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Ayr:St Quivox Parish Church

September 2025

Auchincruive Edition

St Quivox refers now to the name of the entire Parish, which has two churches: Auchincruive Church in St Quivox village, and Dalmilling Church on Dalmilling Road, Ayr.

Early on, the parish was known as Sanchar-in-Kyle - an area three miles north of the River Ayr and five miles inland. There are still farms with this name in the district. It was dedicated to St Kevoc. To distinguish it from Sanquar in Nithsdale, the Parish came to be called St Kevoc's, which became corrupted to St Quivox.

The name St Kevoc is an unusual one and its origins are obscure. It may have referred to a St Kennocha Virgo in Coila during the reign of Malcolm II (Máel Coluim; c. 954 – 25 November 1034) and has also been spelt St Kevock, St Kenochis, St Cavocks and St Evox. The church was still known by this name in the 18th century. There are houses in the village with some of these names.

The church of Sanquar (now known as Auchincruive Church) was described as a Rectory in 1208. Scott's Fasti (new edition) says, "From 1221-1238 the church of Sanchar belonged to the Gilbertine Priory of St Mary at Dalmulin within the parish. The monks left the Priory in 1238 and from then, until (the) Reformation, it was owned by Paisley Abbey." There are also potential links to Mochaemhog, an Irish Christian alive in

the 7th Century, who may have worked in this area of Scotland and who died in 699.

In this history, until 1952, St Quivox refers to the church in St Quivox village, now known as Auchincruive Church of Ayr: St Quivox Parish. After 1952, the parish was expanded with the building of a second church at Dalmilling, half a mile away in Ayr.

References:
Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanae (1920) Presbytery of Ayr https://archive.org/details/fastiecclesiaesc03scot/page/64/mode/2up?q=st+quivox

The Scottish Reformation

Until the Scottish Reformation, St Quivox was a Roman Catholic Church. The movement away from Rome began, in the late 1400s and early 1500s. Scotland under the impetus of John Knox, in 1560 officially adopted the reformed Protestant confession of faith, rejecting papal jurisdiction and the Mass, developing a Calvanistic national Kirk (or church). After the Reformation, the church became used for the Protestant form of worship.

From 1547 until 1618, the Patron of St Quivox Church was Alan, Fourth Lord Cathcart, the owner of the Auchincruive and Sundrum Estates. Alan was born in 1537, He was an early adherent to the Protestantism of John Knox, and agreed by bond to the Reformed religion. His interest in St Quivox was considerable, and he instructed the first restoration in 1595.

After 1560, it was difficult to get a sufficient number of qualified ministers acceptable to the new regime, and a class of Probationers known as Readers, (or Exhorters), was employed. The Church of St Quivox was served intermittently by four Readers from 1567 till 1591. After this, all the occupants of the charge were ordained ministers.

The family history of Rev. William McQuhae – Minister at Auchincruive during the time of Richard Oswald.

Often, family history is just a list of names, yet when my father-in-law looked into my family tree he found an individual who has a mention in a Rabbie Burns poem, who wrote a book called 'Difficulties Which Attend The Practice Of Religion', a man who ministered at Auchincruive Church for 59 years and his son after him for 36, and whose children had links with the East India Company and Jamaica. One of his grand-daughters, Rose, who was born in India married James Tobin Bush, who on closer research was descended – via kings, emperors, bishops and a saint – from Charlemagne!

William McQuhae was born in 1737 in Wigtown and was the son of a Bailie – David McQuhae. As a young man William tutored David and John Boswell, brothers of the famous writer James Boswell. William studied divinity at Glasgow University and became Minister at Auchincruive Church in 1763. He was known to the poet Robert Burns, and the poem 'The Holy Tulzie' is about a parish boundary dispute between two 'Auld Licht' ministers. Other ministers became involved, and all were satirised by Burns. Of William he said: "An' that curs'd rascal ca'd McQuhae," and: "McQuhae's pathetic, manly sense." – a less scathing account than of some others!

William was of 'New Licht' persuasion and in 1785 his book was published. It seems that he became a trusted member of the clergy since in 1805 he was offered the position of Moderator of the Church of Scotland. He turned it down (the only person to have ever done so!) – perhaps because it would involve travelling and he had many children at home!

