

St John's Women's Group (History 1970-2008)

St. John's Parish Church, Kirkcaldy, is the home of our Women's Group who meet twice a week in the church halls. This document covers the groups' history from 1970 to 2008.

In the 1950's St John's Woman's Guild ran a creche once a month on a Wednesday from 2pm — 4pm to allow young mothers to attend an afternoon Guild meeting. This arrangement continued into the 1960's.

St John's Young Wives and Mothers Group

The first meeting of this newly formed Group was held on Tuesday 1st September 1970 at 7.30 pm in the Lesser Church Hall. Rev George M Graham opened the meeting bringing with him the good wishes of the Kirk Session for its continuing success. The Group's first President was Mrs Mary Stark and Mrs Margaret Graham was Hon President. Sixteen ladies attended this meeting. Meetings were held once a fortnight.

Guest speakers gave talks on fire prevention at home, infant education, the care of your hair, family planning etc. As membership increased the ladies of the Group held fashion shows, bring and buy sales, concerts and enjoyed visits to Edinburgh Zoo, Fettykill Paper Mill and McIntosh's Furniture Factory. Many events took place, raising funds towards the cost of the re-building of a new Church, after the disastrous fire in July 1975. In September 1975 weekly meetings began. In 1977 the Group was affiliated to the Woman's Guild, had 30 members and was re-named St John's Young Women's Group.

St John's Young Women's Group

On 2nd September 1980 the Group celebrated their 10th anniversary with a dinner in the Church Hall attended by 57 past and present members. President Mrs Margaret Fraser and the Group's first President Mrs Mary Stark cut the 10 anniversary cake baked by Mr Archie Ritchie. Mrs Janet Darling, St John's Woman's Guild President presented the Group with six stainless steel plates on behalf of the Woman's Guild.

Over the next decade, meetings continued weekly from September to May. The many topics covered by guest speakers varied from divine healing, H.M. Coastguards, St Andrew's Ambulance Association, Fife Constabulary on various subjects from advanced driving to drug abuse, Procurator Fiscal's Office, Quarriers Homes, Pringle Knitwear, McMillan Nurses, Cancer Relief and living with diabetes etc, etc. At each session Rev Sam McNaught was invited to speak to the Group as was a representative from Church of Scotland headquarters, 121 George Street, Edinburgh. The Group also had joint meetings with the Woman's Guild. Demonstrations of cookery, electrical goods, knitting machines, floral art, cane ware, karate, disco dancing, keep fit, hairdressing, make-up etc. etc, etc. were enjoyed. Some of the many very interesting visits took the ladies to Kirkcaldy Central Library, Largo Potteries, Newbridge Candle Works, The Royal Observer Corps at

Turnhouse, Kirkcaldy Sorting Office, various supermarkets and businesses and to other church groups.

The Group held very successful annual concerts from 1983 — 1988 ably assisted by Church organist Mr William Darling and from 1987 Mr Brian Booth. In December 1988 and 1989 the Group also had joint carol concerts with the Church choir and held many fundraising events. On 5th November 1989 the Group took part in the Woman's Guild's 60th Anniversary celebration Service in the Church. In 1989 membership of the Group was 19.

On 4th September 1990 the Group celebrated their 20th anniversary with an open meeting for all present and former members. Photographs, syllabuses and minute books were on display. President Mrs Isobel Howarth cut the anniversary cake and a light supper was enjoyed. 39 ladies attended. The Group continued to meet weekly in the new hall.

Talks were given on Cheshire Homes, the RSSPCC, British Heart Foundation, Citizens Advice Bureau, Hearing Dogs for the Deaf, healthy eating, hormone replacement therapy, reflexology, yoga, stress management, Rev Sam McNaught and speakers from 121 George Street. A fashion show by Etams, jumble sales, mock auctions, beetle drives etc, all helped raise funds and in April 1993 a concert by Central Fife Crusade Choir was enjoyed. At a meeting on 15th February 1994 it was agreed the Group buy a slate in the name of the Group to go towards the Church roof fund. Visits included Silverburn Craft Centre, Valentines Greeting Cards premises in Dundee, a witch hunt in St. Andrews and a guided walk around Falkland.

At the AGM 17 May 1994 members voted to change the Group's name to St John's Women's Group. Membership numbered 17.

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In 1994/1995 session the Group was given talks on children's books, Fife Aids Care Through Support, Alzheimers Scotland, Ingolstadt, Tea tasting, PC Wood on personal safety, first aid and a craft demonstrations. A fashion show by Pandora Dress Agency, an Easter bonnet competition, beetle drive and mock auction raised funds. Visits included RT Stuart, Bakers, Buckhaven, Carmelite Monastery, Dysart. At the AGM on 30th April 1996 it was decided that Group meetings would take place on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month and not weekly. At that time the Group had 17 members. The 1996/1997 session included talks on The history of Dysart and Ravenscraig Park and safety in the home. The Group visited the new Police Headquarters in Glenrothes, Townhill Country Park, Dunfermline and Cellardyke Crafts. A car treasure hunt was enjoyed.

