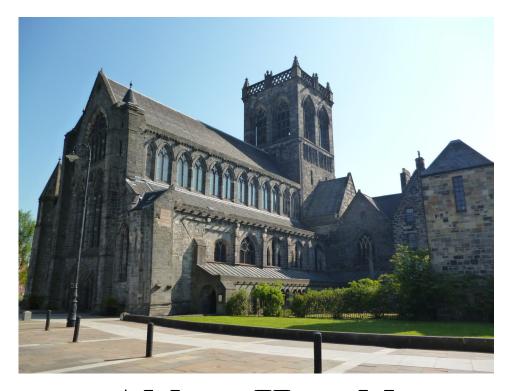
Paisley Abbey



Abbey Herald
February 2025

2025 began with a winter's vengeance. It was cold and driech. Parts of the country under flood or covered in snow. At such times, we try to keep ourselves safe and our homes warm but, for a great many people, its not easy. Bills have to be paid: money can be scarce.

At the Abbey, in many ways we have been fortunate. The past month or so has been full of occasions of joy and bonhomie. Christmas services were well attended, infused with peoples' warm goodwill and overflowing with music that was truly magnificent. From the excitement of the Accord Hospice carol singing to the childrens' innocent enthusiasm as they participated in the Shoppers' Service on Christmas Eve to the incredible choral singing of the Abbey choir at the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, the Choral Communion in Christmas Morning to the bass chorister's superb rendition of 'The Three Kings' on Epiphany Sunday: the feast offered in worship of such top quality music – played and sung - has been mouth-watering. Something to be remembered and keep us warm for many months to come.

Within the Abbey many of us take it all for granted (to our shame). Few cathedrals in Scotland offer such glories as is regularly the case within the Abbey. As a worshipping community, we are truly blessed. As with music so also with our building. Its splendour is without equal in Scotland.

These 'glories', however, come with a price. Scholarships have to be paid to choristers, salaries to organists of high talent, just as energy bills and insurances have to be met. All this on income from the congregation and from external sources as and when we can attract them. How long can we sustain such pressures?

One of the things Christmas Services made abundantly clear is the enormous goodwill that exists for the Abbey among those who are only 'seasonal visitors', at best. To people throughout Paisley, Renfrewshire and beyond it appears it would be unthinkable for the Abbey no longer to function as a church, offering people — whatever the season — the splendours of its worship, the safety-net of its ministry, the warmth of its welcome and humanity of its concern. But will the Abbey continue? Can it continue as it struggles to fulfil all that is asked of it while, at the same time, being responsible for the ongoing maintenance and stewardship of such colossal buildings?

I really don't know the answer to that. All I can say with any certainty is that we are working extremely hard to do our very best to ensure the Abbey's survival. Churches around us are closing or uniting, as they are sadly doing all over the country. Congregations can no longer remain viable. Yet, at Paisley Abbey we press forward. Why? Why bother when problems faced are magnified in every possible way?

History has much to do with why we press on. The building of the Abbey has stood sentinel since ancient times. The community, to be called Paisley, grew up and developed around it. From the very beginning, people looked to the Abbey and its monks for safety, sustenance and spiritual nourishment. Nearly nine hundred years later, they still do. As a building the Abbey exudes a sense of permanence, of reliability, of being somewhere that stands for something different to the emptiness and casualness of today's society and uncertain world. What gives it such strength and enduring reassurance is not just the grandeur of its architecture but the faith which built it and, then, rebuilt it time and again, over the centuries and to which it witnesses still. A faith expressed day and daily, year after year, by ordinary people doing their best to live out what they try hard to believe.

It would be so easy and, at times I suspect it has been tempting, for Abbey members to walk away, shoulders sagging under the sheer weight of responsibility placed upon us all. Members of the Abbey we are no better than our fellow traveller in faith in churches that are closing. The only difference between us is that we have generations and generations of faithful souls whose past witness encourages us onward through these uncertain times. If they could do it with all the problems and difficulties they faced, so must we.

Over the past couple of years since Covid, office-bearers have been in negotiations with the Presbytery of Clyde, about the longevity of the Abbey as a church and about the Abbey's financial position. After some fairly brutal discussions, the Abbey was allowed to continue. Covid, however, left the finances of the Abbey in a dire state. We are still trying to recover. Huge progress has been secured, much to the surprise of some within the Church of Scotland. Negotiations have since broadened to include the General Trustees of the Church of Scotland.

