

## OLD KILPATRICK: A SPECIAL PLACE

*By Christine Menhennet*

Crossing the Erskine Bridge many years ago, I looked down to the wee village tucked between the banks of the Clyde and heather clad Kilpatricks and thought to myself – that looks a special place. It looked so special that I moved to the village in my forties and fell in love with the place – the villagey feel, chatter at the shops, towpath walks, the flower dotted Saltings, music nights in the Ettrick, pockets of understated history, the stunning hill backdrop; Old Kilpatrick felt like a little known, but really cool place to be.

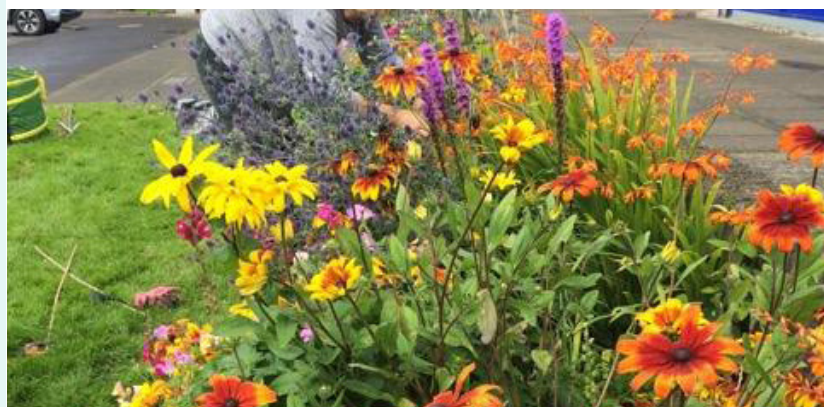
I did occasionally think however, that even more could be made of the village's lovely setting and heritage, so, when a handful of local people promoted the idea of a group that would actively care for the environment and history of the village, I was up for joining. Action Old Kilpatrick (AOK) was formed and my main contribution was to coordinate the set-up and maintenance of the new flower beds and the community greenhouse.

As a group we achieved masses – a heritage walk and book based on local stories, flowerbeds all over the village, planters at the station, the fabulous Santa Parade, social events at the Bowling Club and the litter picks. As an individual however, an 'outsider' who knew very few people when I moved to the village, I gained new friends, had a lot of laughs, was able to indulge my love of flowers for community benefit, gained inspiration and learning from my fellow volunteers, had the occasional therapeutic rant at the Council (who were in truth very helpful!) and enjoyed good social times at the pub, cafe and each other's houses.

The pandemic highlighted the value of friends, family and community; Councils don't make community, ordinary individuals working with Councils and other agencies to make prettier, more supportive places – that makes community. AOK desperately needs more volunteers, younger or older – to do as little or as much as you are able to, whether on a regular or an adhoc basis; no particular skills or knowledge are required to help out, just a willing soul and a love of the village – a sense of humour also helps! Please give it a go and help to keep Old Kilpatrick a special place.

*This newsletter is produced jointly by Action Old Kilpatrick (AOK) and Old Kilpatrick Community Council (OKCC) for all residents of the village.*

Welcome to the Autumn issue of the AOK and Old Kilpatrick Community Council newsletter - we're back after a break now that activities are starting up in the village again. In this issue we hope to update you on some of our recent projects and AOK helpers write about their experience with volunteering - we hope these stories inspire you to get involved!



## VILLAGE LITTER PICKS ARE BACK!

### SALTINGS

First Sunday of each month  
10:00-12:00am  
Meet at AOK container,  
Erskine Ferry Road

### LUSSET GLEN

Last Monday of each month  
10:00-12:00am  
Meet at AOK container,  
Erskine Ferry Road

*By Jim Hall*

The litter pick sessions in the Saltings and Lisset Glen have been a great success with individuals realising that not only does clearing litter help the environment and its appearance but is also great for getting some fresh air, exercise and for meeting new like-minded friends; it's very sociable.

The pandemic interrupted the normal monthly pattern but we are now back in action. If you would like to join us at one or both events, just come along at the above times and you will be made very welcome.

Hope to see you there!



# ACTION OLD KILPATRICK



## AOK GARDENING GROUP

By Heather Hay

In the 5 years or so since AOK gardening volunteers got together several areas have been developed in a variety of locations around the village. There are now three big and colourful planters at the village entrances at Bowling, Freelands and Station Road, there are a range of flowerbeds and pots at the Thistleneuk shops and also next to the benches in Erskine View all of which help give these areas a lift.

