

balerno



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



Blether

but
50p in the red can
would be much
appreciated!

Apples in Greenfield

Issue number 27
October 2023



Moving towards Union. Having a plan; and choosing a name



On 12 September the Presbytery of Edinburgh and West Lothian agreed that the charge of Currie will become vacant on 19 September 2023 following on Rev Dr Easter Smart's acceptance of a post in the US. It also appointed Rev Dr Anne Logan to be Interim Moderator of Currie Kirk.

The Presbytery Plan agreed in April this year had placed Currie and Balerno in deferred union. The vacancy in Currie means that that deferred union will now effectively, even if not yet formally, become a union to be implemented by 1 January 2025.

Progression towards that union will involve a number of specific steps starting with preparation of the Basis of Union, which the name implies will set out the basis on which Currie Kirk and Balerno Parish Church agree to the Union. The document has to be agreed by each Kirk Session and is then put to each congregation. It also has to pass scrutiny by the Presbytery and Departments in 121 George Street.

At a meeting in August of the Currie and Balerno group which has been looking at moves towards Union, Presbytery's representative strenuously encouraged swift progress towards the Basis of Union. That progress is complicated not just because of all approvals required but also because bringing two organisations together is intrinsically complicated, even if they have lived beside each other for over two hundred years. For two congregations to approve a Basis of Union is not simply, and should not be simply a mechanical tick box process. It involves a cultural adjustment developing a shared perspective and vision for the future across communities.

Balerno Parish Church has of course known for some time that Union was coming, and ever since the first iteration of the Presbytery Plan it was clear that our partner would be Currie Kirk, although the structure of the new Presbytery was not settled until April of this year. For some considerable time the Presbytery had assigned Balerno and Currie into what it called somewhat strangely the *Border Mission District*, cutting both off from the Water of Leith Valley community. Sorting that out took literally months of huge effort. While Balerno and Currie are now at the least at a starting line towards a Union, albeit somewhat sooner than they might have envisaged, it is always dangerous to try to rush a job.

The first step towards the Basis of Union will be to agree a Name for the new parish. Should be simple? After all what's in a name? Well, quite a lot really, because it's not simply up to Currie and Balerno to choose it. The Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) is pretty intimately involved. And of course Presbytery and 121 will be equally, if not more intimately involved.

So there is a process to be gone through on the name, once

Currie and Balerno have agreed on one. And yes, there are of course rules for that to ensure that a name is acceptable. For example it mustn't be the same or too like the name of another charity.

So, what name is appropriate? It comes down to what Balerno Parish Church and Currie Kirk together want the new Church to be called. The first step on that is for Balerno to decide what it wants; and importantly the congregation has a voice on that. It is better then that the congregation be asked early on; what name would you like for the new Church.

So the Blether are inviting our readers to get involved. There are some candidate names already. 'Water of Leith' was figuring in some but the Presbytery signalled that that might be difficult given that the Water of Leith runs a fair distance down stream from Currie and Balerno. But if you'd like *Water of Leith*, or any other title included, then it's best to say so. It could be included beside *Currie and Balerno* or should that be *Balerno and Currie* or *Currie Balerno* or vice versa. Or what about simply Kirk of Currie and Balerno? Now that does seem to have some historical resonances. And signs outside Balerno Church could also include something like *Balerno Campus* as a sub-title. After all Balerno and Currie will still be open and functioning; we're only choosing a name for the new united charge.

But before we get too carried away by the allure of choosing a name we do need to remember that we are still only at the start line of the move to a union. There must be a plan for how we are going to get from where we are to where we know we will have to be; in a union with Currie.

At a recent meeting of the Balerno planning group charged by the Kirk Session with developing the Union it was agreed that a scoping paper should be produced to identify the main issues which have to be addressed. Chief amongst those will be knowing what Union means in terms of decisions we have to take. It would be nice simply to wave a magic wand and wake up one morning to find 'here's one I made earlier.' But since article 2 of the Basis of Union will say that 'all the property and funds belonging to or on behalf of each congregation shall belong to or be held on behalf of the united charge' there will have to be some process to determine just what that means. What is 'our property'? Counting individual tea spoons may be going a bit far; but at the least the Asset Register would have to be reviewed and updated.

Balerno's Finance Committee are already looking at convergence of financial arrangements with Currie. But there is probably a need to spell out what has to be done across the board to achieve union, so that everyone can understand it.

Here's who we think we are! in which we interview folk so they can tell us something of what we probably *don't* know about them. If you'd like to tell us about yourself then please get in touch with the editor!

George Taylor looks back on building the Tay Road Bridge



It was a wonderful day, never to be forgotten... It's the story of my very special happy day of memories of 57 years ago. I do hope you can share in this happy day for me, as happiness is the most important thing in life, and to look back on my career with me ... George's own introduction to this article, describing how his daughter Shona took him to Dundee on the 57th anniversary of the opening of the Bridge, and how he met the present Bridge Master, his Deputy and others.

