



Out and about over the Music Festival weekend Gala Concert Triumph

October is a busy month what with Harvest and the Balerno Music Festival, and this past month we've also seen the launch of Balerno Parish Church's new Ministry to Children initiative.

Covid-19 meant both that the Music Festival's usual three weeked programme was reduced and that audience size was much restricted due to continued requirement for social distancing. As recently as August there was real doubt whether there could be any Festivals this year, but the team were absolutely intent on presenting the 14th Festival on time and in place. And they did, with a great programme of nine events between 25 September and 10 October including Festival Praise on the theme 'All You Need is Love' on Sunday 10th, at which the Choir presented two anthems and Charlie Husband sang *Norah Nagee* on behalf of the Folk Club.

At the Gala Concert on the 9th October Andrew MacTaggart and Jessica Leary, accompanied by Andrew Foster, presented a wide ranging programme including opera, Rodgers and Hammerstein, Robert Burns and there was even space for 'The next stop's Kirkcaddy!'

From the Blether Team

Congratulations and a massive thank you to all of the Balerno Music Festival team, and especially the Parish Church sub-group for having made such a fantastic start to the move out of Covid-19's shadow.



You want us to eat all of those apple pies? ...Really !?
What do you think, Dave?"



Parish Church at Farmers Market

Balerno Parish Church had a stall at both the September and the October Farmers Markets, and it looks as though that could be an emerging and exciting pattern for the future as the Church continues to develop its mission in the community.

With anything up to 650 folk visiting the market each month - second Saturday every month except January - being there means that there's a real chance to meet and chat with many more people than you could ordinarily expect to see in one place in Balerno at any other time.

The October Market hosts Apple Day and the Apple Press was again in action and local muscle power was called on to help produce juice for thirsty shoppers. Andre along with David Lyons Assistant Minister at St Mungo's were faced with the enviable task of having to sample all the entries in the Apple Pie Competition

You can see that both Andre and David were looking forward to the challenge!

contd on p2

From the Pews to the Mews

a message from the minister

To be back in church every Sunday is a crucial step in the right direction. The Harvest thanksgiving service was a wonderful opportunity for people to return to regular worship. Those who attended really enjoyed the service and the fellowship afterwards. It was also a great opportunity to start a new children's ministry in Balerno Parish church with the theme: "I am going to BEE like Jesus". Balerno church is going to BEE buzzing with all the BEElievers in the next year.

November will also be a busy month with three Communion services on the 7th November, the Remembrance service a week after, and with the Bereavement Service on the 28th November, before we know it, it will be Christmas.

With all the services and activities, we should always remember the words of Scripture which say: "So then, my dear friends, stand firm and steady. Keep busy always in your work for the Lord, since you know that nothing you do in the Lord's service is ever useless." (1 Corinthians 15:58).

May we all be blessed by doing God's work, everywhere we go.

All my blessings,

André

November 2021

Do You Have a Minute, Lord?

I notice that the days are getting shorter and the colour of the leaves on the trees is changing. I always seem to have mixed feelings at this time of year; the autumn colours are beautiful and warm which is in contrast to the change in the temperature. While I am fortunate to be able to look forward to warm winter evenings, I am aware that there are others who are less fortunate.



The end of the year approaches and as the leaves gather on the ground there is a sense of imminent closure; but there is also a suspicious sense of regret. There is a list of things which I had hoped to achieve and if I dwell on it, the list is probably longer than I would like. Perhaps my expectations for the year were too high; there was certainly a lot which happened that was unforeseen and perhaps I have been distracted by the 'urgent.'

One way or another I can't help but feel that I could have done better. Either that's just a result of my Calvinist upbringing or else . . .

Contributed

A Great Big Green Day at Balerno



The Mill at St Joseph's was host to *Balerno's Great Big Green Day* on Saturday 25 September. The event, which aimed to raise awareness in our local community about how we can all work together for the environment, had been co-ordinated through Balerno Village Trust and involved some eighteen groups including Friends of the Pentlands, Balerno Village Gardeners, and Balerno Fairtrade Village Group.

