

Paisley Abbey



Abbey Herald

April 2024

I am writing this on Easter Monday, with memories still fresh of services during Holy Week and on Good Friday and, of course, yesterday's magnificent Easter service in the Abbey. I feel justified in describing it as such as that is how it was described to me by worshippers at the end of the service. As usual, the music was simply superb and the choir on top form. The Communion was administered with great dignity by individuals who brought to it their own personality and so ensured that any hint of stuffiness was dissipated. The Abbey was well filled by the congregation. No minister could ask for more. My thanks, therefore, to everybody who, in any way, participated either in the service itself or its preparation. The floral displays, throughout the Abbey for example, were beautiful. It is such an enormous privilege for me to be a small part of the Abbey's life at this time. Hopefully, the energy and brilliance of our Easter service will empower us in faith and adventurousness over the coming months.

As a means of keeping my promise to keep the congregation updated on events as far as possible, I must say that the next few months in the Abbey are going to prove hectic. As part of our ongoing transitioning plan of action, specially-targeted working groups will be established to begin the planning work necessary for us to farther the building of a new Visitor Centre comprising Welcome Area/ Abbey Shop/Café /Toilets and Storage facilities. Simultaneously, planning will also begin on the conversion, modernisation and refurbishment of the two apartments on the third floor of the Place of Paisley, now known as the King's Apartment and the Apartment. Added to this, work will also be undertaken to identify credible sources of outside funding. Make no mistake, this is a mammoth undertaking. However, it is absolutely necessary for the Abbey's future. We must make full use of our properties both in support of our ministry through the Abbey itself and as a major source of income for the Abbey. We have been blessed by such unique historical buildings and we must do everything possible to ensure the ministry of the Abbey is, indeed, secured. This will always be our priority. Membership of these working-groups is currently under discussion. The best possible professional expertise will be sought.

Meanwhile, the daily witness of the Abbey continues. How fortunate we are to benefit from the loyal army of volunteers who, week by week, support the Abbey in so many ways from office-bearers to shop / café workers, from guides to members of staff. Their contribution to the daily life of the Abbey is beyond value. We must be so grateful to them all.

NEW ELDERS

Meetings between the Abbey Finance team and Presbytery, the General Trustees and representatives from the Church of Scotland Offices are ongoing. It has been a slow, slow process but one which is now showing signs of benefit and hope for all. The historical debt of the Abbey in its past '121' Allocations – created solely as a result of Covid closedown – has now been acknowledged as not of the Abbey's making. Consequently, the method whereby allocations are calculated are now being investigated. The General Trustees and Presbytery have conceded that churches like the Abbey (cathedral churches) are being unjustly discriminated against. Just what will result from all these discussions and when, we will have to wait and see. Hopefully, following the meeting of the General Assembly next month we may find out.

Last year, the finances of the Abbey continued to show recovery from the Covid meltdown. The financial Statement has been prepared and signed-off by our independent auditor and approved by the Kirk Session. The Statement will be presented to the Annual General Meeting of the congregation to be held following Morning Service on Sunday, May 12th.

As a new initiative, 'Back to Church Sunday' was held very successfully last year. Encouraged by this, it is proposed to hold another such Sunday in June. After the Service on that day, members of the congregation will be given presentations of the latest information concerning plans for the Abbey and its outreach to the community and, beyond.

All the above is offered as an expression of our faithful witness to the Risen Christ's command to 'go out into the world and preach the gospel to all people'. There is nothing vainglorious about our planned actions as a congregation. What we do we do for the sake of Christ's gospel and so that we might better be his Church in Paisley in years to come. Let us all pray God that we might be blessed in our vision, work and worship.

Jim Gibson
Minister at the Abbey
Extra Chaplain to HM The King in Scotland.

Following discussion over recent months, at its last meeting the Kirk Session unanimously welcomed the candidature of the following members of the congregation to be Ordained and Admitted to the Eldership at Paisley Abbey:

Dr David Davidson,
Mrs Susan Donn,
Mr Kenneth Good,
Dr Iain Morton,
Mrs Linda Stamp.

If no substantiated objection to these candidates is received by the Minister/Session Clerk on/before Sunday, April 14th 2024, the Kirk Session will proceed to their Induction and Ordination during Morning Service on Sunday, 21st April 2024 at 11 am.

MINUTES OF KIRK SESSION MEETINGS

Furthering our policy of transparency, Minutes of recent meetings of the Abbey Kirk Session are made available to the public as soon as possible after each meeting of the Kirk Session. They can be found attached to the noticeboard in the cloister outside the entrance to the St Mirin Chapel. We are grateful if they can be returned to the noticeboard after they have been read, so that they may be available to others who may wish to read them.

