

# MAXWEST CONTACT

September 2022



**Maxwelltown West Church - Dumfries**  
[www.maxwelltownwest.org.uk](http://www.maxwelltownwest.org.uk)



The Church of Scotland



# MAXWELLTOWN WEST CHURCH

## Our Mission

*Maxwelltown West Church seeks to be a place of welcome to all in our parish; a centre of Christian worship and fellowship.  
We seek to provide a framework for family life and a place where young people may be nurtured in Christian values.*

## SUNDAY SERVICES – 11 am

Communion Service: Sunday 11th September - 11am

## CONTACTS

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Fabric Convenor: (Volunteer required - please call the Session Clerk if you can help!)

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**Front cover:** Summer Barbecue at The Manse **Above:** Adèle Wildner's Confirmation

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# Rev Johannes



When you hold this Magazine in your hand autumn has arrived. The warm and sunny summer days are over. The days are getting shorter and colder. Yet, each season of the year has a fascination.

But we do not have these seasons only around us but also within us. For you can compare these four seasons to the stages of life. Then, spring can be seen as a symbol of youth; summer of adulthood; autumn of retired life and winter represents old age living in the shadow of death. Each age has like the seasons of the year its advantages and disadvantages, its chances and challenges.

As a young person you mainly have to learn what you need in your life and to find your own way. As an adult you are responsible for a family. But whereas it is not so difficult to define the tasks of young age and adulthood, it is nowadays much more difficult to speak about the role of an old person. For we live in a time that has set youth on the throne. Everybody wants to look young and attractive. But as an old person you cannot defy the truth that your body is getting weaker leaving you only limited opportunities. But that exactly is the chance of old age. For when the physical dimension of life wanes then the spiritual dimension could come more into focus. Who was traditionally the religious teacher of a young person? It was not so much the father or mother or priest, it was the grandmother.



Source: Wikimedia Commons

To understand this let us look at Rembrandt's painting *Old Woman Reading* that I have recently seen on a visit to Drumlanrig Castle. It is a fascinating painting. It takes some time to decipher it, because the darkness is very dominant in it. Normally, when you have a portrait then the face is painted in a way that you can easily recognise it. But that is different here. It seems that Rembrandt was not so much interested in the personality of this woman – we do not know the name of this woman – it is enough for him to identify her as an old woman. But then what is at the centre of his painting, what is it about? ►

► Often in Rembrandt's paintings he is very much interested in painting light. It seems as if the light comes out of the book that she is reading. It could be that the book is reflecting the light that comes from a window, but it also could be that the book itself is the source of light.

Rembrandt does not identify the book. But we know that Rembrandt often painted biblical persons and stories. Although he was not churchy, there was no book for him like the Bible. Moreover, the word "Bible" is a transliteration of the Greek word *biblos*, meaning "book". So the bible is, quite simply, "The Book". It seems that Rembrandt is interested in the Bible as the book that gives light in the darkness. For Jesus as the word of God is the light of the world and so the book that contains his words also serves as a source of light. The main actor in this painting is not the old woman but the light that shines through this book. It is not so much that the woman who holds the book as that the book that holds her and enlightens her.

The old woman is surrounded by darkness and seems to be alone. That is underpinned by her hood that like a monk's hood helps her to avoid distractions. She is only focused on the book in her hands. So, she becomes an image of the essence of old age. When you are young or an adult you cannot avoid being concerned with the life around you. Simply your studies or your responsibilities in family and work bring you in connection with the community and world around you. That is the time of many chances but also of many ways to distract you from your goal in life. Using what is physically given to you, you tend to forget the spiritual dimension of your life. Old age can help you to see more clearly what really matters in life. There are many ways how we try to bring brightness into our life, but ultimately only one book and one person can bring the light that is even mightier than death. It is the chance of old age to make the younger people look behind the veil of this life and to see the world in a spiritual way.

All generations need each other. And I think in our world that is often blind for the spiritual dimension we need especially the old generation. Elderly people are more important than they often think. They can teach wisdom that comes through life experience. But it is best when you can keep all these stages in your life together. What do I mean? Just look at the seasons of the year. We do not experience them once and for all, but they come again and again. And here in Scotland with its special climate you can even experience all four seasons in one day! In the same way you can experience all life stages in one day.