He had seven children with Elizabeth Park, although three died young. One daughter, Charles, married the owner of a plantation in Jamaica when she was 50 years of age, and a son, Peter, served in the Royal Navy

and died in Kingston, Jamaica of yellow fever. My ancestor, William (Junior) was a soldier in India, dying there in 1824 leaving six children. Sadly, my family residing in India did not live long lives as did their Scotland dwelling ancestors, and three generations of children were left orphans.

William married Mary Laurie after the death of his first wife and they had eight more children – one of whom, Stair became Minister at Auchincruive Church immediately after William. You can see both their names on a large memorial in the churchyard. 'D.D.' refers to 'Doctor of Divinity' – awarded to William by the University of St. Andrews. When William McQuhae died he was Father of the Synod, and the date was 1st March 1823 – the 59th anniversary of his ordination.

My thanks to my Father-in-law, Lawrence Downey for his diligent research, and to Rev. McCutcheon, Catherine and John who showed me around the church on my recent visit.

Vicki Downey

Auchincruive Church
Funerary Hatchments
June 2020

From the early 17th century, **Funerary Hatchments** were displayed over the entrance of a deceased nobleman's home for a period of between six to twelve months, after which they were taken to the local church for display. The practice followed on from the older custom of carrying the heraldic shield before the coffin.

They are depictions of a deceased person's heraldic ''achievement' - the family coat of arms and crest, together with indications of the supporters of the family and the person within a black lozenge-shaped frame generally on a black background.

The word 'hatchment' is probably a corruption of the French word 'achevement', from the verb 'achever', itself a contraction of 'chef venire' - 'to come to a head' thus, to reach a conclusion, accomplish or achieve.

These were found during restoration work in the crypt at Auchincruive church and were said to be 'very old' and something to do with the Oswald family.

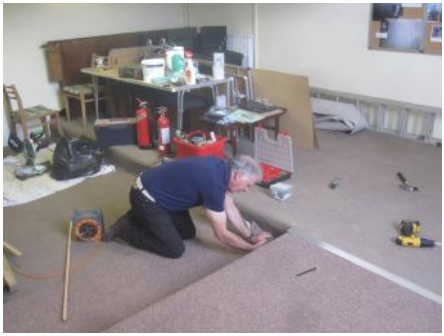
The items on the first shield correspond with images of the Oswald family arms, and a likely candidate for this one is Richard Oswald (1705-1784). He is known in America as the Peacemaker for his work in drafting the peace treaty which ended the American War of Independence.

The second has elements from both the Oswald and the Haldane families and may belong to Alexander Haldane Oswald (1811-1886) MP for Ayrshire from 1843 until 1852.