STATED ANNUAL MEETING – SUNDAY 12 MAY

All members of the Abbey Congregation are invited to attend the Stated Annual Meeting for a presentation of the 2023 Annual Accounts which have been approved by the Kirk Session. The meeting will take place in the nave follow the morning Services.

SOCIETY OF FRIENDS OF PAISLEY ABBEY

Are you a member yet ?
Why not ?
Don't miss out.

Membership of the Society is open to anyone who shares the Society's aims and would like to support its activities. Please contact the Abbey Office and ask the Secretary for a membership form; or collect one from within the Abbey. The Society exists to enhance and safe-guard your Abbey church.

The Society exists to aid:

- The preservation of the Abbey buildings for posterity;
- The adornment and furnishing of the building;
- The safe-guarding of the amenity of the Abbey and its surroundings;
- The promotion of the Abbey as a centre of excellence for education, the arts and music as well as a place of Christian worship.

GIVING WITH A WILL

(A legacy to your Church)

Did you know that Paisley Abbey is a registered charity?
Did you know that giving a LEGACY is one very important way by which you can continue to support the ministry and work and outreach of the Abbey after your death?

A legacy may be a specific sum of money, a property, share in a company or the residue of your estate.

Legacies are exempt from Inheritance Tax and may provide vital funds for a particular project of the Abbey; or may be invested to produce annual income for ongoing work.

All legacies are only used in accordance with the donor's wishes. So, why not speak with your solicitor and 'give with a will'? Alternatively, you might consider donating your legacy while you can still enjoy witnessing the benefits your generosity makes.

CAFÉ

The Café is open Tuesday to Saturday from 10.30 am - 3.30 pm. The café will serve tea, coffee & home baking from 10.30 am—12.30 pm on the Saturday mornings when the Lunch Hour Concerts take place. The next lunchtime concert will be on Saturday 20 April with The Abbey Strings. Admission to the Concert is £5 payable at the door.



CAN YOU HELP

With huge appreciation and recognition of everything which the shop volunteers currently do in providing refreshments, we would like to complement their sterling efforts with a dedicated person in the café.

The number of customers is growing gently, and it would be good to increase what we can offer over the summer/visitor months. If this is something you may be able to support, please come along on **Wednesday 10 April at 10:30am** for a coffee and a chat. We will explain the vision for the café, and some events which we are planning. We would welcome regular helpers, and also those who might only be available on an ad hoc basis. If you are unavailable on the 10th, but wish to know more, please contact the Abbey Office, who will forward your details.

PAISLEY ABBEY ~ THE CLUNY OF THE NORTH

THE LEARNING, THE ART, THE MUSIC AT CLUNY,

WAS IT NOT ALL FOR THE GLORY OF GOD?

12TH CENTURY CLUNIAC REPLY TO CISTERCIAN CRITICISM

In the final chapter of her 1931 book, “Monastic Life at Cluny 910-1157,” Joan Evans concluded: “Such was life at Cluny: a moderate interpretation of the Benedictine rule, warmed by charity and illumined by beauty in buildings, services, and music; setting psalmody in place of manual labour, cultivating the arts as well as theology; governed by tradition and custom in every detail of the day, yet saved from deadness alike by religious fervour and charitable deeds.”

The period covered in Joan Evans’ tract ends with the death on Christmas Day 1156 of Peter the Venerable, Abbot of Cluny. His spiritual, intellectual, and financial reforms are credited with having restored Cluny’s pre-eminence at the centre of religion in Europe, characterised by immense temporal wealth to match its spiritual authority. Such a restoration had been made necessary through a number of factors but especially by the challenging rapid rise of the Cistercian order, founded nearly two hundred years after the monastery at Cluny was first established.

During the three centuries that followed Cluny’s foundation, western monasticism established itself as the greatest force at the spiritual heart of Europe. The reformed Benedictine Cluniac order emerged as one of the mightiest empires of the Middle Ages, and its abbots rivalled emperors, popes, and kings for both spiritual and political authority. Inevitably, as the monastery at Cluny gained a reputation for liturgical grandeur and autonomy from any authority, reasoned criticism and jealousy combined to undermine Cluny’s supremacy, and her adherence to the fundamental founding principles of the Rule of Saint Benedict was increasingly questioned.

