

DORNOCH FIRTH PARISH MAGAZINE

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£1.50 (to cover costs)



Photo: Zara Macdonald

One of many photos taken when we had thunder and lightning



Photo: Andy Kirby

Dornoch Pipe Band celebrated their 100 year anniversary this year. Each Saturday evening when they play in Dornoch Square we open our Cathedral Tower and so far this year we raised around £200 per evening, sometimes more.

Contacts

Minister: Carol Anne Porter

Email: caporter@churchofscotland.org.uk & 07400 313303

Session Clerk Team: Liz Manson, Jeani Hunter and Mary Stobo

Email: sessionclerks@dornochfirthcofs.org

Treasurer: Kim McCarthy

Email: treasurer@dornochfirthcofs.org



AN T BAR

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Minister's Thoughts

Dear friends

I SPEND a lot of time, as you might imagine, thinking about church.

Not about a building, please understand. But the heart-on-sleeve, heart-in-mouth people I know and am getting to know. *All of them...*

The ones who are curious about Jesus and those who can't quite imagine how interested Jesus is in them.

The ones who feel 'in with the bricks' and those who hang out around the edges which, watch out, is kind of an interesting/unsettling place to be as that's where Jesus often shows up too. And when Jesus shows up, well, nothing can ever be the same again - which is to say, we can never ever be the same again. To which we might sigh, 'Thank goodness!'

As you'll read, further into this newsletter, *An Tobar*, our gathering place in Lower Gledfield, is a year old at the end of August. Or at least, a year old into a new name and a new lease of life. We plan to have a birthday party to celebrate - to which you are all invited, by the way (more details inside these pages)!

Because of this, I got to thinking about cake! Those who know me know there doesn't have to be an excuse, as far as I'm concerned, for cake! But cake does sometimes have a particular purpose, like at birthdays, it's not just for eating, but for making wishes over.

Have you ever wondered why we are encouraged, as we blow out our birthday candles, not to speak our wishes out loud?

Maybe I'm overthinking it, but I wonder if we tell each other to keep our wishes quiet because we know how scared we are to say what's really in our heart. And, pushing it further, maybe because the things we really wish for are things other people might be afraid to hear.

'I wish you would listen to how I experience the world.'

'I wish the church was for me too.'

'I wish...' you fill in the blank.

As our birthday celebrations approach, I encourage you to spend time, dwelling with Jesus, asking God's wish for our church. And to have courage to speak what you hear out loud, even if you think what is yours to say might rattle some bones.

And do you know, according to the prophet Ezekiel (chapter 37), things get very interesting when old bones are rattled! New life! New breath! Go on - make a wish! God wishes with you!

In love,

Carol Anne



HRH The Princess Royal Visit (some thoughts)

Photos: © John Wright

IT WAS a very moving experience and an eye-opener to Princess Anne's people skills. She absorbed everything she had been told about us and put us at our ease. I could tell that she'd done it before! A truly memorable event. (Donald)

I was looking at photos of the Royal Visit with my two wee granddaughters aged four and two. They were delighted to see folk they knew, Carol Anne, Willie and Trish who looked very smartly dressed but were most disappointed that the Princess Royal didn't have a tiara and a long flowing sparkly dress!!! (Morag)

Heard Princess Anne had arrived. Could see her talking to dignitaries in the vestibule, then the junior band began to play and I saw her coming down the aisle with Carol Anne. She stopped and listened to the band. Then was introduced to Trish, Kathleen, Stella, Willie, Kisha and Donald. She spent time with each and all I could hear, standing on the opposite side of the church, was laughter.

Princess Anne spoke to the representatives of the other Dornoch churches and the Junior Band. All the time, I was getting more nervous. Then she unveiled the plaque, I turned and Carol Anne was introducing me to

Princess Anne. I managed to say something to her and then I had to ask her to sign the Visitor's Book.

For weeks, I had been practising how I would ask her. Well, the long rehearsed phrase disappeared and something completely different was said. She smiled, signed the book taking her own pen from her handbag. Said another few words. Received her bouquet from a band member and was off down the south aisle and out into the rain.

The long awaited occasion was over. Surprised how nervous I was and there was no need. She showed interest in you. Princess Anne has done this thousands of times before but it is once in a lifetime experience for us. Months of preparation had gone into this event and it was interesting seeing The Lord Lieutenant and his team at work. The meticulous planning. We had two rehearsals.

When the Princess had left, we felt that the visit had gone well and were left with a good feeling. Absolutely delighted to be part of it. (Margaret)



L to R HRH Princess Royal meets Chris Ferne, Eric de Venny and Michael Hanratty



HRH Princess Royal chats with Margaret Macrae

Happy Birthday to...

...AN TOBAR! On 30th August last year we celebrated all the work and reimagining that had gone into creating a welcome space in the hall we thought we'd lost but were cheeky enough to ask to have back! We wanted to see what might become of us if we were to have a base, a gathering place, at the west side of the parish, our hope being it might better enable our mission there. We invited the community to a BBQ (and of course the weather was... course!) to help us give the hall a new name, 'An Tobar' (with the emphasis on 'To'), Gaelic for 'The Well'. This seemed a useful handle and reminder of what we are seeking to do as, in Scripture, and in Highland culture, a well was a meeting place, a place where bonds were made; it was a place of life, of nourishment; and it was a place of collective responsibility, the community called to care for this vital source and resource.



Over the course of the last year, An Tobar has been home to worship of different styles led by different folk; it's also been host to lunches and cream teas, to afterschool activities and prayers and more - there is much to celebrate a year on! So on Sunday 30th August - save the date! - you are invited to a birthday party at An Tobar at 1.30pm. We will look over our shoulder (but only a little!) and look ahead to what might be. Everyone - everyone! - is welcome.

Carol Anne

Bradbury Centre

IN JUNE, Carol Anne, Roddy Maclean and I were made very welcome at the Bradbury Centre, Bonar Bridge.

The clients who regularly attend the day centre and staff joined us, sharing the singing of favourite hymns, prayers and scripture readings.

It was lovely to have a chat and catch up with old friends and make new ones.

