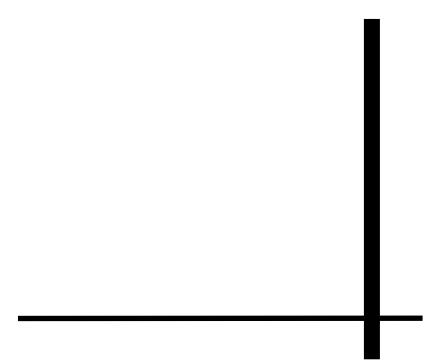


MUIRKIRK LINKED
WITH SORN

PARISH PROFILE





Muirkirk linked with Sorn

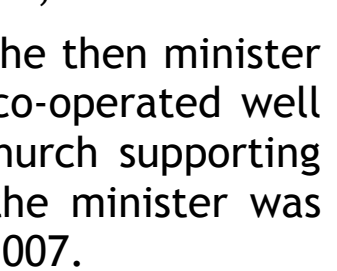
In the Presbytery of Ayr



profile



After being in deferred linkage for a short-time, Muirkirk and Sorn Parish Churches finally linked in 2002, when the then minister of Sorn retired. Since then both churches have co-operated well and have had several joint ventures with each church supporting the other. The Churches became vacant when the minister was called to full-time hospital chaplaincy in March of 2007.





MUIRKIRK CHURCH and PARISH

The earliest mention of the district is to be found in a Charter of the Monks of Melrose in the 12th Century. Earliest writings place the early 1600's as the time when Muirkirk developed into a village settlement and by 1631 the Parish was formed when it separated from Mauchline. The present church building was opened for worship in 1814 and is an original Gothic design by William Stark. It is a squat rectangular two storey buttress-plan building with a broad square tower. The building is surrounded by a historic graveyard with a number of Covenanters' graves dating from 1600. The interior of the Church was destroyed by fire in 1949 and re-opened for worship in 1954. A number of stones in the graveyard were cleaned and repaired in 2005.

Both the manse (1987) and the Church (1974) were refurbished, the money coming from a public appeal and fund raising and by grant funding. East Ayrshire Council is responsible for the upkeep of the graveyard and maintenance of walls and gates.

The Manse is situated in the centre of the village and is a grey sandstone two-storied building which comprises six apartments with shower on the upper floor. The house is fully doubled glazed and has gas central heating throughout. There is a security system fitted with sensor lights to the front and rear of the property. The hallway, front room and landing have been laid with hardwood flooring. There is a separate garage beside the house and a medium size garden to the rear and a smaller one to the front.

Members of the congregation take turns to read the Bible passages from the Good News Bible at the morning service, which is held at 11.45 a.m. Praise is from the Church hymnary 4th Edition.

After each service the Minister is always entertained to tea and coffee and other savouries by ladies of the congregation.

The Communion Roll comprises 218 members and the Kirk Session has 15 elders. The Kirk Session meets every two months.

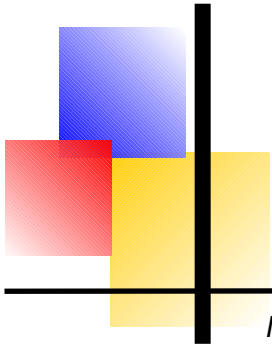
In 2006, there were 13 funerals, one wedding and one baptism but this varies from year to year.

Muirkirk is an active Church with a Guild, Sunday School, Choir, Boys' Brigade Company and Amicus Group.

There are five congregational lunches held each year.

The Church produces a magazine every quarter, although until recently it was printed 10 times a year.

The only other Church in the village is St Thomas' Roman Catholic Church, which is situated within meters of the Parish Church. They have an excellent ecumenical relationship.



MUIRKIRK VILLAGE

Muirkirk has a population of 1600 with a school roll of 140. There is a mixture of private and council housing in the village. A number of private housing developments are taking place within the village and it is to considerably increase the size of the population within the next two years.

As a village, Muirkirk has been in the finals of the Calor Gas Awards for the last five years and has won a number of major awards for its enterprising nature with a number of schemes to benefit all ages. It is a very community minded village with over 40 different organisations for all ages.

Muirkirk is located on the A70, the main artery from Ayrshire to the M74, and is 24 miles from Kilmarnock and 25 miles from Ayr, 30 miles from Glasgow and only 47 miles from the centre of Edinburgh.

Included in village businesses are a Post Office, two newsagents and general stores, five grocery shops, a butchers (which is renowned throughout Ayrshire for the quality of its meat), four hairdressers, a local joinery and hardware shop, two beauticians, a chemist, an excellent medical surgery and a petrol station. There is one Hotel and three private houses where bed and breakfast accommodation is available.

The Community Hall which is attached to the Primary School, and St Thomas' Hall are used regularly by both congregations.

