

A dazzling display, and a green agenda!



Over the month of August many people commented on the beautiful display of flowers in the Parish Church's tubs and boxes which have considerably enhanced the centre of the village with colour. Needless to say, the flowers have not just appeared by magic, but represent a lot of work by a team from the Balerno Village Gardeners, with George Harrison at the forefront of the effort.

The Gardeners previously operated under the name of *Friends of Mainstreet*, but their activities have expanded over the years so that there is now a team who plant out the displays of bedding plants in the village, including the church gardens as well as tending the Malleny House Gardens where the vegetable garden has become a source of seasonal produce for the Farmers' Market.

Some of the bedding plants are supplied by Edinburgh Council from their own nurseries and then the *Village Gardeners gardens and the* – supported by the Village Trust and Balerno Parish Church – purchase further stock from Pentland Plants which is then

planted out in the village boxes and tubs. Some displays can do better than others, but there has been a late bonus this year as Pentland Plants found themselves with surplus stock and were kind enough to donate enough plants to reinvigorate the displays throughout the village and help to sustain the colour into the end of the season. This year the Gardeners also allocated one of their Main Street planters to the FairTrade Group in recognition of the award of Fairtrade Community of the Month for June; the tub was planted out in the Fairtrade Foundations colours.

We're including pictures also of the gardeners fantastic stall at the September Market set out by George, as if for a show. The stall sold out raising some £125 for reinvestment in Malleny Garden in particular. With COP26 on the horizon the Gardeners are showing us all the way forward as we look for a greener future!

The *Village Gardeners* are always happy to welcome new volunteers to help with the summer displays and if you are interested in joining their ranks then George Harrison (449 4944) will be happy to hear from you.



Balerno Village Gardeners 'show' stall at the September Farmers Market; a Green agenda in action!

Differing perspectives

In 1992, countries joined an international treaty, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, as a basis for international cooperation to combat climate change by way of limiting average global temperature increases, and coping with impacts of change that were, by then, inevitable.

By 1995, negotiations started to strengthen the global response to climate change, and, two years later, the Kyoto Protocol was adopted. The first commitment period under the Protocol started in 2008 and ended in 2012 and bound developed countries to emission reduction targets. The second commitment period began on 1 January 2013; its delayed ending is this year.

The UN's 26th Climate Change Conference (COP26) is scheduled to take place in Glasgow in November. COP26 is significant as it will be both the first COP to take place after the landmark Paris Agreement's measures take effect and the first opportunity since then for nations to come together to review commitments and strengthen ambition; these measures approved at COP21 in Paris in 2015, were due to be implemented during 2020.

Climate change looms over all countries, promising severe droughts, supercharged storms, and blistering heat waves. But these consequences are unevenly felt around the world. Pope Francis describes the global failure to act on climate change as "a brutal act of injustice toward the poor." As global temperatures and sea levels rise, as the oceans acidify and precipitation patterns get rearranged, people living in poverty are the most severely impacted. Since climate change affects everything from where a person can live to their access to health care, millions of people could be plunged further into poverty as environmental conditions worsen.

Human rights are universal legal guarantees that protect individuals, groups and peoples against actions and omissions that interfere with their fundamental freedoms and entitlements. They are articulated in the European Convention on Human Rights and the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights

The Church of Scotland considers that climate change poses a serious and immediate threat to people everywhere, particularly to the poor of the earth, and that it represents a failure in our stewardship of God's creation. It has said that it will work with Christian Aid and other partners around the world to promote climate justice as a human right.

Eco congregation Scotland (EcS) is a

movement of Scottish church congregations, of all denominations and none, 'committed to addressing environmental issues through their life and mission'. More than 10% of all Scottish churches are now taking part. Balerno Parish Church is a member of EcS although at present there is no formalised structure within the congregation for addressing climate and eco issues.

Balerno Parish Church is enjoined by the Presbytery of Edinburgh to give effect to the Five Marks of Mission. Those include the following at Marks 4 and 5;

- Δ To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation, and
- Δ To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

contributed

Blustery day at Harburn!

Prizes presented at the close of the annual Balerno Parish Church Golf Competition for the coveted Richard Dennis Trophy included, for the next closest church member to the winner, Jim Todd. Jim was followed by a very close race amongst others to avoid coming last. Details of individual scores and final placings are classified.

The closely fought encounter was once again played over 18 holes at Harburn, on the 24th September - a day of gusty wind and occasional light drizzle - and was followed by an excellent lunch in the clubhouse.

