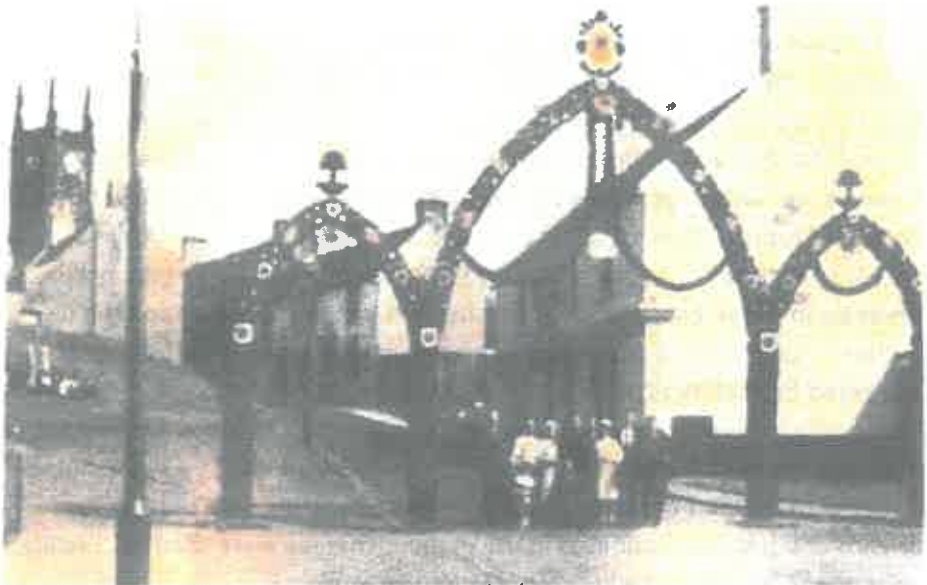


**BATHGATE HIGH PARISH CHURCH**

**THE LINK MAGAZINE**

**JUNE 2021**



**Green Tree Arch (date unknown , looking up to the church )**

**Our Mission Statement**

**We seek to share the love of Jesus by ,  
Worship , Faith and Fellowship with all ages .**

**( Scottish Charity No. SC007418**

**Church office : [info@bathgatehigh.com](mailto:info@bathgatehigh.com)**

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**June Editorial**

Hello once more my friends , I am slowly recovering from a chest muscle injury caused by my own inability to recognize the fact that I am not quite so young or fit as I used to be . I have to admit that this has been the worst few weeks in my memory of personal pain and not even being able to go to bed as lying down was impossible ( Muppet springs to mind ) . However almost mended , soon be back to the gym and soft play area , in my dreams of course .

I am thankful the many of the current restrictions are gradually easing off , although , for the life of me I cannot see the logic behind the science that says that we are allowed 100 people in church , singing but wearing a mask , usual distancing and then we have the severely limited numbers allowed at funerals and weddings , while the powers that be think it ok to allow three thousand football fans to gather to watch a game and be served alcohol. ( table service only for goodness sake ) . There seems to me to be a serious anomaly in the science there , or maybe I am just too stupid to see the big picture . For the life of me I fail to see how anyone could expect several thousand football fans to stick to socially distancing in the event of their team doing well or even scoring a goal especially with drink in them. I only hope that no further lockdown measures will have to be inflicted on the country because of this and that we can all get back to meeting with our family , friends and just living our lives in the manner that we were used to . I really miss all my friends and fellow travellers so so much .