Reference

AUCHINCRUIVE CHURCH - Ayr: St Quivox Parish Church

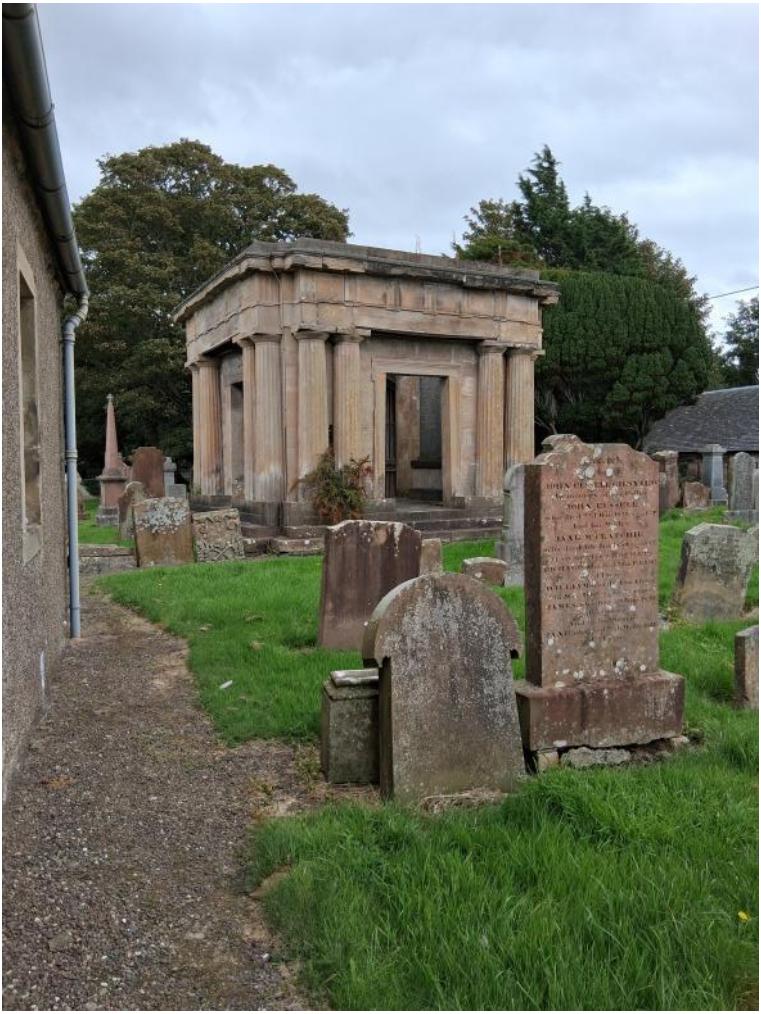
The team of volunteers , Ian, Gwyn and David, who carried out the Restoration work in the crypt at Auchincruive.



The Campbell Mausoleum, St Quivox Churchyard, Ayr

The Campbell Mausoleum, a Doric structure designed by William Henry Playfair, was built in 1822 to enclose the grave of the advocate James Campbell of Bardarroch, then of Craigie (c.1784 ~ 1860).

Since then a number of other members of the family have been inscribed on a plaque within the memorial.



There has been a Christian presence on the site of Auchincruive Church in St Quivox since the 1200s. Its earliest mention was from 1208. From 1238, it was owned by Paisley Abbey, until the Reformation when it fell into disrepair.

The medieval building was restored in 1595 on its original 13th century foundations by Alan, Fourth Lord Cathcart, who owned the Sundrum and Auchincruive estates and was Patron of St Quivox Church.

At that time it was built as a simple long hall running along the current pulpit wall, served by the Auchincruive aisle. The pulpit and chancel were thought to be on the east wall, and the covered-in door on that wall probably served as an entrance for the priest.

The first Restoration moved the pulpit to its present position and added a T-shaped 'body o' the kirk' opposite the pulpit.

This restoration was marked by a stone panel on the outside south wall of the church. Made of sandstone, it has worn badly over the last 4 centuries, but bears the date 1595, the Cathcart coat-of-arms, and motto 'I Hope to Speed."

1759 -1900

Auchincruive Estate now belonged to Richard Oswald, and the Patronage of the church went with the sale. In 1765 he presented to the church beautiful silver Communion-ware, still in use today. (Not stored in the church.)

Richard Oswald in 1767 oversaw the second restoration. He had built the Auchincruive Gallery and the underlying burial vault. The church was "repaired, uniformly seated, and plastered by the heritors; and a new aisle built by the Patron".

By 1792, the parish population had grown to 250 families, mainly living in what had become known as Wallacetown. (Wallacetown had developed from land north of the Auld Brig which Sir Thomas Wallace of Craigie had feued for building.) By 1835, a separate church was built to serve this area and was declared a separate parish the following year.

The next changes in the Auchincruive Church were the addition in 1825 of the Whitletts and Craigie Galleries for the families of those names with their respective staircases .
All three galleries are only accessible from outside the main church building via their own staircases.

1900 - 2000
Auchincruive Church remained relatively unchanged in layout during the twentieth Century.

The Parish of St Quivox itself, however, underwent major changes.

Following WW2, the population of Whitletts was expanding, and new housing was built at Dalmilling and Whitletts. It was agreed that a 'church in the midst' was necessary. This church was designed to be an extension of Auchincruive Church and was built as a "Hall Church" i.e. one building with open seating, a stage at one end and a Sanctuary at the other. Dalmilling Church was opened and dedicated on the 2nd September 1953.