Christine Mackay



WORKING WITH FAMILIES AND YOUNG FOLK ACROSS OUR PARISH

Family Summer Fun

WE HAVE two more family fun sessions to go, one at An Tobar (4th August) and another on the Cathedral Green (11th August). Bring your children, your grandchildren, encourage your neighbours to come along to enjoy games and crafts and snacks - and one another's company. Everyone is welcome to come and join in.

Can you spare an hour a week?

WHAT'S THAT thing Jesus said about the harvest being plentiful and the workers just needing a wee bit of encouragement? I think that's how it went! We have made a start to work with school children and families in our communities but, to sustain it, we really really need more people to help. We've asked before and here we are asking again, please...

Can you spare an hour a week? We've tried an after school club at An Tobar - think games, crafts, snacks, playing outside when the weather allows. We've been to Bonar Bridge Primary on Friday afternoons to bake and play Lego and make stuff. We've visited Dornoch Primary where we are given tasks by teachers - reading with pupils and playing games. And we have volunteers willing to put on something like Messy Church, a monthly gathering where families can eat together, learn stories of faith together and make and play together - but without a team to help they just can't get anything of the ground. There's also the West Church Hall, passed by school kids every day, which could easily be a stop on the way home for unwinding or somewhere to get a warm meal. We'd also like to organise a treat for the kids who come to youth theatre and Girl's Brigade and so on, maybe a picnic on the beach or whatever they'd enjoy. There's so much we can do together and so little can be done on our own.

So, all of this is to say, please will you think about getting involved and helping? No special skills are required except maybe a willingness to try new things or share hobbies and, most important of all, be a friendly face.

Hoping, ready, sleeves rolled up,

Carol Anne (07400 313303)



Dornoch Firth Parish Pilgrimage to Croick

ON SUNDAY 9th August come and join friends from Dornoch Firth Parish for a short journey with a difference. Don't be put off by the word pilgrimage – it's not just for people who go to church every Sunday (or even occasionally!) It's a time open to everyone to take time out just to reflect while enjoying the walk or the drive up to the Church.

The journey can be by foot or by car. It is only a mile long and follows the river upstream from Amat to Croick church, retracing the steps of the people of Glencalvie who were forced off their lands in 1845. It's a time to reflect and allow the wild beauty, solitude and peace of this hidden valley to heal our aching minds and spirits. For those who wish, there will be some verses or thoughts at places to pause to help us on the journey, but others may prefer to allow their hearts to lead them.

We meet at Amat junction, beside the red phone box, on the road to Croick at 2pm on Sunday 9th August. Transport back from the church to Amat can be provided for those who walk.

The service at Croick church begins at 3pm bringing together all of God's family, whatever their background and you don't have to have taken part in the pilgrimage to join in there just for the service. Communion will be offered for those who wish this. Do come and celebrate with us.

Mary Stobo



A poster for a pilgrimage and worship event. The background is a mix of teal, yellow, and white. At the top, it says 'DORNOCH FIRTH CHURCH OF SCOTLAND' and 'SC0000315'. Below that, in large blue letters, is 'PILGRIMAGE & WORSHIP'. Underneath that, in smaller blue letters, is 'With Communion'. In the center, there is a photograph of a white stone church with arched windows and a blue door. Below the photo, it says 'SUNDAY 9TH AUGUST, 3PM / CROICK CHURCH'. At the bottom, it says 'To make the pilgrimage, please gather at 2pm at the Amat turnoff. What3Words send.outbound.surprises'. At the very bottom, it gives the telephone number 'TEL: 07400313303' and the website 'www.dornoch-cathedral.com'.

DORNOCH FIRTH CHURCH OF SCOTLAND
SC0000315

**PILGRIMAGE &
WORSHIP**

With Communion

SUNDAY 9TH AUGUST, 3PM / CROICK CHURCH

To make the pilgrimage, please gather at 2pm at the Amat turnoff. What3Words send.outbound.surprises

TEL: 07400313303 www.dornoch-cathedral.com

Prayer

– for you, from Carol Anne.

Here I am, God
Listening for you

Feeling my way
Toward you

Remembering
You are here already

And so may we
Be as one

Your thought,
My thought

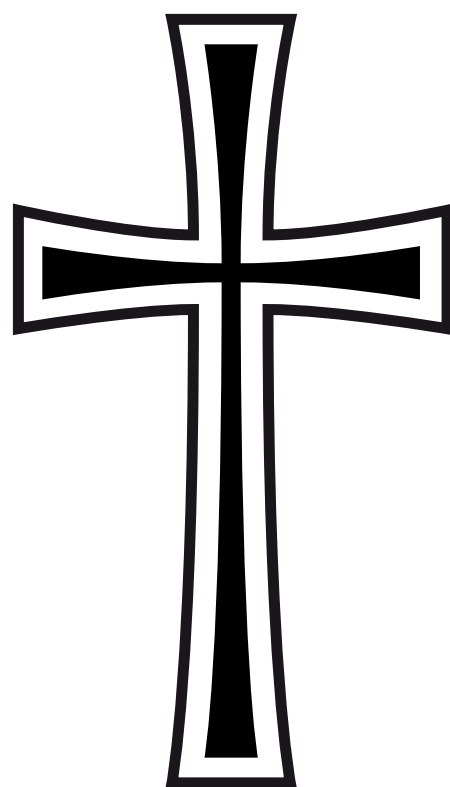
Your yearning,
My yearning too

And the world
A gentler place

My walk
A steadier pace

Because we are here
Together

AMEN



The Chosen

FOR SOME months now, some of us have been watching The Chosen, the first multi-season series about the life of Christ. On our own or in groups, we have found the series really gives colour and question to the stories we thought were familiar and yet have turned out to be, in their different ways, surprising.

Speaking personally, the series has been one of the things that has made me all the more curious about our Scriptures and their stories and the handprints on those stories made by the many, many folk who told them and edited them and collected them together. And I find the way Christ is portrayed, not to mention his friends, and even his enemies, to be, as we probably always suspected, far more compelling and nuanced than the sometimes terse story told us by the gospel writers - which is not to say The Chosen writers are messing around with the stories, more that they are digging deep and rummaging around in what is there, trying to bring out their fullest sense.