Another successful session in 1997/1998 included a display of antique kitchenware which had members guessing their uses. Visits to the Fife Ethylene Plant, Moss Morran and CID, Glenrothes. In 1998/1999 session a talk about Scotts/Quaker Porage Oats Mill in Cupar, Mrs Ann Wooton on the Lomond Trust and Mr Roy Daniels on the care of house plants were well attended. On 31st November 1998 the Group had a talk about the work of the charity Scotia Relief helping orphans in Romania. Members enjoyed a Scots night with the Woman's Guild, their annual Burns supper and a talk by Kirkcaldy Civic

Society. Among the items on the 1999/2000 syllabus were talks on antiques, barge painting, the Samaritans, and McMillan Nurses. Indoor bowls with the Men's Association, a joint Burns supper with the Woman's Guild. A games/quiz night was enjoyed, along with fundraising evenings.

On Tuesday 12th September 2000 President Mrs Sybil McGrow officiated at the first meeting of the 2000/2001 session. This was the Groups 30th Anniversary year. 12 ladies attended the meeting. Again a varied selection of speakers and events had been arranged. A talk by a Patient Liaison Officer from Victoria Hospital and on how to trace your family tree also a talk on Reiki and a floral art demonstration. A visit to Kingdom FM radio in Markinch, a Civic Society walkabout and theatre visits. An illustrated talk about a holiday in Rome, a talk about schooldays and travels with a football, a visit to an embroidery workshop and to Methil Moggies and also a Tai Chi demonstration were on the 2001/2002 syllabus with visits to the theatre in Kirkcaldy and Markinch. In September 2002 the Group had a talk from the National Counselling Service, Dunfermline. A talk in January 2003 about the work of the Princess Royal Trust Carers Service, Fife and an open meeting in February 2003 when Mrs Mary Sherrard spoke of her wartime experiences at Bletchley Park. 35 people attended this meeting. In March 2003 a talk about the Titanic was also enjoyed. A silent auction and jumble sale were held.

During session 2003/2004 the Group had a talk on Fire Safety and by St John's missionary partner Tony McLean Foreman based in Sri Lanka and by our new Minister Rev Nicola Frail. A Police dog handler, a Thai cookery demonstration and a craft workshop. Fundraising involved a concert by Melodic Minors and a beetle drive. 12 members attended the 2004 AGM. Session 2004/2005 began with a quiz night. Speakers on the rain forest, on HIV and aids and Rev Nicola Frail on Taekwondo. Line dancing, Indian head massage and a craft demonstration. A concert by Glenrothes Music Group, a bunny drive and silent action raised funds. The 2005/2006 session began with a visit to Lochore Meadows, then the new Police contact centre in Glenrothes. Talks on the history of Fife fisher lassies and Kirkcaldy High School. A reflexology/reiki talk and a belly dancing demonstration. Members enjoyed a talk/taster night with Rev Nicola Frail who brought a selection of foods her Church members in Colorado and Nebraska would cook and share when any family/social functions took place. Memories of the 1950/1960's were relived when the Group opened a memory box supplied by the Museum. A silent auction and Easter bunny drive helped raise funds.

A walk along Seafield beach then a visit to Kirkcaldy Museum began the 2006/2007 session. Talks by the Fife Ranger Service and a counselling service and Rev Nicola Frail on training to become an Army Chaplain. A very successful Easter bunny drive and two theatre visits were made. The Group opened the 2007/2008 session on 4th September 2007 with a (board) games night. On 18th September Miss Susan Finlay and Mrs Sandra Marshall delighted the Group members with a talk on making furniture etc. for dolls houses. In October a Tai Chi demonstration kept us cool and calm, a visit to R.T Stuart, Bakers/Butchers new headquarters in Methil was enjoyed, especially when each member left with a bag of 'goodies'. In February, members visited the Maggie's Centre and Mrs Mary Sherrard talked about her holiday in Prague. Miss Elma Cordiner recited some of her Scottish poetry and stories written for children, in April. Mrs Carol Herbert, Guild

Convener of Kirkcaldy Presbyterial Council was a guest at this meeting. A mock auction and Easter bunny drive raised funds. Membership 12. The Group's next session, beginning on 9th September 2008, will be the start of their 38 year.

The ladies of the Group look forward to celebrate the Group's 40th anniversary in September 2010.