

balerno



the magazine and newsletter of Balerno Parish Church; for the Church and for the Community

FREE!

BUT
donations
welcome!

Wether



Issue number 13

April 2022



CELEBRATING A HUB OF THE COMMUNITY

The purchase of St Joseph's opened up a new vision for Balerno Parish Church and for the village in general. There was no café in the village, nowhere to meet and chat, nowhere to have coffee in the morning. This was going to change when the Mill Café opened its doors on the morning of April 17th, 2012.

Since the formal opening of the new campus a month earlier, there had been tremendous activity preparing for the first customers under the supervision of Jo Khan, the first café manager, assisted by Joyce Beaton who helped to develop the menu and – most importantly – instigate daily procedures. They were later joined by Lindsay Rutherford who shared the manager's role and acted as Volunteer Co-ordinator. When the time came for Jo to move on in 2013, Sandy Taylor took over, with assistance from Fiona Jackson. Sandy first became involved with the Mill as a volunteer who loved baking – and the role of the volunteers cannot be underestimated. Without volunteers, the Mill could not survive. When Sandy returned to her career five years ago, Lynsey Inglis took her place as Café Manager, assisted now by four Duty Managers plus the invaluable volunteers.

Over the years, the Mill has been involved in supporting the Duke of

Edinburgh awards and funding the 'Louise Duncan' bursary award. Teas and coffees are all FairTrade, with some of the fruit, vegetables and herbs being grown in the garden outside or donated locally.

When the decision to go ahead with the opening of a café was taken, there was a lot of debate about the menu to be offered. 'Costco make excellent cakes' someone declared, and was promptly shouted down. The Mill would have 'nothing but the finest home-baking - at all times'. And so it does - scones are freshly made every day, sweet and savoury. A variety of wonderful cakes is on offer, along with sandwiches, salads, bacon rolls, paninis, fresh pancakes etc. And soup. The Mill is famous for its soup!

In fact, soup became the central point of the valuable outreach project that the Mill put in place during the dark early days of Lockdown in 2020, when they operated a takeaway 'Soup and Scone' scheme – a shining example of the Church's outreach to the community.

Kathryn Mulligan, one of the Duty Managers involved, tells the story...

'In January 2020 The Mill got off to a great start but as we started to hear the murmurings of Covid around the world, little did we anticipate the rollercoaster to come.

continued on p2

in this issue!

SISTEMA SCOTLAND HAS ARRIVED SO IT'S TIME FOR BIG NOISE

PRESBYTERY PLAN UPDATE - WHERE TO NOW?

10 YEARS WITH THE MILL

hear say
Crossword Corner

Letters
to the
Editor

1 of

Celebrating 10 years of The Mill Cafe

The past two years have highlighted how vital our little cafe is to the community

(continued from p1)

At first it was just fewer tables... fewer customers ... fewer volunteers then it was '*cafe closed!*' which came as a surprise for us all. Staff

then it was "care closed," which came as a surprise for gathered for a socially distanced meeting and came to the conclusion we could and would be allowed to run as soup kitchen. We would operate on a donation only basis - none of us would question anyone's needs during this uncertain time. We worked through the logistics, such as how many

**2 weeks successfully running
as a soup and scone kitchen;
serving 60 scones and 40 pots
of soup a day....**

people would it take to
run it and keep 2
meters apart? How
would we get

had 2 weeks of successfully running as a soup and scone kitchen; serving about 60 scones and 40 pots of soup a day. We saw a variety of customers, some collected for the neighbours, some came down for their 'work from home' lunch and others just used it as an excuse to get out and speak to a human! (albeit one wearing PPE and standing behind a barrier). The donations came in, many being very generous and considerably more than we would ever have asked for. Ishbel scoured the internet for flour, we all pounced on any vegetables and stock cubes we could find, we had some very welcomed donations from the Balerno High School canteen when it closed and Nikki and the Scotmid staff kindly went out of their way to help us. Several local businesses and organisations gave us very generous donations for which we are very grateful. Sadly as national lockdown hit The Church of Scotland decreed we close our doors completely. It was a very sad zoom meeting for the team.

Lynsey and I went in one last time to clear the kitchen for what we hoped (initially and maybe slightly naively!) would be 3 weeks. No stock went to waste it was donated to a soup kitchen in the grass market that had been allowed to remain open. Eventually takeaways were allowed, we implemented the same pay what you can if you can basis. Telling customers they couldn't sit in the garden or use the toilet was difficult - us all still adjusting to a new social distanced world. However speaking to actual people face to face via masks and a screen was wonderful!

Gradually we were allowed outside tables (which had varied success in the Scottish weather!), then a few tables inside, our

fabulous volunteers were allowed back and the place was buzzing once again. We had queues for tables and that we thought The Mill was on the road to recovery... again how wrong could we be.

Lockdown 2 hit and like most sequels it

Lockdown 2 hit and like most sequels it was worse than the first!

Lockdown 2 hit and like most sequels it was worse than the

first! We once again shut up shop altogether for nearly 4 months before we were able to reopen. Similar to the first wave there was a gradual build up of operations and as restrictions have eased we have returned to normality - well as normal as we can be in a post-Covid world.

Now nearly two years later we are almost back to normal, we have survived slightly battered and bruised but not broken! Like everyone we have learnt lessons from Covid and the importance of safe community spaces like The Mill Cafe. The past two years have highlighted how vital our little cafe is to members of the community and we are all truly grateful for all the love and support we receive.'

When the interior of St Joseph's was being renovated, a wooden plaque was discovered. On it were engraved lines from a popular hymn: 'Give thanks, with a grateful heart...' and it now hangs above the kitchen door for everyone to see. Truly, the church and the village give thanks for The Mill Café as it celebrates this milestone



There are some 23 or so community cafes in the Edinburgh community cafe network, all committed to providing a safe, inclusive and welcoming environment. Balerno Parish Church can be very ill Cafe and of all of those who have contributed to its past ten years whether as staff, volunteers, customers or simply helping it to achieve that success. Thanks to them the cafe hub open to all in our community The Bletherill Cafe therefore, and all who have made it what it is and wishes it every success for the future and in that vital role.





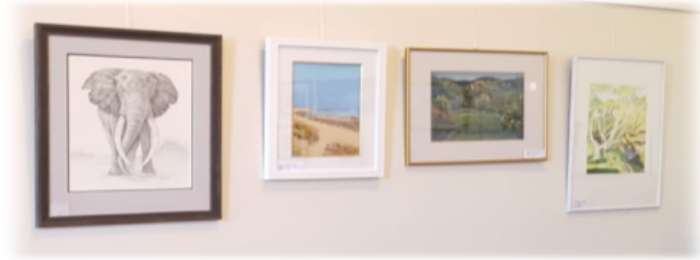
The Mill Gallery

Ian Gidney tells us about an imaginative and successful venture which attracts a growing number of customers to St Joseph's to enjoy both the facilities and the wonderful service provided by everyone at The Mill Cafe.

On one of my regular holiday excursions to Speyside I recall visiting the 1896 Art Gallery in Boat of Garten where James Gordon the owner uses a wall mounted metal bar and plastic cord system to display paintings by local artists and his own landscape photographs. I came away with the germ of an idea -- use part of the wall space in St Joseph's to create a Gallery in association with Pentland Art Club. Approaches were well received and a hanging system purchased and installed - The Mill Gallery was born and the first exhibition of paintings and tapestry work was in place in March 2018.