Even as an old person you can try to try new ways. Just think of Abraham who left his home venturing into unknown lands. And even in old age you can be productive like Sarah who became pregnant with Isaac when she was ninety years old. And as a young man you can ask for wisdom like Solomon as he became king. So, we should always try to combine all the different life stages. In order to learn this, it is always helpful to associate with people of different ages. Young people make you open-minded and engaging, old people make you wise and distanced from the distractions of this world. Young people show you what is physically possible and old people what is spiritually possible. ►



## Kirk Session / Deacons' Court Report

On Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> June a joint meeting of the Kirk Session and Deacons' Court was held where routine matters were reported. At the end of the meeting there was a discussion on whether or not the Balcony could be re-opened for the use of members of the congregation. Different views were debated. In the end, for Health & Safety reasons, it was concluded that the Balcony should remain closed at present. Measures for the possibility of using the Balcony in the future will be further investigated.

**New Elders - Sunday, 7<sup>th</sup> August:** Anne Walter and Ron Thomas were ordained as Elders. Anne and Ron have been members of Maxwelltown West for many years. Both have served as Deacons, and play an active part in the life of the Church. Anne leads the Praise Group and often uses her musical talents during a service, either by singing a solo or playing the flute. Ron joined the Guild when membership was opened up to men as well as women; he helps with the teas after the Sunday service, and also helps with the Flower Ministry by delivering flowers.



After the ordination ceremony Anne and Ron were welcomed into the Kirk Session by being given the right hand of fellowship by Jane Marchbank and David Johnson, Joint Session Clerks. Anne and Ron then took their place in the pews with their fellow Elders to a round of applause.



►In this way, Rembrandt's painting can help us to learn how to approach the Bible. When you hold the Bible in your hands, then this turns the tables. In fact, the Bible reads you and God's word holds you. We are not the masters of the Bible, but the Bible is the master of our life. You can of course close the Bible and leave it in a corner. But the Bible never leaves you. It is a mystery, but the Bible bursts through all our concepts of time and space. And even stories that happened many years ago become present touching our lives. When you look into the Bible then you look into the heart of God, the heart of this world. And that is why this book finally wants to speak to our hearts. What is exactly in the centre of this painting? It is the heart of the woman. For that is why God created this world and sent his own son into this world: to touch our hearts. **"For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light."** (Psalm 36:9)

### ✠ CHURCH REGISTER ✠

#### Baptism

Aurora Rose Graham on Sunday  
19<sup>th</sup> June 2022

#### Church Membership

*By profession of faith:*

Adèle Wildner

*Additions by resolution:*

Mrs Käthe Wildner

Agnes Wildner

Wilhelm Wildner

August Wildner

#### Our condolences to the family and friends of:

Mrs Elizabeth (Betty) Gracie  
24.04.22

~ May she Rest in Peace ~



## Wee Seeds, Big Trees



*The Kippford Hawthorn - UK Tree of the Year 2021*

This session is the second of our strategy “Look forward in Faith”, and our theme “Wee seeds, Big trees”. This shows how the Guild has had a lasting impact over the past 135 years, thinking about how our movement has started small and, like our trees, grown into something special. Last year’s project “Home for Good” has helped find permanent homes for vulnerable children, as well as training new staff in Scotland. The funding, which we helped raise, is now at over £13,000. This year we have chosen “Starchild”, a project in Uganda, that will hopefully change the stigma and myths affecting the attitude towards children with physical and mental disabilities. We hope our congregation and friends will support us with this.

In May “The Big Sing” took place in Edinburgh, when the National Guild launched the Queens Green Canopy, supporting tree planting in Malawi through our National Guilds international partner in Livingstonia. MaxWest Guild has contributed towards the purchase of one tree.

This September, during Guild Week, our Guild will attend a Quiz and afternoon tea hosted by Nithsdale Guilds. MaxWest Guild will officially start again in October with a Service on Sunday 2nd October and an Opening Meeting on Tuesday 4th October at 2pm when Rev. Johannes Wildner will be the speaker.

The leadership team have planned an interesting programme which should suit everyone. There is no obligation to join, but if you have never attended a Guild meeting, please come along and find out how we have moved forward. We are delighted to welcome both men and women at our meetings.