John Binnie

**Large print editions of The Link will continue to be available via the Church Office ...**

**Tel . 01506 650517 or email....[info@bathgatehigh.co](mailto:info@bathgatehigh.co)**

### **Locum's Message**

**At last , after a long cold Winter , a damp and dreary Spring compounded by a lockdown during to the COVID Pandemic , I can finally make use of Summer toys .**

**I am just back from a long walk , not by distance , but Lily , my dog , is such a slow walker as she trundles along in the sunshine . The sun and the warmth it brings certainly lifts my spirits and I thank God that His constant love for us is not like the weather .**

**We know His love is unchanging and unending , a love He longs for us to share with others who still walk in the world's ways and fell burden with the worries this brings .**

**When the Holy Spirit fell on the Apostles on the Day of Pentecost their lives were transformed , they longer to share the love that God has for the whole world and set about sharing the Good News , initially in Jerusalem , then Judea and beyond .**

**We today know the Good News of Jesus , God's son dying for our sins and we are reconciled to our Heavenly Father through this sacrifice , accepted as sons and daughters into his family where we know the promise eternal life awaits us .**

**Just like the disciples were transformed when the Holy Spirit came and rested on them on the Day of Pentecost , that same Holy Spirit came into our hearts and transformed us to be loyal and effective disciples of the word , not on our own strength , the message of the gospel is too important to rely on human strength alone , but with the guiding of the Holy Spirit to fulfil the purpose that we were created for .**

**Loyalty is a combination of faith and love , and we who profess to be followers of Jesus should have in abundance .**

**We know personally of the love that God has for us and the difference it made to our lives when we accepted Jesus as our Saviour .**

**Faith we have knowing God's unending and unchanging love for us , the promise He will never leave us or forsake us . Faith we find in God's word contained in our bibles , and examples of faithful disciples are recorded and are there to encourage us in times of trial .**

**Leading a Christian life in a hostile world where we reside but are not part off is trying and requires great faith , pray and support for and to fellow believers .**

**Now we are meeting regularly once more as a congregation , albeit still with social distancing and the need to wear a face mask it is important that we meet , pray for one another and praise God from our hearts .**

**I am hoping that this Sunday that we will be able to sing once more , still wearing our facemasks , but it lifts my heart and offer my praise to God , our good and faithful Father in Heaven .**

**We are continuing to live stream our service on Facebook and later in the day it can be found on the church website .**

**But please if you are able to come and join us in person you will be made most welcome and know we are abiding to all COVID rules and regulations for your safety . Enjoy these warm and sunny days , marvel at God's creationism nature and know God loves you .**

**David Wilkie ( Locum )**

**Interim Moderator**

As you are probably aware, Scott Marshall, our Interim Moderator, retires from ministry at the end of June.

It has been a pleasure working with Scott and he has shown deep knowledge, common sense and a strong commitment to the High which has helped us navigate these last few years.

We thank Scott for his commitment and all his hard work and wish him well in his retirement. As he is moving to Bathgate, we hope he will not be a stranger!

Our new Interim Moderator will be Nelu Balaj, minister of Livingston Old Parish Church. We look forward to working with him.

**JW**

**Work at the church**

As you are probably aware, we are meeting for worship in the Hall due to work going on in the church.

A survey of the roof found some issues to do with lead work, pointing and cleaning which needed to be attended to. We are in the process of obtaining estimates and organising the work, supported by Jean Kershaw from Presbytery.

Following this work, we will need to inspect some of the internal plasterwork around the cupola. Due to the height, this involves internal scaffolding, and it is proving a slow process, finding appropriate contractors and obtaining the necessary estimates

The Board is working hard to navigate and resolve these issues as quickly as we can.

**JW**

**Sunday mornings**

**As restrictions ease, there are changes to worship on an almost weekly basis.**

- **We continue to meeting in the hall while work is ongoing in the church.**
- **The Hall has a capacity of 60 and operates under social distancing guidelines.**
- **Services are normally led by our locum, David Wilkie.**
- **Masks need to be worn throughout the service**
- **Members are asked not to congregate in the Hall before or after the service.**
- **Contact details are collected for Track and Trace purposes**
- **The service is streamed live on our Facebook page, with the video being uploaded to the church website later in the day**
- **As we have moved into Level 1, congregational singing is now permitted. This is led by the Praise Band and a singer who leads from the stage.**

**The spirit of worship is far more dependent on being together as a fellowship and sharing in our purpose rather than the surroundings and distancing. We would encourage all to return to worship in the confidence that we are running our services safely and being careful to follow all guidelines.**

**JW**

## **Vacancy Issues**

It is now two years since we completed the process of Interim Ministry, and it has been a long and very bumpy road since. The whole time of vacancy has been characterised by moving goalposts and advice and opinion seeming to swing like a pendulum. The process is, however, still going on, but at what seems a painfully slow pace.