A further two halls and attendant facilities were added and officially opened and dedicated on the 21st February 1975. The main hall was named “The Wilson Hall” after the Wilson family.

In September 1981, a union took place between St. Quivox and Lochside Churches which lasted until 2008, when Lochside Church was joined with St. Columba Church, Ayr.

In 1985, Auchincruive Church underwent extensive roof repairs, renovations to the heating and lighting systems and was redecorated, at a cost of around £83k.

2000 - 2025

In 2016, the UK Government released funds for Roof Repairs to Listed Religious buildings. A team from St Quivox successfully bid for funding from this and other sources which allowed further repairs to Auchincruive Church roof.

2016 was a busy year for upkeep. A dedicated hand washing sink, was fitted in the Auchincruive Vestry, the Vestry floor was recovered and the inside of Auchincruive Church and Vestry repainted. The Fabric Team also re-floored the crypt area to allow it to be used as a meeting room.

One of the more major changes in St Quivox Parish, however, has been in the pattern of conducting Sunday Services.

After the opening of Dalmilling Church, the Minister had traditionally conducted the Sunday Service at 10:00am in Dalmilling Church, then 'hot -footed' it up to Auchincruive to conduct Sunday Worship there. This meant the minister was unable to chat to the Dalmilling congregation after the service, and had barely time to catch breath before conducting his or her second service of the day, and delivering his or her second sermon of the day in under two hours.

This pattern also seemed to cause a distinct separation of the two congregations, and falling numbers on Sundays made this way of worship unsustainable.

The Rev Ken Yorke 'took the bull by the horns' and proposed that changes should take place. We now worship as one congregation going to either Auchincruive or Dalmilling on alternate Sundays.
Our congregation has grown once more with new people moving into the area.

As the saying goes however all good things must come to an end and so it is that the last service at the church in Auchincruive will be held on 21st September 2025.

Agnes Cooper Stewart sadly died on 2nd January 2015 aged 87. Although her name was Agnes she was Nana to us and everyone else. She was called Nana because there were five cousins with the same name in the family, and each had to be given a different variation of Agnes.