**Anne Dunbar**

### Flower Ministry Appeal

If you would like to donate to this on a special anniversary or birthday, please speak to Anne Dunbar. (01387 251455)





**The Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June was celebrated with a garden party organised by Nithsdale Guilds.**



**This was well supported and enjoyed by many Guild members and friends on a lovely sunny day.**



**The outside temperature may not have been sizzling hot on Sunday, 12<sup>th</sup> June, but the burgers, sausages and vegetarian kebabs certainly were!**

This barbecue feast was provided by David Johnson, Hamish McDonald, and Shona McNaught. Sauces and salads accompanied this delicious fare -



## Manse Garden Barbecue



Käthe's scrumptious potato salad being a particular favourite!



Strategically placed umbrellas and gazebo shelters warded off the worst of the occasional rain showers. Despite the slight chill in the air, the atmosphere was warm and friendly, as everyone chatted and laughed, enjoying the opportunity to get together in the lovely Manse Garden. Thank you to the chefs and to Colin Irving, Patricia Lilly and others in the Social Group who organised shelter, seating etc. Special thanks to the hosts, Johannes and Käthe, for making this such an enjoyable afternoon!

**Kathleen McMillan**



# Brownies

Jill McEwan  
reports



Before the Summer Holiday there were four very busy meetings with various celebrations and events.

The Queen's Platinum Jubilee was celebrated with a party. The girls wore their wonderful tiaras which they had made the previous week and enjoyed eating party food then playing Queen themed games.

The following weekend, there was a Jamboree for the Jubilee in Mabie Forest for all sections of Girlguiding from Dumfries and Galloway. We travelled there by bus and took part in an afternoon of fun.

Our Sponsored Walk by the River Nith took place the following week. Thanks to our kind sponsors, the sum of £359 was raised. This has been divided between Maxwelltown West Church, DGRI Paediatric Ward and Edinburgh Sick Children's Hospital.

Our third week featured a Promise Celebration for Carly, Charlotte and Cora in the Church Hall and Rev Johannes presented the following end of term awards: 'Six of

the Term' - Kelpies; 'Silver Award' - Bethany and Teyah and 'Brooke Award' - Elsa.

Afterwards we went to a barbecue in the Manse gardens. Many thanks to Rev Johannes for the use of the garden and to David Johnson for cooking the delicious burgers and sausages. Our final meeting of the term was held in Dock Park. We all brought a picnic tea which we enjoyed together before playing games and walking around the park.



We will be happy to welcome more girls to join Brownies and we can be contacted via the Girlguiding or Maxwelltown West Church websites.

# Guides

Tracey Stewart  
reports

Thank you to Maxwelltown West Church for your continued support of the 6<sup>th</sup> Dumfriesshire Guide Unit.

2022 saw the launch of the **Take 2 in 2022** Badge to celebrate the final year of Girlguiding Scotland's outgoing Chief Commissioner, Moira McKenna. Our Guides grew 22 sunflowers, sewed 22 pieces of bunting, and wrote 22 letters to members of the community to achieve this badge.

The girls also continued discovering and growing through completion of their "Take Action" programme theme: **Taking A Stand**, by building their "Activist's Toolkit", and completing badges such as "Be Prepared", "Craftivism" and "Conscious Consumer". A Jubilee celebration also saw the girls receive the special Platinum Jubilee badge. All these achievements were celebrated at our Badge Ceremony, where we welcomed 8 new Guides making their Promise, and sent 6 Guides onto their next great journey at our Ranger Unit.

The summer term also saw us able to take advantage of the warmer weather. An outing to Mabie Forest had the Guides brushing up on their outdoor skills. Their bedding rolls might need a little more practice, but rest assured the sleeping bag dried out eventually! And our last night of term was spent at Powmillmount Beach, playing rounders, exploring, and having a fantastic sausage sizzle - compliments to our chefs, the Rangers!



We also said a fond farewell to Caitlin, our Young Leader, and to Fiona, our fantastic Unit Leader, who both move on to pastures new this summer. To these women, we can only say thank you - MaxWest Guides would not be the Unit it is without you, and we will miss you both dearly.

All in all, a fantastic year, and while Guides and Leaders are currently enjoying a well-earned Summer break, we are all raring to go when we return in September.



We were honoured to present one of our own with her first "Soltaire Award" for 50 hours volunteering as a Pack Helper with the Brownies - well done Gemma!