The Cistercian order was founded in 1098 with the determination to be strict in its observance of the Rule of Benedict. It regarded a more ascetic, simplified, and peaceful lifestyle of prayer and manual labour more conducive to achieving spiritual perfection than the perceived opulence and laxity of Cluniac life. Their differing perspectives, Cluniacs versus Cistercians, Black Monks versus White Monks – arguments both trivial and otherwise – engendered conflict and distress throughout the twelfth century in monastic circles, and as the “weary bickering” continued, so the former glory of Cluny began to wane. “After the death of Peter the Venerable, Cluny entered upon a period of decline that lasted for more than six hundred years.”

How extraordinary then was it that a Cluniac monastery, later to become the Abbey and Monastery of Paisley, should have been founded just at the very dawning of that period of decline?

We know of course that our founder, Walter, the first High Steward of Scotland, hailed from Shropshire. To him it would have seemed natural to bring a prior and twelve monks from his calf-country, from the Cluniac Priory at Much Wenlock with which he was most familiar, to establish his new foundation. Not withstanding, as the man in charge of King David I’s domestic affairs, Walter must have been aware of the changing fashions in monasticism. Driven by his noted piety, David proved himself one of medieval Scotland’s greatest monastic patrons with a predilection for the newer and increasingly ascetic Cistercian and Tironensian orders.

To an order set on maintaining tight centralised control of its monastic houses, as distant and northerly a foundation as Walter established must have seemed a challenging addition. Over centuries, the Abbots of Cluny had proved themselves doggedly resistant to granting autonomy to any but a handful of the priories under their authority, yet Paisley was granted permission to appoint its own abbot when less than eighty years old.

Emerging from the troubled times of the Scottish Wars of Independence, Paisley Abbey in the fifteenth century was redesigned, rebuilt, and restored. It is said to have “attained to great prosperity and splendour.” For a brief time at least, it emulated its Burgundian parent, and life at Paisley became a distinct, however faint and distant echo: *a moderate interpretation of the Benedictine rule, warmed by charity and illumined by beauty in buildings, services, and music; setting psalmody in place of manual labour, cultivating the arts as well as theology; governed by tradition and custom in every detail of the day, yet saved from deadness alike by religious fervour and charitable deeds.*

If it had reached its apogee at the end of the fifteenth century, all too quickly the Abbey church was to be overtaken by disaster, despoilation, and dilapidation. Barely surviving the ensuing three hundred years and more of neglect, it at last saw the emergence of a new and more worthy spirit that afforded it once again to be illumined by beauty in buildings, services, and music, though now within the reformed presbyterian Church of Scotland.

Was it not is it not all for the glory of God?

For more than five hundred years, until the completion of St Peter’s in Rome in the early seventeenth century, the Abbey of Cluny was the largest church in Christendom. Much of it was destroyed, however, in the French Revolution and now, barely a tenth of the original building survives. In contrast, Paisley Abbey is a remarkable and almost unique survivor of the once great Cluniac empire, retaining, however tenuously in its later pre-Reformation years, its Cluniac links. In no small measure, it owes its survival to having been the mother church of Paisley, both parochial and conventual in function, continually from its first foundation to the present day.

2024 is the thirtieth anniversary of the creation of the Federation of European Cluniac Sites. During its lifetime, the Federation has grown in stature and recognition as representative of the enormous importance of the order of Cluny in European cultural history. The network of some two hundred sites, including Paisley Abbey, was confirmed as one of the Council of Europe's Great Cultural Routes in 2005. It has supported a wide range of events, some in commemoration of the 1100th anniversary of the foundation of the Abbey of Cluny in 2010 and, more recently, regular Cluniac tourism fairs. Members of Paisley Abbey's congregation have participated in a number of these events.

Currently, the Federation is embarked on its greatest and most exciting project to date – an application to UNESCO for registration of the Cluniac network on the World Heritage List. This is a serial application made on behalf of as many sites as have signed up to be candidates for inclusion. At present, there are just over one hundred such sites of which Paisley Abbey is proud to be one. The process of developing such applications is extremely complex, and it will be a few years before any decision regarding registration is reached by UNESCO. Nevertheless, the potential benefits for Paisley Abbey as a visitor attraction are immeasurable.

This year, to celebrate its thirtieth anniversary, the Federation has launched a programme of events entitled “Cluny Makes Europe” for which applicant sites were asked to propose a cultural project to be included in the programme. The remit was for applicants to identify individual characteristics that related to their place in the network, and their relationship to other Cluniac sites. Taking the idea of “Paisley Abbey, the Cluny of the North” as the theme of an outline proposal, an application to be included in the Federation's Thirtieth Anniversary Programme was submitted on behalf of the Abbey. It has come as a pleasant surprise to hear from the Federation that the Abbey's project has been selected. This will be a wonderful opportunity for the Abbey to develop its visitor appeal, especially in the increasingly important sphere of European cultural tourism.