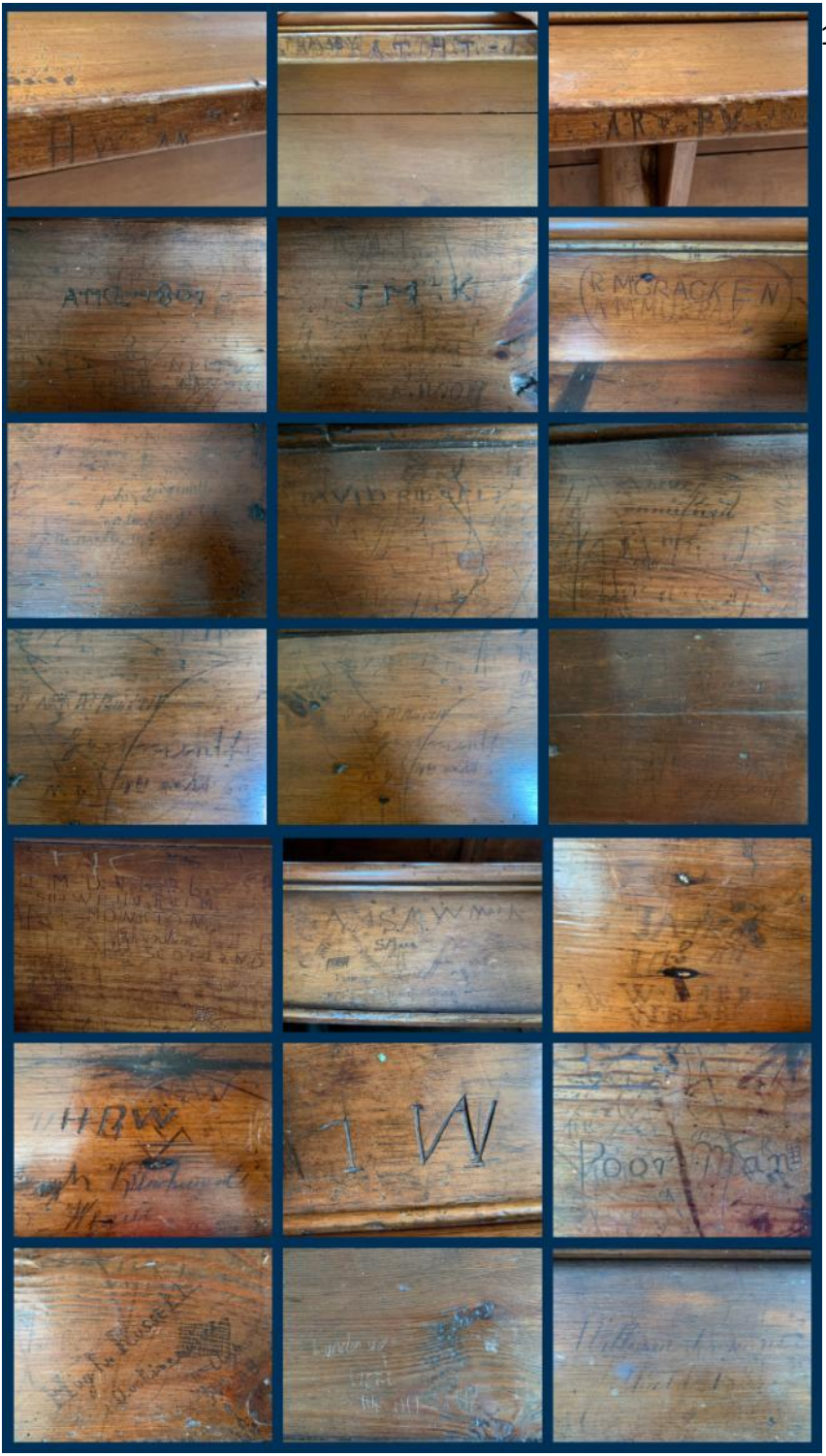
Nana grew up and spent her early life in Clydebank. She worked at Craigie College before it was sited on the Campus, working from an office in the Sandgate. During her early married life, she and her husband were very actively involved in Ayr Fort Players. Nana preferred to work behind the scenes. Until she became ill, Nana always took a very active part in the social life of this congregation.

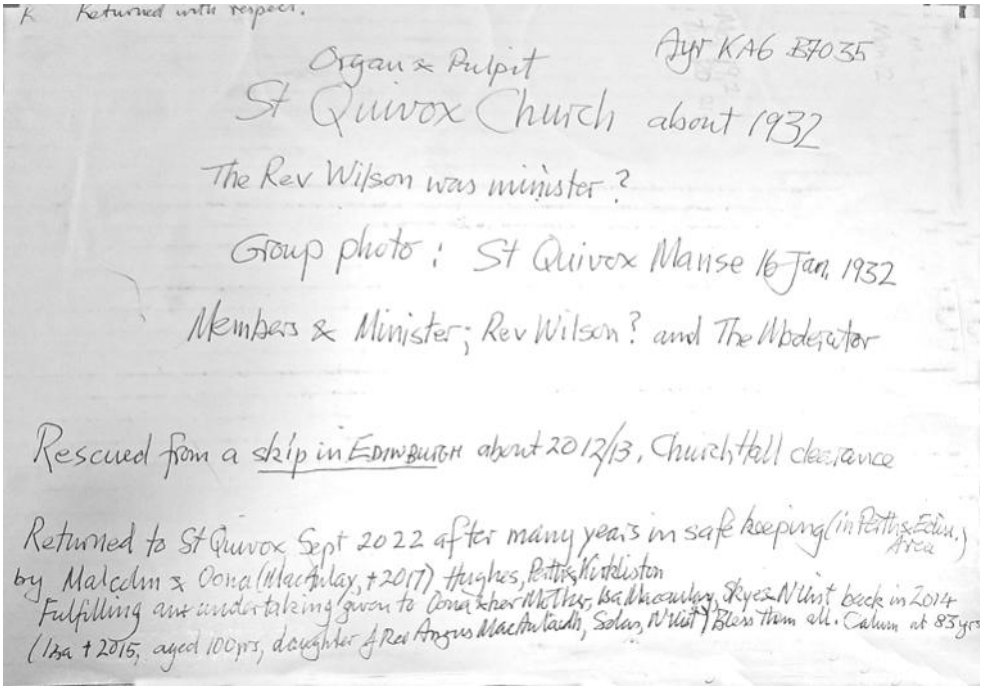
In December 1979, Nana was one of the first women ordained as an elder in this church. She was appointed Presbytery elder in February 1982 and served until she became Session Clerk in June 1984. After that she continued as an Additional elder and was very highly regarded within Ayr Presbytery. When Nana retired in 2004, she had served alongside three ministers and guided this church through some challenging times. Her minutes and all her records were all kept meticulously.