## *A Walk with John the Baptist, Covenanters and Kings*

**David Johnson leads us on  
an historic trail**

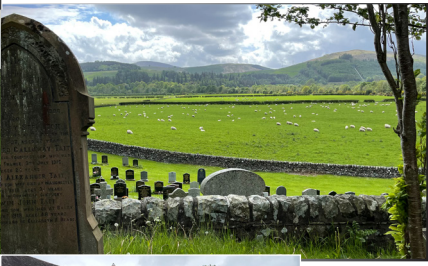


St John's Town of Dalry was the site of Scotland's first, and so far, only popular uprising against the Government of the day. And it's also where a group of MaxWest "pilgrims" made their own "uprising" of the 170-metre hill, the Mulloch. Johannes' exclamation from the summit, taking in the 360-degree view, from the Rhinns of Kells, Cairnsmore of Carsphairn, the Water of Ken, the Galloway hills, south to Bengairn and Screel and down to the Lake District hills, was totally appropriate: "It's like Paradise!"

No signs of Paradise were apparent in St John's Town of Dalry in 1666 as the village's inhabitants, staunch Covenanters, suffered grievously for their religious beliefs. Their minister, one John McMichan, was deposed and his congregation refused to attend services conducted by a bishop-appointed curate. They had their crops and stock confiscated and had soldiers quartered with them whom they had to feed. The bodies of three Covenanters, shot during these "Killing Times" had been buried by their families in Dalry, but were dug up by Claverhouse and his troopers and hung from a tree beside the Kirk. Grierson of Lagg even stabled his horses in the Kirk. Grier, an old man who was believed to have information on Covenanters' hiding places, was being tortured by soldiers, when a villager fired on them. This incident sparked off the Pentland Rising which resulted in further persecution and executions. In a far corner of the churchyard, a place usually kept for thieves and moral outcasts, there is a "table tomb" for two Covenanters shot down in 1684: "Behold! Behold! A stone's here forc'd to cry! Come see two martyrs under me that ly!"







A church has existed in Dalry since 1427, with the present church being built in 1771. Dalry was on the route for medieval pilgrims going to the shrine of St Ninian at Whithorn. James III passed this way, as did his son James IV on at least three occasions, paying eighteen shillings for “belchair” - bed and breakfast - before saying his morning prayers in Dalry Kirk.



Our pilgrimage walk on May 21<sup>st</sup> began with a delicious soup and sandwich lunch in the Clachan Inn's Bothy, followed by a visit to Dalry Kirk and Session House.



Walking along a wide path on top of the Water of Ken flood embankment, we could see the tail race from the Glenlee Hydro Power Station, part of the 106-megawatt Galloway Hydro Scheme which powers 50,000 homes. It was not popular with everybody when it was built between 1930 and 1936, long before climate change hit the headlines: “*Dam the Deugh and dam the Ken.*”

*And dam the Dee – oh damn the men who plan such desecration!*” After crossing the A713 at Boat



Knowe, we began the climb up the Mulloch, Gaelic for “summit”. Its name comes from the closely related, but now long-lost Gallovidian language. The view from the “mulloch” was simply stunning. Picking up the



“faint grass track” described in the route plan, we walked downhill and into Dalry's main street. At the top of this street sits St John's Stone, which legend has it, John the Baptist used as a seat. An unproven legend, as Dalry is named after the Knights Templars who owned property in the village, an important halt on the pilgrim route from Edinburgh to Whithorn.

It's believed that Robert Burns based his poem “Tam o' Shanter” on the intriguing story of one Adam Forrester of Knocksheen in Kells parish. But that's a great story for another time and another walk, and another lunch at The Clachan!

So ended another successful pilgrimage walk: superb Galloway weather, delicious victuals, great company and fellowship, fantastic views and a fascinating walk through religious history. My grateful thanks to everyone who took part, with special thanks to Rev. David Bartholomew and the Elders of Dalry Kirk.

# Gary Brough

## Our Mission Partner in Malawi

After attending this year's General Assembly in Edinburgh, Gary Brough and his family visited our Presbytery for a week in June. They had been scheduled to visit in 2020, but the global pandemic intervened. A programme of events and visits was organised for Gary, his wife Jacqueline and daughters Eildih and Morven, which hopefully gave them a flavour of what is going on in our Presbytery, before we become part of the new Presbytery of South West Scotland later this year. Gary gave presentations at services at Kirkcudbright Parish Church and here at MaxWest. There was an Afternoon Tea at Castle Douglas Parish Church, a picnic at Crawick Multiverse and visits to Kirkcudbright Primary School and Kirkcudbright Academy where Gary had been Head Boy.



Giving us the background to his work in Malawi, Gary described his work with the Church and Society Programme [CSP] run by the Synod of Livingstonia which seeks to improve the lives of people in northern Malawi by promoting access to justice, advocating for good governance, empowering women and young people and building resilience to the climate crisis. He emphasised how CSP is

hard at work to ensure that girls, at risk of child marriage and early pregnancy, are able to stay in school and pursue their own hopes for their future. With schools closed during the pandemic, this put children at greater risk. Congregations and Guilds supported efforts to engage with communities and their local traditional leaders on the issue

of child marriage. The work of the CSP emphasises the pursuit of justice for survivors of gender-based violence - a long and difficult process, which too often forces women to abandon the justice system and return to abusive relationships. The CPS legal team supports women by providing loans to help them start small businesses.



By the time that you read this, Gary, Jacqueline, Eildih and Morven will be back in Malawi, along with their third child, Caitlin Rosie, born in Northern Ireland on 12<sup>th</sup> July. Mother and baby are both doing well. Congratulations!

Please remember the Broughs in your prayers as the family settle back to life in Malawi with their new addition, and Gary starts his new role with the General Assembly of CCAP.





## A 'NEW' CHURCH FOR MATHIA

*World Mission Report 2022  
from Anne Dunbar*

Our Mathia Faith Share Partners are preparing to celebrate the Dedication of their “New Church”, following very many years of saving and building to reach this point.



There is now disabled access as well as new washing, sanitation, and parking facilities. A special Service will take place on 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> September to coincide with a Presbytery visit. As you may know, Maxwelltown West Church has been invited to take part. Due to the time difference between countries, a pre-recorded video made by MaxWest will be sent to Mathia; our greetings and pictures will be shown on the day and included as part of their service. Our gift of a CCTV system is now in place, with grateful thanks from the Elders and congregation. Funding came from the WCT account.

Congratulations to Mathia Church Guild who have celebrated 100 years! Other latest news states that Rev Wachera is on leave, so a student minister is filling in. We look forward to showing you the Dedication Service of this “New Church” soon.



Priority over the years has been to support Mathia Students' Bursary funds. We receive many letters of thanks and details of their progress, with over 30 now graduated and many have found good jobs. Our Christmas Appeal will go out again this year as 7 new students are in place.

**More news on next page ►**



## MaxWest Sponsored Walk ▶▶▶

Jane Marchbank reports

On the morning of Saturday, 25th June, 15 people left the Church Hall to walk to Kingholm Quay. Their route went via Mill Green and along the Troqueer side of the river to the Millennium Bridge, then along the riverside path to Kingholm Quay where the road was crossed at the Swan Hotel. The return route went through Dock Park and across the Suspension Bridge. A sixteenth person, unable to attend that day, completed this walk earlier in the week.

Despite some earlier isolated showers, the weather throughout the walk remained dry and a light breeze made it extremely pleasant for walking. Back at the Church Hall, everyone socialised as they ate their packed lunches and enjoyed the tea, coffee and delicious fairy cakes made by Shona McNaught – a much appreciated reward for completion of the walk! The total sum raised was £1503 for Church Funds which included a very kind donation of £120 from Maxwelltown West Brownies who had also completed a sponsored walk earlier in the week. Many thanks to everyone who contributed to the success of this event.

### ▶ A 'NEW' CHURCH FOR MATHIA

John Njeru was delighted to tell us that one of their students, Michael Murage Kiragu, has recently graduated. Studying at the University of Eastern Africa at Baraton for four years, he is now Bachelor of Science in Networks and Telecommunications. A beneficiary of donations from MaxWest he is very grateful for the support received. John added: "Currently we have a total of 11 students; two joined this Academic year and there are 9 continuing students. We have three awaiting graduation by the end of this year and they have now received the funds."



"We give glory to God for yet another success we have achieved together."