The writer is conscious that recent articles in the Abbey Herald have had a bias towards the church's musical associations. Reluctant to depart entirely from that rich seam of inspiration, this short tailpiece is included with the justification of its having links to our church music, our Cluniac heritage, and the lately ended “Women's History Month” of March.

The writer has a near-pathological habit of acquiring books and amongst the thousands of volumes in his possession is one of the smallest but most prized. It is leather-bound, measuring six inches by five inches in size, and only seventy pages long. Its title is “The Rhythm of Bernard de Morlaix, Monk of Cluny, on the Celestial Country. Translated and edited by Rev. J. M. Neale, D.D., Warden of Sackville College.”

The preface asserts that: “in the twelfth century, the Abbey of Cluny - under its celebrated head, Peter the Venerable - was at the very height of monastic reputation. At that time,” it continues, “one of its children was Bernard, born at Morlaix, in Bretagne, but of English parents. He occupied a portion of his leisure by the composition of a poem, *De Contemptu Mundi*, in about three thousand lines.”

This, it must be admitted, is an unpromising beginning for the modern reader to encounter, and the prospect is not greatly enhanced by Neale's crediting “Dean Trench, in his *Sacred Latin Poetry*,” with having “given a very beautiful *cento* of ninety-five lines from the work,” from which Neale has derived his own very free translation. Latin verse is not generally considered to be the stuff of fascination to any but a very few classical scholars, most probably resident in some ivory tower.

For regular churchgoers, the name J. M. Neale (John Mason Neale, 1818-1866) may have rung a bell. In the Abbey's hymnary, “Common Praise,” he is credited in the index as being the author of thirty items. Most are translations and include “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel,” “A great and mighty wonder,” “Of the Father's love begotten” and “All glory, laud, and honour.” He also wrote the Christmas carol, “Good King Wenceslas,” but it is Number 482, “Jerusalem the Golden,” that he translated indirectly from the poetry of Bernard of Cluny.

“Jerusalem the Golden” is sung to the tune “Ewing,” composed by Alexander Ewing, 1830-1895. Born at Aberdeen, he was regarded as the most talented young musician in the city. As a career officer in the British Army, he served at Constantinople during the Crimean War, and thereafter in China, Ireland, Canada, Malta, and Ceylon, reaching the rank of Lt. Colonel. While stationed at Aldershot, Ewing gave music lessons to the seventeen-year-old daughter of a major general in the Royal Artillery who strongly disapproved of his daughter's musical aspirations. Ewing introduced her to the music of Wagner and Berlioz and supported her in the battle that she eventually won against her father about her plans to devote her life to music. The girl's name was Ethel Smythe (1858-1944), the first female composer to be granted a damehood, and a leading member of the women's suffrage movement, for whom she wrote the anthem, “The March of the Women.”

We live in a small world!

David C Davidson

RENFREWSHIRE FOODBANK

The congregation of Paisley Abbey generously supports the Foodbank set up to serve our local community in Paisley. By doing so we are trying to assist the most vulnerable people for whom life can prove the most difficult. The Foodbank distributes to those for whom the need is most urgent. If you would like to contribute, please bring along your donations to the Abbey on the last Sunday of the month. Anything you may be able to donate will be much appreciated.

Thank you to all who faithfully donate each month and to those who now give support. Your donations show the community that the congregation of the Abbey care for others and actively contribute to the wellbeing of all.

PAISLEY FOOD & DRINK FESTIVAL

FRIDAY 26 & SATURDAY 27 APRIL

Paisley's popular Food and Drink Festival will be returning to the town on Friday 26 and Saturday 27 April. This year's event will take place in Abbey Close and Bridge Street running from Friday at 4 pm until 10 pm and from midday to 9 pm on Saturday.

Road closures and restrictions on parking will come into effect from 1 am on Wednesday 24 April until Monday 29 at 5 pm. Details of road closures are as follows.

Abbey Close will be closed from Bridge Street to Gauze Street.

Bridge Street will be closed from Cotton Street to and including Bridge Street car park.

Access for volunteers to the Abbey car park will be available from Gauze Street, please advise the stewards that you require access.

There will be Bric a Brac and Plant stalls in the cloister on Saturday 27 April. Donations of suitable items for sale would be welcomed, jewellery, unopened cosmetics, crafts, household items for example. Please see Priscilla Routley.

SERVICES & MUSIC FOR APRIL

7 April
11 am
Jubilate Deo
Anthem

14 April
11 am
Te Deum
Anthem

4 pm
Responses
Canticles
Anthem

21 April
11 am
Jubilate Deo
Anthem

28 April
11 am
Communion Setting
Anthem

5 May
11 am
Benedictus
Anthem

Second Sunday of Easter
Morning Service

Surgens Jesus

Third Sunday of Easter
Morning Service

Blessed be the God and Father

Choral Evensong

Laudibus in sanctis

Fourth Sunday of Easter
Morning Service

My Shepherd is the living Lord

Fifth Sunday of Easter
Holy Communion

Beati quorum via

Sixth Sunday of Easter
Morning Service

In exitu Israel

Weelkes (Short Service)
Peter Philips

Stanford in C
SS Wesley

Smith
Brewer in D
William Byrd

Walton
George McPhee

Lennox Berkeley
CV Stanford

Stanford in C
Samuel Wesley



PRINTS BY SANDY STODDART

Members of the Congregation will remember that on the occasion of his 60th Anniversary in October Dr McPhee was presented with a painting of the interior of the Abbey, featuring the Abbey organ by Professor Sandy Stoddart. The painting was much admired when it was displayed at the time.

Sandy Stoddart also generously gifted four signed prints of the painting which can be sold for Abbey funds. If you are interested in purchasing one of the two remaining prints, details can be had from Linda Barrett, the Abbey Manager.

SATURDAY LUNCH HOUR CONCERTS

Saturdays at 12.30 pm
Admission is £5 payable at the door

20 April
Abbey Strings

1 June
Douglas Lawrence (Violin)
Maureen Rutherford (Piano)

15 June
Richard Craig (Flute)
Classical and contemporary chamber works for flute



SUNDAY ORGAN RECITALS

In celebration of the Cavallé Coll Organ
1874-2024

7 April
George McPhee
Director of Music at Paisley Abbey

21 April
John Kitchen
Organist to Edinburgh City, Edinburgh University
& Old St. Paul's Church

28 April
Tiffany Vong
Jordanhill Parish Church, Glasgow

19 May
James Lancelot
Durham Cathedral (Emeritus)

2 June
Mark Browne
Paisley Abbey

23 June
Matthew Beetschen
Dunfermline Abbey

30 June
Kevin Duggan
Dunblane Cathedral

Admission is £10 payable at the door

EVENTS AT THE ABBEY

LONDON CONCERTANTE – The Four Seasons & The Lark Ascending by Candlelight

Friday 12 April at 7.30 pm

Tickets £21-£46 available from ticketsource.co.uk/classical

LONDON CONCERTANTE – A Night at the Opera by Candlelight

Sunday 5 May at 7.30 pm

Tickets £21-£46 available from ticketsource.co.uk/classical

LONDON FILM MUSIC ORCHESTRA - The Best of Hans Zimmer & Film Favourites Illuminated

Thursday 6 & Saturday 8 June - performances at 6.30 pm & 9 pm

Tickets from £38.22 available from Eventbrite

LONDON CONCERTANTE – Music from James Bond Movies by Candlelight

Sunday 16 June at 7.30 pm

Tickets from £19 available from candlelightconcerts.co.uk

J S Bach B Minor Mass

Saturday 25 May at 7.30 pm

Mhairi Lawson (Soprano)

Jessica Gillingwater (Alto)

David Lee (Tenor)

Colin Murray (Bass)

George McPhee (Conductor)

Tickets £5 - £35 available at
bminor2024.eventbrite.com

*This performance given in memory of
Professor Norman Sharp OBE*

ABBAY CONTACTS

Minister:	Revd. Jim Gibson
Director of Music:	Dr. George McPhee
Church Manager:	Linda Barrett
Church Secretary:	Karen Kerr
Session Clerk:	Marion Sommerville
Depute Session Clerk:	Dr David Davidson
Treasurer:	Stewart McDougall
Abbey Herald:	Karen Kerr

The Abbey office can be contacted on 0141 889 7654 or by email at -
info@paisleyabbey.org.uk

*The Abbey, shop & café are normally open
Tuesday to Saturday from 10.30 am - 3.30 pm
Tuesday & Thursday tours are at 2 pm.*

Abbey website - www.paisleyabbey.org.uk

Facebook - [@paisleyabbey](https://www.facebook.com/paisleyabbey)

Instagram - [@paisleyabbeyofficial](https://www.instagram.com/paisleyabbeyofficial)

X (formerly Twitter) - [@paisley_abbey](https://twitter.com/paisley_abbey)

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