

CHALKING THE FRONT STEP

JERRY EVE

Photo by Carol Bulmer

On Sunday 5 January, the first Sunday of the New Year and that closest to Epiphany, we took part in a Glasgow Presbytery initiative to revive a medieval European tradition. This was to ask *Christus Mansionem Benedicat* which is Latin for 'May Christ bless this house'. It's a happy coincidence that the three initial letters of this phrase are the same as those of the traditional names for the three wise men: Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar. How long, we wonder, will these chalk marks still be visible?



WORLD MISSION - Busby Focus on Malawii

MAUREEN POTTER

Although I am no longer part of the Kwenderana Partnership Group, I am still in regular contact with people in Malawi. There has been major changes in the Kirk Session at Ekwendeni. Maggie Msowoya is the new session clerk replacing Jack Longwe. Both Maggie and Jack have visited us in the past. Maggie's deputy is Sangster Nkhandwe and his wife Violet is former Kwenderana Secretary and visited us along with Maggie a few years ago. Chrissie Mfune who visited us last June has been confirmed as church treasurer.

Merci Chabinga has completed her teacher training and has had excellent exam results but has been unable to get a job in a government school as the Malawian Government appear to have run out of money and often delay salary payments to teachers in their current employment. She is hoping to get a post in a private school but until she does, she is earning a living making and selling Mandazi - a type of doughnut much loved by the Malawians. She has asked me to thank all those who sponsored her teaching training and says she will be forever grateful to them for their generosity.



Merci making mandazi

I would like to thank all who supported the underwear appeal so generously. A big thank you too, to those who supported the Malawi Lunch on Sunday 23rd February as well. The lunch raised about £230 which will be used to cover the cost of sending 11 banana boxes of clothing and other essential items to Ekwendeni via the Banana Box Trust. There a team led by Anson Singini will ensure that these items will go to the neediest in the community there. I would like to express my gratitude to all who have supported this project in some way and especially to Lynne Macgregor whose input was invaluable and the great team of church folk who helped set up and clear away after the lunch. We could not carry out this work without your support.



Maggie and Violet on their visit to Busby Church

KATEE KROSS TO HEADLINE SUMMER FAIR



EVENTS

In the past, we've called it "The Garden Party" and then "The Summer Sizzle". This year though, for our biggest one yet, it's THE VILLAGE FAIR and we've changed the date too, to Saturday, June 6th. Headlining this year will be Katee Kross, and the 23 year-old singer songwriter from Bishopbriggs will be appearing on the Marquee Stage with her band, following dates in England and before embarking on a tour of Germany. She has appeared in the past with Dougie McLean, Barbara Dickson, Karine Polwart, Wildwood Kin and Seasick Steve, as well as performing on Radio 2's Bob Harris Country Show. And releasing her fourth album, "Show Your Hand" in February this year.

This year, too we will have two stages. On the Marquee Stage, along with Katee will be a full supporting line up while, on the Laid Back Stage, in the Church Hall, entertainment will be from string quartet Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Park plus others.

Outside, as well as the usual bar and barbecue, there will be a bouncy castle and arts and crafts activities for kids, a basketball competition, a chance to record your own record and other attractions for teens, and the regular favourites, a Tombola Stall and the Raffle. In the Hall, tea and coffee will be available, along with home baking and there will also be some stalls.

It promises to be an amazing event and certainly the biggest Busby has witnessed for years, so look out for posters and more information and make sure to get your tickets when they become available in mid-April.

WONDERFUL WIZARD OF OZ



This year's Panto from Busby Drama Group, the Wonderful Wizard of Oz, was one of the best. With a captivating storyline, based on the original, the amazing cast had the audience in stitches with some hilarious antics, as well as the favourite sing-a-long where everyone joined in.

With a packed house on every one of the three nights, the show demonstrated just what talent we have in our midst. More of the same please...next year!

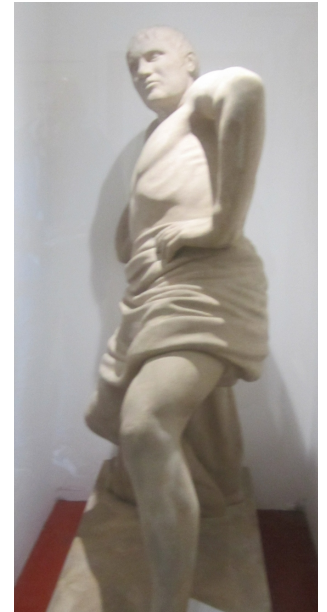
THE GEMMELL COLLECTION

MAUREEN POTTER

A few weeks ago, I got a message from one of my cousins who lives in Stirling. He told me he was coming through to Eaglesham to see that statue of "Hawkie". I racked my brains but couldn't think of any statues in Eaglesham so responded by asking him where the statue was located. I was told the Carswell Centre which is part of Eaglesham Church. I decided to investigate further so contacted Eaglesham Church and arranged a visit on Friday 14th February.

When I got there, my guide Brian Fraser took me round the Carswell Centre telling me about the history of the centre and the statues. There are 6 statues altogether and they were carved by William Gemmell (1814 - 1891) who was a joiner in the village. He was a self-taught sculptor was widely praised for his work in his lifetime much of which is now in unknown locations. However the six in Eaglesham are life size and represent a) Robert Burns and Highland Mary, b) William Hall who was a local blacksmith and shot putter, c) The Blind Fiddler, Alex McDonald who earned his living entertaining at social events, d) Hawkie, real name, William Cameron, born in Stirling who made his living writing and selling lurid magazines known as penny dreadfuls, e) Mother and children including a dying child representing the prevalence of child mortality in the 19th century and f) The Laughing Boy!

After William Gemmell's death the statues became family heirlooms until Mary Picken in 1995, gifted them to the former Eastwood District Council on behalf of the late Grace Picken. The statues were cleaned and restored by Olga Marzantowicz funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and are now on permanent display in the Carswell Centre in Eaglesham where they can be viewed every Wednesday or Friday morning between 9 and 12 noon or by appointment. For further information see portaltothepast.co.uk or email office@eagleshamparishchurch.co.uk



PICTURES
(clockwise from top left)

Robert Burns and
Highland Mary

William Hall

Hawkie

The Laughing Boy

Mother and Children

The Blind Fiddler