In his homily to the company when presenting the trophy to this year's worthy winner, Douglas McBeth, Brian Conway drew attention to the fact that the next three places after the winner went to non-church members; they were counselled that they must now put in an appearance....

The *Blether* understands that all score cards for the day have now been destroyed



Organiser and good loser Brian Conway presents the trophy to Douglas McBeth after the excellent lunch enjoyed by the 12 strong field at Harburn Golf Club.

Balerno's Hidden Talent

Most of us have pastimes which we enjoy – some more openly than others. Sports, for example are not ones for single players only and talents become known to opposition and spectators alike. For those with an artistic bent there is a variety of ones



that can be done in leisure time in the home. So let me introduce you to Balerno resident Jack Lyall whose spare moments when not being granddad are spent painting a variety of scenes in different formats.



Whilst working and time was limited Jack's main joy was watercolours but since retiring he has graduated to oils. Having not always been able to paint a scene 'in situ' he has developed a novel way of photographing a scene from which to paint. As such shots cannot always be taken in the best light, he has even photographed other pictures and, on occasions, postcards to get the best view. In both cases, the results are to be highly commended.

His earlier preferred subjects were birds but he has since moved on to landscapes.

He has tackled smaller canvasses and up to 700mm x 800mm, but the latter, only once. He says he finds painting de-stressing and relaxing and likes to listen to classical music.

He has no wish to be a painting production line and is happy to complete three or four each year. Jack admits he has yet to try his hand at portraits but would like to capture his grandchildren at their present young age. Jack and his wife Sandra are proud to display his artwork as a gallery around their home and Jack can be justifiably proud of his masterpieces to date.



contributed

from the Blether Team

There's something about autumn that is reassuring; 'season of mists and mellow fruitfulness' is part of that. Our front page for October is a tribute to all those who beautify our community, starting with the flower boxes and tubs at the church gates, along the railings, the displays throughout the gardens and inside the church itself. They do such a lot to raise spirits and encourage us to new efforts and they deserve a complete issue all to themselves. We thank them on your behalf.

What they do however goes much further than adding colour to our lives. The flower boxes and tubs, and the church garden, are all looked after by Balerno Village Gardeners, who besides that task care for the Main Street floral displays, and, importantly they also look after the Malleny House vegetable plot as part of Balerno Village Trust. They have been carrying out the Malleny Garden task since 2017 and they also started selling produce at the Market a couple of years ago.

It is great that folk from Balerno Parish Church are actively engaged with Balerno Village Gardeners. With COP26 not far away now they are amongst those who are demonstrating something of what may be involved in, in the words of the Five Marks of Mission, striving to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

Useful Contact Details

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Balerno Blether;	bpc-thebridge@balernochurch.org.uk
The Guild;	Kay Coull; coullkay@hotmail.com; 0131 449 6151

The Blether is keen to receive ideas and comments on articles published and on points which correspondents may want to raise. Please contact the editor.

Jack Cranston - an appreciation

Jack Cranston was born on the 28th of October 1924 in Carluke, Lanarkshire. His idyllic childhood spent with his musical family in the beautiful Clyde valley fostered three of his lifelong passions. One was music, from singing around the piano with his family in Carluke to sharing his favourite songs from his youth on his iPad in his later years. Another was his love of the countryside, where he spent long, happy hours exploring as he grew up. He continued to climb Scotland's hills and mountains into his 80s. The third passion was for food, with visits to his aunts timed on when they had just made fresh scones and pancakes.

He volunteered for the Royal Navy aged 18, and he saw service on the Atlantic and Arctic Routes, in D-Day and then in India and Burma over an adventurous and distinguished few years, but he lived a very full and interesting life long after the war ended. He met his wife, Marion, in 1947 when he returned to Carluke and they were married for 71 years. They had four children - Iain, their first born who tragically died at 6 weeks old, David, Margaret and Andrew.



The family lived in several places, moving from Carlisle back to Hamilton, Strathaven and then Lanark before settling in Johnsburn Road, Balerno for the last 50 years. Jack was a self employed Chartered Accountant dealing with small businesses, a job he loved. He formed lasting ties with many of his clients, particularly enjoying visits to the farmers who plied him with delicious home cooking while discussing their financial affairs.

The family describe Jack's incredibly broad and in-depth knowledge of so many subjects, from physics, engineering and space to Scottish folklore and kelpies, and he had an astonishing memory for details. He loved nature, the outdoors and the mountains. On family walks Jack would vault over gates, listen for an echo in a particular field, run races and notice all the wild flowers, trees and birds. There was also his love for the Isle of Coll, walking on the beach and going out fishing on his boat. Why, he would ask, would anyone want to live anywhere other than Scotland?

The church played an important part in Jack's life, especially during Marion's long illness when he cared for her devotedly. After her death he drew comfort from Andre and others in the congregation who visited him. Many of us remember chatting to him after the service – and more recently, joining us on Zoom for coffee after the online service during the Covid restrictions.

Jack passed away peacefully on 1 July this year. A long life, a good life, well-lived. Jack Cranston will be remembered as a man devoted to his family, a loyal friend, wise, interested, kind, positive. A man who told of the beauty of the stars in the depth of the Arctic night, not the bitter cold.

Contributed, after speaking to Jack's family

Christmas is coming.....

The Blythwood Shoebox Appeal 2021

Now is the time to start to think about the meaning of Christmas and in particular how we can help others. One way is to support the Blythwood Shoebox appeal.



The Blythwood Appeal grew out of the Blythwood Tract Society which was started in 1966 by Rev Jackie Ross, who later became minister at Lochcarron, and it is now part of the Blythwood Care charity. The Appeal started in 1993 following on from responses to emergency requests for essential aid for Poland in 1984 before the scale of crippling poverty in Romania becoming evident there in December 1989. The first Shoe Box Appeal was in 1993 aiming to deliver Christmas Boxes to the poorest and most vulnerable communities in Europe. In 2020 75,218 shoeboxes and bags were donated and sent off to Eastern Europe by way of the Blythwood Shoebox Appeal.

Each year Bill and Margaret Black organise a Shoebox Appeal in Balerno, and this year's campaign is now underway. They ask for completed ShoeBoxes to be delivered to them by 30 October. If you would like to help then please contact them at mtblack@blueyonder.co.uk or phone on 449-6707. They'd be very happy both to tell you all about the work and to help you to respond.

Look out for the leaflet coming through your door!



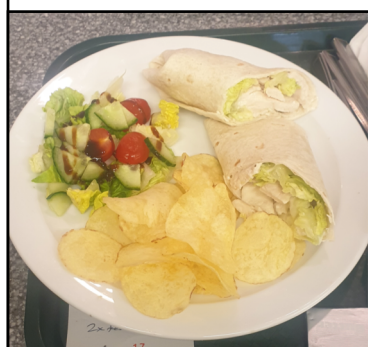
The Mill Café opens its doors open Tuesday – Friday 9am-2pm and every second Saturday of the month for Farmer's market 9am – 1pm. We offer a varied menu that gives options for breakfast and lunch. Our coffee is fair trade and our baking homemade.

The Mill Café relies on volunteers to keep its doors open. We are always looking to welcome new members on to our team. This is the perfect opportunity to get to know your community and its goings on, make friends and support others. We offer inhouse training and support. If you would like to join the team, please just pop in to enquire or email Lynsey Inglis themillatstjosephs@gmail.com

We have been enjoying getting to know new people and catching up with those we haven't seen since lockdown began. Our Larchfield residents have returned for their coffee and scone morning that we host in one of our campus rooms. It is a pleasure to get to know those that are new to the Neuk and see them all getting to know each other

We always aspire to offer a place of safety and companionship where you are supported and heard, not to mention a lovely cuppa and cake!

We look forward to welcoming you to The Mill Café.....!



For your diary!

Sunday worship will be back to normal in the Church from **Sunday 3rd October** which will also be the **Harvest Thanksgiving Service**.

On the **10th of October** there will be a **breakfast service** in St Joseph's at 9am focussed on **children and young families**.

The 10.00am service on **10th October** is moved to **10.30am** and will also be the annual **Festival Praise service** which forms part of the Balerno Music Festival.

Thereafter Sunday services will be at the usual time of 10.00am and will be followed as usual by coffee.

On **14th November** we hold our annual **Remembrance Service** at 10.00am.

You can also watch all the services online from 2.00pm every Sunday on our website www.balernochurch.org.uk

Please join us live or online!



What to do with pre-loved soft toys? When Ruth Lorimer's boys – now 11 and 15 – outgrew their cuddly toys, she wanted to donate their teddies to a good cause.

Searching online, she came across www.teddytrust.org.uk. Based in Leominster, Herefordshire, The Teddy Trust collects soft toys from around the UK and sends them to children who are suffering the traumas of war, starvation or abuse. The charity is supported by companies and individuals who provide premises, packaging, drop off points and hours of volunteer time – which is where Ruth comes in. She partially filled a box with cuddlies, and asked on Facebook if anyone could give her more to fill it, and it went on from there.

How can we help? Ruth can take teddies – and other cuddly toys – cuddly, soft and comforting -small enough for a child to carry, so smaller than 38cms, please! – clean and in good condition – and silent, no squeaks or growls or music as this could compromise a child's safety in dire circumstances.

Nothing branded, nothing with big eyes. Also if you have any boxes lying around, max 60x50x50cms, they will be good for packing. You can contact Ruth at www.facebook.com/RMLorimer for drop off etc.



Remember, never underestimate the healing power of Teddy!

Contributed

Balerno Blether October publication dates

Copy by 15 Oct
Publication 31 Oct

Answers to September Crossword

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Keeping up with the Radical Action Plan

The Blether led on its front page earlier in the year with the impending impact of the Church of Scotland's Radical Action Plan approved by the General Assembly in 2019. At the same time the Assembly approved the General Trustees report entitled 'Well equipped spaces in the right places', and also the Special Commission Report on Structural Reform.

Thereby it set in motion a reform agenda for the whole of the Church of Scotland which included spending more money aimed at church growth and establishing new worshipping communities. That agenda also paved the way for consolidation and reorganisation within Presbyteries, which in the case of



Currie Kirk

Edinburgh is proceeding by way of conversations between churches within local clusters. For Balerno that has meant conversations with Currie and Juniper Green, and those conversations entered a new phase with the formation of the Working Group on which we reported in the september issue



of Blether. It took a little longer than we had hoped to set up the group which is made up of three members from each congregation, but it has met twice in September with the aim of considering the scope for closer co-operation and sharing of resources. The group is currently



sharing data which sets out something of how each congregation is currently organised along with material on the various activities which each member church offers.

These Cluster Group discussions are part of the process by which we can begin to craft a

joint vision and mission for a new shared future for the Upper water of leith Valley area which Edinburgh Presbytery envisages as necessary in order to allow our churches to continue to operate with the reduced financial and personnel resources which it assesses as being available. Within Scotland as a whole the General Assembly agreed in May of this year that the number of minister posts should be reduced from around 800 to 600, with an allowance of 60 vacancies to allow movement within the system. It also agreed an area-by-area allocation of the posts, which includes a reduction from 133 to 84 in Glasgow and from the current 78 to 48 in Edinburgh by 2025.

Within Balerno the Kirk Session had earlier also turned its mind to planning for the future. It is at the very least difficult to contribute to a discussion on vision and mission for the Water of Leith Cluster Group in the absence of an up to date and developed assessment of what the vision and mission of Balerno within that larger group is to be. The Kirk Session therefore undertook a first step on that process at a special meeting in August to consider the returns from a survey of session members conducted in July.

The conclusions of that discussion highlighted the need for action in several areas as for example in the development of a new community focussed strategy as well as partnership working with other denominations locally.

There is likely to be considerable movement therefore across a number of areas, and the Blether will keep you in touch with developments.

Do you have a minute, Lord?

Thank-you for people, Lord.

Today I watched as about 30 of them all worked together to try to save the lives of 4 people who had been trapped in two cars which had been in a head on collision on a country road.



One car had been going too fast and the other had simply been going to the village shops. A revved engine, screech of brakes, a loud bang and everyone who had heard it knew that something serious had happened.

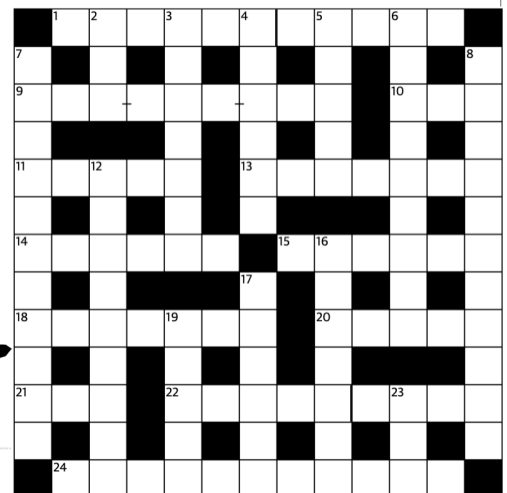
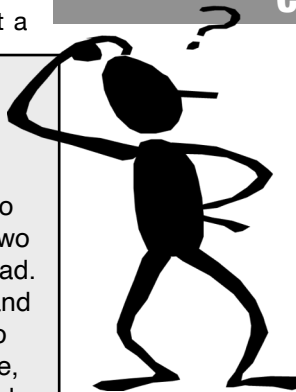
The two cars were inseparable and lay across the carriageway. Everything had to stop; people stepped forward to help; others stepped back to get out of the way. Some minutes passed before the sirens wailed, blue lights flashed and helicopters, yes 2 of them, landed in an adjacent field. The cars, with their human sardines inside were prised open with gigantic tin openers and the victims were removed from the debris for treatment.