The clear direction of travel is that Bathgate High and St John's will be working more closely in the future, but the roadmap to that goal is still being established. There is a working group of representatives from the two congregations who meet monthly and are considering issues to do with shared vision and buildings. The Session is working closely with this group to consolidate what we are looking for as the way forward.

There are, however, two issues which have run in tandem with our vacancy which have had an inescapable effect on the process. The first of these was the effect of Covid restrictions, with disruptions to worship and our service to the community and the difficulties it presented regarding meetings and communication. Despite maintaining an on-line presence all the way through the pandemic and working hard to re-open for worship as soon as we could, with fluid regulations, there has been a noticeable effect on both attendance at worship and giving. Whatever the way forward, the church and those involved in discussions need the support of all our members at this time.

The second issue has been the wider structures of the Church of Scotland. Over the past few years, at the General Assembly, there has been a growing acknowledgement that falling membership, ageing and out dated buildings, reduced finances and a lack of ministers has left the Church in an unsustainable position. This year's Assembly has passed a plan to reduce the number of ministry posts across the country. Each Presbytery has been allocated a number of ministry posts and asked to plan for the required reductions by 2025. For West Lothian, soon to merge with Edinburgh Presbytery, this means a planned reduction of 40% on the numbers used in planning since 2012. This is a reduction from 28.5 posts to 17. This, obviously,

has the most immediate impact on charges already in vacancy or working on readjustment. Presbytery has set up a series of discussion, starting at the end of this month in area groups (ours being Armadale; Bathgate Boghall; Bathgate High; Bathgate St John's; Blackburn and Seafield; Blackridge; Breich Valley; Fauldhouse St Andrews; Harthill St Andrews; Whitburn Brucefield; Whitburn South) to look at how this reduction in posts can be planned for.

It is important to keep re-stating that vacancy or readjustment follows a well-defined process and nothing can be decided until there have been full congregational meetings and votes.

So, where does this leave us? As always, there are things that are outwith our control, things that we can influence and things we can do. It is very important that people are willing to come forward and be part of discussions, representing the High Church. This is a time commitment, but vital to shaping our future. It is also important that we re-focus on what we can do. As a church we need to support our own congregation, serve our community, celebrate together in worship and go out in mission to our town. As restrictions ease, we need to support the church in worship, giving and in prayer. We need to plan for organisations and groups restarting – probably after the Summer – by re-establishing links and contacts and looking at how things can operate safely. It is a time not to be despondent about what we cannot control, but to work hard at the things we can do that have a real impact.



## Finance Report May 2021

Dear Friends , as we are committed no out of lockdown , I am pleased to report that donations to the General Fund have increased by just under £3,000 compared to the same period last year , and donations overall have increased by £400 .

However , as we haven't had any fundraising activities , and a reduction in income from the Manse for the first couple of months this year , overall our income has reduced by about £3,000 .

Our outgoing so have reduced by just under £2,000 . Whilst we would have had a deficit of £2.7K , thankfully due to the furlough scheme this has brought in enough money that we can have a modest surplus of £507 .

The Finance Team

## Fabric Report

While we are still worshipping in the Large Hall , the work of obtaining the necessary amount of quotes from the different companies to satisfy the requirements of Presbytery is ongoing .

Once these have been obtained , these will be vetted and the choice of vendor will be submitted to the Presbytery Property Committee for their approval and hopefully the work can be completed and allow us to worship in the Sanctuary .

While we all wish to be back in the Sanctuary , the use of the Large Hall has been acceptable and we have not had to turn anyone away as we have always managed to accommodate everyone who came along every Sunday . We have adhered to all the social distancing requirements and hand sanitising under the guidance of our welcome team who also record your details for the necessary ' Track and Trace ' which thankfully have never been needed .