St Patrick's Well, a corner next to the former bus depot and another corner next to the church have also all been given the AOK treatment and now look much better and the triangle at the bottom of Station Road has a lovely flower bed... and of course, our wee Christmas tree! Although it is still much smaller than the ones we used to have, the hope is that it will grow and become a permanent feature for many Christmases to come.

The pots and flower beds in front of the Napier Hall are usually filled with colourful plants, however while the hall is being used as a Covid testing centre access to tend to this area has not been possible. Hopefully, it will soon be returned to its former glory!

People often commented on how nice it is to see colourful and maintained areas around the

village. Unfortunately, the restrictions over the past eighteen months have made it difficult to look after all these flowerbeds to the usual standards. Also a couple of members have moved away from Old Kilpatrick reducing available volunteer numbers. However, we are looking forward to being able to start work on some new ideas and hopefully encouraging others to come and join us.

As you would expect some people in the group have more experience in gardening than others – in fact some have little experience at all! – but it's always good fun and everyone enjoys working together to improve the look of our village. Hopefully as more normal times begin to return there will be even more planting to do and probably more chat over coffee and cake! You don't need any landscaping skills or tools but if you have any time to spare it would be great to have you join us so **why not come along to one of our regular maintenance days. We meet at the Thistleneuk shops at 10.00am on the first Saturday of the month.**

## ANTONINE ARBORETUM UPDATE

The Antonine Arboretum is still an aspiration for the village!

We have had consultations, we have had a day in the field with various activities. We spent time with the children at Gavinburn Primary School, we also held an exhibition of all things Roman in the Napier Hall.

We had a landscape designer plan out the Arboretum and we're in talks with the Canal College regarding proposed developments. Then we heard about the dangerous railway bridge and to cap it all we had a pandemic! All activities came to a halt.

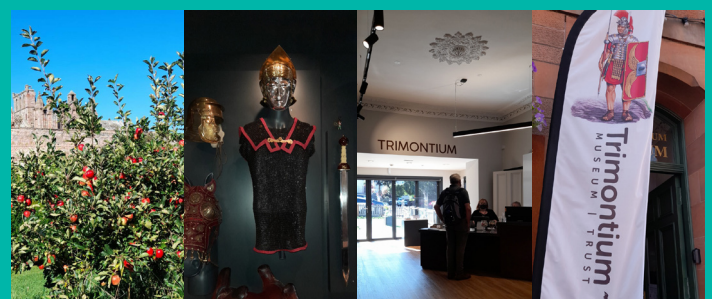
But nothing good comes without effort...

The people of Melrose can vouch for this after some 30 years in the planning they now have a super wee museum well worth a visit. "The three hills place" was the nickname the Roman soldiers

gave to their fort in the lee of one of the most familiar landmarks in Southern Scotland: the Eildon Hills. The Latin "Trimontium" became an official title covering a huge fort, settlements, a military amphitheatre, a field system and road.

Following many years of effort by a small number of volunteers this modern small museum has finally opened this summer. Hopefully, our Antonine Arboretum will not take as long to come to fruition.

We will however need lots of community support to plant the proposed community orchard and woodland! Roll on 2022!



# OLD KILPATRICK COMMUNITY COUNCIL



## OLD KILPATRICK COMMUNITY COUNCIL NEEDS SUPPORT!

We believe that every member of our community is a valued member of society and can contribute something to the area in which they live. We witnessed this in action during the pandemic of 2020/21.

Old Kilpatrick Community Council were delighted to help in the development and encouragement of Old Kilpatrick Food Parcels. Volunteers both young and old give of their time and effort to raise awareness of food poverty in this community, many people have been thankful for their support.

Community Councils attempt to engage with as wide a range of people as possible to collate a diversity of views and insights which can help the Community Council to achieve the best for the community.

This year we have raised issues and are pursuing actions in relation to the Kilpatrick Braes, the High Park development, issues surrounding underage drinking in the village plus the ongoing issues of traffic speed and parking in the area.

West Dunbartonshire Council are supporting a review of Community Councils and this hopefully will create an interest in the Community and will encourage more public understanding and awareness of the role and remit of Community Councils.

## THE LUSSET GLEN



The Lisset Glen is a well known and valued asset which is part of Old Kilpatrick.

It is used by dog walkers, cyclists and those members of the community seeking a pleasant stroll through the trees. However, a number of issues have been identified which we hope will be resolved with community involvement. Points raised include, for example, the overgrown trees, lighting, and speed of cyclists to name but a few.

WDC, AOK and the community council hope to produce a development plan for the glen which will be published for public comment, so watch this space!