Parish Church at the Market continued from Page 1

At the September market visitors were being offered the opportunity to take part in the on-line Community Survey, about how we in the Parish Church can be good neighbours in our community. We'll let you know the results.

At the October Market visitors to the stall were able to get information about upcoming events, including the Ministry to Children initiative, from the rota of volunteers who were on duty throughout the morning.



Angus, Rowena and Kay were ready to answer any and all questions fired at them at the October Farmers Market.

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.

Opinions expressed in articles in this magazine are solely the author's and do not necessarily reflect the opinions and beliefs of Balerno Parish Church.

Is streaming of church services inevitable?



Communal worship in church on Sunday mornings was one of the major casualties of the pandemic. It didn't discriminate between creed or colour because the high risk of the spread of infection meant that all normal worship was considered to involve too many potential hazards.

Ministers were isolated in their parishes and isolated from their parishioners and there was a sense that, 'something had to be done.' This led to a proliferation of online opportunities for worship, the variety of which was probably a reflection of the contrasting styles of ministers which had been previously prevalent in their parishes – but perhaps less obvious.

The last thing that a nominating committee would be thinking about in interviewing a prospective minister would be, 'What would you do if your congregation weren't allowed to come to church?' but this was the practical challenge which ministers faced. Some had no problem in adapting to the technology of streaming and embraced the opportunities which it offered with worship being led from all sorts of environments; others remained more conventional and streamed a service from their sanctuary or manse and the occasional Rev I.M. Jolly impression reappeared.

Now that the pandemic appears to be receding, there is a new challenge for congregations. Should they stop streaming services? The reality is that the streamed service offers an opportunity for the housebound to be more involved in worship as it adds a visual experience to what might have been previously only listened to on a tape or CD. The pandemic was, in that context, a cloud with a silver lining which promoted online access to worship and worshippers were spoilt for choice!

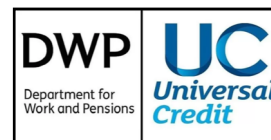
The process of 'live' streaming services or video recording for later streaming is not without its cost. As well as the equipment, there is the need for people to operate the video equipment and then to make sure that the recorded version is accessible on the internet. In some quarters there is a body of opinion which feels that the streaming of services will be the core of worship in the future, but there is an equally strong alternative view to the effect that many worshippers derive benefit from regularly coming together with other Christians on a Sunday morning. It can sound like a good idea to say that streamed services represent progress as they can allow people access to services when the weather is bad and they don't want to come out. If everyone were to take that option, then they would find themselves tuning in to an empty church.

Contributed

Differing perspectives

Harvest is the time of plenty, and Harvest thanksgiving is about giving thanks for a successful crop yield over the year as winter starts to approach. We celebrated Harvest on 3rd October as gifts of food were brought to the church for distribution to those in need. This year donations were delivered both locally to the Community for Food Group and also to the Wester Hailes Food Bank. Over the weekend of 15 to 17 October our Fresh Start collection in-gathered over 60 boxes of household necessities for delivery to Bethany Christian Trust.

On October 6 the Covid-19 related temporary uplift to Universal Credit was ended; in broad terms that meant a loss of £20 per week for each claimant. Universal Credit is gradually replacing six benefits for working-age people who have a low household income. There are currently around 478,000 Universal Credit (UC) claimants in Scotland. UC is available both to those in work and to those not in work. In 2011 2.5 million people in Scotland aged between 16 and 74 were employed. More up-to-date figures will be available after the delayed 2021 Census. Assuming the 2011 census figures are still roughly accurate for 2021 however, that would suggest that approximately 1 in 6 working age Scots, therefore, are claiming UC.



There are some 2200 food banks in the UK although the figure is probably higher when smaller more local initiatives are taken into account. Of those 2200, 1300 are operated by the Trussell Trust.

In April 2020, compared with April 2019, Scottish food banks saw a 47% increase in the number of all people fed, along with a 62% increase in the number of children fed. Statistics from the Independent Food Aid Network indicate that numbers of food parcels distributed in Scotland across all known food banks increased from 480583 in an 18 month period in 2018/19 to 596472 in a similar period in 2019/20.