Since John Binnie has retired as , Fabric Convenor , we are grateful that Jim Campbell has taken over and is being supported by a number of members in the short term .

Jean



### **100<sup>th</sup> Birthday**

**Our oldest member Miss Jean Turpie celebrated her 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> June 2021 .**

**On behalf of the congregation but strictly adhering to Covid regulations , Janice Boshell , Jean's Elder , delivered an arrangement of flowers to the Care Home where she is now resident , together with congratulatory card expressing our kind thoughts and best wishes on this momentous occasion .**

**Jean a " weel kent Bathgate Bairn " had many and varied interests throughout her life including sport and is well remembered in her hey-day as a very talented golfer and prominent member of Bathgate Golf Club .**

**She received many cards , flowers and gifts from relatives , friends , colleagues and neighbours all wishing to share this very happy time of celebration .**

**God Bless**

**Flower Committee**

*"If I had a time Machine I would visit Winston Churchill  
but not to change History, just to be there".*

*Jonathan Hayburn June 2017.*

If you had a time machine where would you go? Back, like Jonathan to an historic event, to meet and visit with an important person? Or perhaps you would use it to return to a time before face masks, social distancing, hand sanitiser and home schooling (remember that world?) maybe you would return to a world without iPads and mobile phones, where children played safely in the streets, neighbours knew each other, and the Church was full every Sunday.

Would you change anything? Would you change the course of history, warn of disaster and hurt? would you make different life choices, a different career or friendships? In imagination we can go anywhere and be anything in our time machine.

The reality is we can't.

The past can be a great place to visit, it reminds us of happier times with people whom we have loved, it reminds us where we have come from and shapes who we are. It helps us to

understand learn and move on from outdated religious and cultural practises.

Without a past we would have no present.

The wonderful, often baffling, technological world we find ourselves in today means hospitals are full of life saving equipment. We each have the power of communication at our fingertips and instant help is available 24 hours a day. At a time when church seems less important to most and numbers are dwindling technology has allowed us to take the first baby steps to the future creating a church "wherever God's people are praising!" As a Congregational Board and Kirk Session we have been able to make important pastoral and fabric decisions enabling us to move forward. We have been able to communicate with friends and family and it is thanks to technology I am able to write and send this article.

So, who will set their time machine to the future? Not some far off world beyond our reality and understanding simply by a few years. You see just as the present needs the past; the future needs the present, the church of now to find the courage, trust God's bigger plan for us let go and embrace an exciting future.

**THE AULD PARISH KIRK , with  
GREEN TREE HOTEL IN  
foreground**

On this site a new church was built in 1739 and served the parish until 1882 , when it was taken down and the present structure opened in 1884 , erected on its site at a cost of

£8,000 . Slightly Norman in style , it is a handsome edifice . The tower contains an illuminated clock and bell , gifts of John Waddell of Inshore , one time Provost of the burgh . The Green Tree Hotel is also a long-standing meeting place .



The kirks hae had their share o' troublous times,  
Thru' the antics o' mankind l' changin' clime .  
Wi' arguin meenisters and redcoat dragoons ,  
Yin reflects o' the history o' Kirk, law and croon ,  
Made upo' scoondrels o' illegitimate stock ,  
Foundations o' sand instead o' rock .  
The Christian ethic is gie near lost ,  
As o' the example set , we canna boast .

*These words and drawing are taken from a book , 50 Glimpses of Bathgate a District by Ellice Milton whose pen name was McGonagal 2<sup>nd</sup> and these were published in the Lothian Courier .*

**SUMMER TIME**

Today is one of these times where words do not come easy , sometimes words just flow and other times I find it exceedingly difficult to put down one word in front of another , today is one of these times I'm afraid .

Well , that's Scotland out of lockdown in May . ( At least most of it ! )

I think what I found the most difficult thing about lockdown was just not getting out and speaking to other people .

As a species I feel we are very social beings and need the fellowship of other people to function properly , of course there are exceptions to every rule in life .

I know it's an old saying but true , you do not know what you have till you lose it .