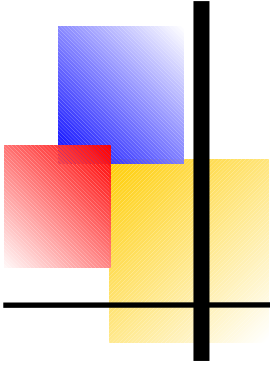
On the sporting side we have two boys' club football teams, an amateur football team, junior football club, golf club, bowling club, angling club and a car track where meetings are held every fortnight. There is an active Games Hall and Floodlit Sports Complex, two Adventure Playgrounds and last year a Skate Board Park was built in the public park.

There is a local Nursery and Primary School with the Primary School having won a variety of national competitions. Other schooling in the area is provided at Auchinleck Academy and St Joseph's in Kilmarnock. The minister in the past has been invited to be Chaplain to both the Nursery and Primary Schools.

In Glenbuck, two miles from Muirkirk, the start of the River Ayr Way is to be found. This walk was opened last year and the pathway traces the River Ayr from source to sea. The 44 mile walk passes through Sorn before finally arriving at Ayr Harbour. With the various walks in and around the village this is a walker's paradise.

The main employment in the area is opencast mining; East Ayrshire Council; factories at Cumnock; and the Immigrant Detention Centre at Dungavel which is seven miles from the village. There is a high percentage of elderly people in Muirkirk but in recent years there has been an influx of young families, who now take an active part in village life.

Annual activities in the village include a Walking Festival in May, Gala Day in September, Firework Display in November and Christmas lights at the end of the year. During the summer months, Muirkirk is renowned for its display of hanoing baskets



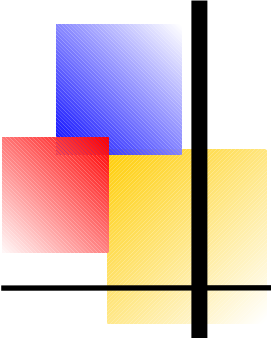
MUIRKIRK MAIN STREET



MAIN STREET The approach to Muirkirk from the east and the M74 motorway



The approach from the west with the Covenanters and Heritage Gardens on the right.



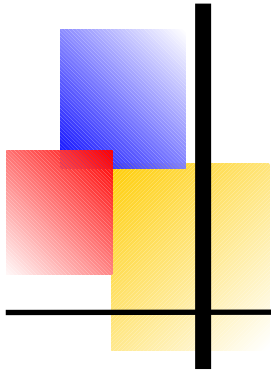
The Manse is situated
In Smallburn Road,
Muirkirk



The gas centrally heated, fully double-glazed manse has twice been restored and modernised since 1987.
It is centrally situated in Muirkirk.

(See complete reference under '*Muirkirk Church and Parish*').





SORN CHURCH and PARISH

The original name for this Parish was Dalgain, and old Celtic word meaning a field of sand and gravel. The present name Sorn, also an old Celtic name meaning a projection or snout, is taken from Sorn Castle, which stands on a small cliff on the edge of the river Ayr just outside the village.

The parish is nearly a square (with sides about six and a half miles), bounded in the East by Muirkirk, in the North by Galston, on the West by Mauchline and Southwads by Auchinleck. This is entirely a rural parish, with the main settlements being the village of Sorn and the small hamlet of Auchencloigh (the birthplace of Andrew Peden, the Covenanter minister). The towns of Ayr and Kilmarnock are about 20 minutes away by car, Glasgow within an hour and Edinburgh one and a half hours.

The Church was built in 1658 but did not have a minister until 1692 when the “killing times” were over. It is believed that the last Covenanter to be killed in Scotland, a 16 year old boy called George Wood, returning home from a Conventicle, was shot by Trooper John Reid on Tincorn Hill above the village. His grave sits against the east side of the Kirk.

The Church has a roll presently of 167 and its Kirk Session is “Quoad Omnia”. There are 12 elders, six women and six men.

Situated at the West end of the village just below the position of the castle on a bend of the river, the church hall is directly across from it and was originally a flour mill converted in the 1920s. The old bridge sits alongside this and encloses the “Old Mill Garden”, winner in 1998 of the TV Community Corner Competition run by the “Beechgrove Garden” series. The new cemetery adjoining the church has won national awards in the competition to find the Best Kept Cemetery.

Organisations of the Church are: The Guild, Sunday School, Choir and a Walking Group.

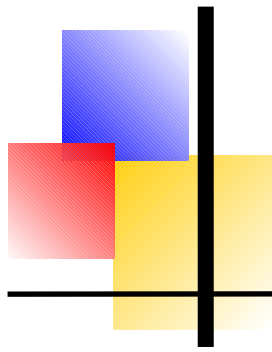
All the Church buildings are in good repair due to an ongoing programme by the Fabric Committee, with a new kitchen and toilet for the disabled recently completed.