If you haven't watched the series yet many of us would recommend it. You can find it online at <<https://watch.thechosen.tv>> or on The Chosen app and it's available on some major streaming platforms too.

For those watching already, and wanting to gather again, we are about to embark on Season 4 which takes us into the last year of Jesus' ministry on earth. If we start just after the school holidays, we will have weeks enough to view the entire season before the October holiday. This would mean meeting some time in the week beginning 17th August, morning or evening as you prefer, and wherever in the parish you would like to watch.

Please speak to myself or to others coming along (Sue and Maria at the time of writing and others we hope) so we can work out what might be best to try for.

Looking forward to your company and to learning anew the stories of Jesus with you.

Carol Anne

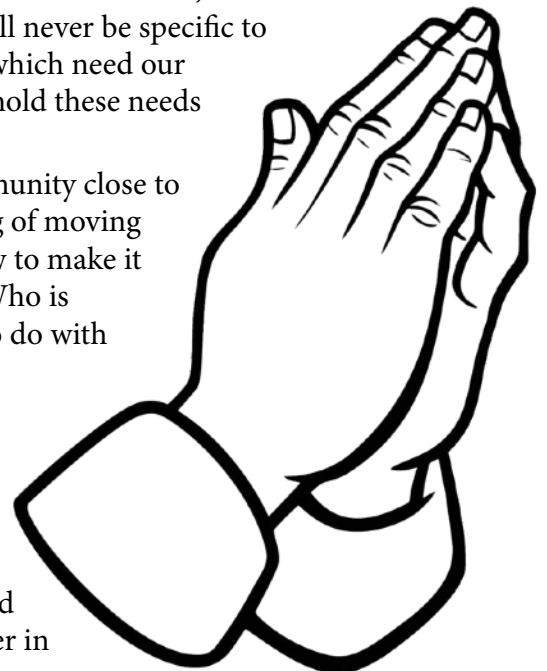


Prayer Group

YOU MAY have seen a recent 'prayer thoughts' insert in the weekly order of service. Many of us pray regularly for our parish and community, but might feel that we aren't aware of the areas of need, or are concerned about where to focus our prayer. These 'prayer thoughts' will never be specific to individuals but they will hopefully highlight areas of our community which need our attention and prayer. Please join us in using these weekly thoughts to hold these needs before God.

At the moment in mid-July we have the young people of our community close to our prayer hearts. They are on holiday from school, or maybe thinking of moving onwondering what comes next, what their future holds and how to make it happen? In practical terms how are families replacing school meals? Who is providing child care? Who is giving these young folk positive things to do with this free time?

"Lord Jesus, you love and care for each one of us individually. You know our needs, our concerns and our anxieties. Hold our young people closely at this time, keep them safe physically, mentally and emotionally. Protect them from potential negative influences among their peers or on social media, and help them to make healthy and constructive choices. Give them a supportive environment at home and in the community in which to plan the next stage of their lives, whether in school or beyond. And help us to be part of that support framework."



Life Events

Funerals

11th June **Colin Terry**
17th June **Irene Fraser**
26th June **Christine Milne**

*Your beauty and love chase after me every day of my life.
I'm back home in the house of God for the rest of my life.*

Psalm 23.6 The Message

Wedding

29th July **Jacob Reid and Jamie Fountain**

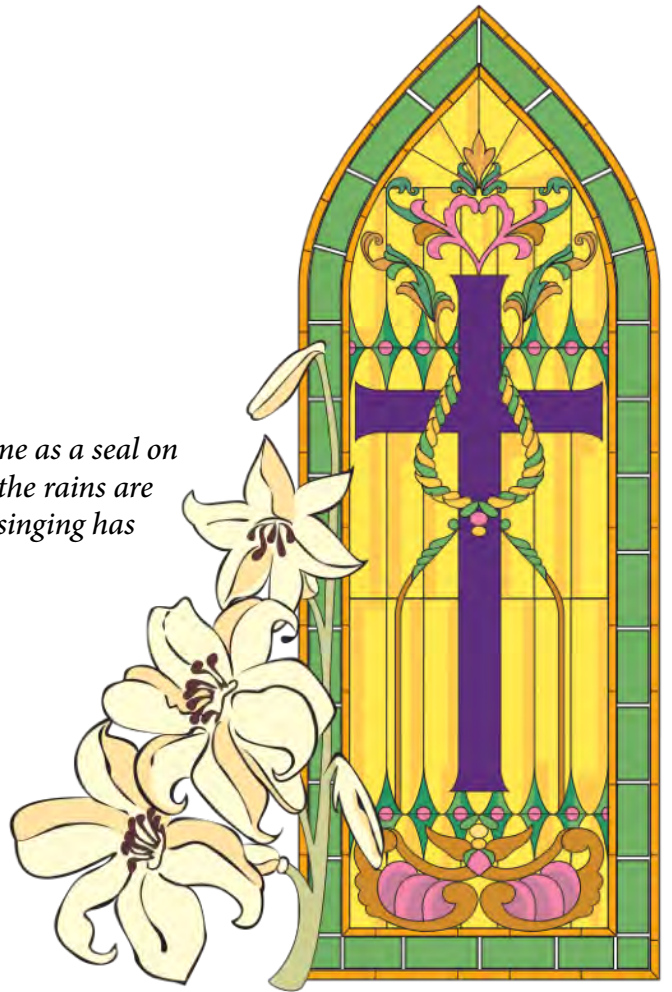
My lover belongs to me and I to him. He says to me, "Set me as a seal on your heart, as a seal on your arm. See! The winter is past; the rains are over and gone. Flowers appear on the earth; the season of singing has come..."