Nowadays one of my passions in life is flowers and plants .

Where we live now in Bathgate our garden at the back of the house is mostly under slabs , which pleases me no end , the only problem with that is , it is very boring , so my solution to that is to fill it with as many planters and hanging baskets as I can get hold of .

I am an extremely late convert to this gardening lark but find it very soothing and very therapeutic now a days , especially during lockdown more restful than mowing the grass anyway .

People that cut grass for a living have my full sympathy .

On to something else now , how about Bread & Butter Pudding . It is without doubt an oldie but a favourite of mine and has been so for many a long year , the only trouble with it is that I always must eat it on my own as Kathleen cannot abide it !

She cannot even stand the smell of it in the kitchen .

In my years as a Lighthouse Keeper with the Northern Lighthouse Board ( N.L.B.) in Edinburgh , we spent 4weeks on and 4weeks off , in our 4 weeks on we spent 2 weeks cooking and 2 weeks not . When I started with the N.L.B. I could hardly make a slice of toast or boil an egg , it is amazing how

quickly you can learn if you must !  
As is the case with many things in life .

A lot of people think that Lighthouse keepers take care of the light and that is it ! Were that true it would be an extremely easy job indeed !

Nobody tells you about all the daily , weekly and monthly reports we must complete , on time every time .

Meteorological reports , RNLI reports , Shipping reports , food orders and orders for this and that and more reports .

Looking after the light was our major concern but it only took up about 10%of our time , so much of our time these days was taken up with paperwork , as with so many other jobs these days .

At the very beginning of writing for the Link a friend who was an author told me , Duncan always, write about what you know and that is what I have always tried to do , he told me if you try and write about things that you do not know about or are not sure about then people will very quickly find you out .

Either I must be getting it right or people in B .H .Church are extremely polite! I hope it is the first one .

Heist Point Lighthouse is on the most westerly point of the Isle of Skye , and I was stationed there for 4 years . It overlooks the Minch and out to the Western Isles .

It is a favoured spot for looking out for Dolphins and Seals and in the summer you could see Killer Whales heading north and in winter you could also see the pods of Killer Whales heading south .

Well time , or as I call it ( The Auld Enemy ) has caught up with me again .

So , till the next time we meet , always try and show love to all family , friends and neighbours .

**Duncan MacPherson .**

16  
YOUR SMILE

Though your smile is gone forever,  
And your hand we cannot touch  
Still we have so many memories  
Of the one we loved so much.  
Your memory is our keepsake  
with which we will never part  
God has you, in His keeping  
We have you in our hearts.

It is sad to walk the road alone,  
Instead of side by side.  
But to all, there comes a moment  
When the ways of life divide.  
You gave us years of happiness  
Then came sorrow and tears  
But you left us beautiful memories  
We will treasure through the years.

- Author Unknown -



## The Shetland Bus Part 1 From Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia

The Shetland Bus (Norwegian Bokmål: Shetlandsbussene) was the nickname of a clandestine special operations group that made a permanent link between Mainland Shetland in Scotland and German-occupied Norway from 1941 until the surrender of Nazi Germany on 8 May 1945. From mid-1942, the group's official name was the Norwegian Naval Independent Unit (NNIU). In October 1943, it became an official part of the Royal Norwegian Navy and was renamed the Royal Norwegian Naval Special Unit (RNNSU). The unit was operated initially by a large number of small fishing boats and later augmented by three fast and well-armed submarine chasers.

Crossings were mostly made during the winter under the cover of darkness. This meant the crews and passengers had to endure very heavy North Sea conditions, with no lights and constant risk of discovery by German aircraft or patrol boats. There was also the possibility of being captured whilst carrying out the mission on the Norwegian coast.

Early on it was decided that camouflage was the best defence, and the boats were disguised as working fishing boats and the crew as fishermen. The fishing boats were armed with light machine guns concealed inside oil drums placed on deck. The operation was under constant threat from German forces, and several missions went awry, of which the Telavåg tragedy in spring 1942 was a prime example. Several fishing boats were lost during the early operations, but after receiving the three submarine chasers there were no more losses.