She was a kind, caring, thoughtful Christian person who always managed to find the right words to say in difficult times. Nana had a wealth of experience and knowledge which was of great benefit to this church.

Pat Smith
Session Clerk

AUCHINCRUIVE CHURCH has a huge selection of graffiti from the 1800s onwards. These have been carved into the pews, some of them in very fine detail. They give a fascinating social history of the time: names, dates, drawings of men in top hats, handwriting styles and slang.


HBW
Poor Man


Returned with respect.

Ayr KA6 B7035

Organ & Pulpit

St Quivox Church about 1932

The Rev Wilson was minister?

Group photo : St Quivox Manse 16 Jan 1932

Members & Minister; Rev Wilson? and The Moderator

Rescued from a skip in Edinburgh about 2012/13, Church Hall clearance

Returned to St Quivox Sept 2022 after many years in safe keeping (in Perth & Edin. Area) by Malcolm & Oona (MacAulay, †2017) Hughes, Perth, Kirkliston

Fulfilling an undertaking given to Oona & her Mother, Isa MacAulay, Skye & N Uist back in 2014 (Isa †2015, aged 100yrs, daughter of Rev Angus MacAulaidh, Solas, N Uist) Bless them all. Calum at 83yrs

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ST. QUIVOX MANSE — 16 JANUARY 1932

In 1932 the minister was Rev James Peter Wilson who served the church from 1906 till 1941.

In January 1932 the Moderator was Rev John Anderson Graham. He had mainly served as a Missionary in Kalimpong and was awarded a house there for his contributions on his fiftieth anniversary of missionary service in 1939.

List of moderators of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland - Wikipedia

This is just a wee bit of info re. when I attended St Quivox as a child.

I am from New Cumnock, now living in Cumnock, and I enjoyed holidaying each year in Auchincruive with my aunt and uncle, Agnes and Tom Flynn. They lived in 1 Gibbsyard, now strangely enough the actual Clocktower Cafe! (I thankfully therefore get to go back regularly to a most amazing time in my life.)

Most Sundays that she could manage her hip issues, my aunt and I used to walk up the narrow road to the church. I specifically remember the lovely long walk, lined with trees, slightly uphill, usually in the hot summer sunshine. If he wasn't working my uncle would drive us home afterwards.

Once inside the cool church my aunt and I loved to sit upstairs in the Auchincruive Gallery, (on a good hip day), or middle of downstairs, always facing the pulpit.

I mainly remember the minister as the Rev. Bob Brown, though I am sure there was another man sometimes too. I don't remember much about the actual services, except that I loved the singing and prayers, and I enjoyed the stillness and calm.

After the service, when my aunt was outside talking to the minister or her friends, I remember watching what was going on at Prestwick Airport. There was a great view of the airport from the grounds of the church. (I was always so fascinated with aeroplanes and how they stayed up in the sky, and always loved watching them take off and land. Staying each summer in Auchincruive meant I also got to hear just how loud they sounded whilst trying to sleep! I know back then there were a lot of Canadian flights especially.)

I loved being in the church with my aunt Agnes, and was very saddened to hear of the impending closure of such a lovely church, one which

holds a lot of special memories for me.

I do hope to make one last visit, for my aunt's memory and for myself.

With much fondness,
Jane Kerr McCrorie

Kathleen and Archie Corson

Married on 22nd March 1974

By Rev Lyle B. Wilson

This photo was sent by Fiona, daughter of the couple signing the register.