Last year, the General Assembly approved the creation of *Signature Churches*, incorporating in Church Law that the financial burdens placed upon such iconic buildings require particular assistance to maintain their sustainability for the future. The Abbey at Paisley is one such building. Progress in furthering this new concept is depressingly slow. Accepted procedures are having to be challenged. Traditional mindsets changed. While the Church works/thinks in an eternal sphere, the modern workaday world has little time for such delay. Our representatives, with the help of Presbytery officials, have worked wonders. But the months ahead hold the promise of even more difficult discussions. The outcome of which remains very much uncertain.

Personally, I wish I could write this article in a much more 'merry' fashion. But we are actually not called to necessarily always be 'merry'. We are called to be faithful. Faithfulness demands the truth as much as it demands effort. Office-bearers and others in the Abbey are most certainly exerting colossal effort. Truth will always be told. Come what may in the months ahead, everything possible will be done to maintain an effective, sympathetic and faithful ministry at the Abbey to the people of Paisley and Renfrewshire and, indeed, to all from around the world who find their way to pay pilgrimage within our ancient sanctuary of prayer and worship.

Everything else must be left to the hand and the will of Almighty God.

Here's to the future!

Jim Gibson
Minister at the Abbey.
Extra Chaplain to His Majesty the King in Scotland.

ELDER DUTY TEAMS

February - Michael McGill's Team

March - Marion Sommerville's Team

April - Team 2

PARISH REGISTER DECEMBER & JANUARY

Funeral

11 December Sandra Hernon,

Death

26 December Iseobail Knox

Baptism

12 January Macaulay William Douglas Thomson

RENFREWSHIRE FOODBANK

The congregation of Paisley Abbey generously supports the Foodbank set up to serve our local community in Paisley. By doing so we are trying to assist the most vulnerable people for whom life can prove the most difficult. The Foodbank distributes to those for whom the need is most urgent. If you would like to contribute, please bring along your donations to the Abbey on the last Sunday of the month. Anything you may be able to donate will be much appreciated.

In the last year the Abbey congregation have donated over £700 in cash much of which is gift aided which adds an extra 25p to every pound you give. Thank you to all who faithfully donate each month and to those who now give support. Your donations show the community that the congregation of the Abbey care for others and actively contribute to the wellbeing of all.

We have been blessed over the years with beautiful displays of fresh flowers in the Abbey, arranged by a dedicated team of ladies who give generously of their time and talent to enhance the Abbey and for your enjoyment.

Unfortunately, the flower fund is depleted and we will rely on generous donations from church members to allow the continuation of the lovely Abbey arrangements.

If you would like this tradition to continue and would be willing to help, please leave your donation in the abbey office or contact.....

Stewart McDougall - Abbey Treasurer stewart.mcdougall@paisleyabbey.org.uk - tel: 07775 900 744

Donations can be made either as a one off payment, or if you would like to choose a month that holds a special memory of someone dear to you, or a special anniversary, the ladies would be delighted to arrange something special.

We hope that by doing this, we can continue to have fresh floral arrangements throughout the year.

Irene Doole





CHRISTMAS PHRASES COMPETITION ANSWERS

To date three have been, I think, 29 of these little Competitions since they began in in 2014 and I am amazed – and extremely pleased – by how often the 2 prizes have been split between Abbey members and kind supporters of our Abbey. I am happy to say that this competition followed that pattern and when it was drawn on Sunday 19th January the winner was – Roberta Yule of Glasgow (a regular contributor and supporter although she has no other connection with the Abbey) and the runner-up (much to her embarrassment) was - Doreen Gibson whose Abbey connections could not be any stronger!

The answers are: Family TREE (or TIME or MEAL)

Dunkirk SPIRIT
Blue STOCKING
English ROSE
Rice PUDDING
Omni PRESENT
Calling CARD
School DINNER
Dundee CAKE

Military DECORATION

Treasure ISLAND

Easter CACTUS or CANDLE or PARADE or,

and again, ISLAND)

St Agnes EVE Paddy's MARKET Sma Shot DAY

Neap TIDE

Golf CLUB (I also allowed BALL)

Roman CANDLE.

I apologise that some clues had multiple choices - particularly EASTER but I was really struggling to think of a noun which could be preceded by-CHRISTMAS or by another adjective. Congratulations if you got every answer correct – but of course the main congratulations go to Roberta and to Doreen , our two winners.