When Germany launched Operation Weserübung, the invasion of Norway on 9 April 1940, French and British troops and ships were sent to help the Norwegians. Several coastal towns were bombed and destroyed by the Germans, and during April and May, the British ships had to retreat from mid-Norway. On 29 April, HMS Glasgow left a devastated Moide with King Haakon VII, Crown Prince Olav, members of the Norwegian Government, and most of the gold from the Norwegian National Bank. In northern Norway, the fighting lasted for another month. A few weeks after the occupation began, the first boats of an "armada" of fishing vessels and other boats began to arrive in Shetland. Some boats made several journeys across the North Sea carrying refugees.

Many of the boats were "Hardanger Cutters", with a straight bow and long stern from the Bergen area, others the more rounded "Møre Cutters", from the area around Ålesund. It appeared that the "Møre Cutter" was the strongest and best-fitted for the heavy weather in the North Sea. The boats were of many kinds and shapes, but most of those used as a "Shetland Bus", were from 50–70 feet (15–21 m) long, with two masts and equipped with a 30 to 70 hp single-cylinder semi-diesel engine, which made the characteristic "tonk-tonk" sound.

In late 1940, both the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) and the Special Operations Executive (SOE) Norwegian Naval Independent Unit (not to be confused with another SOE Norwegian unit: the Norwegian Independent Company, No.1 or Kompani Linge more of whom later), established a base in Lerwick; SIS later moved to Peterhead. They asked some of the skippers of the boats that were coming from Norway, if they would return to deliver agents and bring others back to Shetland. This went on throughout the winter of 1940–41. In early 1941 it was decided formally to establish a group of men and boats to assist the SIS and the SOE.

The main purpose of the group was to transfer agents in and out of Norway and provide them with weapons, radios and other supplies. They would also bring out Norwegians who feared arrest by the Germans. Sometimes the group was involved in special operations, like the failed attack on the German battleship Tirpitz, Operation Archery, the raids on Måløy and Operation Claymore in the Lofoten Islands.

The men put in charge of organizing the group were a British Army officer, Major Leslie Mitchell and his assistant, Lieutenant David Howarth RNVR. Upon their arrival in Shetland they commandeered Flemington House for their headquarters and they found a perfect location in Lunna Ness north of Lerwick, from which the boats could operate. Before then the boats had been moored in Cat Firth. Lunna Ness had a sheltered harbour and a small population that were not too curious about what was going on and Lunna House was used as accommodation for the boat crews. Their whole staff consisted of three British sergeants; Almond, Sherwood and Olsen; a stenographer; Harald Albertsen, a Norwegian cook at Lunna and two maids in Flemington. During the first winter Flemington House was used to train saboteurs and house agents and to accommodate Norwegian refugees. Later the refugees were received in a special camp at the James Sutherland Herring Factory in Lerwick, administered by James Adie and his Norwegian-born wife.

**Thank you letter**

**Just a wee note of thanks from the sister and family of a good friend and faithful member of the church Mr Jim Brown .**

**His sister has been in touch to inform us that Jim is now in care , where he has settled in rather well .**

**Jim would like to say that he really appreciates having the Link delivered to him and that he has not been forgotten about by his church friends .**

**Jim also wants to say how much he has enjoyed the editors memories of The Auld Toun in the previous issues .**

**Thanks Jim Brown and family .**

**Editor : Jim thank you for your kind words and rest assured you are not forgotten , I feel that I was blessed with my upbringing in the Auld Toun , we maybe didn't have a multitude of worldly goods but we had good parents , good friends , good fun even without TV , smartphones , personal trainers and all the other rules and regulations that clutter up our lives now .**

**Life was more simple and at the end of the day more and more memories and aye milestones even spring to mind .**

**So my friends why don't you get in touch with some of your own memories and share them with us all .**

**And Jim I also would like to say how much your friendship and company in your own quiet way has enriched our lives and I hope that you keep well and continue to enjoy your new surroundings .**