

Kilwinning Heritage News

November 2021



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Welcome to November's newsletter. We hope you enjoy reading about what we've been up to recently. We encourage you to get in touch with your thoughts and suggestions.

AGM

We're delighted that this year's AGM will take place in the Abbey Church Hall on Saturday 20th November at 3.00pm. A "real" meeting with "real" people! Please try to come and support our society. We will be having a review of 2021, as well as a light-hearted look back at the 10 years of Kilwinning Heritage's existence.

This year, all committee posts are open for election. Although most of our current committee will be standing again, there are 3 vacancies to be filled. We meet every 6 weeks, and we plan to hold our meetings online using Zoom over the winter,

If you think you'd like to join the committee, please let Christine know as soon as possible.

Light Up the Abbey Red

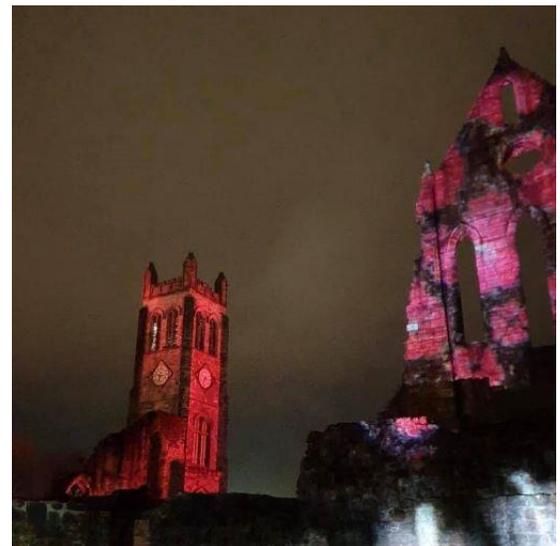
A new project for us. As part of the Poppy Scotland 100th anniversary commemorations, Craig McLellan decided it would be great if we could light up in red the Abbey ruins, the Tower and the World War 1 memorial in the grounds. We had £500 grant funding from NAC last year to commemorate the 75th anniversary of VE Day, but we were unable to use it due to Covid restrictions, so we thought this would be an appropriate use for it. On 11th November, portable lighting and a projector were brought in, and between 50-100 people turned up with their own torches, and were supplied with red filters. Around 30 visitors climbed the steps to the roof of the Tower to view the night-time display. People were invited to submit photographs in a photography competition. Feedback has been very positive, so events like this might be something to consider for the future. A big thanks to the following groups for their help and support: NAC, Promoting Kilwinning, the Kilwinning Branch of the Royal British Legion, and of course our own volunteers. The Kandy Bar kindly supplied cakes. Craig's enthusiasm and initiative have injected a huge boost to our activities and raised our public profile.



Kilwinning at night
from the Abbey Tower

Poppies projected on the
south transit gable.

(Credit – C McLellan)



Archive Project update

The boxes of documents that we rescued from the former bank building now occupied by Kilwinning businessman Jim Frew are now safely stored in Dreghorn Library, where Jeni Park and NAC's Jill McColl have started the task of assessing them. Chris Cassells (Business Archives Officer, Scotland) visited to assess the collection. He described it as an important collection, showcasing not only solicitors' records, but the history of the local area. He listed priorities for keeping – solicitor's records, court records, criminal records, court summons, and anything early in date (eg. early 19th century). Items not required to be kept include routine correspondence, billing letters from solicitors, tax receipts, etc. He offered technical advice on how best to scan and record the documents and suggested that they should be transferred to archive boxes. Some documents were too fragile to keep and have been securely disposed of. The real work of the project will begin next spring, when hopefully some help will be available through Ayrshire Archives. If you'd like to lend a hand, please get in touch.

Musical connections

We were contacted recently by a lady in Australia whose ancestor wrote a piece of Scottish fiddle music about Kilwinning. This inspired Heather Upfield who immediately set about doing further research. It appears there are no less than seven Scottish Country Dance tunes associated with Kilwinning! *The Pippingo Reel* by E Dorrian (1891), *The Kilwinnan Lodge Reel* in R Bremner's Collection (1757), *The Kilwinning Archers Strathspey*, *Kilwinning Lasses Strathspey* and *Kilwinning Papingo Waltz* in W Hamilton collection 1844, *Kilwinning's Steeple Reel* and *Wives of Kilwinnon Strathspey*. Many of these tunes can be listened to and downloaded from The Traditional Tune Archive on <https://tunearch.org/>

Here's a link to Kilwinning's Steeple Reel (sound on)
https://tunearch.org/w/images/b/b2/Kilwinnings_Steeple.mp3

Maybe we need to have a Scottish Country Dance night?

Have you explored our website?

- ✓ Heritage Centre information
- ✓ History of the Abbey and the town
- ✓ Archaeology project reports
- ✓ Photo gallery
- ✓ Free downloads
- ✓ Free out-of-print books
- ✓ Free information leaflets
- ✓ News
- ✓ FAQs
- ✓ Video links



The image is a horizontal banner with a blue background. On the left, there is a close-up of a fiddle (violin) resting on a plaid fabric. In the center, a man and a woman are depicted in traditional Scottish kilts, dancing. On the right, there is a musical score for a reel. The title of the score is "Kilwinning Steeple" and it is attributed to "By the late Hugh Gilmour". The score is written on three staves of music.

Doors Open Days

In spite of the difficulties of Covid restrictions we managed to take part in this year's Doors Open Days. Visitor numbers were lower than usual, but we still were able to welcome 42 visitors over 2 days. All were offered a trip upstairs to the roof, and most accepted. Many thanks again to all our great volunteers who gave up their time in trying circumstances.

Abbey grounds

Concern has been expressed recently about anti-social behaviour and litter in the Abbey grounds. A stakeholders' meeting was held at which there was input from the church, Historic Environment Scotland Police and NAC. Craig was there to represent KH. I am pleased to say that progress is being made. HES arranged for the yew hedge around the cloister area to be cut back to improve visibility, and more improvement work is planned. Plans are being made to improve security and supervision.

We are planning to work with community groups, the police and with local schools to try to engage with young people in a positive way. We were pleased to welcome a class from Corsehill Primary School who enjoyed a visit to the Tower for the dual purpose of learning about local history as well as having a talk and discussion about citizenship and social responsibility from NAC's antisocial behaviour team. They were a pleasure to work with, and we're grateful for their participation. As their visit was on Remembrance Day, pupils marked the minute's silence at the War Memorial at the abbey, and a small group were the first ever people to mark Remembrance Day on the roof of the Abbey Tower at 11am. Well done to pupils and staff. We were impressed by the pupil's behaviour, curiosity and knowledge about our heritage.



Corsehill pupils marking 1 minute silence on the Tower roof.

A question from member Alastair Weir

Do you know of any buildings in
Kilwinning that were constructed of
Stevenston stone / Ardeer stone?
No prizes, but if you can help,
please contact
Christine (We're stumped!)