Thanks are also given to all those who supported the Abbey by donating to this quiz. That support is greatly — and gratefully — appreciated. SGC

THE KNIFTY KNITTERS

If you attended the morning service on Remembrance Sunday, you will have been aware of the fall of poppies from the lectern and from the cross in the cloisters.

These were knitted and crotched by a band of 18 "Knifty Knitters' who produced over 700 poppies over the previous months, all of which were used.

For our next venture we plan to knit children's' hats which we aim to send out to Ukraine and possibly Gaza.

If you would like to become a "Knifty", or if you have a pattern or wool you no longer need, please contact Margaret Sharp TEL 07779463723. You will be very welcome and patterns and wool put to good use.

We may meet as a group in the Abbey cafe now and then to compare notes and share ideas.

Look out those knitting needles and start this project over the remaining winter months.



MRS HELEN McPHERSON

Warm congratulations to Mrs Helen McPherson who celebrated her 100th birthday on Thursday 23 January. Helen has been a life-long member of the Abbey and still takes her place within the church to worship every Sunday.

Along with her daughter, she never misses joining with friends in the fun and activities of Allovus on a Wednesday afternoon.

A celebratory buffet lunch was organised at Dalmeny Park House Hotel. Helen receive an official birthday card from His Majesty The King and best wishes from her many friends, not least, at the Abbey.

Happy 100th Birthday!



ALLOVUS

Back in September 2022 I returned to church after an absence of 50 years. Growing up I attended St Marks church in Ralston and played an active part in the Boys Brigade – playing the piano for the Boys Brigade Sunday service and playing the bugle in the band. When I left school at 18, I was working full time and attending night classes and regretfully I stopped going to church and learning the piano. A few years ago, I started to do both once more.

Initially I went to Elderslie Kirk (now Elderslie and Linwood Parish Church as of 1st January) where I was made most welcome and now play the hymns for the midweek service. I also revisited St Marks church where I was amazed to find that some of the congregation there remembered me.

Early in 2024, I visited Paisley Abbey for the Sunday morning service. If I am honest, whilst I loved the setting, organ and the choir, I found the experience a little cold (and I don't just mean the temperature!) and for the first few visits I only spoke briefly to the minister Jim Gibson as I was leaving.

In September, the Abbey started a new club called ALLOVUS. I decided to go along and see what it was all about. It meets for 2 hours every second Wednesday and I ended up attending 7 out of the 8 meetings. The programme was varied and ended the week before Christmas with a session of carols and Christmas cheer. The thing that I enjoyed the most though was the chance to meet other people and over the weeks I have got to know some lovely, interesting people. It has made me realise that there is really no difference between Elderslie and Linwood Parish Church and Paisley Abbey in terms of the wonderful people I have met, it is just a little harder to make those acquaintances initially at the Abbey.

I would encourage members of the congregation to think about coming along and see for yourself how friendly and enjoyable this club is when the new programme is announced later this month.

Jeffrey K. Blackshaw

ALLOVUS SYLLABUS February - June

Wednesdays - 1.30 pm - 3.30 pm Meeting fortnightly

Varied programme of activities, speakers and outings Refreshments served

12 February Our Passions

26 February Feeding the Hungry

*Monday 10 March Cheesy! (Special Visit)

*12 March (No Meeting)

26 March Just Relax!

9 April Speaker

23 April Spring Fever!

7 May Paisley's Sma' Shot

21 May Visit to St Mirin's Cathedral /fish & chips

June (date TBC) Afternoon tea at Caulders

SATURDAY LUNCH HOUR CONCERTS

Saturdays at 12.30 pm

Admission is £5 payable at the door

15 February

Alastair Savage & Friends

Alastair Savage (fiddle), Euan Drysdale (Guitar/Piano), Iain Crawford (Double Bass),
Bronte Huddnot (Flute/Piccolo/Whistle),
Chris Gibb (Border Pipes)

22 March

Scottish Clarinet Choir

26 April *Abbey Strings*

24 May

Cheryl and Gordon Cree

21 June

Douglas Lawrence (violin)



THE CATHCARTS AND PAISLEY ABBEY

"NEVER LET THE TRUTH GET IN THE WAY OF A GOOD STORY."