We can see this sort of thing on the television almost daily, but it is different in real life when you share the sense of urgency for the participants in this drama that time is critical. I was left with the feeling that money alone did not buy the care and attention that rescued these people from the wreckage.

Thank-you for people.

Contributed

Crossword corner



Down

- 2 Decide (3)
- 3 Final rite of passage (7)
- 4 Add quality to (6)
- 5 Therefore (5)
- 6 Relating to the time after childbirth (9)
- 7 Captivating (11)
- 8 Pigeonholed (11)
- 12 One who adapts quickly to new environments (9)
- 16 Receive by genetic transmission (7)
- 17 Wild horse (liable to buck?) (6)
- 19 Turn of phrase (5)
- 23 Ode on a Grecian . (3)

Across

- 1 Places offering hot drinks and snacks (6,5)
- 9 Accident caused by driver who doesn't stop (3-3-3)
- 10 Complete collection (3)
- 11 Happen time after time (5)
- 13 Less polluted (7)
- 14 Unchanging (6)
- 15 Place serving drink in France (6)
- 18 Artist's workshop (7)
- 20 Steep (5)
- 21 Fury (3)
- 22 Part of a bicycle tyre (5,4)
- 24 Petty (11)

Session and congregation say a massive 'thank you' to Jennifer!

After nearly ten years in post as Church Administrator, Jennifer MacDonald has eventually managed to escape to pastures new, and the Kirk Session was able to thank her for her commitment and all her hard work at a presentation on 8th September.

Anne Charman who had been Session Clerk when Jennifer first started, told her and the assembled company that Jennifer would be a hard act to follow; seldom has that phrase been used more appropriately. Jennifer has almost literally worked her socks off for the Parish Church over the years, and the Session agreed that we all owed her an immense debt of gratitude.

Jennifer was presented with a cheque along with a fine piece of Scott Irvine glass sculpture, pictured below, inscribed with the Church's logo.

In addition it is just possible that the applause of all those present and all those who were unable to be there is still resounding around St Joseph's Hall.



Jennifer is pictured with Anne, Malcolm and Andre after the presentation



Fresh Start - *to help people make a home for themselves*

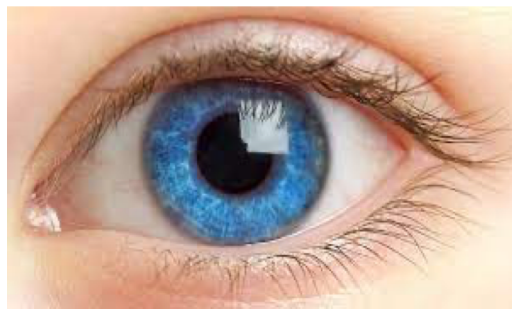
Fresh Start is an Edinburgh based charity which helps people who have been homeless establish themselves in their new home. Working with volunteers and organisations from a broad section of the community it delivers a range of services providing practical and social support to people to resettle successfully. Each year Fresh Start helps thousands of new tenants, ranging from families to individuals, make a home for themselves. This can only be achieved, in the charity's own words, by the hard work of volunteers and the generosity of the donations they receive.

Over 2020, in response to Covid-19, Fresh Start delivered 8770 emergency packs to over 300 households. Alongside that response Fresh Start also continued to support their core community purchasing goods that go into their Starter Packs and delivering 4375 of those moving on from homelessness, as well as 78 white goods. They also delivered DIY HIOTsquad Kits of paint along with instructions to 20 households so that whilst the charity wasn't able to actually go into houses to help people could still make their house a home. And outside, the gardening team formed the Green Grafters and transformed 33 gardens creating safe play areas. Fresh Start also created the first Local Pantry providing local access to affordable and nutritious food, and maintaining a stable supply in a world of toilet roll shortages and empty shopping aisles. And at Christmas they provided bespoke presents to 147 children across 67 families.