A YouGov survey of universal credit claimants, commissioned by the Trussell Trust in summer 2021, illustrated what people thought the impact of the then projected cut in UC would be for them within three months of its ending. 24% thought it was very likely that they would need to skip meals in order to afford other essential costs. This is one in four people claiming UC and represents more than 115,000 people. 17% thought it was very likely that they would need support from a food bank or similar service. This is one in six UC claimants and represents nearly 82,000 people who expect to join food bank queues. 19% thought it was very likely they wouldn't be able to afford to travel to work or essential appointments. This is one in five UC claimants and represents more than 91,000 people, who might therefore expect to cease to be employed.

The YouGov survey was conducted before the rise in energy prices of September and October.

On 3rd October the Moderator of the General Assembly, describing UC as a 'lifeline', joined other faith leaders across the UK calling for plans to cut Universal Credit to be scrapped.

Contributed

Fresh Start Bonanza!

FreshStart
helping people make a home for themselves

Thanks to all
the
volunteers

Fresh Start is an Edinburgh based charity which helps people who have been homeless establish themselves in their new home.

Balerno Parish Church has actively supported Fresh Start for many, many years.

and
Thank You
Balerno!

It took two vans and two cars to shift the huge volume of goods donated by folk across Balerno to Balerno Parish Church's bi-annual collection for Fresh Start. Because there were no collections in 2020 we were in effect collecting two years of donations.

That meant there were over sixty boxes of assorted household goods including crockery, kitchenware, bedding, small electrical and audio - all destined to support those moving on from homelessness to create a home for themselves. The next collection will be in May 2022!

In 2020 Fresh Start delivered 8770 Emergency Packs to over 300 households, and 4375 Starter Packs to those moving from homelessness, as well as 78 white goods.

*Fresh Start:
to help people make
a home for
themselves.*

from the Blether team

'Is there anybody there?' said the Traveller,
Knocking on the moonlit door;
And his horse in the silence champed the grasses
Of the forest's ferny floor:
And a bird flew up out of the turret,
Above the Traveller's head:
And he smote upon the door again a second time;
'Is there anybody there?' he said.
But no one descended to the Traveller;
No head from the leaf-fringed sill
Leaned over and looked into his grey eyes,
Where he stood perplexed and still.'

October is a busy month as the crossover between late summer and autumn, and, with its ending, Christmas is suddenly almost on the doorstep. And time is very short then for writing that letter to you know who and to set out the long

list of wishes. This year of course we will not be able to complain that we have not been warned about the need to shop early for Christmas.

Lest there be any emerging doubt on the matter, the Blether is not, or at least not this year, offering a letter writing service to *you know who* or anyone else, beyond suggesting that letters to *you know who* should always be signed off with the formula that you, the writer, remain *you know who's* most obedient servant etc etc.,

We are of course sure that *you know who* appreciates the estimated eight million plus letters he receives each year. The Blether team would appreciate even an eight millionth of that total or even a single e-mail from amongst the as yet probably considerably smaller number of our readership.

But until then we can simply collectively stand and wonder whether there is, indeed, anybody there?

Harvest 2021

Balerno Parish Church took a huge step back towards the new normal when it marked a Return to Church on Sunday 3rd October with the annual Harvest Festival.

The Church had been dressed and decorated by Wendy Williams and the Flower Group and harvest offerings had been collected on Friday 1st and Saturday 2nd. Only packeted and tinned produce could be received in light of the continuing Covid restrictions, but they made a fine show against which we could all give thanks that maybe, maybe this time, we could all see that things might be getting better.

After the service the groceries were gathered together and then delivered to Community for Food and Holy Trinity Food Banks. As we note elsewhere in this issue there are over 2200 food banks across the UK, and, although it may surprise some, there are families in need in Balerno.

Marion Milne was amongst the group helping with distribution, and, no, she wasn't really standing in one of Harlaw Farm's fields for the photo-op, but it seemed a shame not to highlight that what was gathered in at the Church is part of the much larger harvest to which our local farming community contributes so much.

Thank you all for all the donations!



For your diary!