— MARK TWAIN

John Barbour (c. 1325 – 1395) was Archdeacon at St Machar's Cathedral in Aberdeen. He served King Robert II of Scotland in important administrative roles, while also completing works of poetry that provided an early record of Scottish history. His long narrative poem, "The Brus," was highly influential as it provided a near-contemporary account of the Scottish Wars of Independence. Modern historians have questioned how much of Barbour's writings are more poetic than factual, but his tales had long been regarded as a credible history of Robert the Bruce and the Black Douglas. Barbour eulogised Sir Alan Cathcart as being one of Robert I's close companions who remained with the king in the years after his accession when his cause seemed most hopeless:

A knight that then was in his rout, worthy and wight, stalwart and stout, courteous and fair, and of good fame, Sir Alan Cathcart was his name.

Though founded on little evidence, the tradition that Sir Alan was one of the knights who accompanied Douglas on his sacred mission to carry Bruce's heart to Jerusalem has been and still is oft repeated. Douglas's death at the hands of the Moors in Spain and the return of Bruce's heart, borne by Sir Alan Cathcart, for burial in Melrose Abbey form elements of a romantic legend. Little wonder that every Abbey tour guide finds its retelling irresistible while looking across the Nave to the votive tablet bearing the Cathcart arms supported by sculptured lions.



Less credible still of course is the tragical account of Marjory Bruce's death and the birth of her son, which historian David Semple's published research (1878) found to have originated no earlier than the mid-17th Century. We should be mindful however that the same David Semple had, in 1874, opined that there was no historical value in the structures that then formed the west cloistral range. That assessment led to the egregious demolition of parts of the medieval monastic buildings.

Sir Alan Cathcart's first known ancestor was Rainaldus de Kethkert (Cart Castle), who was very likely one of the companions of Walter Fitz Alan – the first High Steward and founder of Paisley Monastery – coming north with him to settle the area to the rule of David I. As early as 1178, Rainaldus was witness to a charter endowing the monastery with, amongst other donations, the gift of the church of Cathcart. Throughout the following century, further charters were witnessed by successive generations of Cathcarts, many conveying rentals and other benefices to the monks of Paisley.

In 1296, as the Scottish succession crisis unfolded, William de Cathcart swore fealty to King Edward I and his name appears on the Ragman Roll. His son was Sir Alan Cathcart and Sir Alan's grandson, another Alan, became the first Lord Cathcart, adding substantially to the family estates with the acquisition of Auchincruive and the keepership of the royal castle of Dundonald in Ayrshire, the latter being granted by James III in 1482.

The Lords Cathcart continued to feature prominently in the nation's history throughout the 16th century. One died on Flodden field in 1513, another at the Battle of Pinkie in 1547. The fourth Lord married a daughter of John Wallace of Craigy and was one of the Reforming nobles who fought against Mary, Queen of Scots at Langside. Following the forfeiture of Lord Claud Hamilton, Commendator of Paisley Abbey, in 1579, the "Lordship of Paisley passed from hand to hand with a rapidity characteristic of the disordered condition of the country," and immediately, Lord Cathcart, who had been appointed Master of the King's Household, received a lease of the temporalities of the Abbey. Within a year, however, they had been given to John, Earl of Mar.

The family appears to have negotiated the troubled times of the 17th century by wisely keeping out of the political turmoil and civil unrest. It is Charles, the eighth Lord Cathcart, born in 1686, who next attains any profile. His mother, Elizabeth Dalrymple, was a daughter of Viscount Stair, and being connected to another of the most influential families in the country brought Charles rapid promotion and opportunity in his pursuit of a military career. He served in the War of the Spanish Succession and, returning from Europe, fought against the Jacobites in 1715. Later, he was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the British forces sent to South America in 1740 but died suddenly while at sea.

The ninth Lord was his son, Charles, from his first marriage to the daughter and heiress of Sir John Schaw of Greenock who, in keeping with the now established family tradition, also distinguished himself in military and diplomatic service. Several times wounded, he survived and returned from war on the continent to be promoted to the rank of colonel, thereafter representing the King for many years in succession as Lord High Commissioner to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. He was invested with the Order of the Thistle in 1763 and, in 1768, was appointed Ambassador Extraordinary to the Court of St Petersburg. He was married to the sister of Sir William Hamilton, K.B., whose wife was Emma Hart – the Emma, Lady Hamilton, who famously became the mistress of Admiral Nelson.

When Lord Charles died in 1776, he was succeeded as tenth lord by William Schaw Cathcart, whose sister, Jane had become Duchess of Atholl, marrying the Duke in a double wedding with her younger sister Mary, who married Thomas Graham, the future Lord Lynedoch. Mary was the subject of one of Gainsborough's finest portraits which has become an icon of the Scottish National Gallery. Robert Burns met the Cathcart sisters when he was a guest at Blair Castle during his tour of the Highlands in 1787. In his journal Burns noted descriptively "Mrs Graham belle et amiable," and in a subsequent letter, "the beautiful Mrs Graham." Happily, the philandering Bard restricted himself to polite observation on this occasion.