Anyone who would like to get involved with this initiative please contact the Community Council through our Facebook page or email us.

## LOST LOCAL HISTORY

*By Florence Boyle*

What did you do in the pandemic? Between box sets I settled down to research some questions I had about the place where I live. In 2018 I researched the names of the WW1 casualties on the OK Memorial and that threw up some interesting facts about the people who lived in Old Kilpatrick, a century ago.

This time I started with a blank page. Stories about shipbuilding, trains and engineering have been well researched and documented elsewhere but some people have been forgotten, and others have never been given their place and those are the stories I am interested in. It's been a fascinating exercise (which I am still working on). Along the way there have been some amazing discoveries.

My favourite story so far is John Murray, Secretary of the Glasgow Emancipation Society and a leading campaigner in the fight to abolish slavery in America. He was revered among fellow campaigners and the famous runaway slave and campaigner, Frederick Douglass, stayed with Murray during his 1845 tour of Scotland, at his home at Bowling Harbour Customs House,



Buried in Glasgow, his grave was lost in the 1970s M8 construction works. No known memorial exists to mark his contribution. Perhaps that's something that could be fixed?

There are more stories of this area's connections with slavery of scandal of adventure. Some of the stories are big enough to fill a book, others just a couple of sentences; like John Halkett a local hero from the Second Afghan War, who in 1880 marched with 10,000 other men to relieve the British Garrison which was under siege.

Interested to know more?

Follow [lost\\_local\\_history](#) on Instagram.

Two of our volunteers recently moved away from the village and their help is sorely missed!



We'd like to thank both Margaret and Christine for everything they've done for the village and hope they come back to visit to see how their work inspired new volunteers!

## VOLUNTEERING WITH AOK

By Margaret Miller

When I retired I joined AOK and spent the last few years working with them. This group of local residents are forward-looking people



and all work to improve Old Kilpatrick and keep it a pleasant place to live. Its been great fun and the things this small group of people has achieved is exceptional, but now they need help.

I hope that the next generation in the village will pick up the mantle and keep everything that has been achieved moving forward.

There is something for everyone with AOK, whatever your talent or hobby, it will be put to good use. The amount of time volunteers give is entirely up to the volunteer.

Look at the plots around the village, the forever Christmas tree, the Santa parade, the lighting on the lamp posts, the station, the litter picking, the history of the village brought to life. There are great social nights too where you make new friends and meet up with your neighbours. I want to come back to the village on visits and see it improving even more and I want to see the forever Christmas tree grow to its full height so the children of the village can help decorate it every year.

Please contact AOK and volunteer and enjoy yourself at the same time. It's very rewarding!

## KILPATRICK STATION

By Carolyn Hutchinson

Loving gardening and nature and hoping to have a purpose in retirement I decided to adopt Kilpatrick Station in 2017. The aim was to brighten up the platform, enhance the biodiversity, cheer up commuters and people passing through the station. At the time I was a new member of AOK helping with the flower beds in the village and on asking if they were interested to help the answer was a resounding yes and with everyone's hard work, combined skills and commitment Kilpatrick Station began to be transformed. We obtained a Bronze Award in our first year thanks to all our volunteers.

For instant impact, large planters were installed by AOK members, family and friends. Scotrail helped with some of the cost as did Murphy, the company installing the gas pipeline. The Old Kilpatrick Bowling Club also allowed us access to their water supply during a particularly hot summer.

We planted some pollinator plants in a wild flower area to encourage biodiversity and already have a few species established foxglove, poppies and ox eye daisies for the butterflies and bees. These seeds as well as compost and gardening tools were provided by Greenspace.

The embankment planting is in progress about half of it is complete and we are hoping to remove the grassy area and continue the planting to give year round colour. Climbers are starting to cover the fence between the bowling club and the station.

Both these areas are work in progress and we have lots of ideas for the future. Especially as Kilpatrick Station is ideal to access the Kilpatrick Hills without driving which hopefully will help a little towards being carbon neutral. Making it a pleasant area to visit will enhance local businesses.

If you have any ideas or are interested in being involved (no experience necessary) please contact us for more info.

Kilpatrick  
Cill Phàdraig



## ACTION OLD KILPATRICK

Get in touch:  
[info@actionoldkilpatrick.org.uk](mailto:info@actionoldkilpatrick.org.uk)

Visit our website:  
[actionoldkilpatrick.org.uk](http://actionoldkilpatrick.org.uk)

Please visit our social media for more up to date information on our activities and events

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