The artwork is changed every two months and the Church is greatly indebted to the enthusiastic support of Pentland Art Club members who provide a varied selection of work and on average there is space for sixteen items to form each exhibition.

Even allowing for interruptions experienced over the past two years with the closure of St Joseph's for periods of time during Covid, approximately 50 paintings and tapestries have been sold to date and the Church coffers enhanced by over £600 from commission on sales.



Centre on Thursday evenings until they can return to the art department facilities at Balerno High School. Members engage in a wide variety of media: painting, pottery, textiles and printing and the Club is always keen to welcome new members, regardless of level of expertise. For further information please contact Phyllis Laybourn at playbourn60@gmail.com

These figures clearly demonstrate Mill

customers do like to look, admire and purchase work produced by so many talented people who reside in and around the village. Grateful thanks is also due to Lynsey and her staff in the Mill Cafe who help on a number of occasions with handling sales enquires.

Balerno is blessed with a wide range of clubs and associations and Pentland Art Club is one of long standing being formed nearly 55 years ago and currently has 44 members. The Club has continued to meet regularly via Zoom during Covid and is now meeting temporarily in Currie Community

Food, glorious food

Come in, help us to celebrate our ten-year success
From humble beginnings , just tea, coffee and cakes
We're not standing still but continuing to progress
We've expanded to include more speciality bakes
Friday is always the most popular day
Doesn't matter to us if your visit's unplanned
Pre-pandemic our wares were out on display
One thing's not changed – they're still in demand
At lunchtime why not call in for a meal
Do something that no-one will understand
Something light? – a soup and sandwich deal
Try using your soup spoon in the other hand

At last bacon rolls have now appeared
With much more bacon than we might have feared
If you're bored, feeling like one of life's put-upons
Try counting the raisins in one of our scones
So, are we not 'posh' enough for quiche Lorraine?
Or a dish of hot porridge with smooth creamy grain
What about a pudding menu with spotted dick
With white sauce or custard, suitably thick
But please, spare a thought as to how all this fare
Appears as if by magic out of thin air
No culinary secrets, just honest endeavour
And reliance on those who volunteer, as ever
So why don't you join us – be part of the team
There's fellowship a' plenty as we further our dream.

DB

Ian Gidney

Differing perspectives

contributed

It may not be right to be talking about Presbytery Plans when not far away people are fighting for their lives and the very existence of their country and way of life. And it is difficult right now to concentrate on other things. Our use of existential in talking about the Presbytery Plan is almost improper when seen against the enormity of the threats to Ukraine and indeed the threats to the whole post WW2 order. Nor can we easily understand the scale of the threat to the Ukraine and its peoples.

Ukraine secured its independence in 1991 following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, becoming the second largest country by area in Europe, and, with a population of 43 million, the eighth most populous country in Europe. The thirty years since then have witnessed swings between east facing and west facing governments in Kyiv until in March 2014 Russia annexed the Crimea and war flared in the Donbas region in South East Ukraine. The Donbas only became part of Russia in the mid C18th soon after the discovery of coal. While accounting for only 5% of Ukraine's territory it accommodated 10% of the population and produced 20% of Ukraine's GDP. Small wonder perhaps that it has been fought over so much over the years, except that the Donbas was

a subsidised region. However it had a substantial Russian speaking population which supported former President Yanukovich who was toppled in 2014 over his decision to renege on signing a trade association pact with the EU. That was the precursor to the war in Luhansk and Donetsk which led to the Treaty of Minsk in 2015 and an uneasy fighting truce until 2022.

It is impossible to justify the actions which Russia has taken since invading Ukraine and difficult to understand how any rational person could take the decisions he must have taken which involve inflicting untold suffering not only on Ukraine but also on his own people. The United Nations estimated in late February that the Russian invasion would displace at least 5 million people, and we know that that is happening.

If Putin's aim is to recreate the old Russian and Soviet Empire then the prospect of a lasting peace being negotiated must be limited. Except that the Russian forces appear genuinely to have encountered such heavy resistance and sustained such losses that, assuming there are advisers able to confront him, either he may have to accept that he made a mistake or others will remove him.

Update on Presbytery Plan

The process for formulation of a Presbytery Mission Plan for Edinburgh and West Lothian, to give it its official title, grinds on. In this issue we trace the recent correspondence and set out some of the main points.

There are two main strands of activity; the first is general correspondence from Presbytery to all congregations, and the second relates to correspondence specifically between Presbytery and Balerno.

On the first strand Balerno Parish Church responded on 12th March to a formal request of 7 February from the Convener of the new Presbytery's Deployment Sub-Group, Dr.Stewart Weaver. That request asked all congregations to report and comment on three issues, namely;

- fundamental, strategic or general issues with or improvements to the proposed Mission Plan;
- comments and suggestions relating to particular Parishes or Congregations, unions and/or Mission Districts;
- inaccuracies or errors in the proposed Mission Plan or further context that the DSG would find useful and relevant.

That the request for comment was addressed to all congregations suggests that Presbytery have real concern about substantial underlying problems, some of which had in fact surfaced at the 15th January Presbytery meeting.

Balerno's responded to the letter of 7th February on 12 March - available on the church website. Essentially that letter reiterated and expanded on points already advanced by Balerno to Presbytery citing as fundamental flaws that

1. The plan is incompetent in that it addresses only the position of the former Edinburgh Presbytery;
2. Presbytery had reneged on the promised bottom up Plan preparation process;
3. The proposed Plan lacked any statement of Vision or Aim;
4. In proposing a Border Mission District the Plan would introduce an internal and divisive boundary between West Lothian and Edinburgh, which was inconsistent with a unified Presbytery, and in any event is impractical taking into account geographical and infrastructural considerations.
5. Having developed the Border Mission District proposal long before publication of the draft Plan in December 2021, Edinburgh Presbytery failed absolutely to consult and thereby test the proposal in advance of its effective adoption;
6. the proposal for a Border Mission District is neither reflected in nor acknowledged in the draft Plan produced by the former Presbytery of West Lothian.

Balerno Parish Council are also concerned and disturbed by the apparent disdain for the welfare of staff and clergy whose jobs are at risk if the Plan were implemented as proposed but for whom no pastoral or welfare support was in place at the point of publication in December 2021.

Balerno Parish Church also commented in the letter of 12 March that the description upon the basis of which Presbytery was considering the situation of Balerno was inaccurate and misleading, proceeding as it did on the basis of a city-centre and tourist based view of the community and demonstrating a lamentable lack of understanding of the organisation and functioning of the Upper Water of Leith Valley communities. To that extent the Presbytery's conclusions were of no value. Had Presbytery conducted a proper analysis and assessment of the evidence they should have concluded that, if any change was necessary, Balerno should continue to be part of a South-West Mission District along with Currie and Juniper Green. Importantly the response also noted that Presbytery had at no time offered any explanation the basis for their conclusion either for the Border Mission District or for the inclusion of Balerno within it.

The second strand of activity arises from a letter to Balerno, of 26 February, also from Dr Weaver, in response to Balerno's letter of 13 January which in turn set out Balerno's comments on the proposed Plan replying to a general request last December. Dr Weaver's letter of 26 February is disappointing in its reluctance to engage with the questions

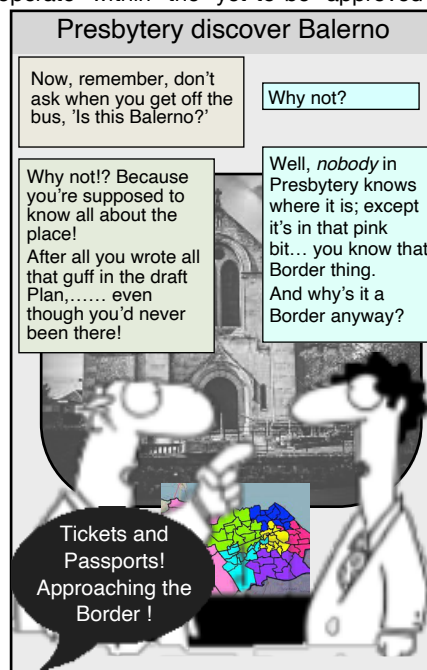
posed, although the responses such as they are do tend to support contentions advanced by Balerno since the start of this matter that in policy terms the presbytery do not appear to know what they are about. Thus;

- I. in response to a question that Presbytery had ignored its own initial brief by departing from the cluster group model for the Valley of the Water of Leith congregations - promoted by the Presbytery for the last 25 years - without consulting on the implications of such a proposal the Presbytery offered no comment responding only in generalities. They offered that 'a number of factors went into these proposals' without identifying any.
- II. In response to questions about the purpose of Border Mission District, Dr Weaver was unable to offer anything beyond a bland statement of aspiration that conversations might develop and that more detailed discussions might take place in the midst of the consultation exercise.
- III. In responding to questions about why Balerno and Currie were split away from Juniper Green Dr Weaver offered what might be described as less than helpful comment that he hoped that there would be links and connections made with our neighbours in West Lothian 'since we are now a single Presbytery....,' and that 'the consultation part of this process will presumably highlight not just the challenges to closer cooperation but also opportunities.'
- IV. In relation to Mission Districts in general Dr Weaver did not offer any greater insight. He says 'Standing Orders for the Presbytery of Edinburgh and West Lothian does not yet include a paragraph outlining the means by which Mission Districts relate to Presbytery. There is thus scope to create missionally from the ground up. It is hoped that different congregations in an area will be able to share resources and support one another.' It would follow that any progress on Mission Districts would be left to individual parishes as 'members'. Dr Weavers also says 'It was envisaged that the Border Mission District would provide an opportunity to begin conversations across the previous boundary between Edinburgh. and West Lothian. Initial conversations have taken place only to understand the West Lothian plan and its thinking more fully. More detailed discussions, it is hoped, will take place in the midst of the consultation exercise.'

Readers will recall that the draft Plan proposes brigading parishes into Mission Districts iand that Balerno is assigned to a Border District, along with Currie, Ratho, Kirkliston, Dalmeny and Queensferry. It may not be surprising that Presbytery have encouraged parishes immediately to begin to operate within the yet-to-be approved Mission Districts.

However no authority has been offered by which the new Presbytery could properly treat the proposals of the draft plan as *fait accompli*, and, for the reasons set out above, Balerno Parish Church has said to Presbytery that it is unable to accept the proposal that Balerno in effect should turn its back on the Upper Water of Leith corridor in search of a challenge in which West Lothian have indicated little interest and which Edinburgh seem unable properly to identify, far less resource.

contributed RH



BIG NOISE

Big Noise Wester Hailes will build on the success Big Noise Raploch (est. 2008); Big Noise Govanhill, Glasgow (est. 2013); Big Noise Torry, Aberdeen (est. 2015); and Big Noise Douglas, Dundee (est. 2017).

The newly appointed Head of Centre for Big Noise Wester Hailes started in post in January, joined by an Operations Manager, and, early in 2022 Sistema will appoint the first group of inspirational musicians who will start working with the children in Clovenstone, Canal View and Sighthill Primary Schools from **Spring 2022**. Sistema aim first to work during the school day with the nursery and Primary 1s and 2s and then introduce the after-school and holiday programmes from **October 2022** growing each year to retain the involvement of these children and engaging with the next generation until, as in Raploch, they are working with all ages from babies through to adults.

The Big Noise programme is delivered by the charity Sistema Scotland, a high quality, early intervention **using music to support children and young people to build resilience, pride and aspiration, improving their lives while strengthening their community**. Sistema say that Big Noise Wester Hailes will become an integral part of the community, building on the inherent strengths and abilities of the children, young people and their families to realise their full potential. Big Noise is fun and age-appropriate, delivered by staff musicians who are also educators, compassionate mentors and inspirational role models, using music to develop confidence and support positive behaviours and life choices through a carefully planned seamless curriculum from birth to adulthood. Critical to the success of the programme are the nurturing, long-term relationships developed between the musician and child/young person which have shown themselves to be more important than ever during the pandemic. All musicians are trained in positive behaviour techniques, elements of child development and psychology, de-escalation and trauma-informed practice in order to respond in the most effective and appropriate way to the needs of the children, some with Adverse Childhood Experiences.

"Big Noise makes me feel happy. Sometimes I'm lonely but I'm never lonely at Big Noise."

For more information and ways to support the development of Big Noise Wester Hailes in Edinburgh please visit Sistema's website:

www.makeabignoise.org.uk



It's coffee and cake time again!

Just in case you haven't noticed, April 2022 marks the 10th anniversary of the opening of the Mill Cafe.

Recognised across the community and up and down the Upper Water of Leith Valley as a warm and welcoming haven and hub for all, the Mill is a real and continuing presence for Balerno Parish Church in the community but a symbol of Balerno itself.

To reach ten years of continuous service is a real achievement in itself. To have done that during through one of the most difficult periods of modern times is a tribute to the commitment and enthusiasm of all those involved, and behalf of everybody the Blether says a huge THANK YOU.

well; and the celebrated soups and scones.



changing times

All organisations benefit from looking at themselves in the mirror from time to time, and Kirk Sessions aren't, or at least shouldn't be, exceptions to that golden rule.

Balerno Parish Church is having that look at itself at present, and Session members were asked to complete a short questionnaire in early March; you know the sort of thing - 'this won't take longer than ten minutes' - and you end up tearing your hair out. Questions like 'What do you consider to be the strengths of the current system?' may be relatively straightforward until you think about it. But when it gets to 'What do you consider to be the desirable characteristics of our management processes for the



future?' then you probably reach for another glass.

All of this has a very serious purpose however and that becomes more stark and pressing when you consider what was not amongst the questions; how does our church actually decide what the issues are? How does it decide what the

options are, make decisions on the options and get through its business?

Running a church is a complex business and we rely on people to 'step up to the plate' to undertake difficult and demanding roles. So when the Convener of the Steering Group gives more than ample notice that it may now be someone else's turn, what do you do? How many people want to take on the role of Convener of the Steering Group? So an *ad hoc* group is set up and it wisely decides to 'phone a friend'. Hence the questionnaire and the difficult questions like 'What do you consider should be the remit and purpose of Steering Group?'

Self assessment is a great discipline however, and some 60% of the Session membership took the time to undertake it for the benefit of the trio who made up the *ad-hoc* committee and whose task it was to report back to the March Session meeting on future arrangements.

Whatever the outcome of that process however, the important thing however is that it was done, and that meant that the outcome of the deliberations of the Ad Hoc Group were based on some fairly solid evidence of what people thought was necessary. and for 60% to take part certainly shows that members of Session are taking seriously the need to ensure that our organisational structures are fit for purpose in the C21st.

The report for the Ad Hoc Group was considered by the Kirk Session at its March meeting, and its main recommendations were accepted. Those were;

- that the Kirk Session was and must be the decision making body within Balerno Parish Church, and
- there must be committees, groups or teams to look after Finance, Fabric and Property, and Safeguarding.

However for the rest Kirk Session, recognising that such things are not straightforward said more work must be done, and a further report will be prepared for the next Session meeting in May.

Remember, it's not just coffee and cake at the Mill; there's breakfast and lunch and all those scones and that celebrated soup.

Go on, go on, go on, go on We'll see you there then!

Happy Birthday
to
THE MILL CAFE!

GO ON,

GO ON,

GO ON,

GO ON,

GO ON,

GO ON,

GO ON,

GO ON,

It's Closer than you Might Think: A Ukrainian Insight

One of the benefits of leaving home to go to university is the fact that one has the opportunity to meet people from completely different backgrounds and experiences. In the late sixties, I found myself sharing a room – in those days single rooms were not a given – with a student from Bradford. Mark spoke fluent English with a Yorkshire accent despite the fact that he had spoken only the Ukrainian language of his parents until he went to primary school.

Mark's father had somehow managed to avoid repatriation to the Soviet Union after having spent some time in a Nazi POW camp. He had settled in Bradford in what was a fairly significant Ukrainian community which blossomed in the aftermath of the war, with many of the people working in the textile industry. Many of these people would have been happy to return to the Ukraine, but that was not an option under Stalin's dictatorship where knowledge of life on the other side of the Iron Curtain was considered to be a threat to the state.

For three years we remained close friends, sharing the experiences that students share. This was the era of the cold war when Leonid Brezhnev was the leader of the USSR and was engaged in building up Soviet military resources in order to try to match the role of the USA on the world stage. It was the age of student protest at misguided government policies based on the idea that post-war peace could only be guaranteed by the acquisition of arsenals of intercontinental ballistic nuclear missiles. It was the age of the Woodstock Festival and protest about the Vietnam War.

Mark was studying Russian and was quite clear about the fact that Russian was not his language. He was equally clear about the fact that Ukraine was NOT Russia; it was a different country. He had strong views that the cold war would only start to thaw when the Brezhnev and the other members of the Politburo, who were of the generation that had experienced the Russian Revolution, had died. While people in western Europe spoke casually of Russia, Mark was at pains to point out that the state of 'Russia' was only a small part of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics many of whom resented the fact that their individual identity was being obscured by a 'pushy' state. The fact that Stalin had been so cavalier with the loss of the lives of so many men from these other states in the course of World War 2 had



reinforced a general sense of resentment and antipathy from the Ukrainians towards the Russia.

Another factor that emerged from conversations with Mark was that a significant factor in the development of the cold war was the failure of western Europeans to recognise and appreciate the significance of long standing cultural contrasts between the East and the West. The experience of government in the states of eastern Europe had been quite different from that of the west.

While western states had all experienced some form of democracy for over a century, Russia had never been able to move away from traditional autocracy and had always recoiled from democratic initiatives. As a consequence, ordinary Russians saw nothing exceptional in the idea of an authoritarian regime.

When, in the late 1980's, glasnost and perestroika emerged under the chairmanship of Mikhail Gorbachev, it was not simply because of the passing of Brezhnev's generation, it was also because of the fact that Russia and the Soviet Union had stagnated. It appeared that Mark had been correct in his prediction of the demise of the USSR and as the bonds of the Soviet era relaxed, so the style of the previously aligned governments diverged.

I was therefore alarmed when I heard reports last month of President Putin's assertions to the effect that Ukraine was a non-country with neither history nor identity. Such a statement suggested complete contempt for a neighbouring country whose only crime was to want to be different. Given my previous contact and insight into a Ukrainian perspective, it seemed to me that no self-respecting Ukrainian would be unmoved on hearing such a declaration. The reports which we have been seeing on the television of the destruction in Ukraine bear out Mark's portrayal of the Ukrainians as having a clear idea of their identity which is irreconcilable with the perspective of Vladimir Putin.

Mark took the opportunity in the years following perestroika to return to work in eastern Europe and he built up several business interests. We remained in contact for 5 decades since our graduation, responding regularly to each other's emails until the end of February . . .

contributed
John Burnside



Something isn't quite right here...

Now we know there's one pretty obvious difference between the two pictures below and the scene today, although we're not sure that the tree was in fact quite as close to the Church as it appears. Yes, of course the tree that for years fulfilled the role of Balerno's Christmas Tree isn't there any more, But can you tell us the seven differences between the two pictures?

Mark the differences on a copy of the Blether, available at the Mill Cafe, and then pop in to the Mill (for some of their excellent scones, bacon rolls, soups, cakes, tea, coffee etc) and there'll be a sheet showing the answers there for you!





A Hymn to the Radical Action Plan

Dear Editor,

I've so far read with interest the Blether's analysis of the so called Radical Action Plan and am totally dismayed with its content and organisation. Then, having been in church last Sunday and joining in one of my favourite hymns – the line 'Open my eyes that I may see' immediately made me think of the Radical Action Plan. I apologise if I offend anyone – that is not my intention – but the following words accurately fit the tune.

Open your eyes that you may see
How could you act so foolishly
Knock on our door, we have the key
It's obvious where the boundaries should be
Silently now I wait for thee
I'm not going down on bended knee
Open your eyes, illumined be
This church is mine.

Open your ears that you may hear
The voices of reason are o so clear
Rethink the plan you're to pioneer
We'll help the problems disappear
Silently still I wait for thee
Fast in my faith, a devotee
Open your ears, illumined be
This church is mine.

Open your mouths that you may bear
Show me you truly are aware
A sensible plan for all prepare
Our faith with our neighbours still to share
Silently how long must I wait for thee
It's a proper discussion there needs to be
Open your mouths, illumined be
This church is mine.

Looking forward to a sensible outcome.

A Worshipper
Balerno



Street names Where do they come from?

Dear Editor

Someone asked me the other day about how names were selected for streets in the new housing areas in Balerno. I hope this may help.

Street names are decided on by Edinburgh Council who have asked the Community Council to comment on ideas offered by the City. In the case of Ravelrig Heights and Kingfisher Park they approached the Community Council in the summer of 2017. The names they offered did not seem to the Community Council to have any direct connection with the community and we therefore suggested some names that related to members of the community, including names recorded on the Balerno Roll of Honour. That seemed to us to be important given the then upcoming Centenary of the 1918 Armistice.

The names submitted by the Community Council were offered along with information about individuals and relevant locations. Those names along with the information are set out on the Community Council website. The specific case in question was Blackadder Drive, the name of which commemorates Gilbert Brown Ritchie Blackadder, born in Crichton in about 1889. whose mother was Mary Ritchie and his father William. William had the farm of Craigentarrie, which lies to the North East of the Black Springs, now a ruin but which dated from the late 17thC. Gilbert Blackadder was a corporal in the 12th Battalion, Highland Light Infantry, and he died on 25 September 1915 at the Battle of Loos.

Some street names relate to locations in the area. The Blackadders' home at Craigentarrie Farm is one such, remembered in the name Craignetarrie Mews. Craigentarrie Farm was certainly still occupied and functioning as a farm until after the Second World War. There are apparently records of deliveries of groceries along with paraffin made each Thursday from Juniper Green Co-op. By 1975 it was being used as a week-end retreat, but stories are told of supplies being delivered by ski to Craigentarrie in the extreme winter of 1962/63, and the odds are it was still operating as a farm at that time. Craigentarrie would have had only basic accommodation at the best of times; the house is recorded in 1911 as having two windows.

You can get lots more information on street names at balerno-communitycouncil.org.uk.

Yours sincerely,

Richard M Henderson
Chair, Balerno Community Council

Really radical stuff

Dear Editor,

At a time when many people may be wondering what the Church is getting up to with Radical Action Plans and Presbytery Mission Plans, could it be useful to think about how open to modernisation the Church may be. Let's start with language shall we?

What is a 'deliverance' in Church of Scotland speak, and is it different from an 'overture'? There may be something quaintly endearing about some of the language of the Church, but is it time to emerge from the C18th and ask whether the language of the Church may not be holding us back from engaging usefully with modern society and *vice versa*?

Many people think of an overture as a prelude to a classical orchestral work; few might recognise it as the method by which a Presbytery brings a matter before the General Assembly. Similarly a 'deliverance', a strange word at the best of times, might be thought to be the act of delivering someone or something or the state of being delivered, as in being rescued for example. However few might immediately think of 'deliverance' as a resolution, something setting the agenda or direction for future work.

Now if the Church wants to be radical we might want to go to the root of things, and ask whether the language we use should be readily understandable, or would such a move be too threatening, too radical?

multo etiam radicatus

What's in a name?

Dear Editor,

Do anyone ever wonder about the difference an 'e' can make? No? Well we can hardly blame anyone for that. But take for example 'convener', or '*conveener*' in old Scots, and 'convenor'. The Church of Scotland loves conveners, or is it convenors?

As nouns the difference between convener and convenor is that the former is one who convenes or calls a meeting while the latter is one who assembles for an official or public purpose; like a trade union convenor, although on 28 December 1974 the Scotsman did reportedly describe Mr John Foster of Cowdenbeath as convener of Fife district shop stewards for the passenger section of the TGWU. I hope that clears up the difficulty

Well, next on the list, what about moderators and conveners then? Of course Kirk Sessions, like the General Assembly, are church courts, and have to be presided over by a Moderator, much as a convener presides over the meeting of a church committee, only it's a court not a committee.

Next month the wonderful world of the hyphen.
sgd S Pellin

Do You Have a Minute, Lord?

I am perplexed; I see the news of the events in the Ukraine and the unwarranted suffering inflicted upon innocent people whose only crime is to support a government which gives them freedom to say what they think. Their army is outnumbered, but they are prepared to die for their freedom. How can these things be allowed to happen? This is almost an action replay of the events which led to the outbreak of war in Europe in 1945 – the difference is that the news reports are no longer in monochrome. The images are all in vivid colour; this time the rallies are in a sports stadium in Russia and the flags are a different colour.



I think that the people of Ukraine know how David felt when he wrote Psalm 35 and said, "God, how long are you going to stand there doing nothing? Save me from their brutalities; everything I've got is being thrown to the lions." When peace broke out in 1945 governments appeared to work hard to try to get on with those whom they still distrusted in spite of the 'Iron Curtain.' They laid down their swords and although they made some new ones, they were trying not to use them. They trusted in peaceful negotiation and yet here we are again, faced with the ambitions of a ruthless leader who has the resources to mislead his people through censorship and the control of information.

I know that we are discouraged from, "Putting God to the test," but at this precise moment I have to say that I feel that you are pushing it a bit. What about a bit of give and take? If I was created in your image – why are you putting me to the test? Or is this just about the fact that all the people who were ostensibly pursuing peace were really doing it for an ulterior motive of profit or power and they aren't the good guys that we like to think they are? If that is the case, then it is the people of Ukraine who are paying the bill.

This is going to sound facetious, Lord, but there are times when it is pointed out that mankind can't expect you to sort out all the world's problems and that you could do with a bit of practical assistance from the bodies on the ground. I think that we have reached a stage when some reciprocal support might be welcomed!

Contributed

Do you remember COP26?

It's not all that long ago, so we should remember it quite vividly still. So what's happened since last November in climate protection terms? Well as far as Balerno Parish Church is concerned possibly not a lot, and that is probably not surprising given the sudden and dramatic shifts in global politics and energy prices since November 2021.

Balerno Parish Church is an eco-congregation. That means it's part of an ecumenical programme helping churches make the link between environmental issues and Christian faith, and respond in practical action in the church, in the lives of individuals, and in the local and global community. Balerno used to have a dedicated group addressing eco issues, but no doubt for a variety of reasons that approach came to an end and eco-congregation was 'mainstreamed' becoming the responsibility of everyone. Are we taking up the challenge?

Remember Urgenda? A Dutch climate activist group on their way to COP26, stopping off at the Mill Cafe for lunch. That's right; at the Mill Cafe. Happy Birthday Mill Cafe! And thank you for helping keep the Climate Justice flag flying.



FreshStart

helping people make a home for themselves



There will be a collection of household items for FRESH START on the following dates: Friday 6th and Saturday 7th May, 10 am - 12 noon and Sunday 8th May, 9.30 am - 12 noon. This will take place in the Rear Hall, which is behind Balerno Parish Church

Donations, in good clean condition will be gratefully received, e.g. crockery, cutlery, pots and pans, bedding, curtains, towels and small electrical items. 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.

Your donations will be sorted and packed by local volunteers and transported to Fresh Start premises ready for distribution to homeless people who have just been allocated somewhere to live.

Help with sorting and packing at any of the above times will be most gratefully received.

For further information please contact Sandra Lyall 449 4375

Special Invitation to a Special Service

Easter Day is Sunday 17th April and is special for two reasons this year. It is always a wonderful celebration of Jesus resurrection but this year it is also the 10th Anniversary of the opening of The Mill Café.

The service in the church at 10.00 will be a Thanksgiving Service for 10 years of The Mill Café and I am specifically inviting Mill volunteers past and present to come and help make it particularly special.

Rev Andre Groenewald

Date for your diary

When - Wednesday 25 May

What - Supper 'n Song with music from
One Bar Rest, The Choir and Quintingle, &
supper by Mackenzies of Colinton

Where - St Joseph's Hall

Ticket - £18

And - collection to raise money in aid of
Disasters Emergency Committee Ukraine
Appeal

Useful Contact Details

Minister; Dr André Groenewald

AGroenewald@churchofscotland.org.uk

0131 449 3830 or 07588845814

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Balerno Blether; bpc-editor@balernochurch.org.uk 0131 449 4314

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

Choir & Music Martin Petty; mpetty712@gmail.com 0131 449 4175



The Ministry of Music

There are some things about music than can be quite revealing about people – and there are some things about people that can be quite revealing about music. Dave Brubeck is well remembered as the leader of various innovative jazz combos from the 1950's on, but it is less well known that he wrote sacred music. As early as 1965 he wrote a short piece, "Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled," to comfort his brother, Howard,



Dave Brubeck

whose son had died of a brain tumour at the age of 16. He once explained that he had been reared as a Presbyterian by a Christian Scientist mother who attended a Methodist Church and stressed that three Jewish teachers shaped his life – philosopher Irving Goleman, composer Darius Milhaud and Jesus.

Brubeck was eventually baptized into the Catholic Church, following the performance of a Mass which he had been commissioned to write in 1979, entitled "To Hope! A celebration." Brubeck said the experience of writing it prompted him to join the Catholic Church, "because someone somewhere was pulling me toward that end. Over the years I've had strong friendships with many priests. As a matter of fact, a group of Christian leaders from the National Council of Churches came to my house in the 1950s to ask me to write music for a Mass. I didn't think I was ready at that time.

So, in a sense, I guess joining the church and writing the Mass was a culmination of a long journey that is still going on."

Duke Ellington, whose orchestra was considered by many to be the most integrated jazz band of the twentieth century, is not normally associated with religious music, but he

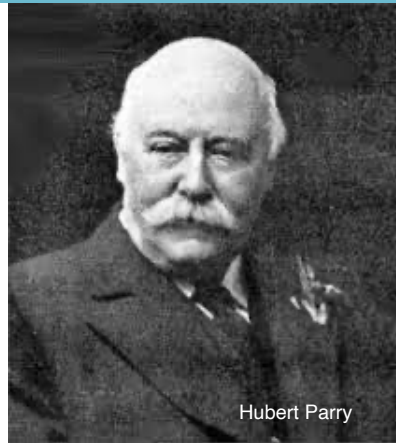


Duke Ellington

regarded the music which he wrote for his three 'Sacred Concerts' as, 'the most important thing I have ever done.' He said many times that he was never trying to compose a "Mass" and a critic characterized the three concerts as Ellington bringing the Cotton Club revue to the church. Interestingly, the first of these concerts took place in the Grace Cathedral in San Francisco in 1965 with choral contributions being integrated with jazz solos. Performances of the work continued long after Ellington's death in 1973 and were performed in Britain under the leadership of Stan Kenton.

For whatever reason, both of these prolific composer/performers were drawn to express their faith in the language of the musical notes and rhythms which were the building blocks of their everyday lives. Their form was unconventional and their lives were contrasting. While Brubeck's marriage lasted for 70 years, many people find it challenging to reconcile the idea that a man like Ellington who had such an apparent disregard for certain commandments could have had a devotional life which involved daily bible reading.

A further contrast appears when you explore the beliefs of prominent contributors to more traditional British church music. It is interesting to discover the number of composers and arrangers whose music has contributed much to what might be termed 'regular' Christian worship but who had little, if indeed any, Christian Faith. Vaughan Williams, whose music accompanies many of our hymns and who was an occasional church organist was described by his wife as a 'cheerful agnostic,' who



Hubert Parry

identified a common spiritual denominator for humanity regardless of creed.

Hubert Parry, another agnostic and well known for his composition of 'Jerusalem', wrote a sequence of songs entitled *Songs of Farewell*. When he heard the songs, his fellow composer, Walford Davies who was an evangelical Christian, found it difficult to accept the idea that Parry did not share his Christian conviction.

Benjamin Britten's War Requiem is regarded as having been one of the most significant compositions of the twentieth century and it is the largest of Britten's many religious compositions, but Britten was a humanist rather than a believer and this starts to suggest that there is something in Vaughan Williams' idea that music does represent a common denominator for our spiritual senses.

John Rutter, who has contributed much to worship through the



John Rutter

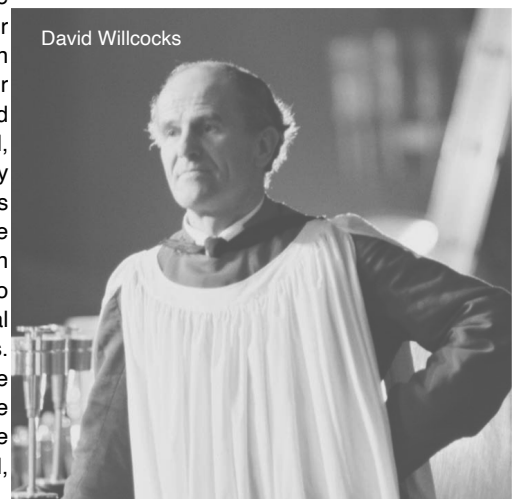
composition of popular anthems as well as Christmas carols is well known to be, 'A friend, fellow traveller and agnostic supporter of the Christian faith.' While that can come as a surprise to people, his position is by no means unique. Neither of the two best known choirmasters of

King's College Cambridge of recent years, David Willcocks and Stephen Cleobury enjoyed religious conviction. It was Willcocks' view that it was his business as an organist and choral trainer to make music as skilfully as possible in order to help individuals in the congregation to find God – whatever that might mean for them.

Archbishop William Temple (1881-1944) who began his career as a teacher, seemed to have an understanding of this view when he said to a group of his pupils, 'There is no charm in the whole realm of art so subtle, so intangible, so ethereal as that of music. It is the most spiritual and incalculable of all modes of expression.'

The words of Psalm 150 are a wonderful exhortation to praise and appears in the modern hymn book as number 169 - *Praise the Lord with the Sound of Trumpet*. Benjamin Britten composed a rather more complex arrangement of the psalm which is performance rather than participation, but is equally uplifting. At the end of the day there are probably a variety of reasons why composers are moved to write or arrange music. Some

may write it for themselves as an expression of their personal belief and understanding of God, while others may compose because it is a gift which they have and which they, in turn, can pass on to enhance the spiritual experience of others. In the words of one theologian, it may be the case that while they haven't got God, God has got them.



David Willcocks



Fairtrade matters

After last year's unwelcome Covid break, when only Harmeny School's lovely pictures bravely kept the Balerno Schools Fairtrade

Art Competition flag flying, this year's bumper entry of thoughtful, lively pieces of work - 193 from Dean Park Primary and Balerno High Schools - was a rare triumph too. Not just because of the numbers taking part: the young artists' clear grasp of the need to care about our world and fellow-people is also so heartening, at a time when that's needed more than ever.

Congratulations again to all who took part, and big thanks to their Staff for making it possible. Many thanks also to Lynsey and everyone who helped accommodate the exhibition of winning entries, brightening up The Mill entrance since early March, with winning video entries also on show via Balerno Fairtrade Village Group's Facebook platform. And for The Mill's and indeed the whole of (FT Church!) Balerno Parish Church's staunch commitment to using Fairtrade products, the best thanks must surely be



knowing how much this helps half a million people in over sixty countries get a fairer deal, safer livelihoods, vital local health and educational projects, and much better chances of tackling climate change at local level. Even when the products we need can be hard to find in the shops, it really matters to go on seeking them out – and remind stockists we still want them.

Yes, local children get it. How about us adults? It's hoped that eco-friendly and fair practices become the new norms, whether or not local organisations apply for formal recognition: we also know that, only human, we have to keep reminding ourselves of the



Meanwhile, when we visit April 9's Farmers' Market, let's support the Fairtrade stall, with its Traidcraft Easter eggs, colourful wooden decorations, cards, crafts and much more.

At the Children's Gala on May 28th, come and hoopa a Scotmid-sponsored FT banana. And listen out for news about helping celebrate, maybe in the autumn, fairly traded South American products.

Our own workaday spending matters too. If we buy FT whenever we can, however little it may seem, it's really making a difference. Thank you everyone for sticking with it!

contributed by Lesley Henderson
for Balerno Fairtrade Village Group



from the Blether team

We make no apology for writing again about the proposed Presbytery Plan for West Lothian and Edinburgh. There are much more important subjects which demand our attention, and one day there will be peace again in Ukraine. But it is also difficult to entirely ignore or escape from problems which are closer to home. Yes, the proposed Presbytery Plan is still with us and we cannot ignore it.

Part of the problem is that the proposed Plan isn't really a plan at all. It resembles more simply a reorganisation to meet a budget, from which, once in place, Presbytery hope that changes will follow. There is an absence of rigour in the analysis of what is required to implement the Radical Action Plan in West Lothian and Edinburgh. The Plan's answer seems to be largely based on introducing Mission Districts which magically will bring parishes together in common cause.

The Edinburgh Presbytery had several years to prepare its draft plan, but they left it until the very last moment before rushing off the stage at the end of December to avoid the silence of an underwhelmed audience. A draft Plan then which amounts to little more than a rearrangement of deck chairs and exhortations to do more with less. As a Plan; *Nul points*, as they might say.

Corporate mergers are difficult at the best of time; but they tend to be carried out by people who have some kind of vision along with the benefit of a command structure; this is what is going to happen, they might say, because we are in charge. Voluntary organisations demand much more complex and sympathetic management, if only because command can only go so far and the question of who is in charge can lead to major debates.

Willingness to consult is at the heart of most organisations which seek success. And that must be especially true for voluntary organisations. Cutting costs against a background of a declining membership across the Church was always going to require a proper and extensive engagement with stakeholders including members and staff. Merging two presbyteries at the same time as

making cuts in staff complements and reducing opportunities complicates the already complicated.

Edinburgh Presbytery's handling of the Presbytery Plan to date could be a textbook example of how not to do it, whatever 'it' might be.

The Blether does not speak for Balerno Parish Church but it can say that what has happened to date in the Presbytery Plan process has disrupted the development of local planning here as well as disappointing widely and giving rise to significant stress. Nor has that disappointment and distress been confined to Balerno. We are aware of widespread dissatisfaction with the process engaged by the Presbytery in its preparation of the draft plan, just as we are also aware of significant dissatisfaction with the Plan's proposals. One knows something is not right when the Church of Scotland's business makes headlines in the local newspaper.

There is, we believe, little if any sympathy for the Presbytery's proposals, partly because the Plan achieves what most rush-jobs manage; it upsets nearly everyone and pleases virtually no-one. We are of aware of any, far less any enthusiastic, support in this area for the implementation of those proposals. There is anger that the Presbytery could seek to undermine or undo what Balerno and our neighbours have been working so hard over the years to achieve in the Valley. There is disbelief that the Presbytery could have executed a *volte face* in tabling a top-down solution when it knew that a bottom up process was essential; support from its members is what the Church needs now more than ever. And there is frustration and disbelief at the clumsy and inept way that the Presbytery has ignored the effects of its process and proposals on its own staff.

And all of these reflect not only on the integrity of the Plan, but more importantly, on the competence of the Presbytery to undertake this massive task in the first place.

hearsay

- I've got a Kirk Session meeting tonight.
- Oh yes, that's for those and such as those, isn't it?
- **No it isn't, anyone can come.**
- Anyone?
- **Yes, anyone that's a member so that includes you. When you're not on the golf course, anyway.**
- You're obsessed with me being on the golf course.
- **And not without reason. But yes, you can sit in but not vote on anything.**
- Have we always had a Kirk Session?
- **They've been around since the 16th Century or so.**
- So what is it – a Kirk Session, I mean?
- **Well, it's the lowest Court in the Church of Scotland, made up of the minister and elders...**
- Eh? What? A Court?
- **Yes, a Court – the highest one is the General Assembly.**
- So... if it's a court ... does it actually try people?
- **No! Or anyway not nowadays.**
- But they did?
- **Yes, long ago, erring parishioners could be hauled before the Kirk Session for various crimes ...**
- Such as...?
- **Oh well ... drunkenness, swearing, breaking the Sabbath...'**
- My Granny never hung her washing out on a Sunday.
- **There you go, then. But they were also responsible for poor relief...**
- Poor relief...?
- **The Burroo back then...**
- Oh, right.
- **... education, baptismal and marriage records up to 1855, inquiries into illegitimacy, punishments...**
- Wait, what???
- **Oh yes, couldn't have that, pre-marital relations etc, you know...**
- I remember there was that lassie in the Youth Fellowship...
- **I don't know who you're taking about...?**
- Aye you do ... Isobel her name was ... and that lad from...
- **Oh them... I believe they've just celebrated their Golden Wedding!**
- So it lasted, then! But they weren't disgraced in front of the congregation, were they?
- **No, no, we stopped doing that a long time ago.**
- Hmm... maybe it's not quite so interesting nowadays, then...?

Woof !! Hello everyone, it's me again.

After my successful ploy on avoiding unnecessary walks, sadly, another tale (sorry, no pun intended) of woe awaits you.

Now, all dogs must accept that taking occasional walks can be useful, mainly as a bargaining chip for a future time, for there's always going to be something we don't want to do, so a few 'good boy' remarks in the bank are almost essential.

This week, 'herself' walked me into Balerno village and up to the café by the church where my lead was tied to the railings. I kid you not, I sat there patiently for over thirty minutes. Soon I began to notice some rather 'tasty' young lady doggies, (it's not the proper word I know but there are limits) who I was keen to get to know. Didn't even get as much as a sniff! – my lead only allowing a couple of feet movement in any direction. One kindly old lady took pity on my plight and offered me a biscuit, which I accepted (out of politeness of course) – a sort of doggie version of the 'widows mite' I suppose.



Walkies

Churches Within Walls

Not an ATM?
A MAAT

Over the last 6 months there has been a considerable amount of conversation and discussion generated by the Edinburgh Presbytery Mission Plan, a draft of which was published in December and which is currently being revised.

A key aspect and driver of the Mission Plan has been the reduction in the number of people coming forward in training for parish ministry in the 21st century. It is understandable that there is a lot of speculation about how many communities are to be served by the Church and ministered to in the future.

One possible solution which is being explored is the MAAT project which is an acronym for Ministry At All Times. Over recent decades we have seen a decline in the number of banks as new technology has overtaken the old methods of doing things and this change has been accompanied by the proliferation of ATM's – Cash Machines – which will dispense cash as and when it is required by the public.