William Schaw, tenth Lord Cathcart, honoured family tradition by serving with distinction in the field and was elevated in 1807 to the British peerage as Baron Greenock of Greenock and Viscount Cathcart of Cathcart, becoming first Earl of Cathcart in 1814 on return from a special mission to St Petersburg. He died in 1843, the senior General in Her Majesty's service, and was buried in Paisley Abbey. A stone set in the floor of the Cathcart Aisle is the only surviving element of a monument by William Mossman that was erected in 1848. In his younger life, William Schaw had

organised the first formal cricket match in Scotland.

The title next passed to Charles Murray Cathcart, becoming eleventh Baron and second Earl, and he too served in the army with distinction, being appointed Commander-in-Chief of the forces in Canada and Colonel of the 3rd Dragoon Guards. He evidently found time in his life for other interests, one of which was geology, and in consequence of that pursuit, he is credited with the discovery in 1841 of a rare cadmium-bearing mineral in crystalline form which he eponymously named "Greenockite."

Sometime following Charles Murray's death in 1859, the middle of the five stained-glass windows in the south aisle of Paisley Abbey's nave was gifted by his successor, Alan Frederick, Lord Greenock, third Earl of Cathcart. It was designed by Clayton & Bell, and its subject is, appropriately, "Triumph in Battle." The inscription reads: "In memory of Genrl. Charles 11th Lord of Cathcart; devoted to duty he fought in the Great War from 1799 until the crowning victory at Waterloo; full of years and honours he died in peace A.D. 1859." On the wall beneath the widow is an unusual brass plaque inscribed in Latin to the memory of the second Earl.



The youngest son of Earl Charles was Sir George Cathcart, who had served with his father in Germany and France, and as an aide-de-camp to the Duke of Wellington throughout a period that included the Battle of Waterloo up until 1818. He served in a number of companies and regiments thereafter, being promoted Colonel of the 1st Dragoon Guards in 1841. In 1846 he accepted the appointment of deputy-lieutenant of the Tower of London. Following his promotion to the rank of Major-General in 1851, he was appointed Governor and Commander-in-Chief at the Cape Colony. Such was the success of his military operations there, that he received the thanks of both Houses of Parliament and was invested K.C.B. in 1853. He returned from the Cape following his appointment as Adjutant-General of the Horse Guards but was immediately embarked in command of a Division of the army that had been sent east following the outbreak of the Crimean War.

At the Battle of Inkerman, characterised by the ferocity of the fighting and considerable confusion, Cathcart led an assault on the Russians and, though initially successful, was surprised by a counter-offensive. Cathcart was killed and his force broken up. Casualties on both sides were high, and it was a marker of the individual bravery and initiative demonstrated that twelve of those who fought that day at Inkerman were awarded Victoria Crosses.

The battle ended with no clear victory, but its effect was to compromise the attempts of Britain and its allies to capture the besieged city of Sevastopol, condemning their armies to having to endure two winters of atrocious conditions. In Paisley, and throughout the whole country, meetings were held for the purpose of raising funds to support the widows and orphans of those killed during the Crimean War. Curiously, three small mining settlements were established close to Paisley in the 1850s and given names of battles fought in the Crimean War. They are Balaklava and Redan (now in Linwood), and Inkerman (near Candrens). Mining has long since been discontinued and the hamlets are no longer discreet recognisable entities.

In 1857, after the close of the war, two cannon or field guns which had been captured from the Russians, were presented to the inhabitants of Paisley, to be exhibited in such a place in the town as might be considered best by the Town Council. The Council accepted the gift and agreed that the Russian war trophies should be placed on each side of the entrance to the old County Buildings. There they remained until a Drill Hall was erected in High Street. In 1866, the Council resolved that they should be removed, along with the carriages on which



they were seated, and placed in front of the new building, as a more appropriate position. When the older drill hall was replaced in 1897, the cannon remained but apparently disappeared during the Second World War when metal was being collected to help the war effort. This month, the drill hall was finally demolished after years of neglect and vandalism.



