



Friends' Spring Newsletter

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TGB Gatehouse was formed and is supported by Gatehouse Community Church for the benefit of our community

Dear Friend,

We have delayed this newsletter in order to bring you news of our recent show and a number of exciting new developments. March was a very exciting month for us as two projects that have been in the pipeline for a while finally come to fruition! More of that later! Not only that, we have been awarded continuing funding by the Holywood Trust who have been supporting us for the last three years and have also received a generous three year funding package from Young Start, a funding scheme managed by the National Lottery's Community Fund using money from defunct bank accounts. As well as this funding which gives us the financial security to employ Sara-Leigh and covers core costs such as rent, we are grateful to all our TGB Friends for their regular financial support and, of course to all those who attend our groups and faithfully give voluntary donations which help to cover our expenses.

Annie Jnr

Bunkeroo's recent show was a magnificent 3-performance run of an interactive and participatory version of Annie. It was set in 1933 where eleven-year-old Annie (played by word and pitch-perfect Beth) is in New York's Municipal Girls' Orphanage, along with Molly (Isobella), Kate (Chané), Tessie (Tanya), Pepper (Emily G), July (Emily) and Duffy (Carmen). In the opening scene we learn that 11 years earlier Annie had been left by her parents on the doorstep of the orphanage along with a note to say they'd be back one day to pick her

up. Annie has total trust in her parents' promise and is ever hopeful that they are still out there somewhere!

Harsh orphanage supervisor Miss Hannigan (hilariously played by Allison Fairnie, one of our longest-serving volunteers), an alcoholic spinster and bully who flirts with laundryman Bundles (Rose Paul) and is the last to abide by her own "*never tell a lie*" advice, comes in and tells the girls to get to work. They complain and Miss Hannigan wonders why any child would want to be an orphan! And so the show continues creating a totally believable insight of orphanage life, bringing more than a tear or two to the eyes of the audience! It has to be said though that, as Annie and her companions were joined by the younger orphans (Violet, Jessica, Anna, Charlotte H, Catherine, Ryan, Katrina, Max, Olivia, Caeira, Connor, Eyilsa, Martin, Annabel, Madison, Iona and Mason) to sing *Hard Knock Life*, it was so rousing, with just a hint they were enjoying orphanage life just a little bit too much!! ("We love you Miss Hannigan!")

Orphanage life really is hard though and Annie tries to run away, when she meets apple-seller, (Rhiannon) and a stray dog, (Elliot) but she is soon found and returned to Miss Hannigan's dubious "care". Annie never loses hope though of her parents coming to collect her and, following the offer by billionaire Mr Warbucks (played by Ian Cain), to accommodate an orphan for Christmas, her luck begins to change. Annie arrives at Mr Warbucks' mansion where his staff (played by Freya, Charlotte, Chloe, Kayleigh, Amy, Jennifer and Zoe, and overseen by attentive butler, Drake (Kieran) treat her like a celebrity.



Delivered by

youngstart



The Holywood Trust



The opportunity arises to try and track down Annie's parents. Following an appeal by Mr Warbucks on Burt Healy's (Lucy) coast-to-coast radio show, a recalcitrant villain Rooster (Kirsty Grieve) and his conniving wife, Lily (Poppy), see an opportunity to claim the \$50k reward aided and abetted by the outrageous Miss Hannigan.



The suspicions of Mr Warbucks' PA, Grace (Maisie) alerts him that things aren't as they seem. A call to President Roosevelt (Chris Barratt), requesting the help of the FBI, brings news that Annie's parents had died many years previously leaving the way clear for the Christmas Day arrest of Rooster, Lily and Miss Hannigan by PC Ward (a brilliant debut performance by Gavin). This leaves the way clear for the adoption of Annie by Mr Warbucks and, seemingly, his whole household as the show came to its rousing end with another chorus of "Tomorrow"!



As well as all the performers, our thanks go to the volunteers and Young Leaders who help with Bunkeroo week by week throughout the year. Thanks also to Reagan, Kenzie and Micah who formed a proficient tech team under the expert guidance of John Dinning, a professional light and sound man. The performance ended with our Director, Sara-Leigh Cain, being presented with a well-deserved bouquet by PC Ward!

Number 1 High Street Open Day

You will probably have heard or read by now that we have taken on a lease for the old bank at Number 1 High Street.

The funding from Young Start will cover our rent so money from defunct bank accounts will be giving new life to a defunct bank! Number 1 High Street will provide a base for our small group activities, an office for Sara-Leigh and the "Wee Shop". The shop will provide a retail outlet for our members and others to sell their art and craftwork



Ian and Mick, two of our faithful volunteers, at work

with a weekly 'shelf-rent' going towards our continuing costs. It will also provide an outlet for artefacts made by members of our new Shed Project.

We will be having an Open Day at Number 1 High Street on Saturday 4th May from 11-4 p.m. so why not pop along and see what's going on? ! Find out more of our plans and ideas and have a look in our wee shop! Refreshments and a warm welcome await you!

We are grateful to so many for helping us get to this stage: our landlords, Gavin and Helen, our volunteer decorators, Ian Cain, Mick Fairnie and Lee Anderson for all the hours they have devoted to decorating the bank; the Community Church for funding our new floor coverings; the Church of the Resurrection for supplying 40 chairs; to local businesses for their willingness to fit in with our tight schedule including David Proudlock, Neil Pickthall, BM Electrical, Gowans and Signcraft.

The Shed Project

It's two years since we were asked if we were interested in using the former Murray Centre in the Cally Woods which The Forestry Commission had offered to the community. We had good reason to be interested! Debbie Dickie, one of our Board Members had heard about the growing Men's Shed movement across Scotland and its benefits for men's mental wellbeing. Debbie was so convinced that this was something that would be good for Gatehouse, that she had sold her own handcrafts at the Christmas Market in 2014 and raised enough money to pay the insurance necessary to run a shed for the first year. This began on a small scale in the garden of our first member, Tom in 2015.

So yes, we were very interested to hear that the Murray



Centre building was up for grabs! The only problem was, whoever took this project on would have to dismantle the building, move it, build a new base and reassemble it! And we didn't even know what we might find when it was dismantled, after all, it had stood in the Cally Woods for almost 50 years! Nothing's impossible though! All we needed was to raise a few thousand pounds so that we could do it properly and to find somewhere to put it! There's an old saying that we like in the Community Church, attributed to Hudson Taylor, a missionary to China. He said that, *'There are three stages to every great work of God; first it is impossible, then it is difficult, then it is done!* And so it was! Two community groups quickly came to our rescue, the Community Council and the Board of the Mill on the Fleet and we were offered a superb site in the grounds of the Mill.

Then we made a successful funding application to the Stewartry Area Committee to dismantle and re-locate the building to equip it for 'Men's' Shed' activities and for women's sessions too. Several women had already expressed interest in the project and we hope that, once the shed is established, there will be opportunities for specific women's sessions and use by youth groups, e.g. scouts and members of the Youth Drop-in.

Both the Cally Woods and the Mill grounds have particular sensitivity either in terms of natural or historical heritage and the process of satisfying all necessary requirements has been much longer than we ever envisaged. Who could have imagined that we would need a Bat Species Protection Plan or an Archaeological Scheme of Investigation! However, we did it (!) and are grateful to all who have made this possible.

This includes Dumfries and Galloway Council, The Murray Usher Foundation and Gatehouse of Fleet Community Council for their general and financial support for this project; the Tesco *Bags of Help* scheme and all who supported it; Hazel Smith, Chartered Architect, Whithorn, for her professional services and generous support with the planning process; the Forestry Commission who appointed their own contractors to dismantle the Murray Centre and transport it to the Mill grounds; Ron Forster for undertaking the archaeological watching brief required as a condition of our planning consent; the Fleet Valley Volunteers for assisting Ron with clearing and scraping the site to enable this; Meadowside Joinery (Craig Cluckie), Neil Pickthall and Joe and William Salfenmoser for carrying out such a fantastic job and for their patience while we waited for all the necessary consents; Stuart Ross for all the electrical work. Soon we will begin to equip the shed with power tools provided through the Tesco bags of help money as well as tools generously donated by a number of supporters. We're also grateful to participants in the joint churches Lent Lunches who have kindly offered half of the donations from this year's lunches towards the Shed project. Thank you.

It's interesting to note that the Murray Centre was originally opened by Mrs Murray-Usher on 30th September 1969 and we look forward to marking its 50th anniversary with an opening ceremony for the re-located building in the late summer or early autumn.

15 men gathered for a wholesome breakfast (generously provided by Sheila and Campbell Blair) on 13th April and

we agreed that men's sessions would, to start with, be on Mondays and Thursdays from 10-12:30, beginning on Thursday 25th April.

Spotlight on our volunteers

This month we feature just two of our many devoted volunteers:

Campbell Blair and his wife Sheila are relative newcomers to Gatehouse but have quickly become active participants in so much of what we do. Campbell is a member of the leadership team of the Community Church and a keen supporter of the Shed Project. A very practical man, Campbell was the ideal person to liaise with our contractors once work began to dismantle the Murray



Centre and move it to its new site. Campbell has a vast array of practical experience and, even if he can't do something himself, he usually knows a man who

can! Together with Ernie Budd, Campbell has helped make sure that our vision of a community shed becomes a reality and we are greatly indebted to him for his energy and commitment. We are delighted to welcome Campbell now as the newest member of our TGB Board.

Rosemarie Paul

Rose moved to Gatehouse with her husband Allan, daughter Marion and sons Alastair and Charles 32 years ago!

Rose has always been happy to give her time to help others, for many years she has been actively involved in the RDA. Around 10 years ago she began volunteering at our first group 'The Bunker' and has been part of the TGB family ever since..

Joining her granddaughter Hollie, Rose joined 'Bunkeroo', our performing arts group in 2011, where she can be seen welcoming all our group members at the door with a friendly smile and her trusty sign-in sheet! It would be fair to say that it didn't take much persuasion for Rose to grace the stage, where she has become a regular in our annual productions.



Rose also volunteers at our after school homework club and is our TGB Treasurer and a much-loved member of the TGB family.

Since being awarded the Chairperson's award for Volunteer of the Year a couple of years back, Rose has continued to be a great supporter of all we do and we are very grateful for all the experience, time and commitment she brings to our groups and Board.



Our Young Leaders

Our young leaders at TGB have had a busy period since our last news letter. Their leadership training has included leading small groups, choreography and improvisation. Through these skills they explore issues facing younger group members including bullying, social media and peer pressure.

All of our young leaders training is supervised to ensure they feel supported through each stage, they also work towards Saltire Awards, several have already achieved their 500 hour certificates!

We are extremely proud of all our young leaders, they bring enthusiasm and creative ideas to our groups. The recent Dumfries and Galloway Youth Awards saw 2 of our young leaders in the final three of our region for their contribution to the arts. Not only that but one of our young leaders won the overall Young Person of the Year Award for the work she does outwith our groups to help young people with diabetes. Well done TGB young leaders, we are so pleased to have you all as part of the TGB Family!

A note from the Project Coordinator

We have been both incredibly busy and blessed over the past few months with TGB!



After running groups for 14 years, we have finally found our own space, not only do we have our 'Shed Project' building in the grounds of the Mill on the Fleet, we also have taken over the lease of the former Bank of Scotland. We have had a fantastic mix of local tradespeople and volunteers who have enabled us to get both buildings ready for use, we are extremely grateful to them for all they have done, especially those who have volunteered so much of their own time.

Whilst all the work has been going on our groups have carried on as normal. Our 'Homework Club' team have continued their fantastic work within the primary school. 'Coffee and crochet' group have met on alternate Fridays for a knit and natter and our latest group 'Step Out' has enjoyed talks from the Police, Fire Service, the Handy Van and had a fabulous demonstration on cooking for one! 'The Ukulele Group' can be heard creating beautiful music during their fortnightly Wednesday night sessions and our Musicality Tots group just love singing and sharing stories together, especially at our inter-generational monthly sessions at Fleet Valley Care Home. Our fortnightly Friday 'Movie Matinee' group has become a popular place for many, with a tea or coffee to start us off, we always welcome suggestions to our varied movie list.

'Bunkeroo' Snr and Jnr groups came together for an audience interactive performance of Annie Jnr for a 3 show sell out which was so much fun we are already planning the next show.

Starting their volunteering experience at the age of 12 years, our Young Leaders continue to do great work within our groups, learning leadership skills whilst racking up hours towards their Saltire Awards.

We are incredibly fortunate to be part of a wee town that is so committed to ensuring provision and community cohesion and are very grateful to all our volunteers and young leaders for all the time and energy they bring to our groups. If you would like to get involved in volunteering with us, either through our groups or our new 'Wee Shop', feel free to give me a call.

Please pop along and see us at our Open Day and the official opening of our new TGB base at Number 1 High Street on the 4th May, from 11-4. This will be a chance to browse in the Wee Shop and have a general look around.

TGB Gatehouse

Reaching out to our community and providing volunteering opportunities for people of different ages in ways that harness the skills and experiences of our community.

To find out more please contact:

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Or visit at our website: www.tgbgatehouse.com

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