The Tay Road Bridge was opened 57 years ago in August, and George had played an important part in this enormous engineering project – as a trained draughtsman he drew all the original drawings for the Bridge. George admits to being slightly apprehensive about this meeting with the Bridge staff, but he need not have worried – they were delighted to meet him and bombarded him with questions! He was able to provide them with information about many things they had wondered about for years and no one had been able to tell them about, for instance reasons behind features of the Bridge design. Also, they had no idea that the Royal Bank of Scotland had produced a commemorative £10 bank note – until George showed them an original one! George was also able to show them a silver pendant given to his wife by the designer of the Bridge, Dr W A Fairhurst, based on the design of the Bridge.

George left school in 1949 and began a 5-year apprenticeship as a draughtsman with Sir William Arrol's in Glasgow, – a major steelworks in design, fabrication and construction. He joined the Institution of Civil Engineers, later becoming a Fellow of the Institution and just last year received a Congratulation for 70 years as a Civil Engineer. On finishing his Time in Arrol's, he joined a Structural and Civil Engineers design Partnership in Glasgow. A few years later he gave a paper in Glasgow and won the Miller prize – the paper was then selected to be given in London and won the Institutional Medal for that year.

The senior partner of the company was Mr (later Dr) W A Fairhurst, and in 1960 he was appointed to produce a design for a Road Bridge across the River Tay, between Dundee and Fife. Mr Fairhurst was a noted bridge designer – the Queen's Bridge over the River Tay in Perth (a project with which George had also been involved) had just been completed.

Mr Fairhurst presented his proposal later in 1960 to the Tay Road Bridge Joint Committee and it was accepted. The next stage was to get Government Approval on the scheme.

Mr Fairhurst had appointed George to work on the new Tay Road Bridge early on, responsible for producing the drawings himself (thanks to his excellent training at Arrol's), then taking these

drawings and calculations to London where a Bill for presentation was prepared. So off George went on the night sleeper to London, presenting the Proposal to Parliament – as all the political parties at the time agreed to the necessity of having a bridge, the Bill was a non-political one and the lawyers got it accepted – and then getting the last train back to Glasgow. These drawings were so important there was no question of flying! Contract documents had to be prepared for the Bridge work tenderers Duncan Logan of Muir of Ord won the contract, attracted to the concept (also employed on the Queen's Bridge in Perth) of building a parallel temporary bridge which saved hours of construction time.

Work started in 1963 and developed at a terrific rate. George was now set to work following the progress on-site, setting up monthly meetings with the main contractors, Logan's, and their main sub-

contractor for the steelwork Dorman Long and Arrol's (his old firm), also the Caledon Shipyard in Dundee who did the fabrication of the box girders. The estimated construction time was only 3½ years, extremely fast for all the works.

In 1964 George was made a partner in the firm W A Fairhurst & Partners. With his wife Heather and their three young daughters (later joined by a

son, Alasdair) he moved to Edinburgh, settling in Balerno where they joined Balerno Parish Church. Eventually the three daughters grew up and were married here. Sadly George lost Heather four years ago, and the girls have all moved away to Cheshire, Cambridge and Wales, but happily his son Alasdair and daughter-in-law Sandy still live in Balerno. Sandy is known to many of us as she was involved in the Mill café in St Joseph's in its early days, becoming one of its early managers.

By now George had joined the Institution of Highways and Transportation and is now a Fellow – the same Institution that our



Neil Johnstone, a noted member of our church and a member of our choir, belongs to. He was the National President of the Institution last year. George held the position of Chairman of central and southern Scotland in 1979/80.

Two months from the expected completion, it was indicated that Her Majesty the Queen Mother would formally open it and the date was to be 18th August 1966. From this success, there was to be sadness the very next week – the Clerk to Dundee, Mr Lyle, died of a heart attack.



1966

18th August

2023

Even worse was to follow, as Mr Willy Logan (of Duncan Logan, Muir of Ord – the chief contractors) on his flight home from a meeting was killed when the plane he was on crash landed at Dalcross Airport at Inverness. Mr Logan as head of his firm was involved in all aspects of the work, so his whole staff were shattered at his loss. After the shock subsided slightly his staff decided that the best remembrance was to complete the Bridge as agreed by him. The intensity of work increased at an enormously fast pace, managing to complete everything by 18th August 1966.

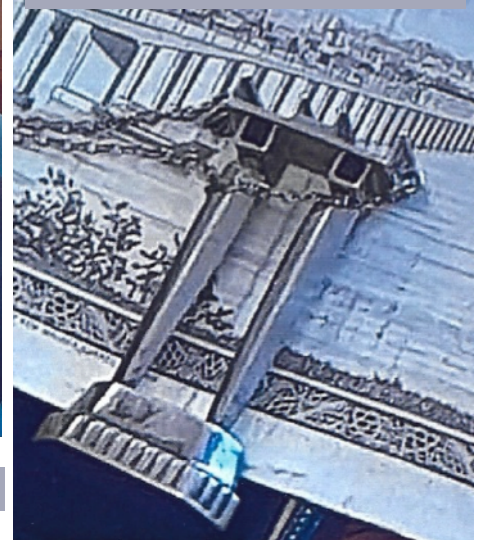


George has some historic pictures of the opening ceremony, which can all be viewed on our website, featuring a very young-looking George and Heather being presented to the Queen Mother and the cavalcade of cars being led across the Bridge by the royal Rolls Royce.