Sunday worship has been back to normal in the Church since Sunday 3rd October. While masks should be worn there is no need to book to attend. Please see page 7 for details of Childrens' Ministry events.

On 7th November there are Communion services at 9.00am (st St Josephs, 10.00am and 3.00pm, and then on 14th November we hold our annual Remembrance Service at 10.00am. On the 21st there will be a *special* Service of Praise.

The Guild will be meeting on 3rd and 17th November - see our website for details - www.balernochurch.org.uk.

news

from



Hello all,

The Mill Cafe has been nice and busy.

We have definitely entered into 'soup season' as the weather has started to get colder. Bob is back in the kitchen making his ham and lentil soup. This as always goes down a treat and is most certainly a village favourite!.

We have met two newborn babies, a wonderful addition to our community whom we look forward to watching grow up. Perhaps to be our future volunteers!.

A resident of our Larchfield group, Rev Gordon McGillivray celebrated his 98th birthday. We were delighted to have been asked to make his birthday cake which was enjoyed by all.

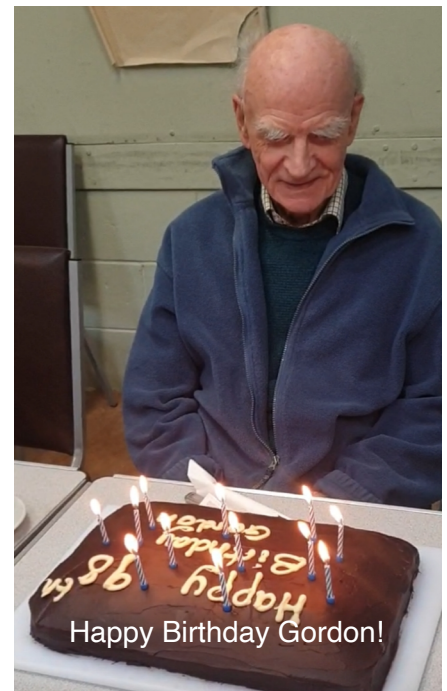
We welcome back Balerno Bridge Group in November. It certainly seems like life is returning to 'normal'.

We have added a bacon roll and soup deal at £5.50 to our menu, which has been well recieved.

As I am writing this we are about to go into our October school holidays. If you were able to get away or simply spend time with family, we hope you had a lovely October break week.

Remember to take time out for yourself. Come down and have a coffee and cake. We look forward to seeing you.

Love from The Mill Cafe x



70 years of ordained service

November marks the 70th Anniversary of the ordination of Rev Gordon McGillivray, formerly the Presbytery Clerk of Edinburgh and Deputy Principal Clerk of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

Gordon was ordained on 6th November 1951 and inducted to the charge of Waterbeck in Dumfries and Galloway before moving to Nairn and eventually to Edinburgh when he took up appointment as Presbytery Clerk of Edinburgh. He lived in Greenfield Crescent for many years along with Winnie before moving to Larchfield Neuk.

Gordon is an authority on Church Law and the author and editor of several books including a book of sermons which was published when he marked 60 years since ordination.

Congratulations Gordon! And Happy Birthday!



November- it must be Martinmas

In Scotland the legal year is divided in four, and the quarters were historically used as the days when contracts and leases would begin and end, servants would be hired or dismissed, and rent, interest on loans, and ministers' stipends would become due. The 'Term' or 'Quarter' Days are Whitsunday, Lammas,

Martinmas, and Candlemas - respectively 15 May, 1

August, 11 November and 2 February until 1886, when they were changed to 28 May, 28 August, 28 November and 28 February.

University academic terms were named after Martinmas, Candlemas and Whitsun, and at the University of St Andrews the two semesters continue to be named Martinmas and Candlemas.

Martinmas is the feast day of St Martin of Tours, a 4thC bishop and hermit who was closely involved in the development of Christianity in Europe. Originally a cavalryman in the Roman army, Martin converted to Christianity and his legend began when he found a poorly dressed beggar shivering in the cold. He removed his heavy wool cavalry cloak and cut it in two, then gave half to the beggar and later in a dream saw Jesus wearing the half-cloak he'd given the man. Discharged from the army, he committed himself to Christianity. Studying and preaching, he worked with other monks to form what would become the Benedictine abbey of Lige, the oldest known abbey in Europe, and later the larger foundation of Marmoutier. Martin was consecrated in 371, but continued to lead a life of humility and compassion, rather than adopting the flamboyant lifestyle of most bishops. He died in 397.

St Martin's life is recorded in countless stories and legends, and a spell of unseasonably warm weather in late autumn around early November is known as 'St Martin's Summer'.



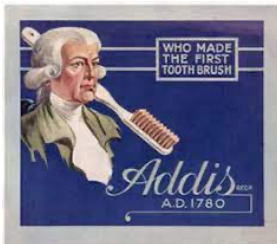
And a tooth for a tooth

For as long as humans have been using tools, we've been cleaning our teeth! We have always been mindful of our oral health. But what about mouthwash? Dental hygiene has come a long way since the days of wine-soaked toothpicks and the urine mouthwash once thought to disinfect mouths and whiten teeth. Yes, you read that correctly – as far back as the first century AD the Romans were importing bottles of Portuguese urine to use as a rinse, Ugh!



It was the ammonia in the urine which was thought to act as an oral disinfectant and was still in use up to the 18th century. One look at some of the diseased mouths which dentists regularly see would surely ensure that we would take more care of our teeth, but some of the remedies do seem horribly extreme. Some of the earliest primitive tooth cleaning artefacts found by archaeologists date back over two thousand or more years. Many years later, ancient Egyptians and Chinese used sticks with frayed ends to clean between their teeth – others used larger fishbones and quills. Europeans cleaned their teeth with salt, milk or soot. In the early 1700s a French doctor named Fauchard encouraged people to clean their teeth with either a toothpick or a sponge soaked in brandy. (Bet he was popular). Amazingly, he is still known as the 'father of modern dentistry'.

An Englishman named Addis was the first to sell toothbrushes on a large scale. He got the idea after being in prison, where he used animal bristles to clean his own teeth, and since then, people have used abrasive powders, eucalyptus and camphor oils in an attempt to fight the bacteria which damage their teeth. Nylon brushes followed in the 1930's, soon followed by electric ones around 1960.



Naturally, oral hygiene is very important, and whatever form of cleaning you prefer,

PLEASE don't try the urine mouthwash!!!.

Contributed DB

Children's Ministry 2021-2022

On the 3rd of October 2021 a new Children's ministry started at Balerno Parish Church with the theme: "I'm going to BEE like Jesus. BEE loving to others". Each child received a BEE bag with sweeties and material to help them to learn more to BEE like Jesus. Each month will have a different focus. During the year we will focus on different aspects of BEElieving in Jesus:

October - 'Bee kind'; November - 'Bee sharing'

December - "Bee a STAR and BEE welcoming"

January - "Bee prepared"; February "Bee loving";

March - "Bee wise"; April - "Bee forgiving";

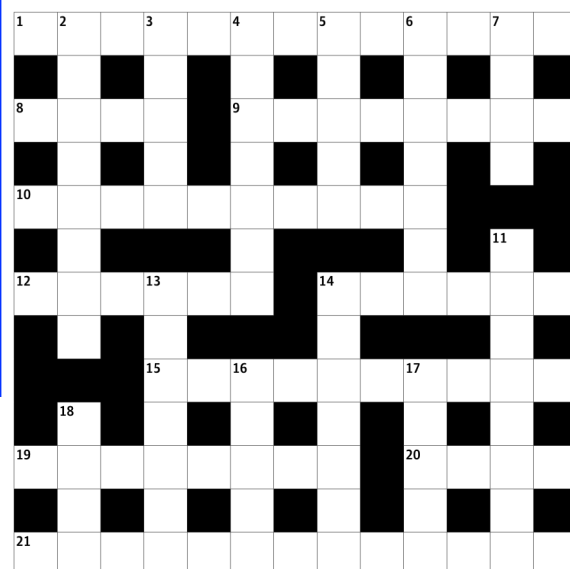
May - "Bee truthful"; June - "Bee honest"