It's a really good photo of Rev Lyle Wilson. I remember him from attending Sunday School and visits he made to my house.

It was on one of these visits that he asked me to help out at the Sunday School which I did for many years.

Elizabeth Brechany

Joint Fund-raising Project raises £10,007.08

January 2013

Troon St Meddan's Church and Ayr: St. Quivox Church have raised a total of £10,007.08 for the Malawi Fund - the highest total raised by any of the annual joint fund-raising projects.

Troon St Meddan's Church have had a Junior Church coffee morning, a Jubilee May Fair, a Golf Day sponsored by Dundonald Links Golf Course, the Harvest Collection, Entertainment Group concerts and (along with St Quivox Church) an autumn walk and BBQ. There were also donations from church organisations and individuals.

A team ran in the Troon 10k on May 9th in which clergy and members of St Meddan's and St Quivox raised £5,147 towards the final total.

St Quivox Church had a Candlelight concert and money was raised at the teas after the services in both Dalmilling and Auchincruive Churches. A smaller cheque for £173.25 from a donation and the teas in the last months of 2012, along with the cheque for £10,007.08 was handed to David and Liz Geddes on Sunday 27 January .

David and Liz gave a short presentation on the benefits this money would bring to the needy people of Bandawe and Limphasa Presbyteries in Northern Malawi.

Rev Rona Young

June 2018

It was a proud day on Sunday for Church Elder Elizabeth Brechany when, during the Service in Auchincruive Church, she was presented with a Certificate to honour her 30 years as an Elder of Ayr St. Quivox Parish Church by Interim Moderator Rev. Ken Yorke.

Also in 2018 we said farewell to Rosie Eggo our Family/Development worker. Rosie had been with us for 2 years but was leaving to take up a post as Support/Development worker at Barassie Primary School. Rosie had only been with us for two years, but she had achieved so much in that time.

Some of the highlights of Rosie's work for and with us have been:-

- Regular School Assemblies both in the school and in Dalmilling Church.
- Work with Barnardo's on lunch- time activities in the school.
- A Fun Day in June 2017 in the church.
- Establishment of Wild Rhythm, a music group for disabled people.
- Participation in Community worship both here and at St James Church.
- 2 Messy Christmas Services and 1 Messy Easter event.
- Establishment of a very successful After School Club.

Pat Smith - North Ayr Thegither Trustee

On Sunday **9th May 2021** Willie Campbell celebrated 50 years as an Elder in the Church of Scotland and is shown with his Certificate signed by the Moderator. Our Session Clerk was able to deliver a wee Afternoon Tea in a Box and a Card to Willie as a gesture from the Congregation congratulating this Golden Anniversary and 50 years of magnificent service to St. Quivox Parish Church.

On **6th November 2022** we recognised those in the church who had given long service. Allan Leydon has served the church for 40 years. He is currently the Safeguarding and Health and Safety Officer and also looks after Fabric matters. Rosemary Alexander has been an Elder for 30 years and served in several committees during that time. Currently she looks after the provision of tea after the services at Dalmilling, the flowers at Auchincruive and is part of the Finance Team. Colin Mutch carried out the Treasurer's duties for 12 years and received a gift from the Congregation as he was standing down from this post. Such was the sterling work that Colin did, he has been replaced with a Finance Team. Margaret O'Hara has been coming to St Quivox Church since she was 5 years old and became a member at sixteen. Her 82 years of service and dedication to the church was also recognised with a long service award.

On **4th December 2022** a further two members were recognised for their long service to the church. Margaret Mackay for her long years serving as an Elder.
Also to Molly Blackwood who for sixty years served faithfully in the church, carrying out many duties, whether as a member of the Congregational Board or as a co-opted member of the Kirk Session.

Molly was involved in nearly every aspect of church life, helping out and supporting all the various coffee mornings, church fetes and other church fundraisers that were organised throughout the years.

And it was as a small sign of our gratitude for all that she had done that the church presented her with a long service certificate at the end of 2022.

Cake is often a feature in Auchincruive.