Balerno Parish Church has a long established relationship with Fresh Start, and there will be a collection of household items for Fresh Start on Friday 15th & Saturday 16th October, 10 am – 12 noon and Sunday 17th October, 9.30 am – 12 noon.

This will take place in the Rear Hall, behind Balerno Parish Church. Donations (in good clean condition) of crockery, cutlery, pots & pans, bedding, curtains, towels and small electrical items, would be gratefully received, both by Fresh Start and by the homeless people who are trying to make a fresh start. Also needed are cleaning items and dried/tinned food with long sell-by dates. We cannot take furniture, televisions, duvets, pillows, cushions, kitchen knives or stemmed glasses.

For further information please contact Sandra Lyall 449 4375



An eye for an eye.....

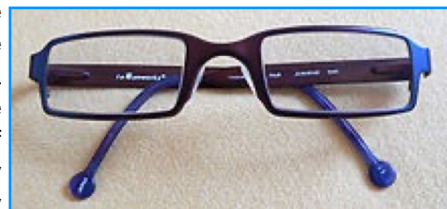
Imagine just how people centuries ago managed to see small things and see them clearly. Surely, you think, spectacles must be a relatively recent invention – by the Victorians perhaps? You couldn't be more wrong, for the Romans are known to have used glass shapes, often filled with water, to enhance their view of an object – or to read early print. If you imagine the glass globes we had as children, with a snowstorm inside when shaken, that would be a fair comparison. In later years medieval monks further adapted this method.

The first wearable spectacles appeared in the 13th century, courtesy of an Italian named Salvino D'Amarte. They would have appeared quite primitive, having frames made of wood, leather or animal horn and would likely have been most uncomfortable.



Little is known about further development of spectacles until the 18th century when the introduction of 'hands free' spectacles, with extended 'frame' pieces at each side to clasp over the ears to secure the lenses. Their invention by Benjamin Martin was nicknamed 'Martins Margins' and were the precursor to many more innovations, with well-known people such as Benjamin Franklin becoming involved. Until then, single lenses were made of either concave glass (for near sightedness) or convex glass (for farsightedness). His invention of the bi-focal lens allowed the same pair of spectacles to be used for near and far sight.

The early 20th century ushered in greater lens technology and the use of different shapes and sizes of frames. Theodore Roosevelt wore pince-nez spectacles, which had no earpieces, but instead stayed in place with a nose clip. These spectacles gained early popularity but fell out of fashion as they became associated with older generations. Eventually, the development of plastic frames led to a huge variety of new style frames in many different colours. Sunglasses to reduce glare started to be mass produced around 1930 and the early 1980's saw the development of plastic lenses which had the advantage of being almost unbreakable but were quite easily scratched, often obscuring vision. There are many people whose sight is being damaged by not wearing spectacles, or by having incorrect ones which can harm their eyes, so having a prescription for lenses prescribed by a skilled optician is essential. Remember, we cannot simply replace our eyes, and need to look after them.



contributed

Big welcome back for Balerno Music Festival !

The curtain rose on the 14th Balerno Music Festival on 25th September and the Festival runs until 10th October.

The programme for this year's Festival - the 14th - is much reduced because of the Covid-19 restrictions and the difficulty in being able to plan with any certainty that the event could take place. In fact the decision to run at all was only taken in August, and the Blether congratulates the organisers for producing such a rich and diverse programme at short notice.

Those with acute memories will remember that the last Festival actually to take place was the 12th back in 2019, with the 13th having fallen victim to successive lockdowns. The 14th Festival has a fantastic programme which you can see on the Festival website.

Still to come in the Festival programme are the childrens workshop - Lost Worlds - with Kerry Turnbull on 2nd October and, also for children, Artie's Singing Kettle on the 3rd. North Sea Gas head up the Folk Concert along with Kenny Spiers on the 8th. The Gala Concert on the 9th stars Andrew McTaggart and Jessica Leary, while the Jazz Party rounds things off on the 10th in the now traditional way.

Dekoy at the Mill, on the 8th, and Festival Praise on the 10th are non ticketed events.

Just click on <https://www.balernomusicfestival.org.uk/> for more information and tickets.

Please send letters to the Blether Editor by e-mail to bpc-admin@balernochurch.org.uk or post to the Church Office at 2 Main Street, Balerno