We will BEE very busy BEES focusing in a fun way on BEElonging to Jesus (lots of crafts, games). Please join us any time on a Sunday morning at 10

Balerno Blether November publication dates

Copy by 12 Nov
Publication 27 Nov

Crossword corner



Answers to October Crossword



Down

- 2 Short romantic composition for piano (8)
- 3 Devour (3,2)
- 4 It's off-limits for teetotalers (7)
- 5 Sugary topping for cakes (5)
- 6 Relating to the kidneys (7)
- 7 Circuits (4)
- 11 Swaggering masculinity (8)
- 13 Experience (7)
- 14 Liqueur made with peel of bitter oranges from an island in the Dutch Antilles (7)
- 16 Fencing sword (5)
- 17 Dark (5)
- 18 Brogue or moccasin, say (4)

Across

- 1 Untiring – I fled a beating (anag) (13)
- 8 Short erect tail (4)
- 9 Bird sounds (8)
- 10 Act without due caution (4,3,3)
- 12 Straighten out (6)
- 14 Basement storage space (6)
- 15 Deeply agitated (10)
- 19 Like an angel (8)
- 20 Tender and full of juice (4)
- 21 TV operating device (6,7)

Coming soon!!!
Balerno Christmas Tree
Festival
Saturday 11 December



Edinburgh Tram Nostalgia



George Murray

George Murray tells us in this column a bit about the history of trams in Edinburgh, which is quite unique in Europe.

The original horse drawn trams of Edinburgh (1871 – 1907) were replaced with cable hauled trams on the same system as developed in San Francisco.

These cable hauled trams were first employed on the two very steep routes on Hanover and Frederick Streets from 1888 and 1890 respectively, the hills being too dangerous for horse traction.

These simple A to B services proved very reliable and the City Fathers decided to convert all horse routes to this system which did not have the “unsightly overhead wires” along the iconic Princes Street. Leith then a separate Royal Burgh refused to have this system in their streets thus causing the need to change vehicles at the Pilrig boundary.

The big task of installing the cable ducts and steam driven power stations proceeded with services introduced from 1899 – 1908. The complications involved at city junctions caused reliability problems and the lack of maintenance during WW1 rendered this behemoth of an installation to the realm of a music hall joke.

In 1918 the Corporation decided to take over the cable system from Company operation and to electrify the whole tramway with this decision being enhanced by the merging of the Burgh of Leith with Edinburgh in 1920 absorbing their efficient electrified trams and once more providing through tram services on the busy Leith Walk by 1922.

Edinburgh residents of a certain age will have fond memories of the latter years of our electric trams which were swept away and replaced with the polluting diesel buses by November 1956, environmental concerns still being half a century in the future!

The trams shown, and others, carried Edinburgh residents and visitors alike in all weathers, and ran in snow, frost and fog.



“Wooden Standard Car 302 supplied by Leeds Forge Co. in 1923, withdrawn in 1954 – of a fleet numbering 240 cars out of total of 360. Many were built locally by Edinburgh Corporation at their Shrubhill Works.”



Above - Car 173 of 1936 being one of a fleet of Domed Roof Standard Cars scrapped and replaced partly by war time withdrawn ex London buses of questionable reliability. Only one Edinburgh electric tram survives in the National Tram Museum, Crich, Derbyshire and is a 1948 example of this class, fleet no 35. The picture is taken at the East End of Princes Street,

Right - Car 251 of the current tram fleet is pictured leaving North St Andrew Street into York Place. There are 27 trams in the fleet built by CAF of Spain. They have been remarkably reliable and not caused any service disruption.

picture courtesy of the author

We are indebted to George for taking us on this trip down memory lane.



Useful Contact Details

Minister;

Dr André Groenewald

Church Administration;

Agroenewald@churchofscotland.org.uk 0131 449 3830 or 07588845814

Balerno Blether;

bpc-admin@balernochurch.org.uk 0131 449 7245

The Guild;

bpc-editor@balernochurch.org.uk

Kay Coull; coullkay@hotmail.com; 0131 449 6151

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