difficult times lie ahead for us as a congregation and never more so was this evidenced by the devastating news of our Minister's illness. We both pray for his speedy return to good health. At the time of writing, Patricia and I continue to pound the streets and forest paths. No doubt another project will present itself to us but meantime, we take pride in reflecting on what we hope was a job well done.

V C (with P J's approval!) 2010

## News from Mathia

One of the memorable acts of fellowship that we were part of during our visit to Mathia, Kenya was an afternoon spent at the Ndina Tea Factory workers' wing accommodation. Here in the welcoming company of many of the workers and their families, we heard a moving account by a young student of Veterinary Studies of how the Maxwelltown Bursary Fund had helped her in her chosen career. Here was the fund "brought to life". I know that we were all inspired and humbled by what we heard that afternoon in such company.

This year's Bursary Fund has been shared by nine young people from Mathia in higher education. Here is information on seven of the students which I thought would be of interest:

- Alex Karuoya Njeru - John and Esther's eldest son is in his fourth year at Maseno University undertaking a BSc in Ecotourism, Hotel and Institutional Management. *"The money has seen me through the journey of my academic life, enabling my parents to have an easier time managing my expenses for the school and my brother's High School fees. Thank you once again".*
- James Gakua Mattenge: at Kenyatta University studying for a Bachelor of Commerce Degree. *"These funds have seen me in payment of some part of my fees and also purchasing reading materials. Thank you and may God bless you abundantly".*
- Prisaua Wamartha: a second year at Kenyatta University studying for a degree in Commerce *"May God be with you in everything you do"*
- Josephine Mwangi: Student at Egerton University studying for a BSc. In Animal Science. Josephine is in her final year and her dream is to one day be one of the researchers in animal genetics. *"Thanks to the financial assistance of Maxwelltown West Church I can see this dream becoming reality".*
- Vivian Mwhaki: is in his second year at Moi University studying for a degree in Applied Statistics with Computing. *"By God's grace I believe I will excel. God bless you and thank you".*
- Geoffrey Maina: is a fourth year student at Egerton University studying for a BSc. in Commerce. He hopes go on to study for an MBA after graduation. *"Being an orphan your donation has been a great aid to my guardian as the burden of school fees has been eased. You have greatly transformed my academic life".*

Heartfelt thanks to all who contributed to the Bursary Fund. Alex Njeru says that the mission of the young leaders of Mathia Church is to strive to make this world a better place. The Youth section of Mathia Church- members up to the age of 25 - is a thriving organisation, with 62 of their representatives due to attend a Youth Conference shortly. In a recent e-mail, Alex, son of John Njeru

who visited us in 2008, asked if any of our young people were interested in making contact with the Mathia Church young people. Please contact me if you would like to be involved.

On Sunday 31st October 2010 Mathia Church is holding a Gift Day, hoping to raise 1 million Kenyan Shillings- about £8,000- to enable the congregation to complete the building of their new church, which so far has taken eight years. Since our visit in 2009 they have put in half of the windows at a cost of 200,000 Kenyan Shillings. 5 million Kenyan Shillings later, the building is half finished.

We wish them well with this ambitious undertaking, and remember all our friends in Kenya in our thoughts and prayers.

D J World Church Team

### **Booming Business in Bondo**

This is our humanitarian project which we have now been supporting for 3 years after Winnie, a lady from Sondo, Kenya visited Maxwelltown West while on holiday with family from London and asked for help. Now a widow and retired from business, she returned to her home village to help the people in extreme poverty. She has started 4 nursery schools with 300 children, mostly orphans as a result of HIV Aids.

After Rosemary and Ian visited the first time and confirmed the community had absolutely nothing, we set up a feeding programme, followed by a deep well which provided clean water and more healthy people. Next were 2 toilets for nursery schools, shoes, mosquito nets, books and games. Following this was the water pump which now helps 15 farmers to irrigate and grow crops such as beans, tomatoes, onions, and melons. They keep half for family and sell the rest locally. The goat project is very popular and now 16 families benefit. The agreement to donate the first kid back to the project has worked well and is "self funding" without using actual cash.

LATEST NEWS: Many small businesses are prospering now with the money which was donated to them by Max West this year. For example: fishing boats and nets, provision for drying the fish for sale, food stalls and more. They are borrowing a little money, given 3 months credit which Winnie controls and recycles the profit into other projects. She hopes eventually to save enough to buy a Tuk Tuk to transport the produce to a market in a town near Bondo which would give a greater profit than locally. She also hopes to grow fruit soon and now has banana plants. The toilet for the 3rd Nursery school is almost finished and we hope to provide the 4th soon.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL now has books for the children in their own language (Luo) bought in Kisumu from a Christian shop which we are glad to know about. This also came from a Max West donation. The WCT are delighted with the progress our funding is making and quite cautious in allocating our hard earned funds. You can be assured that all money received from you is sent directly to Winnie with no middle person involved. We take guidance from Winnie as to the requirements most needed. We receive a balance sheet from her every 6 months and are satisfied with this.



The FOOD MONEY donated still only provides the children with one substantial meal a month. We hope as the community becomes more self-sufficient this will no longer be a concern.

WINNIE'S FINAL WORDS: *"Nothing works as well as empowering a community. Please rest assured we will develop and continue to better our lives. God Bless Max. West for giving us so much hope in life."*

PS: The Concert on 20th November by Brighton's Church Falkirk will be in aid of our Kenyan Projects. We do hope our church members will support this. The last concert by Brighton's was well received and enjoyed. Tickets £5. per person, £10 for a family regardless of how many children and a light supper is included after the concert. WCT have tickets or pay at the door.

A D WCT Convener

### **Letter from Muriel Donkersley**

As this is the last issue of Contact the "stapling team" will be engaged with, I can't let it pass without saying a very big thank you to Mrs Murray and Mrs Allison for all the help and friendship they have given me over many years. My thanks also to Mrs Bretherton and Miss Haines for helping out when the need arose. My very grateful thanks to Dr Christie for all the help and consideration he has given me as well as the "fetching and carrying" to save me. Thank you Sandy.

It has been a privilege to work with such lovely people. Our best wishes go to the new team and may they enjoy the fellowship and pleasure we have had.

Muriel Donkersley

### **National Children's Assembly**

Earlier this year, Mr Savage, once again, asked me if I would like to go to the National Children's Assembly, to represent the Church and presbytery. Like last year, the event took place on the Isle of Iona and was during the middle of the school October holidays. About 50 children and adults boarded the ferry at Mull on the Saturday morning and we arrived on Iona at about 2pm, with the boys staying at the Mac Centre and the girls staying in the Abbey. This year 2 children from the Church of England and 2 children from the Netherlands attended the assembly.

While we were there we worshipped in the Abbey every morning and every night and during the day we had free time and did lots of fun activities, which included art, crafts, puppets, mime and music. You only got to take part in four of these activities. In between the activities we got a chance to have some free-time, which is where we got to do what we wanted. This included going to the Abbey to look around or go to the Mac Centre where you could do different things like could play table-tennis or speak to others attending the assembly. Unfortunately the weather wasn't very good this year and we were unable to go on the pilgrimage around the island on the Monday. On Tuesday morning we started our journey back to Oban to meet our families. Once again I would like to thank the Church and Presbytery for giving me the opportunity to attend the assembly.

A L

## **Reports from Organisations**

### **The Guild:**

We had a very enjoyable opening meeting, shared by guests from other Guilds. Rev. Colin Sutherland led a very thought provoking Dedication Service, followed by a hilarious talk on his life to date. The evening ended with a lovely supper provided by the Guild Committee.

On 20th October, we joined with other Guilds from the Dumfries area, for our annual Autumn Rally in St. Mary's/Greyfriars' Church. The speakers on this occasion were from 'Christian Care for the Homeless' and 'Rape Crisis and Sexual Abuse', both of which gave us much food for thought. At the time of writing we look forward to an interesting talk by Mick Durham, on Birds of Arctic Norway, and are already making preparations for our Box Opening Coffee Morning on 27th November. We hope that you will come and support this. On 7th December, we are having a musical evening with the Ruthwell Singers, which promises to be a super night.

Please note, that our meetings on 11th January (Dumfries Civic Pride) and 1st February (Marie Curie Cancer Care) will be at 2pm, which hopefully will make access easier for members if the weather is bad.

If you would like to learn more about the Guild, please come along and join us. You will be made most welcome. May we take this opportunity of wishing everyone a very happy Christmas and a healthy New Year.

M McL

### **Badminton Club:**

The new season started on Tuesday 7th September. We meet every Tuesday and Thursday evening until the end of April. On Friday 24th September 31 past and present members of the club attended a celebration dinner in the Edenbank Hotel. This was to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the club. It was actually the anniversary of the reformation of the club as badminton was being played during the 1950s and 60s. However the club unfortunately folded in 1966 due to lack of members.

In September 1980 Ian Wilson was approached by the Deacons' Court to try and form a badminton club for the church. He agreed to see if there would be enough interest to do so, and the minister intimated this intention to the congregation. Luckily enough people came forward to enable badminton to be played again in the church hall.

That was 30 years ago, and it's wonderful that the club is still going strong today. The club isn't just about playing badminton, it's also about having fun and socialising, as is proven by the excellent attendance over the years at our annual dinner and also for ten pin bowling evenings at Carlisle.

Although there is a good membership, only 4 players now belong to Maxwelltown West Church, and 2 of them have been playing since the club reformed. In order for the club to keep going for another 30 years it would be great to have some new members from the church. Anyone over 16 would be made most welcome. The age range at the moment goes from 17 to 80 and we all have a lot of fun as well as getting some exercise.

J M

### **The Brownies:**

We welcomed six new Brownies after the summer holiday and we have worked on different activities to get to know each other. We were pleased their parents were able to join us to take part in their Promise Celebrations held recently.

To complete the Centenary Year of Guiding, we took part in two events - we held a Centenary themed sleepover in the Church hall with lots of crafts and games, and also took part in a lantern parade. This ended with everyone renewing their promise at 20.10 on 20/10/2010. - Special celebrations to remember.

The Brownies are now working on the traditional badges and enjoying being able to learn about Brownies as they continue their Brownie Adventure.

J McE Brownie Leader

### **The Scouts:**

That time again to write a new report for the Scout section. The session has got off to a good start, with three new boys, Andrew, Scott and Taylor. There are three more boys due to join in the next weeks who were not connected with Scouts before. We seem to be growing at present so will have about 19 Scouts now, so there will be three patrols.

So far this session we have had a street quiz, been to Auchin Castle to see a falcon display, cooked biscuits and had a walk in the dark in Mabie forest. There will be a Halloween party and a talk from Colin Mitchell of the Moffat Mountain Rescue. We are also going to the pantomime at the Theatre Royal called "Alibaba". We will be parading on Sunday 14th November for the Remembrance Sunday service.

We now have a new leader helper called Andrea. She comes from Germany and works as a Consultant Orthodontist at the hospital. Andrea has worked with a youth group before in Germany. Jonathan is the other assistant leader. There was word of someone else, but they have not been in touch. So we could do with finding another potential leader. Let me know if you know of any budding leaders at Dumfries 750794.

You will be pleased to hear that the missing woggle has been found. Thanks go to Mrs Johnstone for rescuing it for me. My thanks go to the Leaders who help every week and to the Church family for letting the uniformed organisations use the halls. We are much indebted.

H MacD Scout Leader

## After Eights

The new session started on Thursday 30th September with Catherine Braid from the Green Tea Room, Moniaive, demonstrating a starter, a main course and two desserts. Catherine is passionate about cooking and likes to use local or Fairtrade produce whenever possible. After the demonstration, with Catherine answering questions while she cooked, we were able to sample the delicious results.

In October local vet Alan Marshall gave a fascinating insight into his occupation. He entertained us with anecdotes that clearly showed his enthusiasm for his work and his love of animals of all kinds.

We are looking forward to a talk by the head gardener at Threave Gardens, Castle Douglas in November and our Christmas dinner at the Edenbank Hotel.

J M

## Y Max

Y Max has had a successful start to this session meeting at Rachel's house for a BBQ. We have also had a movie night and a mixed night of games and planning the program for the winter. The program includes an art and games night with some of our young leaders, a drama night with Julie and our Christmas party. If anyone at secondary school would like to join us we meet at 7pm - 8.15pm in the committee room of the Church.

Please phone Alison 01387 750794

	Church Flowers	Memorial Flowers
2 <sup>nd</sup> Jan	Mrs A Dunbar	Mrs B Ivins
9 <sup>th</sup>	Mrs J Sloan	Mrs M Bryden
16th	Mrs M McLeod	Mrs M McLeod
23rd	Mrs McCall-Watson	Mrs Forsyth & Mrs Scott
30th	The Misses Gemmill	Vacant
6 <sup>th</sup> Feb.	Mrs R Slack	Mrs E Wilson
13th	Mrs Train	Mrs M Gibson
20 <sup>th</sup>	Mrs Margaret Wallace	Mrs F Saddington
27 <sup>th</sup>	Mrs R McClymont	Mrs E Walker
6 <sup>th</sup> March	Mrs Mary Wallace	Mrs S Aird
13 <sup>th</sup>	Mrs N Jamieson	Miss L Riddick
20th	Mrs O Woods	Mrs E Riddick
27th	Mrs E McNay	Mrs M Holmes

If you would like to fill a vacant space or help to arrange flowers please contact Anne.