It has been suggested that the Churches in Scotland might follow a model which is being developed in the US which could provide a network of 'holes in the wall', installed to meet the spiritual needs of the community. The developers of the project initially thought that some of the capital cost might be offset by sponsorship from the businesses of Funeral Undertakers and Wedding Planners, but are now investigating the ecumenical opportunities which might allow different denominations to share the new facilities.

The potential benefits of these developments are immense with personalised services immediately available whenever and wherever you want them. At present the version on offer here – MAAT/01/04 – would display a list of services and situations for which the user might wish a response and by using the keypad to enter the appropriate code a printout could be dispensed in much the same way as an ATM dispenses a receipt. Regular users could apply for a card which would allow the Church to keep a record of their needs and

perhaps make personal contact if it was felt to be appropriate. This, however, would require safeguards to be in place to ensure compliance with Data Protection legislation at all times.

The MAAT project is not without some controversy as there is a body of opinion which feels that such a strategy could undermine the identity of our Christian communities, and that while we should all have a direct relationship with God, our mission is best fulfilled through talking to each other.

The Editors have condensed this article from a press release which was received on April 1st 2022.



Several pats on the head and sundry platitudes later I had a desperate urge to do a 'Samson' and drag the railings into the café – the heavens opened and soon the rain was teeming down. Ten whole minutes it took, to completely saturate me – and what sympathy did I get? "Oh you poor boy, you're wet through". What did she think? – I'd been for a swim perhaps?

So then, I either cash-in some of my bargaining chips or revert to plan A and devise a cunning strategy.

Does it rain in Currie do you think? – this is getting serious.

Woof !!Woof !! Woof...



When finest aspirations fail

When finest aspirations fail
and dreams become dismay,
and all the hopes tomorrow held
lie felled by yesterday.

what can we do, where do we turn,
what can we say?

We hurt for what has happened
and we fear for what's to come,
and easy consolation leaves us
negative and numb,
and wondering whether deeper depths
are yet to plumb.

Shall they control our destiny
who, deaf to our demands,
are ruled by other values
and defer to their commands?
And are Our futures safe
in these unwanted hands?

This poem appears in a compilation of materials published by the Iona Community for use in worship during Holy Week. It aims to associate all the brokenness which we experience with the brokenness of Christ, in order that, through him, and in imitation of him, disintegrated lives may be made new.

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Oh, Christ, you lost control,
or so it seems, when to a tree
they nailed you and regaled you
and refused to set you free;
and all because you showed
how life was meant to be.

Then must our hopes, like you,
be broken down beyond repair,
must we be lost and powerless,
befriended by despair,
in order somehow to be saved
and sense God's care?

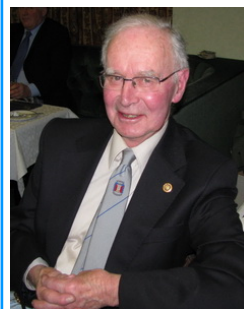
And shall our hopes, like you,
arise from where they ceased to be;
and shall the spirit that was crushed
be transformed and set free?
If that's God's will, then we await,
what's yet to be.

Services in April

3 April @ 9 am	Breakfast service
3 April @ 10 am	Worship Service
10 April @ 10 am	Palm Sunday
14 April @ 7 pm	Maundy Thursday service in Balerno
15 April @ 7 pm	Good Friday service in Currie Kirk
17 April @ 10 am	Easter Thanksgiving service celebrating The Mill café's 10th anniversary

remembering

Ian Falconer



Ian Falconer, a long time elder and Treasurer at Balerno Parish Church died on 3 March 2022 at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary, aged 97.

He was a member of our congregation for many years before moving north to Aberdeen a few years ago, having been an Elder of

Balerno Parish Church and Treasurer for more years than most can remember.

For the 'day job' Ian had been the last Head Master of Balerno School, where he had taken up post in 1961, and he was also the first Head Teacher of Dean Park Primary School when Balerno School transformed itself and literally walked up the road on 22nd June 1971. Overall Ian devoted a career of over 25 years between 1961 and 1987 to education in Balerno.

Ian was also a longstanding and much respected member of 'Let it Blow', and his recitation of that most difficult Burns epic, 'The Cottar's Saturday Night' lives on in the admiration of those who ever heard it. His link with the Burns Club from 1976 contributed greatly to the success of the Club's annual School Burns competition, and it continued after he left Balerno as he joined 'Let It Blow' annual suppers during lockdown via Zoom.

Ian Falconer was a well respected and well liked figure, across the whole community of Balerno.

From the Pews to the Mews a message from the Minister

When I think of Scotland I think of green hills and lush valleys. In Psalm 121 the psalmist says:

I lift up my eyes to the hills
where does my help come from?
My help comes from the Lord,
the Maker of heaven and earth.

Psalm 121 is about a faithful believer of God who was afraid of all the dangers that faced him on his journey home. He stands on the footsteps of the temple in Jerusalem and the only thing he sees is the hills that surround Jerusalem. Then God speaks to him through the priest telling him: He will be with him through his whole journey home. He is the Almighty God and oversees everything - even the sun and the moon. Nothing will happen to him unless He wills it! He will protect him. He must just trust him and believe that he is not alone.

Sometimes we also experience feelings of anxiety, despair, and sadness when we look at all the proverbial hills that surround us - Hills of grief, worries, broken relationships, abuse and depression that feels almost impossible to overcome. But the Lord God

says He is with us and will help us with whatever upsets or trouble us like He did on another hill called Golgotha. God overpowered the hill at Golgotha into One of living hope when He in Jesus Christ took all our sins and misery upon Himself for us to live in all eternity with God. He showed us in a very concrete way how much He cares about us. We have the living hope that we too that have faith will not die but live in all eternity with God.

So when we are faced with a steep hill, we have choices. We can either experience feelings of concern or have the living hope of God's victory in Jesus' resurrection.

My prayer for each and everyone this Easter is that we will not be overpowered by our proverbial hills that make us anxious or scared but look with hope at the hill of Golgotha where God changed our destiny forever and ever! May we climb and overcome our proverbial hills with faith, hope and love.

With all my blessings
and a happy Easter,

André Groenewald

Across

- 1 Retreat (8)
- 5 Grow weary (4)
- 9 Tourist island in the Bay of Naples (5)
- 10 Winding (7)
- 11 Bramley, say (7,5)
- 13 Period of time in office (6)

Down

- 1 Cord in a candle (4)
- 2 Proceeding from the general to the particular (3-4)
- 3 Being behind the wheel and under the influence (5-7)
- 4 Go with (6)
- 6 Respite (3-2)
- 7 Contraptions (8)

- 14 Trap-spinner (6)
- 17 Permanent (12)
- 20 Boost (7)
- 21 Mousy (5)
- 22 Lowest bass wind instrument (4)
- 23 Dressy clothing (4,4)

- 8 Thwarted (12)
- 12 Most stuffy (8)
- 15 Mid-meal (anag) - quandary (7)
- 16 Harrowing experience (6)
- 18 Addiction treatment (5)
- 19 Likelihood of something happening (4)

Answers to March Crossword



Crossword Corner