Song of Songs

Baptisms

24th May **Callum George McIntosh-Smith**
24th May **Anna McIntosh-Smith**
5th July **Kayla Ann Elizabeth Macleod**
5th July **Keira Louise Macleod**
5th July **Georgie Alexandria Macleod**
5th July **Coraline Wilma Charlotte Sutherland**

May the Lord, mighty God, bless and keep you forever
Hymn 787 (CH4)



New Members

By Profession of Faith: Valerie Graham, Easter Sunday 4th April

By Resolution of the Kirk Session: Eric De Venny

I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.
John 8.12

Sundays@7

WE HAVE enjoyed our Sundays@7 since they started in June. In August we can look forward to:

Susan Brown on Sunday 2nd

Jeani Hunter on 9th

Sandy & Kenny on 16th

Surprise on 23rd

Roddy and our Choir on 30th
with our final evening

Sharing this relaxing worship together is a lovely end to the weekend but you can also join on-line.

Mhairi Mackay

Christian Aid Lunch

ONCE AGAIN our Women's Group provided an excellent lunch to raise funds for Christian Aid. Every seat was taken in the West Church Hall.



Opening of Scottish Parliament

THOSE IN our congregation will be sure to know Margaret MacDonald who regularly attends Sunday Services. Margaret and her husband, David, were invited to attend the opening of the Scottish Parliament on 27th June with David being nominated as “local hero.” Those who know David will understand why. Each of the 129 MSPs could invite a guest. Newly elected David Green words explain why he chose David.

“Davie has dedicated more than 60 years to Scouting with the 1st Brora Scout Group and across the Highlands. I enjoyed numerous camps and rallies with Davie, not least a trip to Austria in 2009 that left a lasting impression on me.

I am just one of countless people who have benefitted from his time, dedication and encouragement. This was wonderfully reinforced when I saw Gillian Mackay MSP’s dad’s face light up at the chance to meet his old scout leader.”

In 2024 David received the prestigious Silver Wolf Award, which is the highest possible honour in scouting for his most exceptional service.



Margaret & David MacDonald

Dornoch Parish Guild

THE GUILD Dedication service will be on Sunday 20th September and Guild meetings will start again on Tuesday 22nd September at 2.30pm in the West Church Hall when we will look forward to beginning our new session.

This session is year 3 of the theme *Let us build a house* and the topic is ‘Beyond the Walls.’

The projects we will be supporting this session are -

Voice of Persecuted Christians Operation Hope (Egypt)
and Crossreach - Playful Beginnings (Scotland).

I am delighted to tell you that the amounts raised for the Projects from 1st January 2025 – 30th June 2026 are as follows:

Bear Necessities -Build My Church (Bulgaria) – **£57,924.44**

Voice of Persecuted Christians- Operation Hope (Egypt) – **£57, 068.62**

Scottish Bible Society- Bibles for Bairns (Scotland) – **£69,423.39**

Crossreach – Playful beginnings (Scotland) – **£82,395.21**

What wonderful work the Guild in Scotland does, so thank you to all and we look forward to welcoming you all in September.

Trish Geddes



WHY?

“WHY,” seems to be the question we hear the most about our arrival in Scotland in early May. A stay that will last until the end of October!

We had always wanted to come to Scotland, but life just got in the way. Work, kids, money, all those day-to-day things that come with a busy life. Finally the time seemed right. We knew we wanted to be in the Highlands. Ann's great, great, great grandfather, Andrew Gaddie, left the Orkney Islands in the 1850's and settled in the central part of America, in the state of Illinois. It was from there he served in the American Civil War on the Union side. Upon completion of his tour, he settled in the village of Sweetwater and became a very successful farmer.



Ann & Curt Adams

Searching the Internet, we discovered holiday lets were difficult to find. It was just after COV-ID, and much was still closed. Finally, a place in Balintore appeared and we took it. As it turned out, we were happy and comfortable in the little village by the Firth, we kept coming back in the month of September for three years. On our first return, we just happened to be in Balintore at the end of the St Duthac Books and Art Festival, which is held in Tain the first full week of September. This was the beginning of our love and relationship with the Highlands. It was through the festival that we were introduced to so much of what the local area and Highlands have to offer. We met artists, authors and took tours of local areas we would never have thought of. We visited Balnagown, The Tarbat Centre, Ballone Castle and Fearn Abbey. We went on walking tours of the WWI and WWII gun emplacements on Nigg Hill, again, so much history we were not aware of. We travelled to Orkney and discovered a treasure of family history. We also made friends that we cherish and stay in touch with.

And then there was Dornoch. We had visited Dornoch as many tourists do and thought the Cathedral was so beautiful. We even attended a service once or twice during those first years but knew we were only here for a short time. Last year, during our September visit, we discussed the idea of coming for an extended period. We are not getting younger and wondered how many more times we would be willing and able to travel.

We talked to real estate agents and were very discouraged when they told us holiday lets for extended periods of time were almost never available. Most people wanted to rent for short periods of time. Later we were having dinner at Green's in Tain, discussing how disappointed we were, when Eileen, a woman we had met who works there, overheard us talking. She said we needed to talk to her friend right away. Long story short, a long term let opportunity in Balintore fell into our lap almost within minutes. In fact, Curt said we must listen and take this opportunity that presented itself so quickly or else we would end up in the belly of a whale, just like Jonah on his way to Nineveh!

When we made the decision to come for an extended period, we knew a church home would be important to us. We believed that we wanted Dornoch Cathedral to be our church home away from home. Dornoch Cathedral was our obvious choice... WHY?

There are, of course, the obvious reasons: a beautiful building filled with amazing history, but is that the reason we kept coming back? Of course not. There is no doubt that when you enter this magnificent building you can't help but be taken in by the towering ceilings, the beautiful windows, the sense of history...and a feeling of peace. What brought us back were the people within these amazing walls. People that reached out to us and made us feel welcome.

Carole Ann, who remembered us from our short visit over a year ago. Her calm and peaceful demeanour but then with her Reflections that generate questions and conversations for the rest of the day. She invited us to join in and participate in the Sunday evening service where we were welcomed by even more people. Alison Bartlett introduced us to Natter and Nosh and the Soup and Scone lunch. Willie and Maureen



WHY? – continued

MacKay who have a way of gathering you in and making you feel you have always been a part of the church, even getting you out on the dance floor at the Ceilidh! There are many more people, so many ... but names escape us so often at this time of our lives.

We both come from Military families. We have lived and travelled to many places around this world. People often ask us what our favourite place was and why. As we have often reflected on this, the answer is always the same. You can have a magnificent building, you can have a lovely town or country but, in the end, it is always the people. The people are what make it special. That is true here. This is a holy place; you feel the presence of God and especially through the people within its walls.

Curt and Ann Adams

Finance News

FIRSTLY we'd like to thank everyone who has contributed in any way this year, whether it be by contributing financially or volunteering or supporting the sales tables, tours, and fundraising events, anything and everything. It is all equally very much appreciated.

Financially we're facing a few challenges. We do have funds but they are mostly restricted, which means that we can only use them for the purpose for which they were given. What we are short of is unrestricted funds. These are needed to pay our running costs such as our minister, heating, lighting, and on-going maintenance and repairs.

These costs include our 'Giving to Grow' payments. This is not a levy to the Church of Scotland. The majority of what we give is to pay our minister's salary, including employer pension contributions, employer national insurance contributions and other related costs. We pay the Church of Scotland and they pay the minister and these other employer costs. Paying this is our first responsibility, it must be paid or we would not have a minister. That is not going to happen, but we do need to be mindful of what we spend. The balance of our Giving to Grow contribution is to help churches pay their minister where their income just cannot do that, and a small amount goes to shared activities.

Half year figures to end June 26

The oil crisis has had an effect on us all and this includes the church. Our costs have risen and people have had less money to give. In the first 6 months of the year offerings are £6,000 down on the same period last year. Safe donations are £1,950 down. For expenditure heating oil for the Cathedral alone is up by £3,340 and routine repairs to the buildings is up by £6,400.

Banking

We now have to bank at the post office or take money to the nearest bank which is Inverness. Once again we would like folk to consider giving by standing order or failing that use the Goodbox machine, either before or after the service. It will still be counted as offerings as we can see what time each donation is made. If you've signed up for gift aid and use the machine tell us what you've donated and we can still claim.

Fundraising and Events

These have included very enjoyable social events and raised several thousand pounds so far including the BBQ £1156.10, Gizzen Briggs £3141.60, Lily Macleod kilt ski £1,500, Choir Concert £665 and the Ceilidh £297. Please remember this is only money banked up until 30.06.26.

If you'd like any more information, or have any questions, please feel free to contact us at <treasurer@dornochfirthcofs.org> and we'll try to help.

Finance Team



Welcome & Sales Team

AT THE time of writing we are 10 weeks into the busy summer season, and our volunteers are daily reporting news of the many visitors from all over the world, entering the Cathedral and expressing their surprise and pleasure at the unexpected beauty that meets their eyes.

Our new leaflet “Nine Highlights of the Cathedral,” is very popular with over 1,000 sales. See photo - “Christine Port of Golspie buying a Cathedral mouse from Jane Hadley while Jane’s husband, Wilf, explains our Highlights leaflet to Christine’s niece, Collette from Kent, who admires the Cathedral and our cooler weather!”

Our conversations with these strangers to Dornoch reinforce what we all realise ourselves: how very fortunate we are that this wonderful building is “our local church”. On the days (sadly few so far this summer!) when the sunshine streams through the glorious stained glass windows, the reflections on the walls and on the floor of the central crossing, are indeed a wonderful sight.

The majority of visitors kindly leave a donation to show their appreciation and many also purchase items from our sales tables; they enjoy conversing with our volunteers, learning more about the history of the cathedral, and telling us about their journeys around the Highlands as well as where they have travelled from.

We have all had many such enjoyable exchanges and we find it a privilege to do so. In the coming summer months we will meet many more folk who, with their kind donations and purchases, are supporting the Dornoch Firth Parish. If you would like to join our team, please contact one of us (details below) for further information.

By the time we next report to you we will be into the Autumn and hopefully reflecting on a successful summer season, but in the meantime, we wish you all a very happy Summer.

Sue Boyce (07833 689040/810415)

Anne Chambers (01862 811520)

Lisa Dickenson (01862 810973)



Gizzen Briggs

IT WAS a pleasure to have Gizzen Briggs celebrate their 30th Anniversary in Dornoch Cathedral with our Junior Band as the opening act.



Women's Group

MAY SAW normal service resumed by the Women's Group.....we were baking scones again! These scones were for a Soup and Scone lunch that we hosted in aid of Christian Aid. The lunch was very well attended and supported. Even though there were only a few members of the group available on the day to serve and clear up, it ran smoothly and a fabulous sum was raised, so thanks go to all who attended and/or donated.

In June we met for a lovely evening walk at Loch Migdale. There were a good number of us walking, accompanied by a few dogs and it gave us plenty of time to chat and enjoy the glorious weather...we even managed to dodge the midges which was a relief.

Next month will be a busy one for our group...we will have a stall selling traybakes in aid of Church funds at the Dornoch Highland Games on Friday 7th August, so please come and see us and be tempted by our baking (no scones though!). We will, however, be serving strawberry and cream scones on Saturday 29th August after the Summer Concert that we host in the Cathedral, so that's one to put in the diary.

Our July meeting (Monday 6th) was going to involve games on the beach, but they we postponed that fun for the moment, and attended the Choir Concert in aid of Highland Hospice held in the West Church Hall instead.

Caroline Gilchrist



View of Loch Migdale

Spring Sing

WELL, we managed to have our Spring Sing, even though it landed on the last day of Spring.

We chose a hymn from the new hymn book supplement, with appropriate words to start the afternoon off, then hymns, songs and choruses from Songs of Gods People and Junior Praise. We sang hymns old and new, some remembered from Sunday School days, some childrens' action songs and even a couple of rounds which sounded lovely.

We were very encouraged by the great turnout. Extra chairs had to be brought in to accommodate everyone, and the singing was wonderful.

We were accompanied with great enthusiasm by Roddy. Lesley read the lesson and Mary finished the Service with a lovely Spring blessing.

A cup of tea was very welcome after the efforts of all, which we are sure was pleasing to God. Thanks to all who came along and helped us raise the roof.