Harvest Festival display in Auchincruive, October 2014.
Picture: Alister Firth Photography

Our visiting organist in April 2022 stepped up to the challenge when our electric organ developed a fault!

Unperturbed, he went straight to the ancient organ, pumped the bellows with his feet and the music rang out loud and true!!

Well done that man! The hero of the ivories!!

Rev Ken Yorke on hand to show off his vintage Austin.

Guided tours with a short history of the church were given. The tour included the church and churchyard.

Visitors could then enter the Crypt where Afternoon Tea was served.

So many people came along that an overflow tent was required.

The maids dressed in appropriate costumes including apron and cap.
I still have mine somewhere.
Elizabeth Brechany

The last Sunday Service was preached in Auchincruive Church on 21st September 2025. New criteria on whether a church should remain open meant that this building, which did not lend itself to anything other than church services was earmarked for closure. This was all part of a Nationwide review of church buildings with proposals drawn up to bring churches together under new unions of parishes and congregations.

Our last service was led by Rev John McCutcheon with input from Rev Rona Young, Rev Ken Yorke and Rev Douglas Moore. It was a time of looking back, looking forward and was quite emotional.

The congregation consisted of current members and those who had served the church in the past. It was lovely to see so many familiar faces in the church once again.

After the service we enjoyed time to come together in fellowship and have some tea, coffee and cake. Anne Howat baked the cake shown below and it was delicious.

Unfortunately 2 of my photos did not turn out so apologies to those who were seated to the right of the pulpit.
Elizabeth Brechany

O	M	O	O	R	E	W	I	L	S	O	N	N	O
F	U	L	L	A	R	T	O	N	C	E	G	O	T
R	E	I	D	C	S	S	R	C	R	N	H	S	O
M	O	R	M	R	B	E	H	D	U	S	A	E	I
O	E	A	N	O	L	M	T	O	U	A	G	I	R
N	O	N	R	L	E	R	Y	E	E	N	M	H	R
T	B	N	I	A	L	I	T	T	L	H	C	T	E
G	E	M	R	A	N	N	O	T	L	I	M	A	H
O	R	C	N	D	N	O	M	H	C	I	R	M	N
M	M	Q	G	R	E	G	O	R	I	E	O	N	B
E	R	U	L	O	R	I	L	A	M	M	I	E	R
R	C	H	A	R	T	E	R	I	S	O	R	R	O
I	A	A	H	N	E	S	S	Y	O	R	K	E	W
E	I	E	M	C	C	U	T	C	H	E	O	N	N

Hint: Row can be found inside another name.

Play this puzzle online at : https://thewordsearch.com/puzzle/8645842/

Find the surnames of the Ministers listed opposite in the wordsearch above.
For more information visit our website at [MINISTERS - Ayr: St Quivox Parish Church]

The McQuhae family, father and son, served the Parish for 95 years.
The Wilson family, father, son and nephew served the Parish for 119 years.

Colin	Row	1604-
Patrick	Hamilton	1618-
Robert	Montgomerie	1636-
William	Fullarton	1642-1669
Alexander	Gregorie	1669-1683
James	Lammie	1683-1684
John	Herriot	1685-1689
James	Richmond	1688-1700
Alexander	Orr	1700-1710
Robert	Miller	1711-1732
George	Reid	1732-1763
William	McQuhae	1764-1823
Stair	McQuhae	1820-1859
Henry	Duncan	1857-1858
Archibald	Charteris	1858-1859
James	Wilson	1859-
James Peter	Wilson	1906-1941
Lyle	Wilson	1942-1978
Robert	Brown	1978-1984
Alastair	Osborne	1981-1987
Angus	Mathieson	1987-?
Gordon	McRae	1985-1988
David	Ness	1988-2008
Rona	Young	2009-2015
Douglas	Moore	2012-2015
Ken	Yorke	2015-2019
John	McCutcheon	2019 onwards

Next issue of Church Magazine

All items should be submitted to Elizabeth Brechany

by Sunday 9th November 2025

St Quivox Parish Church: Ayr (Church of Scotland) (known as Ayr:St Quivox Parish Church) is a Scottish Charity, SC004906, regulated by the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR).