



Harlaw Reservoir

Summer 2021

Coming up - a summer of activity

May and June have been busy months with several events and processes taking place, each of which affect Balerno directly.

First there was the General Assembly, occupying its usual place in the last week of May, although, as a virtual event, this year it was quite different. Paradoxically that may have meant it attracted a higher

audience, who in turn may have noted an agenda which boasted greater immediacy for several reasons. It is not every year that the Assembly is called on to debate proposals to reduce the number of charges, agree mergers of Presbyteries and to warn that reforms must maintain their current pace or the sacrifices already made will be for nothing.

Those reforms touch Balerno directly, and the second important event relates to one of those. In early June BPC held the first of a series of conversations with Currie Kirk to develop working together and to plan for a closer relationship in the future. These conversations arise from Edinburgh Presbytery's Radical Action Plan related initiative. That in turn was launched over the winter and stretched into early spring and had seen Balerno brigaded with Currie and Juniper Green to consider options for the future, within a Water of Leith Cluster Group. The Presbytery are now considering next steps in their

A Summer of activity but still time to relax!



own Presbytery Plan process, while our local conversations so far have shown that both Currie and Balerno are in the vernacular 'up for the challenge'; the Blether will keep you posted as proposals on that, and on the Presbytery Plan, take shape.

Within Balerno itself the Parish Church is part of a group of organisations, along with the schools, Village Trust, Commu-

nity Council and others, which met virtually on 3rd June as part of what is ordinarily a six monthly cycle of discussions to review events and co-ordinate activities. The last meeting had been in November 2019, so we had a bit of catching up to do. Everyone was glad that we were at last able to renew contact, as we develop our thoughts about the issues involved in emerging from the shadow of the pandemic.

So, there are several serious planning processes under way at present all of which involve and affect Balerno Parish Church. And right at the centre of all of this, here in the Parish Church itself there is a new and serious approach to plan for our own future as the Kirk Session agree that a strategic plan be undertaken.

And on that, more anon in the pages of the Blether over the late summer and autumn.

From the Blether team

Towards the end of May Edinburgh Council rejected a planning application to build 350 houses and flats land around Ravelrig Road. That decision will almost certainly be appealed and so the threat of such development, if that is the way you view it, remains. If the development were to go ahead then Balerno's population would increase by, we think, at least 700.

At least 635 people regarded the planning application as a threat, and lodged objections, while only 3 comments in support were received by the City Council. Of course that doesn't mean that if the application was approved on appeal, and was built, that those who objected would shun those who came to live in the houses. Far from it, Balerno has always been a welcoming community. But the numbers of objections, and the fact of the application itself, do raise questions for us all. On the one hand, whatever happens with Ravelrig

Road what do we want the future to look like, and can we help to shape that future? And, on the other hand, how do we respond to the future as it may emerge even if it's not what we might otherwise have wanted?

Edinburgh Presbytery will have to respond to General Assembly decisions on staffing and structures amongst other things, and we in Balerno have in turn to respond to Presbytery decisions and to more local pressures on resources and capacity. Of course we know that housing developments at Kingfisher Park and Ravelrig Heights will already have increased Balerno's population by more than 700 over the past four years or so; change is a constant for us all. But we should still ask ourselves the questions, what does Balerno Parish Church want the future to look like, and what do we have to do to help to achieve that? And we should ask the questions now, regardless of whether the Ravelrig Road decision is appealed..

From the pews to the "Mews";
a reflection by the Minister.
June 2021

I cannot believe that we are already nearing the month of July. However, this year feels quite strange... To not be preparing ourselves for our usual holiday in South Africa for the second year in a row feels quite unreal. But if there is one thing that the Covid-pandemic has taught me, it is never to assume anything with regards to tomorrow. God is the only ONE who holds the future in His Hands. Since the start of the church, the believers always used the words (in Latin) DEO VOLENTE meaning "God willing" to reflect this notion. In recent times it has been abbreviated to D.V.

After reading some of the General Assembly Reports and studying the Radical Action plan, I am intrigued as to why this phrase is often missed out in Church minutes, papers, reports and deliberations. Is it because people still think they run the Church and can make decisions without consulting God? Is it because we live in a secular world where

faith in God's Almighty reigning power has become obsolete in society?

Maybe we should start quoting more from God's Word to our Church and to each other, to make the point clear that the Almighty God is the ONLY one who holds the future. In Ecclesiastes 11: 4-5 we read:

***Whoever watches the wind will not plant;
whoever looks at the clouds will not reap.***

***As you do not know the path of the wind,
or how the body is formed in a mother's womb,
so you cannot understand the work of God,
the Maker of all things.***

We may plan, but God will make it happen (or not happen). We should always use and add the words "God willing" respectfully to all our planning!

Enjoy your summer D.V!

André

Quote from Very Rev John Chalmers ... 'How many lightbulbs does it take to change the Church...?'

Please Help, Could you Volunteer?

We are The Mill Café, located in the heart of Balerno in St Joseph's Hall. We are currently recruiting volunteers to help in our community café. The café is run by volunteers with a small staff team. We aim to provide a warm welcome, support and a safe meeting place for our customers to have a quality coffee and a chat, also to enjoy good homemade baking.

We provide a breakfast and lunch menu.

We offer the opportunity to meet new friends, pick up new skills and get to know your community. We provide on the job training, so no experience needed.

**If you would like to volunteer or would like more information,
please contact:**

Lynsey Inglis - themillatstjosephs@gmail.com or ask for a volunteer form at the front desk.



The Mill Café

The Mill is delighted to see customers coming back as restrictions lift,



albeit slowly! It's lovely to welcome new faces, as people move into the new houses and discover the village – and we like to feel that we are a comfortable, relaxing place to visit. And we are still looking for more volunteers! Please get in touch if you feel that you could join us. Even a couple of hours a month will help!

We have stringent setup precautions in place following the guidelines, which makes the Mill a very safe environment but the downside is that we can only serve half the number of clients that we can at full capacity, but with the better weather we can have seating outside and that helps. Our lovely home baking is always available as usual, and light lunch choices are available, and our famous home-made soups. Free WiFi as well! We're looking forward to seeing you soon.

Contributed

Church Services

The number of people attending Church on Sunday mornings is slowly increasing and we plan to continue to hold worship in our Sanctuary on the **1st and 3rd Sunday of the month** over the summer. Anyone wishing to attend one of these services should contact the Church office. 0131 449 7245
Bpc-admin@balernochurch.org.uk
Worship is also available online every Sunday on our website. balernochurch.org.uk



Pastoral Care

Anyone needing support should contact the Minister, André @ 449 3830
07588845814
bpc-minister@balernochurch.org.uk or your Elder, or Kay Coull, the Pastoral Care Co-ordinator (449 6151).
If you cannot reach the minister, please contact the Church Office, 449 7245,
bpc-admin@balernochurch.org.uk

A Ship with a Medical History.

Looking back on life can be fascinating to discover that the world is a much smaller place than we thought and we discover that the pathways of our families have crossed before in the most unlikely places. Here is an example.

Many of us sit back to watch 'Call the Midwife' and in the opening sequence we see a photo of Saville Road in Tilbury with a ship parked at the end of it. The ship is the *Dominion Monarch* which was built on Tyneside before the war. She was unique from the point of view that she was built to carry a combination of passengers in luxurious accommodation and freight – much of it refrigerated.

The *Dominion Monarch* made her maiden voyage from Southampton to New Zealand in February 1939 with 527 passengers. The ship's doctor was a young RG Samuel who was taking the opportunity, while he had no commitments, to travel a bit and see the world. He saw the world and when the ship returned to Southampton in June, Dr Samuel left the ship and became a medical officer in the navy; that particular experience gave him a chance to see Iceland and the North Atlantic but ten years later he was to find that he had some serious commitments as he became the proud father of Gill Burnside.

During the war, the *Dominion Monarch* was commandeered as a troopship making regular voyages to and from the antipodes. In the later stages of the conflict she brought home people who had been isolated by the war in the Pacific and



and civilians coming home. The children went to 'school' in one of the ship's dining rooms and parents 'mucked in' to help and became temporary teachers. However, Anne's mother was relieved of this task as she was a doctor and there was plenty to keep her occupied as well.

Sadly, changing patterns of travel and cargo handling led to the *Dominion Monarch* being sent to the breaker's yard in 1962 as another casualty of progress. However, she is fondly remembered in New Zealand as she was the largest ship to be built for the Cape route and in her day was both the fastest and most luxurious. Her significance in NZ is demonstrated by the exhibition of the builder's model from Swan Hunters which is on display in the NZ maritime museum in Auckland.

John Burnside

would sail with more than 1500 people aboard. In February 1945, a little girl, known to us as Anne Shaw, was one of the passengers on the *Dominion Monarch*, returning to Liverpool via the Panama Canal and New York as that was a safer route than the clipper route around the Cape. The ship was full with troops



Quilting

I've been sewing all my life, and started doing patchwork and quilting more than 40 years ago. At first it was all 'traditional' quilts – the sort of things you put on beds, made with recognisable traditional patterns. Sometimes I would see a different quilt, using different shapes and colours, strange fabrics and embroidery, making pictures – the sort of thing you would hang on the wall. And I'd say 'Well, of course, it's lovely – but it isn't a quilt, is it?' But it was – it was an Art Quilt. And I discovered what



fun they are to make, more challenging sometimes than traditional ones, and now they are mostly what I do. The Dove of Peace, the wall-hanging on the stairs just outside the Mill Café, is one of mine. It is a life-size reproduction of the stained glass Dove panel in the Church door, which was designed and made by local artist Elizabeth Cull and it was commissioned to symbolise a link between the old and the new buildings.

I belong to two quilt groups in Edinburgh, and several online. I've made friends all over the world through quilting, mostly through the Internet, although I've met several of them 'live' as well! Quilting is so much more than just cutting up little pieces of fabric only to stitch them together again. Yes, we quilters certainly do that, but there is so much more in the wonderful world of quilting.

Lesley Burt

A Note From The General Assembly of the Church Of Scotland 2021

'CHANGE' was the watchword for the General Assembly this year. From the setting – only a handful of officials in the huge Assembly Hall, with 700 people following and contributing on Zoom – to the content, the concept of change was everywhere. 'Change is about the acknowledgement of the present and the anticipation of the future' we were told... 'it is *not* a criticism of the past.'

There were stark warnings about the current state of the church and the urgent need for reform – re-shaping the Church will affect every minister and every congregation.

But this can also bring about new opportunities. 'Pioneer Ministries' can encourage the growth of small alternative Christian Church groups with services taking different forms, fresh expressions of faith and forms of worship found in meditation and yoga, in chaplaincy, in shared ministries. Believing in one another, the unified in Christ.

More and more people across all denominations are finding non-denominational faith more to their taste than the 'standard' version – this is becoming obvious from online faith programmes. Links are forming with the Scottish Episcopal Church under the St Andrew's Declaration, recognising each other's shared faith and ordained ministries and committing to strengthen their partnership in ministry and mission. Unity is not uniformity, and co-operation doesn't mean combative.

The Church of Scotland is not alone in its decline – as faith and theology change, congregation numbers are falling across all denominations. But without a radical plan, the alternative is a slow debilitating decline and we have to accept the challenge of working together, making ourselves into a new, different Church.

Lesley Burt

On the Volga

There is something about a musical instrument that can be irresistible. Whether it is a guitar that is propped on a chair or a piano keyboard, it exists to generate sound and make music. While visiting a church member, John Howie encountered an open piano and was moved to play two bars of Chopin's Prelude in C minor. A slow rich piece, full of heavy and haunting chords. Eight bars, followed by four which are repeated. One of the few pieces of classical music that he admits to being able to play without music.

John then explained that, for as long as he can recall, he has been pursued by a recurring nightmare in which he is playing this piece in public and, on reaching the repeat section, he freezes completely and has to stop. Having lost his 'muscle memory', and no matter how often he tries again, he is lost.

It seemed to start with a holiday experience; John's story continued. "Thirteen years ago, we were on a river cruise from Moscow to St Petersburg with friends from Aberdeen. On day five, we stopped at Yaroslavl on the Volga and visited a jade museum in an old Romanov mansion. The jade demonstration was at one end of, probably, a former ballroom; a grand piano sat in the middle of the floor at the other end. Anna, our tour guide - who turned out to be a concert pianist - played Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody, and called for volunteers from our small group of 25 awestruck tourists. My friends 'volunteered' me. The first eight bars went well. As I started the next four I was already aware of my recurring nightmare; they were passing fine, but should I risk repeating them, or quit while I was ahead? I went for gold, and won! On the bus to the next stop, I was asked if I too was a professional pianist?"

It was a story which had been lost in the memory but recalled through the presentation of a piano keyboard that was saying, 'Play me,' but the very next day John received a letter from his Aberdeen friends enclosing a photograph of his 'recital,' taken in 2008, but lost until a few days before.

An amazing co-incidence; or something else?



As related by John Howie



Do you have a minute, Lord?

I'm wondering about leaders, Lord. What is it that makes some people stand out from the crowd? If you look back at history, what is it that makes some people famous? How was it that the disciples just followed Jesus? I suppose that if somebody performs miracles then they are a bit hard to ignore!

When I think about it and famous people in the past, it seems to me that it's the fact that other unimportant people follow the important (famous) people that makes the people important. They couldn't be important people without the support of lots of unimportant people; so that means that the choices of the unimportant people are really quite important. The important people aren't important because they tell people what to do, they become important because lots of unimportant people are happy to go along with their example and follow their guidance.

So that means that I may be a bit more important than I thought I was. On the one hand there is the sacrifice that Jesus made for mankind and our redemption from sin, but on the other hand, the impact of the Church on the modern world depends on me! Well maybe not just me, but lots of people like me. That begins to sound as if I am important too - but maybe it's not me that's important, it's what I do that counts; perhaps some of the choices that I have to make and seem fairly trivial are more important than I thought.

Contributed

Fair Trade News

Good news from our **Fair Trade group!** Balerno's just been announced as the Fairtrade Foundation's Fair Trade Community of the month for June '21! All the more cheering in that this isn't something we'd applied for; Balerno was nominated, not

only for long commitment, but over this year of 'mostly virtual' activity, it's Jo (Khan)'s tireless Facebook work which made this happen. More detail there - do have a look! We're hoping the award may encourage others to support FT's aims too.

Jo's now finishing off a 'Wave of Hope' she organised with the FT Group last night, Balerno's contribution to a much wider campaign reminding G7 decision-makers of work they urgently need to do toward a greener, fairer world.

Coming next: planting the FT tub in the Main Street, our writing competition over the summer for Balerno High School students, then 'Great Big Green Week', 18-26 September, ahead of November's COP 26.

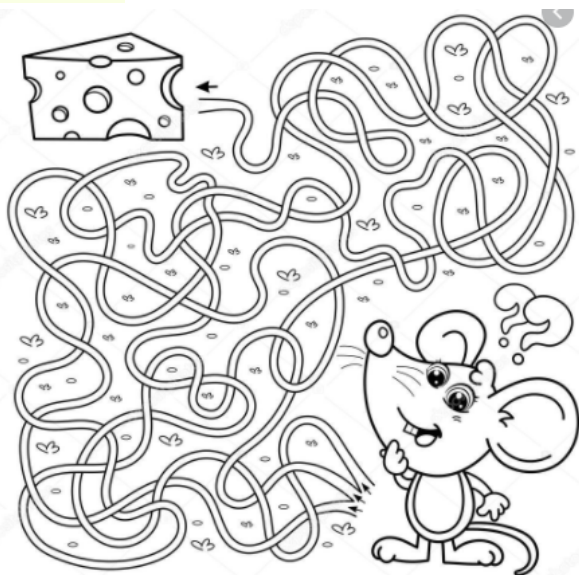
Lesley Henderson - for Balerno Fairtrade Village Group



Games Page

Word Search

VANILLA	S	K	C	A	R	T	E	S	O	O	M	G
CHOCOLATE	T	L	A	N	A	N	A	B	C	E	H	E
STRAWBERRY	R	I	Y	D	G	T	R	T	H	G	O	O
MOOSE TRACKS	I	A	D	A	R	R	E	O	O	D	K	Y
REESES	P	T	N	O	E	E	E	G	C	U	E	T
TRIPLE TORNADO	L	R	A	R	E	E	S	A	O	F	Y	O
PECAN	E	E	C	Y	N	O	E	E	L	U	P	I
FUDGE	T	G	N	K	T	O	S	Y	A	S	O	R
COOKIE DOUGH	O	I	O	C	E	A	W	T	T	L	K	P
COCONUT	R	T	T	O	A	B	T	R	E	E	E	E
COTTON CANDY	N	S	T	R	A	W	B	E	R	R	Y	C
HOKEY POKEY	A	D	O	A	V	A	N	I	L	L	A	A
ROCKY ROAD	D	H	C	O	C	O	N	U	T	U	I	N
GREEN TEA	O	C	O	O	K	I	E	D	O	U	G	H
BANANA												
TIGER TAIL												

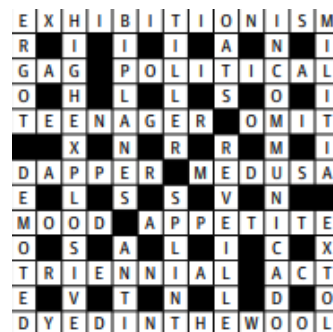
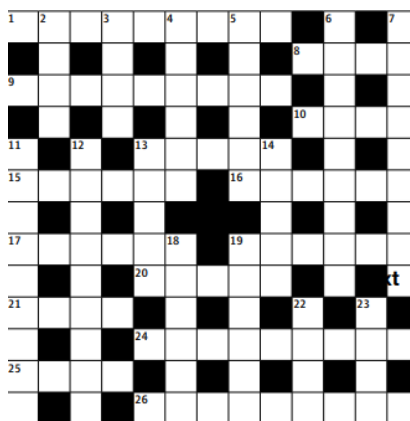


The Blether Editorial Team would like to wish all our readers a very happy summer.



We will be back in September!

Crossword Corner



June Answer

Down

2 Loose hood (4) 3 Never, poetically (4) 4 Morning worship (6) 5 Alloy used in bonding metals (6) 6 International motor sports event (5,4) 7 Religious recluse (9) 11 Importing that guarantees a more equitable deal for the producers (4,5) 12 An__ Calls, 1945 Priestly play (9) 13 Avoid (5) 14 Dedicated follower of fashion (5) 18 Nap (6) 19 Spans (6) 22 Creator of the musical Oliver d1999 (4) 23 Un-trustworthy person (4)

Across

1 Kind of social scientist-weekly magazine (9) 8 Ireland, poetically (4) 9 Wheel-dle (5-4) 10 Move very gradually (4) 13 Over (5) 15 Chronological account of events in successive years (6) 16 Stormzy, for instance (6) 19 Directionless (6) 20 Listing (5) 21 Risqué (4) 24 Shabby (4-5) 25 Ruin (4) 26 Adaptable—relatives (anag) (9)

Can you spot the 8 differences between these two pictures?



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Sunday worship is at 10am every week

on facebook or our website balernochurch.org.uk

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