Ann and Carol



Charity Golf Event

ONCE AGAIN the Dornoch Firth Church of Scotland with their main hub being the historic Dornoch Cathedral is needing support for funds to meet our ongoing running costs.

A charity golf event on Royal Dornoch's Championship Course is planned for Friday 23rd October. We are offering golfers the chance to collect a "goodie bag", and have a bacon roll, play on the World famous Championship Course and enjoy a two course meal afterwards in the wonderful new clubhouse.

At £150 per player this is less than half the normal green fee cost with the offer of playing the Struie on Saturday for £50 (half cost of green fee).

Our target audience is to attract players from across Scotland and the UK with this opportunity to play a Championship golf course which is regularly in the Top 10 Worldwide. We hope that you might have golfing friends that will find this an attractive offer. Please forward details.

We are grateful for Glenmorangie Distillery for generously providing special malt whisky for the first three teams. There will also be a raffle and an amazing list of auction items to bid for after the meal.

Entry forms are available on www.dornochcathedral.com or by emailing neilsenhunter@btinternet.com

Jeani Hunter



Ceilidh

ON SATURDAY 27th June we had a super ceilidh dance in the West Church Hall. The Georgie MacLennan Ceilidh Band were superb and kept the dance floor full all night. Dancers came from as far afield as France, America, Wick as well as more local from Ardgay, Bonar Bridge, Dornoch and Rogart. Even the non-dancers took to the floor (well done W.P.).

Thank you to the Events Team for organising the evening, to Dornoch Gatherings for advertising, to John Wright Photography for capturing the evening, and especially the Georgie MacLennan Band who played a great variety of music and a full programme of Scottish dances and, of course, thank you to everyone who came along to enjoy this social event.

Keep an eye for other events such as Button & Bows and another Ceilidh with a mixture of songs and dancers.



The Gay Gordons - Patricia & David starting the evening

Scottish Country Dancing

If you fancy trying reels, jigs and strathspeys, the Ardgay Scottish Country Dancing Group have a free taster/introductory session on Wednesday 30th September 2-4pm, in Ardgay Community Hall. before our regular Wednesday classes start on 1st October and continue until April. All welcome and no partner or previous experience required.

Note that we are a Scottish Country Dancing, not a Ceilidh Dancing Group, although there are ceilidh groups in Rogart and elsewhere. Ceilidh dances such as the Gay Gordons, are usually danced with just your partner, whereas most of our dances are in sets of eight people.

Phone Patricia or David on 01863 766061 for more information.

Youth Theatre - Robin Hood Performance

ONCE AGAIN, the young Dornoch thespians surpassed themselves with their lively and moving musical version of Robin Hood in the West Church Hall. Having performed a dress rehearsal, afternoon and evening shows on the day, the cast were exhausted but delighted with how things went.

“The best show yet!” was the verdict of many.

The script, and choreography were created by the team of Graham McCarthy, Rachel Cameron and Rachel Graham, whilst the music was provided by Roddy Maclean. The sound and lighting, once again provided by Stephen Macintosh, created a wonderful atmosphere and helped lift the children’s performances to a new level.

The Group wishes to thank the Dornoch Firth Church of Scotland for supporting them over so many years. It was great fun! £505 was raised for Church funds.

Graham McCarthy



Robin challenges the Sheriff - Nasty Nottingham (Morven Cameron) - and his sidekick, Ronnie “the Rat” Rattle (Tonia Simon) as they torture Young John - prone - (Lochlan Park).



Robin Hood (Lilly Tarry) leads the dance to the song “Dizzy” as he has spotted Maid Marion for the first time.



Robin lies dead. Maid Marion (Holly Sangster) sings the hauntingly beautiful Runrig song, “In Search of Angels.”



Robin is brought back to life thanks to the supernatural powers of the trees, the ghosts and the angels. Everyone celebrates with “The Time Warp.”

Our Choir

THANK YOU everyone who supported our concert for the Highland Hospice. Over £670 was raised. A big thank you to everyone.

It was a truly lovely evening with a wonderful mixture of music, with the choir full of energy and enjoying the evening as much as the audience.

Jane Hadley



Gardens

THOSE OF YOU who know me might laugh at the idea of me being able to “Be still and know that I am God” but I do try. For me an early morning walk is the best way to spend time with God. So on Sunday 12th July before church I walked with Nigel and spotted this “creation.”

A highly unusual exhibition of God’s creativity a burning bush as Moses found in the Old Testament? I paused to consider.

Then in the Cathedral later on Sunday with the reading from Mathew and Carol-Anne’s message I wondered if this was an illustration of the work of the sower... not all seeds grow and develop the same? We all have our own styles and talents?

Maybe in sharing this you will have another interpretation, a special message for you? However you react I feel Blessed to live where we do and see the miracle of God’s love in our everyday lives.

Roz



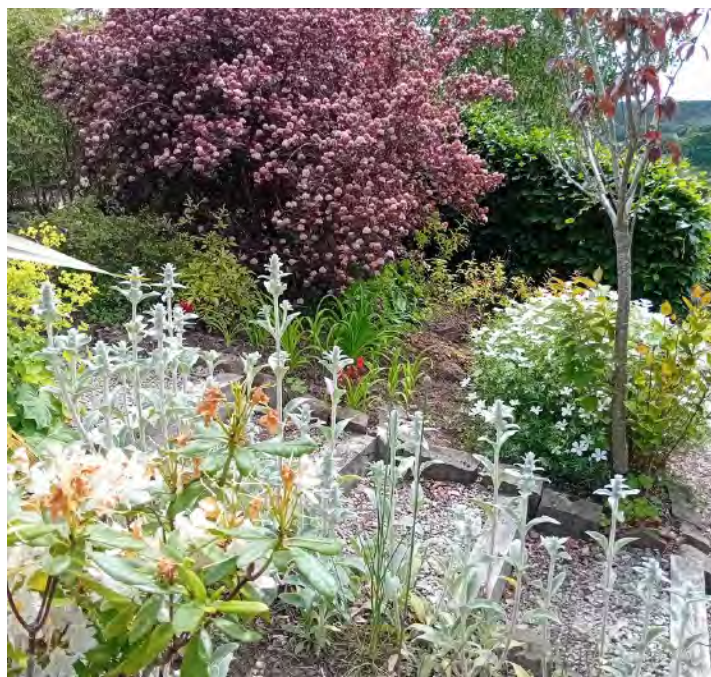
Somewhere near Tain – ask Roz



Alison Barlett, Skelbo



Fay Wilkinson, Astle



Rosie Baxter, Invershin

Donations at Fay’s garden went to the Bumblebee Conservation Society. Alison’s donations went to Mary’s Meals. Rosie split her donations across Christian Aid, Save the Children, Air Ambulance and Motor Neuron Disease. Rosie may have another Open Day later in the year.

