

### Advent Calendar

**Wow!!** Did you check out the Church website during the lead up to Christmas and learn all these wonderful new things about Advent and the Christmas Story? There were **700** + hits by Christmas Day plus a further **290** by the middle of January, so I hope you were one of them. There was so much information packed into each daily opening, and such fun - it was a project to be proud of – well done Iain!!

It's amazing how quickly our website has made its mark on the World Wide Web. I have received 2 interesting genealogy and history based requests via the website. Both came via links to Malcolm Little's History of the Church published for the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the present building, from the chapter "Some Significant Characters".

### Dr Alexander Graham

The first person from Cheshire was looking for the gravestone of his ancestor, Dr Alexander Graham of Polmont Cottage, who died in 1843, aged 43, well before the beginning of statutory registration (in 1855). Fortunately there are published books of Monumental Inscriptions for pre-1855 gravestones, one of which includes Polmont Churchyard, and very quickly I was able to discover the location of 3 gravestones for this family, side by side. Since he was a local surgeon, I decided there might be a published obituary for him. However, the Falkirk Herald did not come into being till 1845, so I had to go the indices of the Stirling Journal, where I found a lovely quaintly old-fashioned obituary for the doctor.

"One of his early cases brought him into great repute, it was that of a woman whose leg was to have been amputated, but after she was put under his care, he effected a cure. In the course of his practice, he succeeded in effecting a perfect recovery of many obstinate cases, and few men have exemplified such a persevering attention to the patients as Dr Graham".

*(extract from his Obituary in Stirling Journal, 1843)*

Polmont Cottage is no more, but coincidentally I can see the site of it from my house – in what is now Grandsable Cemetery!! It was located on the main Polmont to Laurieston Road, a few hundred yards west of the top gate into the cemetery. Sadly the doctor's first wife seems to have died in childbirth in 1838, having already had 6 children, of whom 2 had died as infants. So despite being a doctor, infant mortality still affected him. With several young children to bring up, he married, the year after his wife's death, Ann Johnston, daughter of Henry Johnston of Meadowbank.

### Captain Sir John Kincaid

The second request has been for permission to use the early life story, as discovered by Malcolm, of another local person, Sir John Kincaid. The story behind this request comes from Hastings, where Sir John is buried. Someone, interested in the history of the Rifle Brigades, had come across a very run-down grave to this soldier in Hastings and had it refurbished. He offered to write a paper about the gentleman for the local museum but was stumped for information about his early life. A search on the website linked him to ours – and the rest, as they say, is history. A copy of the final leaflet will be lodged with Falkirk Archives at Callendar House, while a copy will be sent to Malcolm for his interest.

### Still searching

I am still working away on a 3<sup>rd</sup> request for information on a grave in the churchyard. This is a more recent one – early 20<sup>th</sup> century, that is!! However you may not be aware that the records for the lairs in Polmont Churchyard pre-1956, or thereabouts, were destroyed in a fire in the 1950s, so the answer to this search is simply to walk round the churchyard, reading all the stones – ie. if there is a stone in the first place!! This enquirer lives in Canada and has visited the churchyard herself to no avail, so I am not expecting to come up with any answers for her.

### Obvious gaps?

I know there have been other requests for information via the website. For example, a few months ago, someone was looking for directions to the church as they were coming to attend a funeral. At that time we did not have this on the website, but of course maps and directions were added immediately. So if you see any gaps in our website, please contact Iain via the website, and he will look into it.

### Interested in Web Design?

A website has to be "up to the minute", so it is an ongoing task to keep it up to date. Presently this is being done by our wonderful friend and website whizz-kid!! Iain Morrison. However, if you think you have an interest in website design or in assisting a small team in keeping our website up-to-date, and would like to undergo some training in this, please contact me at 01324 712415 or [SMReid@aol.com](mailto:SMReid@aol.com) or Iain at [iain@kirkweb.org](mailto:iain@kirkweb.org)

**Keep on Surfing !**

*Sandra Reid*