The givings are mainly by Freewill Offering envelopes and a fair number of members add to that through the Gift Aid Scheme.

Morning worship starts at 10 a.m. and we currently use the Good News Bible and Church Hymnary 4th Edition. The Sunday School group comes into Church at the start of the service and leaves after the second hymn. A number of the congregation participate in the service by reading the lesson and so on. After worship a cup of tea or coffee is available for all who wish to enjoy the fellowship for half an hour or so: it also allows the minister a short time to chat with members before travelling to take the service at Muirkirk at 11.45 a.m. Generally we celebrate Communion four times a year and we use both the Common Cup and Individual Glasses.

A newsletter goes out to the whole Community every quarter. On average there are four weddings a year and seven funerals. A well-maintained manse is located at Muirkirk.

Sorn Church is a very happy one with hard working members from all pursuits in life.



SORN VILLAGE

The village of Sorn is situated in East Ayrshire, has a population of 240 and sits on the banks of the River Ayr. Having a mixture of private and Local Authority housing, it contains the Church, Primary School and a village hall, owned by the village and used by the following groups: The WRI, Mothers and Toddlers, Hospice Committee, Old Folks Committee and by various groups or individuals for ceilidhs, dances, weddings, etc. Other village groups include the Community Council, the Bowling Club, the Angling Club and more recently the Sorn Athletic Boys' Club.

In the village there is a Post Office and General Store, a TV and repair shop, a motor cycle and repair garage, a plumbing and slating business and a Hotel and restaurant.

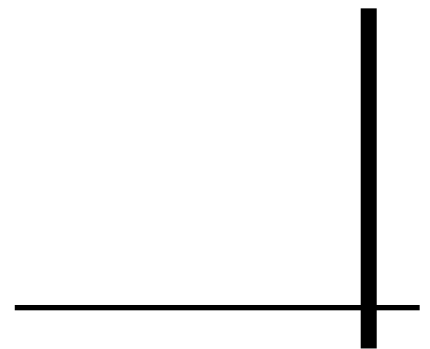
The nearest supermarket is five miles away in Auchinleck.

The Primary School, the oldest in East Ayrshire, has a roll of 78 at the moment. The local minister, by invitation, is regarded as school chaplain and has regular contact with the school. At Christmas and Easter, the school hold their services in the Church.

Seventeen new houses have been built in the village and are now available to buy so the population may increase soon.

Sorn has a history of success in Scotland in Bloom and Britain in Bloom competitions.

The web site to obtain more information on Sorn village is www.ayrshirehistory.com





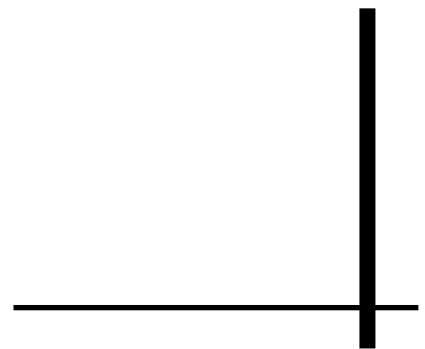
Sorn church hall and Old Mill Garden

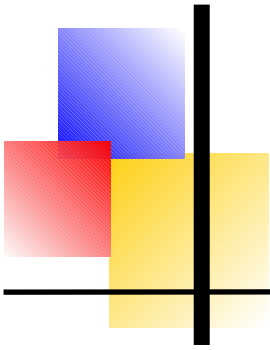


ABOVE—The Church Hall at Sorn, which was converted from a flour mill in the 1920's.



LEFT — The Old Mill Garden won the Beechgrove Garden series in 1998

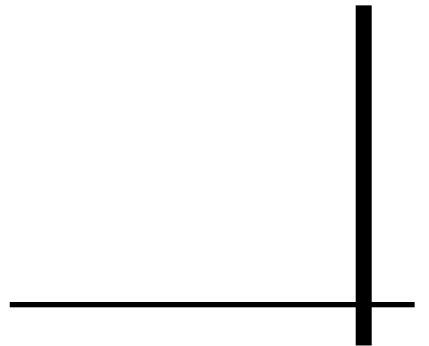


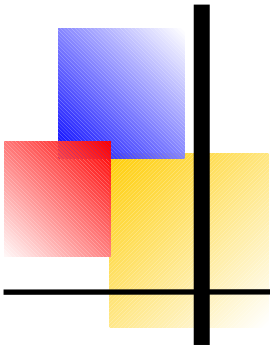


Our future...

Our vision for the future is to rebuild
a community of faith in our villages.

We need a leader with the zeal
to encourage and equip
us for the task.





THE CHURCHES—A VIEW FROM PEW TO PULPIT



Muirkirk



Sorn