Natter and Nosh

EXCITING advance notice for your Autumn/Winter planning!

We are pleased to say these are the dates for Monday's Natter & Nosh.

September 21st

October 5th & 19th

November 2nd, 16th & 30th

December 14th

We look forward to welcoming you to catch up with old friends whilst sharing a simple meal. We open doors for 12 - 12:30 which is time to relax in good company. Our menu is varied and seasonal but the natter is legendary!

We do have need of some additional volunteers... if you are able to: help set a table, serve some food, maybe even enjoy some and then help clear up all with some nattering then this could be you? Its typically once a month and you would help for a wee bit longer than these times depending on the menu and dishes!!

Please do consider joining our volunteer teams - both men and women wanted and clean aprons provided for the first week then its up to you!! Please speak to Trish Geddes or Roslyn Oliver-Jones if you feel you could help.

Roslyn

A night to remember

ANYBODY fortunate enough to be in Dornoch Cathedral on Saturday 20th June will have experienced a 'once in a lifetime' event: an evening performance by Amira Willighagen. This remarkably nice young lady is blessed with a voice that many who should know have described as 'stupendous', 'staggering' and 'sublime.' With a repertoire that covers religious works, opera and light classics, Amira is credited, at the age of only twenty-two, as being possibly the finest lyric soprano of our age – some say possibly of all time.

Her Cathedral audience was filled with amazement, delight and – for many, raw emotion – at the beauty, range and power of her voice.

With a presentation that included music as diverse as *How Great Thou Art*, *Nessun Dorma* and *I Could Have Danced All Night* it very soon became obvious why Amira is by far the most popular artist on You Tube, with over a billion views.

The event was enhanced by the contributions of Gaelic trio 'Ealtainn', fiddler Rachael Campbell and the bagpipes of Allan Macdonald, whose performances were enjoyed by all, including Amira herself; the Cathedral organ was also brought into play, courtesy of John Brozovski.



Among the audience were a large number of visitors who had travelled from around the world to be at the event, something some regularly do, in order to see her every performance. To have Amira sing in our Cathedral was an almost unbelievable treat for our local residents, many of whom never thought they would be so fortunate as to see her sing live anywhere in the UK, yet Dornoch Gatherings deftly managed to have us included on Amira's world tour, to the absolute delight and gratitude of all who attended.

Chris Ferne

1st Dornoch Girls Brigade

WE HOPE that you had a great summer. We are looking forward to seeing you all again in the West Church Hall on Monday 7th September once you have settled back into school.

Explorers P1-P3 (6:15-7:15) Juniors P4-P7 (7:00-8:30) Brigaders S1-S6 (7:00-8:30)

Marianne & Jane

Dornoch Brownies

WE WELCOME you back to Brownies on Thursday 27th August.

Julie Herbertson

The Meadows



Frances getting into the Wimbledon atmosphere



Allen and Mora enjoying a game of dominoes

Oversteps

WE HOPE to see you come along to our Summer Fayre on Saturday 8th August starting at 1.00pm. We will welcome all donations to help us fill our stalls and need some volunteers to help on the day. Thank you.

We had lots of fun with the bikes, cycling down the drive and enjoying the sunny weather.

Alastair continues to amaze us with his green fingers. We have potatoes, tomatoes, beans, beetroot and loads more. He has also gone to the Community Market to sell extra plants and make space for more.



Dornoch Gatherings

Photo: John Wright

DORNOCH

CATHEDRAL provided a perfect setting for Gaelic singing supergroup Sian who captivated a packed audience with their spellbinding harmonies from start to finish. A standout piece for me aptly sung was the Old Church Yard, an English hymn the girls translated into Gaelic. The voices and Innes's accompaniment were inextricably intertwined throughout the whole set with such grace and respect for their tradition which you could feel through the songs both old and new.



Gaelic singing supergroup Sian perform

It was lovely to see such a range of audience members too with local children midway through their Fèis Chataibh week of Gaelic music tuition enjoying the concert alongside some of Gaeldoms heroes Calum and Rory MacDonald of Runrig.

To finish, the group came onto the floor in front of the stage to make use of the amazing acoustics of this 800 year old Cathedral, singing in four part harmony. You could've heard a pin drop throughout this song! The whole audience were hanging on every word with this building up to four voices in harmony where they then brought the volume down to finish before a rapturous applause broke out. The whole gig gave you goosebumps and the special kind of feeling you only get at a live gig - better come along to another to feel it for yourself!.

April Sutherland

We have enjoyed so many great events in the Cathedral thanks to Dornoch Gatherings. Here are a few coming soon.



CHARLIE MCKERRON AND FRIENDS
MARK CLEMENT / TIM EDEY / ROSS AINSLIE / CAILEAN MCKERRON

12 SEPT 19:30 (DOORS AT 19:00)	DORNOCH CATHEDRAL	TICKET £20 (UNDER 18S FREE)
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WITH SUPPORT FROM
RACHEL CAMPBELL

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AND TICKETS VISIT:
WWW.DORNOCHGATHERINGS.COM

GARY INNES & EWEN HENDERSON
WITH SPECIAL GUEST RORY MATHESON

17 AUGUST 19:30 (DOORS AT 19:00)	DORNOCH CATHEDRAL	TICKET £22 (UNDER 18S FREE)
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WITH SUPPORT FROM
RUAIRIDH MACKAY & MEGAN MACKAY

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AND TICKETS VISIT:
WWW.DORNOCHGATHERINGS.COM

SEAN KELLY
— VOLUNTEER ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEON —

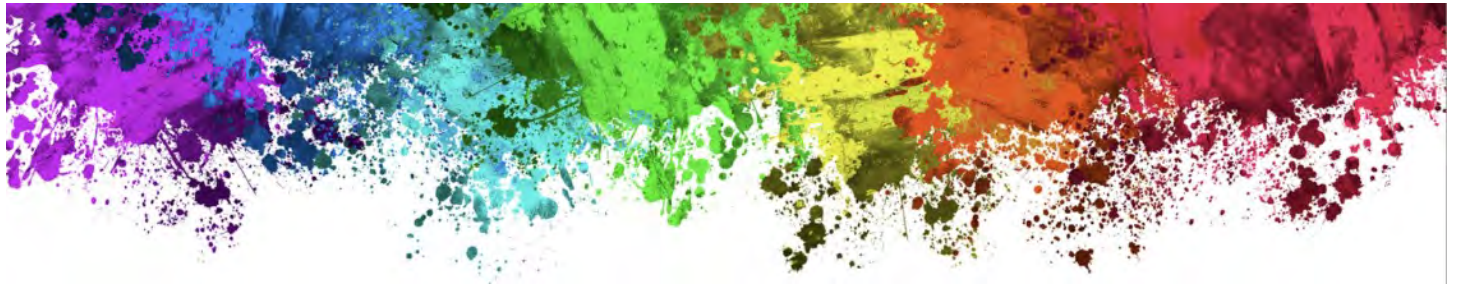
After a 35-year career as an NHS Orthopaedic Surgeon in the Highlands, Sean now volunteers with an orthopaedic charity, helping provide life-changing care in Zambia.

Come and hear Sean share the story of his career and the impact of his work.

Come along and join Residents at
Innis Mhor, Tain
for their annual
Summer Fete
on
Saturday, August 8th
1.00 - 3.30pm

Food Raffle Baking
Craft stalls Music

Everyone Welcome



Prison Art Made Visible

At Dornoch Cathedral – 27th July to 1st August

Building on the success of last year's exhibition in Dornoch Cathedral, the Pictora Made Visible Prison Art exhibition returns on Monday 27th July with two launch events at 2pm and 7pm

This special exhibition is organised by Dornoch Resident and Open University Lecturer, Robert Morrall and his 'not-for-profit' social enterprise Pictora- Art with conviction: www.pictora.org

Robert says that "engagement in art can help change behaviours and that the Made Visible exhibitions are a key part of this process. Art submitted by artists and budding creatives in prison is displayed as prints, with the individual receiving a Certificate of Participation, photo sheets showing their art displayed in Dornoch Cathedral and sets of professionally printed greeting cards showing the submitted image, which they can then send to their partners and children. This helps strengthen family relationships, which are a key component of successful resettlement".

Robert, explains that these outcomes for artists in prison can be life changing. Participation in the exhibition builds self-esteem and helps tackle the condition of Learned Helplessness (in which an individual learns to fail). For some individuals, having their creative art 'Made Visible', changes the label from prisoner to artist and thus helps change offending behaviours.

Feedback from individuals in prison participating in the 2025 Made Visible Exhibition highlights how motivational the exhibitions are:

"Amazing, this is the first time my work has been featured in ANY exhibition"

"... feels amazing, being part of the exhibition"

Work being exhibited in this year exhibition is from individuals in HMP Inverness, HMP Low Moss and HMP Castle Huntly.

This is a free event and everyone is welcome to a free drink and shortbread, with donations going to Dornoch Firth Parish.

Visitors to the launch events will hear poetry being read by an ex-offender and hear about the value of art in prison from guests connected to the prison system. The exhibition is being launched by Kim Tulloch, Deputy Lieutenant of Sutherland, with a

welcome by Dornoch Firth Parish Minister, Carol-Ann Porter.

Come along and enjoy the interesting range of art and poetry – Made Visible

Robert & Sheila Morrall





**You are invited to a very special
Exhibition
In
Dornoch Cathedral
Art created in prison
Made Visible**

**Launch events on
Monday
27th July 2026
at 2 pm and 7 pm**



Free entry with shortbread and wine (or a soft drink)
Plus a welcome from guests supporting the prison system

Donations from the launch events go to supporting Dornoch Firth Parish

Exhibition will run from Monday 27th July to Saturday 1st August 2026

This exhibition is organised by
Pictora - Art with Conviction
www.pictora.org






Dornoch through time

ENJOY these photos and notice the changes.



▲ 1940s ... Now ▼



Dates for your diary

SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES

AUGUST

- 2nd 11.00 am – Morning Service in Cathedral
7.00 pm – Sundays @ 7 Service in Cathedral
- 9th 11.00 am – Morning Service in Cathedral , including Sacrament of Baptism
2.00 pm – Pilgrimage from Amat junction to Croick Church
3.00 pm – Service in Croick church, sharing the Lord's Supper
7.00 pm – Sundays @ 7 Service in Cathedral
- 16th 11.00 am – Morning Service in Cathedral
4.00 pm – 'Summer Sing' in An Tobar, Ardgay
7.00 pm – Sundays @ 7 Service in Cathedral
- 23rd 11.00 am – Morning Service in Cathedral
7.00 pm – Sundays @ 7 Service in Cathedral
- 30th 11.00 am – Morning Service in Cathedral
1.30 pm – 'Happy Birthday' in An Tobar, Ardgay
7.00 pm – Sundays @ 7 Service in Cathedral

SEPTEMBER

- 6th 11.00 am – Morning Service in Cathedral
- 13th 11.00 am – Morning Service in Cathedral
3.00 pm – Reflective Service in An Tobar, Ardgay, led by Neil Simco
- 20th 11.00 am – Morning Service in Cathedral
Livestreamed to An Tobar, Ardgay
- 27th 11.00 am – Morning Service in Cathedral
1.30 pm – Afternoon Service in An Tobar, Ardgay

It was definitely a sun cream day when our Summer Walk was to Littleferry.

