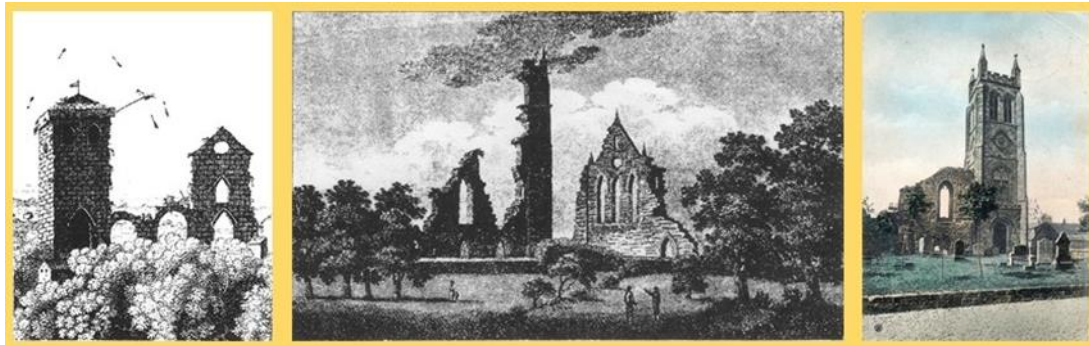


# Kilwinning Heritage News

May 2022



## Light up the Tower

The Abbey Tower is 206 years old this year. Thanks to the negotiating skills of our Chairman, Craig, we are delighted to say that NAC has upgraded the floodlights at the Tower. We now have permanent, coloured lights, which we will be able to change for appropriate times throughout the year. The Tower is currently illuminated at night in blue and yellow to show support for the people of Ukraine.

## Abbey news

We were annoyed and saddened to learn that there had been another deliberate fire set in the grounds of the Abbey (the third in a year). We have been in constant discussions about this problem with police, NAC and HES. There is no simple answer to security issues. It is a sensitive site with the complex ownership.



Following on from the disappointing news that there has been an outbreak of vandalism and anti-social behaviour over the last months in the Abbey grounds, we are pleased to say that Ayrshire Police and Historic Environment Scotland have been very responsive and are now monitoring the situation closely. A new sign has appeared on the Abbey gates inviting help from the public. If you see any vandalism or litter, take a photo and email it to [MM@hes.scot](mailto:MM@hes.scot) with subject line "Kilwinning".

## Dr Auld's lamp

We were contacted recently by Bill Parlee of Campbell River, British Columbia, who has been researching his family history. His great grandfather was Dr Charles Auld 1837-1911. Dr Auld lived in the Howgate, Kilwinning. Outside his house he had a gas lamp which is now an exhibit in the Abbey Tower Heritage Centre.

Bill's grandmother, Mary Caroline, was the eldest daughter of Charles and Agnes Auld, born in 1870. She married Robert Nairn whose family resided at Clonbeith Farm and in 1904 they emigrated to Canada.

Bill was excited to learn that his great grandfather's lamp is still here and is much admired by visitors.

## Easter at the Tower

We were happy to be able to open the Tower fully to visitors at Easter. Over four days, we welcomed 84 visitors, most of whom climbed to the roof. A huge thank you to our team of wonderful volunteers who made it possible.

## Volunteers

Sadly, over time we have lost a number of our valued volunteers, and others have had to give up for various reasons, so the number of active Tower climbers has decreased. The Committee has taken the decision to limit Tower opening to Saturdays and Sundays only over May/June, to be reviewed at the end of June. The good news is that Craig is actively running a recruitment campaign using social media, and early indications are hopeful. Please help us spread the word. Free KH membership for 1 year to new volunteers!

## Let's Talk History

Now that Covid restrictions have been relaxed, and we are able to meet people again, we are delighted to say that we are returning to live events. Our new FREE event is three talks in one day!

On Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> May, we will be welcoming three authors to speak about history, fact and fiction.

**11.00am – 12.00**      **Philip Paris** *The Italian Chapel* and *Effie's War*

Highland-based author Philip Paris will use his novels *The Italian Chapel* and *Effie's War* to highlight some of the challenges encountered by writers when trying to separate 'fact' from 'fiction', as well as the moral dilemma that can arise when uncovering previously secret, highly sensitive information from the past.

[Let's Talk History - Philip Paris Tickets, Sat 21 May 2022 at 11:00 | Eventbrite](#)

**1.30 – 2.30pm**      **Margaret Skea** *The Munro Saga*

Scotland 1586: James VI, looking to the English throne, seeks to subdue the nobles and bring peace to Scotland. But blood feud is endemic.

From the 1586 Massacre of Annock to 1600 Edinburgh, multi-awarding author Margaret Skea's illustrated talk will focus on how both her own background - growing up in Ulster at the height of the 'Troubles' and her research into 16th century Scotland; enabled her to bring the period to life through the Munro trilogy. A tale of compassion and cruelty, treachery and sacrifice, set against the backdrop of the Ayrshire Vendetta, the French Wars of Religion and the Great Scottish Witch Hunt of 1597.

[Let's Talk History - Margaret Skea Tickets, Sat 21 May 2022 at 13:30 | Eventbrite](#)

**3.00 – 4.00pm**      **Dane Love** *Legendary Ayrshire*

Ayrshire historian and author Dane Love will take a look back at the folklore and customs of Ayrshire. Dane will talk about the places traditionally associated with early saints, as well as rocks and stones that were perhaps places of pilgrimage and ancient wells and strange caves which can be found all over the county. There are traditional tales of ghosts and hauntings, fairies and witches, as well as the ancient festival of Beltane. Some of the old traditions associated with birth, marriages and death, often unique to this county, are recalled, as well as other customs that took place at different times of the year.

[Let's Talk History - Dane Love Tickets, Sat 21 May 2022 at 15:00 | Eventbrite](#)

You can book your free place by clicking the links above or by phoning me on 01294 557295

I hope to see you there!



## Group visits to the Tower

We're pleased to see the return of group visits to the Tower. On 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> May, 3 classes from Whitehirst Park Primary School will be visiting us, and on 25<sup>th</sup> May we'll see the welcome return of the Wednesday cubs. After a quiet time over the last two years, it's great to see the young people back!

## Unwanted visitors at the Tower



As you'll have probably noticed, the nesting season has arrived and the birds have been busy around the Abbey.

Two pairs of jackdaws have chosen to set up home in the bell floor of the Tower. The protective mesh on the louvred windows has been breached, allowing them to build two gigantic nests on the inside window ledges, with eggs in each. These nests are so big, we think they've been there for at least 2 years.

Unfortunately, this means that the bell floor is now closed to visitors. North Ayrshire Council, who own the building, have been informed and we wait with interest to see what will happen after the birds have flown!

## Message to members

And finally, a big thank you to all our members. There are now 80 of you, including 6 from USA and Canada and a few others throughout the UK. It never fails to surprise me to learn how far our name has spread. I really appreciate your support and it makes all the hard work worthwhile when I hear from you.

Please contact me if you have any comments, questions, stories to tell. Have you visited our website recently? There are videos to watch, books to read, and a wealth of information. There's even an interactive tour of the Abbey Tower which you can access with one click from our Home page. (If you're sharp-eyed, you can see the jackdaws' nests on the bell floor!) [www.kilwinningheritage.org.uk](http://www.kilwinningheritage.org.uk)

See our Facebook and Twitter pages for up-to-date information (search Kilwinning Heritage).

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