Discussing the finer points of building the bridge,

Commemorative jewellery
presented to Heather Taylor



Money Matters

Finance Report to September Session

Following the publication of the church's August accounts where the gap between income and expenditure is growing to an alarming and unsustainable level, such is their concern, the Finance Committee convened an extraordinary meeting. on Monday 11th September.

In the 12 month period to August 31st 2023, income from standing orders has reduced by £752 per month or £9024 pa, partly arising from deaths and partly from reductions in giving.

At the same time expenditure has risen and is likely to rise further especially so far as energy use is concerned.

The projected annualised shortfall of income over expenditure is approximately £23k.

The Report commented drily that that level of loss is clearly not sustainable.

The Committee held a wide ranging discussion on 11th September and agreed to the following proposals.

First of all, and in relation to income, all members of the congregation, should be approached, and invited to review, where possible, their contributions to the church. They should be asked to be mindful of the future inflationary costs in, for example, the church's utilities. Separately and also in relation to income there should be a review of all hall letting charges in line

with cost-of-living increases and those should be adjusted where necessary.

In relation to expenditure there should be a root and branch review of all church expenditures in order to ensure that the congregation's contributions are being wisely and necessarily spent. These expenditure reviews should be held with the Minister and all committee convenors who hold a responsibility for church expenditure. The Committee also felt that there must be a more rigorous observance of procurement rules, along with better control of energy use. There has been a problem of hall users altering the temperature on campus thermostats, and the Finance Committee agreed that that must stop.

The committee is aware of several financial initiatives that are currently being undertaken by various groups and bodies within the church community which will help to address income and expenditure concerns. For example the Mill Café have been able to re-instate their quarterly support of £500 and they have also recently added in a further £1000.

The Committee observed also that a consequence of a reducing income means that the increase in non-regular expenditure has had to be almost totally funded from within reserves and that the balance on the Reserves Account is now almost £18000 less than at the start of the year.

from the Blether team



This month the front page of the *Blether* is (once again) given over to the Presbytery Plan and in particular the upcoming Union with Currie Kirk. This autumn will be an important and challenging time in that process, which is likely to accelerate now that a vacancy has been declared at Currie Kirk.

The Kirk Sessions of both Balerno and Currie must agree the terms of a Basis of Union as the first step towards the union, and the first step towards that agreement will be for the Kirk Sessions separately to agree their positions.

Deciding on a name for the new Church will be towards the top of the Agenda; hence the invitation to readers on page 1 to help in that choice. But it's probably not the most important.

Once the Basis of Union is agreed by both Kirk Sessions then the two congregations have an opportunity to vote on the Basis of Union themselves, and thereafter, and dependent on whether our Minister wishes to be considered for the new joint charge of Currie and Balerno Currie Kirk, Currie congregation will have the opportunity to vote on whether he should be. The vote is for Currie since it is Currie Kirk which has been declared vacant.

While no timetable has yet been set, the Union with Currie Kirk is suddenly much more imminent, and Balerno must improve its planning process to achieve it.

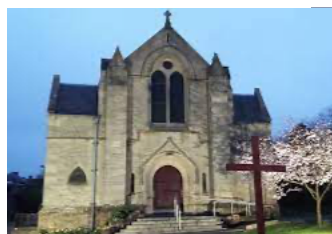
Our other main 'news' item concerns finance, usually a subject which induces great torpor. But this time we think our readers may want to fight against that inclination, because there is real

cause for concern. Income is decreasing and over the past year has reduced by @£750 per month or £9K pa. This will inevitably lead to some belt tightening and a more stringent requirement for expenditure rules to be followed. But that is unlikely to do the trick on its own.

The drop in income from givings (arising from both deaths and reduction in givings) has been acute, and the effect of that coupled with increasing running costs has meant that over the past year the Treasurer has had to prop up the Church's current account by transferring significantly from the Reserves.

The Church will probably be asking members to increase their givings, and while that may have some success, we doubt whether that alone is going to be sufficient to fill the hole in reserves let alone set a sustainable course for the future. Articles in previous editions of the *Blether* have drawn attention to strategies used by other congregations to maximise the use of church buildings to generate the income necessary for repairs and maintenance. It would seem that we have reached a point where such a strategy will be essential if the church campus in Balerno is to be retained in the Union.

Balerno Parish Church's future now lies within the Union with Currie, but while it will first have to address the process towards Union, it cannot delay in the quest for more diverse sources of income to sustain ministry in Balerno.



FreshStart

helping people make a home for themselves

The Autumn Collection

A collection of household goods for Fresh Start will take place on Friday 13 and Saturday 14 October, 10.00 -12 noon and Sunday 15 October 9.30 - 12 noon. This will take place in the Rear Hall of Balerno Parish Church (situated behind the Church).