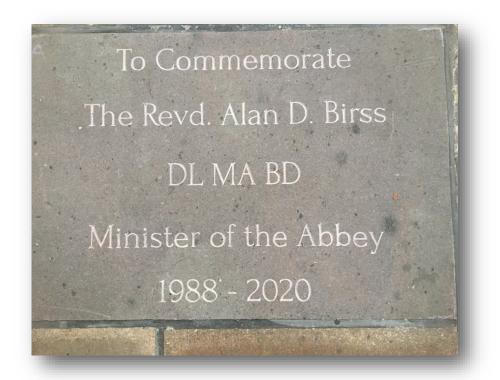
In the Cathcart Aisle, there is a memorial to George Cathcart on the south wall, surmounted by the Cathcart coat of arms. The shield of the coat of arms reflects the four families that came together through marriages in the past, namely Cathcart, Wallace, Dalrymple and Schaw. The inscription on the memorial is unusually lengthy, providing a résumé of the soldier's illustrious military career.

The close association of the Cathcarts with Paisley Abbey, and the maintenance of the Cathcart Aisle as a family vault, seem to have ended during the early twentieth century restoration works. Notwithstanding, the history and memory of their exploits across many generations from the time of our foundation deserve to be honoured. It is a remarkable record.

David C Davidson

COMMEMORATIVE STONE FOR REVD. ALAN D. BIRSS

Through our recent connections with the King's Foundation, a skilled stonemason based at Highgrove visited the Abbey where he inscribed this stone in the choir area in memory of Alan Birss - a fitting memorial to Alan's 32 years as the Abbey Minister.



MUSIC FOR FEBRUARY

2 February 11 am Introit Te Deum	Candlemas Morning Service We wait for thy loving kindness	McKie Harwood in Ab
Anthem	Senex puerum portbat	Byrd
9 February 11 am Jubilate Deo Anthem	The Fourth Sunday before Lent Morning Service The Spirit of the Lord	McPhee Elgar
7 thithem	The Spirit of the Lord	Ligui
4 pm Responses Canticles Anthem	Choral Evensong Smith of Durham Stanford in C Blessed City, heavenly Salem	Bairstow
16 February 11 am Jubilate Deo Anthem	The Third Sunday before Lent Morning Service Beati quorum via	Gabrieli à 8 Stanford
23 February 11 am Communion Setting Anthem	The Second Sunday before Lent Holy Communion Tantum ergo	Lennox Berkeley Duruflé

EVENTS AT THE ABBEY

LONDON CONCERTANTE - Valentine's Piano by Candlelight Friday 14 February at 7.30 pm

Tickets from £21 available from candlelight concerts.co.uk

LUNCHTIME CONCERT - Alistair Savage & Friends
Saturday 15 February at 12.30 pm

Alastair Savage (fiddle), Euan Drysdale (Guitar/Piano),
Iain Crawford (Double Bass),
Bronte Huddnot (Flute/Piccolo/Whistle),
Chris Gibb (Border Pipes)

Admission is £5 payable at the door

CITY MUSIC PROMOTIONS - Valentine's, Vivaldi Four Seasons Saturday 15 February at 7,30 pm

Tickets from £19 available from www.classical.tickets 0333 344 6250

SCOTTISH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA - Elgar The Dream of Gerontius Thursday 27 February at 7.30 pm

Tickets available from bbc.co.uk/bbcso

LUNCHTIME CONCERT - Scottish Clarinet Choir Saturday 22 March at 12.30 pm

Admission is £5 payable at the door

RSNO CHORUS

Saturday 15 March at 7.30 pm

Tickets £20 (under 26 £6) available from www.rsno.org.uk

COATS CHORAL & GLASGOW CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Poulenc's Gloria, and Faure's Requiem Sunday 23 March at 7.30 pm

Tickets £15 (students free) available from Eventbrite

ABBEY CONTACTS

Minister: Revd. Jim Gibson

Director of Music: Dr. George McPhee

Church Manager: Linda Barrett Church Secretary: Karen Kerr

Session Clerk: Marion Sommerville
Depute Session Clerk: Dr David Davidson
Treasurer: Stewart McDougall

Abbey Herald: Karen Kerr

The Abbey office can be contacted on 0141 889 7654 or by email at - info@paisleyabbey.org.uk

The Abbey, shop & café are now open

Monday to Saturday from 10 am - 4 pm with last entry at 3.30 pm

Tuesday & Thursday tours are at 2 pm.

Abbey website - www.paisleyabbey.org.uk Facebook - @paisleyabbey Instagram - @paisleyabbeyofficial X (formerly Twitter) - @paisley abbey