**THANKS TO  
THE BEAN  
COUNTERS!  
THE SILVER  
SCREEN  
RETURNS !**

*MIKE MARSHALL gives us  
a preview*

**We're really looking forward  
to welcoming you!**

We're all hoping that our new season for this autumn will get under way without the uncertainties of the last couple of years. At our final screening in May, a short-leet of titles had been presented to those attending; using a traditional system often used by film clubs, everyone voted using beans placed in jam jars for their choice of titles!

Curating a collection of films for quite a diverse audience is always an enjoyable challenge. Our new season has a classic and artistic feel – starting with a good dram and classic Scottish humour as portrayed by Ealing Studios in 1948. There are new releases and some beautiful, almost unknown titles in the line-up:

**23rd September: WHISKY GALORE!** The Ealing Comedy classic inspired by Compton Mackenzie's novel 'Tight Little Island'.

**21st October: WOMAN IN GOLD:** An intriguing drama based on a real-life story of the recovery of this famous painting by Gustav Klimt stolen during the Second World War.

**18th November: BELFAST:** Kenneth Branagh's BAFTA and Oscar winning movie of life in the city in the 1960s.

**9th December: THAT SINKING FEELING:** 1970s Glasgow is splendidly portrayed by Bill Forsyth in his first feature movie when an out-of-work teenager hatches a plan to make him and his friends rich.

**20th January: THE DUKE:** In 1961, a 60-year-old taxi driver steals Goya's portrait of the Duke of Wellington from the National Gallery in London. What happened next became the stuff of legend. Only 50 years later did the full story emerge, enabling this film to be made.

**24th February: SWEET LAND:** A beautiful, award-winning independent film celebrating the land, love and the European immigrant experience in mid-west America in the 1920s.

**24th March: THE GUARDIANS:** 1915 in France: men have left their homes and farms to fight; it is the women who have to unite and keep their family and society from collapsing. A moving, Gallic 'Sunset Song'. (English subtitles)

**6th April (Thursday): EL BAÑO DEL PAPA (THE POPE'S TOILET):** In 1988 a small border town in Uruguay awaits the visit of Pope John Paul II. Thousands of pilgrims are expected. Enterprising villagers believe that they will need to extend a welcome with the provision of one of the most essential needs... a toilet. A funny and poignant story. (Subtitled).

**12th May: THE ROCKET POST:** On a small island in the Outer Hebrides in the 1930s they are desperate to improve their communications with the outside world. Can a German rocket scientist help them achieve their aims? Based on a true story, this is a beautifully made and charming film.

*Wherever possible, all English language films are also screened with subtitles for anyone with hearing difficulties.*



# Maintaining our Church

## Fabric Report

The Church now has new updated signs at the front and back and the front flower beds have been planted with bedding plants.

Inside the Church, the warped kitchen flooring has been replaced. The Church boilers have had new valves to try to improve management of the heating. New curtains are hanging in the Centenary Hall and the old staging has been removed from the store cupboard.

The Manse sitting room has been decorated and a new carpet laid, the bathroom has been painted and a new oven has been fitted. The down pipes have been painted and the garden has had a big tidy up.

The fire risk assessment has been updated and the annual property inspection of the Manse, Church and Halls was completed in May.

*Again, many thanks to all the volunteers who have helped in any way with some of this work.*

*Patricia Jardine*

### - Dates for Your Diary -

Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> September: **Badminton** nights resume

Sunday, 11<sup>th</sup> September - **Holy Communion**

Friday, 23<sup>rd</sup> September - **MaxWest Movies** Opening Night

Sunday, 25<sup>th</sup> September - **Harvest Thanksgiving**

Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> October - **Guild Service**

Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> October - **Guild Opening Meeting** - 2pm - with Rev Johannes.

Friday, 21<sup>st</sup> October - **MaxWest Movies** night

Friday, 18<sup>th</sup> November - **MaxWest Movies** night

**You'll see it here first!**

**Remember to visit our Website or our Facebook Page for the latest news of events and information about MaxWest**  
**[www.maxwelltownwest.org.uk](http://www.maxwelltownwest.org.uk)**



**August Wildner helps keep MaxWest 'on the air' for our online Sunday services.**



**Mary McLeod and Dawn enjoy a return visit to St John's Town of Dalry**