Donations in good, clean condition of crockery, cutlery, pots and pans, bedding, curtains, towels and small electrical items would be gratefully received by Fresh Start, an Edinburgh based charity helping people who have been homeless get established in their new homes. If you have no household items, please consider donating everyday cleaning materials/toiletries. We cannot take furniture, televisions, duvets, pillows, cushions or kitchen knives.

Your donations will be sorted and packed by local volunteers and taken to the Fresh Start premises.

For further information and offers of help please contact

Sandra Lyall on **449 4375**



65th Edinburgh Company The Boys' Brigade

The 65th spent a great September holiday weekend at the Battalion's Adventure Centre at Craggan, Loch Tay.

Great fun from start to finish especially on Saturday as the boys spent almost six hours on the water receiving canoe and kayak instruction from the excellent David Walsh of Emmaus Adventure.

While it rained heavily on the Friday, we were blessed with glorious sunshine on the Saturday and a fairly dry Sunday. Great fun had by all

boys and staff. Looking forward to our next visit.



If you'd like more information about the BB and how to become involved

please contact

Bill Brown, Captain, 449 4905

or 07878377897

Anchor Boys/Junior Section for boys P2 - P6 (aged 6-11) resumes on Thursday, 7th September 6.00 - 7.30pm.

Company Section for boys P7 - S6 (aged 11-18 years) resume on Sunday, 3rd September, 6.30 - 8.30pm.



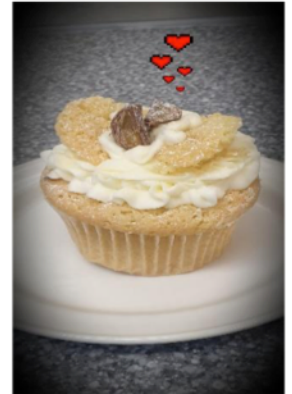
The Mill Café

Balerno Parish Church

Come visit The Mill Café at the St Joseph's Centre. Open Tuesday to Friday, 9.00am to 2.00pm.

(and the second Saturday of every month when Farmers' Market is on)

There is something for everyone at the Mill – good quality coffee, freshly-baked scones, cakes and much more besides. Why not try one of our bacon rolls or fresh-griddled pancakes? Or our baked potatoes with a variety of tasty fillings. Every day we have two varieties of soup, lovingly made by our volunteers and staff.



The Mill Café, St Joseph's Centre, 2 Main Street, Balerno
Fairtrade products used wherever possible.

The worship team at BPC considered various ways of encouraging members and their friends to join with us in fellowship. Sunday morning at 10am, does not suit everyone, whether you are a young person who must get to a sporting event or an older person who may find it difficult to get to Church by 10am.

The informal, café style Supper and Song evening was thought to be something that may appeal to folks of all ages.

The worship team decided to trial the concept for four Sunday evenings over the autumn and winter of 2023.

Our first evening was held on Sunday the 3rd of September in the St Joseph's Centre (The Mill) at 6.30pm. A setting familiar to many in our local community.

We were delighted to welcome 44 adults and 8 children which included friends from West Lothian and Craigs Bank as well as Currie and Balerno.

The hall was full, and the atmosphere felt welcoming, enjoyable, and friendly.

The evening started with a warm welcome and prayer from our Minister followed by a light supper of Quiche, Pizza and salads.

We sang a hymn, there was a Bible reading, and we reflected informally, at our tables, on 'Summer'. The theme for the four trial gatherings will be 'Seasons of the sun'.

The evening was short, with everyone leaving around 8pm.

Our next informal Supper and Song evening service will be on

Sunday the 8th of October at 6.30pm in the St Josephs centre.

All welcome!

If you would like to come along, please let us know for catering purposes. Happy for folks to contact me on coullkay@hotmail.com or contact the Church office (Monday to Friday morning) on 449 7245 or bpc-admin@balernochurch.org.uk

Hope to see you there!

Kay Coull on behalf of the Worship team, BPC.



Supper and Song' Evening Service

Happy Birthday Gordon!

Congratulations to Rev Gordon McGillivray who celebrated his 100th Birthday on 22 September. The Blether passes on to him all good wishes and celebrates with him on the occasion of his birthday.

Gordon continued his birthday celebrations on Sunday 24th September when he joined us as usual for morning service at which the congregation sang a the Blessing. After the service when everyone enjoys a cup of coffee and a chat in St Joseph's Hall he was wished Happy Birthday in song.

Gordon was joined by several members of the family at the service and at St Joseph's and they helped in blowing out the candles on his cake.



Congratulations and best wishes Gordon from the Blether team, and everyone in Balerno.

One Bar Rest

One Bar Rest, might be described as an informal singing group for lower voices, performing at social events and occasionally singing in church. While liquid refreshment after an hour's practice is not essential, it is considered to be beneficial. This year practices will be on Monday evenings in St Joseph's Hall at 7.15 between October and May, starting on Monday 2nd October.

We enjoy our singing and will be delighted to welcome new voices. *The ability to read music is not essential.* The only requirement is that you enjoy singing. Elsewhere in *The Blether* you will see publicity for our evening of words and music to introduce the Christmas Season.

Further information can be obtained from
John Burnside -
jburnsidemail@virginmedia.com



The Guild

The Church of Scotland Guild branch at Balerno Parish Church will commence its new session on Wednesday the 4th of October at 7.30pm in the Ogston Hall.

Our guest speaker for the evening will be Minister, the Rev Dr AJ Groenewald. He will focus on the Guild theme for the session; *New Wine, New Wineskins*. We will also share Communion together.

Please take time to look at our syllabus for the session; the autumn term is printed below this article.

We meet on the first and third Wednesday of the month from October through to March, and remember that *the Guild is open to all!*

In your first year there is no membership fee, so why not think about coming along and joining this friendly group.

If you would like further information, please do not hesitate to contact Kay Coull: coullkay@hotmail.com or 449 6151.

Programme for the

Guild Autumn term 2023

- 4 October: **Dedication service and Communion** with Rev Dr Andre Groenewald.
- 5 October: **Edinburgh Guilds Together (EGT) opening meeting**, - 2pm at St Michael's Parish Church, 1 Slateford Road. Guest speaker: - Rev Christine Fulcher: Guild Regional -Support and Resources worker. -Rev Andrea Price will celebrate Communion with us.
- 18 October: **The Coronation:** Neil Johnstone.
- 1st November: **Cake Decoration Demonstration** with Janet McCracken.
- 15 November: **National Guild Project:** BEAT.
- 6 December: **No meeting in Balerno.** Afternoon meeting of the EGT at Slateford Longstone Church,

It's never too early to start talking about Christmas?!

A great programme of fantastic events coming up for the Christmas Season, starting on 2nd December with 'The month before Christmas' presented by One Bar Rest and Friends at Balerno Bowling Club. and then there's loads of Christmas Trees, pipe band, choirs, brass band concert; you name it we've got it covered!



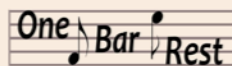
It's only two and half months to Christmas! And before that there's the **Christmas Tree Festival**, and that means lots of things will be going on!

First, the Festival which was started by Balerno Parish Church in 2010 which continued to manage it for the first eight years of its life before Harneny School took over the organisation of the annual event in 2017. The Gala then took over for the 2022 event and staged it as an outdoor event; making that two years in a row! Brrrrrrrr!!

The Blether understands that the Gala are doing the honours again this year and that it is likely to move back indoors into the Ogston Hall. More on this in the November issue!

The Blether also know that there will again be **Christmas Lights** and a 10' Christmas Tree in Main Street this year courtesy of the Community Council with the switch on on Thursday 7th December, co-inciding with the switch on of the Rotary's **Tree of Life** in the Church front garden. And then there's also the 'traditional' Concert for Christmas with the **Broxburn and Livingston Brass Band** on Saturday 9th December, with tickets going on sale in November. More on all of this in the November issue!

The Month Before Christmas!



and friends invite you to a lighthearted evening of words and music to introduce the Christmas Season



In **The Church Choir**
Balerno Bowling Club on
Saturday 2nd December
at 7.30pm.

A light supper will be provided.

Tickets - price £7.00 - are available from
Church Office.

Tickets on sale from
23rd October

Quintingle



Do you have a Minute, Lord?



I was talking to a friend the other day who has been going through a hard time. He recognises that people who have faith seem to find it easier to cope, but he has been put off religion because it seems to be the cause of so much conflict in the world.

He sees the zealots of faith who are so convinced of their own rectitude that they become oblivious to the damage caused by their inflexibility.

You don't need to look very far to find conflict, violence and wars fought in the name of religion – and it's not just one religion, it's all of them. While I can't think offhand of a faith that doesn't share the basic Christian values of loving each other and showing respect for people somehow some people seem to become competitive and assertive about their own belief system in a way that can progress from hostility into antagonism and even violence. Fanatics can even become intolerant of fellow believers who do not share their convictions.

So, I face a challenge; how can I be a good Christian without alienating other people? A militant assertive church seems to run the risk in the modern world of alienating people, while, on the other hand, a meek church runs the danger of having no identity and simply disappearing – which doesn't quite seem to tally with the idea of the meek inheriting the earth!

The zealots – of any faith – seem to think that it doesn't matter how many rules you break because an outcome of the achievement of their aims is a fair justification for their action. They don't seem to see that total disregard of the opinions of others can only undermine their own long term effectiveness as publicists or ambassadors for their faith.

In contrast to these proactive zealots who look for a challenge there are many others in all faiths who wait for the challenge to come to them. They are quietly assertive about their beliefs and their values, as circumstances arise and they may be more effective in communicating love and care for their fellow beings than the zealots.

So that leaves me in a bit of a quandary. I think I may be an 'Extreme moderate.' Is that allowed?

Contributed

Messiah cancelled!

an imagined possibility



Imagine!

You're just arriving at the Inn – you've spent a fortune on the journey by hiring a camel instead of taking your old donkey – and what do you find? There's the innkeeper pinning up this notice "Messiah Cancelled". Was Elizabeth was mistaken and is it just a rumour after all?

More importantly have you booked your room and if this turns out to be a non-event, will the inn refund your money? But then you espy the reporter from the *Nazareth Chronicle* looking rather glum. "What was the problem" you ask, – "It's a girl" he replies. "A girl!? Whoever heard of a female Messiah?"

You agree to buy him one of those sweet sticky coffees and he tells you all he knows. He tells you that since way back, all positions of power had almost always been occupied by men – he didn't know why, whether it was just by chance or deliberate, perhaps they were just more intelligent or were the ladies simply not up to the job? (Don't forget the Queen of Sheba though – oh and Cleopatra of course – they were both quite powerful).

The reporter couldn't understand it, all the portents pointed to it being a boy. Had the three wise men arrived yet – they would have had a totally wasted journey, but then the star was there so what went wrong? And what about Herod, he would have got his knickers in a twist for no good reason. Think of all the effort John the Baptist had expended – people would surely lose faith in him pretty quickly – he had been certain it would be a boy. Does that then mean that Isaiah was wrong too?

Of course, the rulers of the time will likely decide that Mary's little girl can never be accepted as the Christ child. Let's face it, anyone trying to convince them to the contrary would be made a laughing stock.

And so what about this new idea that everyone is talking about – this Christianity?

Does this mean that.....

contributed



Balerno
22 September

Dear Lesley,

Thumbing through the pages of your excellent newsletter/paper/journal/magazine I am troubled. Why? because I search in vain for that staple of all community rags - the recipe page!

PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE CAN WE HAVE ONE?

How might it work? Well just for starters. We have an absolutely fantastic community asset in the Mill Cafe, They are rightly lauded up and down the valley. not just for their welcome buy for their soups, scones, cakes and everything they produce. That deserves an even wider acclaim, and the Blether could help to help to achieve that.

Now I know that cooks, bakers, chefs and everybody involved in producing such marvellous fare may be a little reluctant to share all of the secrets of the Crown Jewels. But I also know that lots of your readers would love to know how

some of how it's done. We get the regular updates on Bob's fantastic soups, and I gather that the Treasurer is also a dab hand (including his thumb) in the same area.

We need the Blether to publish some of their secrets, and while we're on about it, what about all those scrumptious scones, the ginger bread and chocolate cake, the Victoria sponge and brownies, and the Empire biscuits.

Now I know it's possible that I may have missed a Mill Cafe recipe book, and if so where can I get a copy? But if I haven't then can we ask the Mill to start putting one together. Please? Please?

But before then could the Blether perhaps start a recipe page.

Thank you in advance?

name and address supplied

Seems a good idea to me! - Ed

Dear Lesley,

22 Sept

I'll start by saying that I think the Blether is great; and that's not because I want you to keep reading, and yes editing, it all, because the Blether actually isn't all that bad. However. I think you need to know a bit more about what people are thinking and what they'd like to see in their parish paper.

And then there's, what's going to happen to the Blether when there's a Union with Currie? Currie has 'Kirk News' and we've got the 'Blether'. They're not going to be competing against each other, but there are two communities and there are real questions about what you do to make a Union actually work. So can we get a discussion going on that?

name and address supplied

C'mon folks; let's hear what you think - Ed



Nice to be back at the Mill after the holidays!

Yes, isn't it? I see there's a new scone flavour, as well. Think I'll try it.

How was the holiday?

Oh, it was great. We stayed with my cousin down south, had a lovely time.

That's good. Anything in particular?

Well, yes. We went to church with them a couple of times, lovely historic little building in the village.

Ah, Anglican service, then?

Yes, and one Sunday there was a special service, and the Bishop came!

Goodness, that must have been like having the Moderator round, then?

Just about! Actually, it was a special service to bless the parish pets.

PETS? As in ... animals?

Aye, that's the usual definition...

You mean, everyone brought their dogs and cats and goldfish?

That's right, and rabbits, and some ferrets, and someone brought a goat...

A GOAT? IN CHURCH??

Well yes and no, actually it was a lovely day - sort of Woof meets the Bishop and vice versa sort of thing - so this was outside under the trees in the churchyard. But yes, they have had it in the Church Hall before.

And the Bishop ... blessed them?

Yes, he did. Apparently his wife is blind, and has a guide dog, so he's very aware of the good that animals do among us. Support, comfort, all that, you know...

Right enough, now I think of it ... one of our Elders has a 'therapy dog'; he takes it round care homes and everyone gives it pats and cuddles!

The Treasurer's Thumb

Record attempt at the Counting House!

Now, as a thumb with a close connection to a banker one has had extensive contact with cash over the years, and indeed one would not like to estimate just how much dosh I have handled from my earliest days on the high stool down to the present day.

Of course the volume of cash in circulation is much reduced from the hey day of the teller but I did learn the techniques, along with my colleague Mr Fore Finger, although we never did quite discover what the other three were doing. But now I'm semi-retired and I'm rarely called on to perform as I once could.

I'm told the record for counting the most banknotes in 30 seconds is held by Zhuo Minjing of Industrial and Commercial Bank of China. Now I can't say I've had the pleasure of meeting my counterpart on his right hand but I know I could give him a run for his money so to speak. The real difficulty is the need for team working - so often a problem what ever line you're in. You know; there you are ready to get into position as the main support for the pile of notes but Mr You Know Who fluffs his bit, the notes are flying all over the place and the Guinness - there's that name again - Book of Records have packed their bags and gone off to the branch of the Bank of Ditherum Doo next door so *they* can try *their* luck. And it's not as if I can get Mr You Know Who reassigned on a free transfer because we are closely connected. And you are right to remind me of my painful near separation from You Know Who in the Encounter at The Green House. Enough said.

But none of that world record stuff is really possible now because there aren't any banks are there. So opportunities for me to prove my prowess along with my team mate Mr Fore Finger are few and far between.

So here's the plan. The Main Man does count monies at least once a week, or so I'm told. OK so we know that the collection plate isn't what it used to be, but let's say a timed note count over - let's be realistic - five seconds, and I might be able to account for say 5 per second, minimum. M. Minjing only did 6.7 notes per second with 202 notes in all over the 30 second allowed. So here's the deal; Mr Fore Finger and I will attempt the record over 5 seconds if you can up the offering plate to include 30 £5 notes in one sitting! Not to mention the kudos of being part of the World Record Money Counting effort.

It's worth a shot isn't it? And the Treasurer would have a smile on his face, not that I ever really get a sight of that.

WOOF

Have you ever had one of those times in your life where whatever you do seems to be successful? I've left my 'marker' in Austria and discovered my own kingdom in the middle of the park lake, but this one really could be the crowning glory.

The house next door has been empty for some time - my pal Monty lived there but he was advanced in years and lacking in enthusiasm - a bit like his owners - and spent most of his time asleep. However, as I was touring the garden the other day I noticed people next door and they had a rather delicious looking lady-doggie with them. We exchanged introductory 'woofs' and sniffed each other through the fence. She's quite a charmer I can tell you, and so I felt I needed to seek a more formal introduction.

I'm quite happy living here, but the local chums are all boys and so we only ever do boy-dog things. The problem I foresee is that the chums will have the same reaction as me and I want to avoid any squabbling over our new neighbour.

Then, yesterday, my folks invited the neighbours in for a welcome drink, and guess who came too? In human language she's called Charlie - strange name for a girl - hopefully that could be a welcome disguise. We got on well and parted on friendly terms - let's hope our relationship (such as it is at this early stage) stays that way!



Caution - Make sure you're sitting down before reading this

Negotiating Frankfurt Airport

What can you say about Frankfurt Airport? The obvious things I suppose are that it is huge and spread out. As your aircraft makes its descent you could be forgiven for thinking you were landing in Falkirk, but then, as touchdown is made your aircraft hurtles along the runway towards what you hope is going to be its gate, only for you to realise that the terminal building is becoming more distant by the minute. Whereas in Edinburgh the aircraft would slow to a crawling speed as it approached the gate, in Frankfurt you often have to make do with being parked half a mile away and then await the arrival of the usual



bandy-bus for your journey to the Terminal building. There are gates listed alphabetically from A-E and then Z and where the bus delivers you to seems to have no relation whatsoever to where you thought you should be. You are in a sleek modern building with a bewildering array of signage (in German and English) Stand still to read the signs and remember that the gate you need can even be on the floor above you. How much time you require to get to wherever you need to be next will vary considerably, from which direction to take to how fast you can run!

Seasoned travellers through airports will remember one cardinal rule – the baggage collection **is always** next to the exit. Unfortunately that also means that the gate you must check-in at is probably at the very end of the airport from which you've just come.

What makes matters worse is that with the huge number of flights arriving throughout the day, the ten carousels each share the load from several flights – all at the same time and a time clock shows the length of time it will take for the luggage from **your** flight to arrive.

Estimates of time required to change flights vary from one to three hours and your correspondent sincerely suggests you opt for the latter. In our journey across this airport we passed twenty-three baggage collection signs and almost achieved the Olympic qualifying speed for the distance.

The head of Frankfurt Airport has partially attributed the time taken to reunite passengers with their luggage to the colour of the cases they use, with the 'standard' black cases being the main culprits. What planet is he from? The picture below would not seem to substantiate this?

The Head's use of the word chaos to describe the problems in the luggage bay seems most accurate. If your journey ends in Frankfurt then a longer wait at the carousel to collect your bags is not too arduous. If however you had booked a 'through ticket' to



your final destination, what are the odds of your luggage finding its way onto the connecting flight?

It's not fair simply to blame the luggage – further problems have arisen out of the Brexit Agreement, with the biometric scanners at the final security gate reserved purely for Schengen passport holders and even if you as a UK biometric passport holder try to use it, you will be unsuccessful and must join the queue with all the other hopefuls.

So then, Willkommen in Frankfurt, and please remember that the gate you need could be a quarter of a mile from where you are standing!

My sincere advice to readers, after putting my wife and myself through this marathon trek (outbound **and** inbound) is to give yourself a minimum of

three hours for the challenge.

Or you could book another route and avoid Frankfurt altogether! – Now why didn't we think of that.

DB

Are you ready for Balerno Music Festival 2023?

It's here and it's starting VERY soon!



October is with us and with it the short Balerno Music Festival!

Our first evening is on Sunday October 1st when St Joseph's Hall will play host to the Jazz Party in the St Joseph Hall. This will be a lively evening of music presented by Stirling Crisis. Festival goers will also be treated to wine and snacks provided by The Mill.

Regulars to this event will be

familiar with the mix of jazz, traditional and modern which has proved very popular. The evening starts at 19:00 and tickets cost £18; so hurry if you want tickets for the fantastic Jazz Party.

And we hope you may still be in time also to get tickets for Saturday 7th October when the Festival moves into Balerno Parish Church to welcome the amazing Forth Valley Chorus as they make a return visit to the Festival. This talented group have successfully competed internationally at Sweet Adeline events and are now hoping to travel to Louisville again soon. Come and see them at Balerno Parish Church on the 7th October at 19.30, and see just how energetic and tuneful they are.

More information can be found on the Balerno Parish Church website and tickets are available through Eventbrite, and will also be available on Sunday morning in the Mill after the morning service.



A Letter from Malcolm and Susan Ogilvie



24 September 2023

Dear Lesley,

Susan and I would like to offer our grateful thanks, through the pages of the Blether to all who contributed to the unnecessary, but graciously received, gifts that were presented to us on Sunday 24th September.

I have been known to say on a number of occasions that "We're a' Jock Tamson's bairns". I was very fortunate to be called to a position of responsibility that carried a title. As I said on Sunday when presented with your generous gift, it was only when I took on the role of Session Clerk that I realised how many various people help with the running and well being of our church. To them, who help, my thanks, for making my role so much easier. My time as Session Clerk has been a bit like the curate's egg... There have been a number of highs and a number of lows, one example of a low being the meeting that I convened on Monday 17th March 2020 at the onset of C***d-9!



I have carried a copy of this prayer with me every day of my life."

When I was a toddler my father, who was a member of the Iona Community, on returning from one of his trips to Iona presented me (Malcolm, Malcolm = servant of Columba) with the following framed prayer,

Prayer of Columba:-

Almighty Father, Son and Holy Ghost
Eternal ever-blessed gracious God.
To me the least of saints, to me allow,
That I may keep a door in Paradise;
That I may keep even the smallest door,
The furthest door, the darkest coldest door,
The door that is least used, the stiffest door,
If so it be but in thine house, O God!
If so it be that I can see Thy Glory,
Even afar and hear Thy Voice, O God!
And know that I am with Thee –
Thee, O God.

With every good wish, Malcolm



**British Heart
Foundation**

Bill and Margaret Black invite you to their **last**

Annual Christmas Sale

in their home

at 11 Larchfield on **14th November** from **9.30am** until **8pm**

Everyone is invited to come!

£5.6K raised at the 2022 sale!





Introducing our new Administrator **Pam McKeon**

Our new Administrator, Pam McKeon, started work on 1st September and is enjoying getting stuck in to the huge (and seemingly ever expanding) range of tasks which tumble into her in-tray and in-box!

Along with husband Stuart Pam moved to Balerno in 1997. She's been a member of Balerno Parish Church since 1999, and is an Elder and member of the Kirk Session.

She helped with the Sunday School/Special/Club for some 20 years. She recently retired early from BT where she had worked for 31 years; her experience as a Project Co-ordinator will be invaluable as she gets a handle on the word and wonderful ways of Balerno Parish Church.

In her spare time she enjoys watching films, eating out with friends and, in her words, 'trying to get to the gym'. Then there's always Isla, a Leonberger who most of us will have seen out for walks around the village, and who one suspects needs quite a lot of exercise. So maybe not getting to the gym isn't such a huge problem after all.

And yes, Pam is also a people person; so if you're passing the office pop in sometime. Pam's in 8.00am to midday. Monday to Friday.

Huge welcome from the Blether Team, Pam!

Useful Numbers

Mimister

Rev Dr André Groenewald, 449 3830
agroenewald@churchofscotland.org.uk

Church Administrator (Church Office)

Pam McKeon 449 7245
bpc-admin@balernochurch.org.uk

Session Clerks -

Kay Coull 449 6151 or 07415 506947
Elaine McCulloch 449 5876
Marion Milne 07971 718892
balerno.sessionclerk@gmail.com

Treasurer:

David Booth 449 3516
bpc-treasurer@balernochurch.org.uk

Roll Keeper;

Pam McKeon 449 2541
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Fabric Ctte:

Dilys Conway 449 7245
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Mill Café:

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Balerno Blether:

Lesley Burt 449 4314
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September 2023 solution



Topical or what?



Welcome and thanks to our Session Clerks!

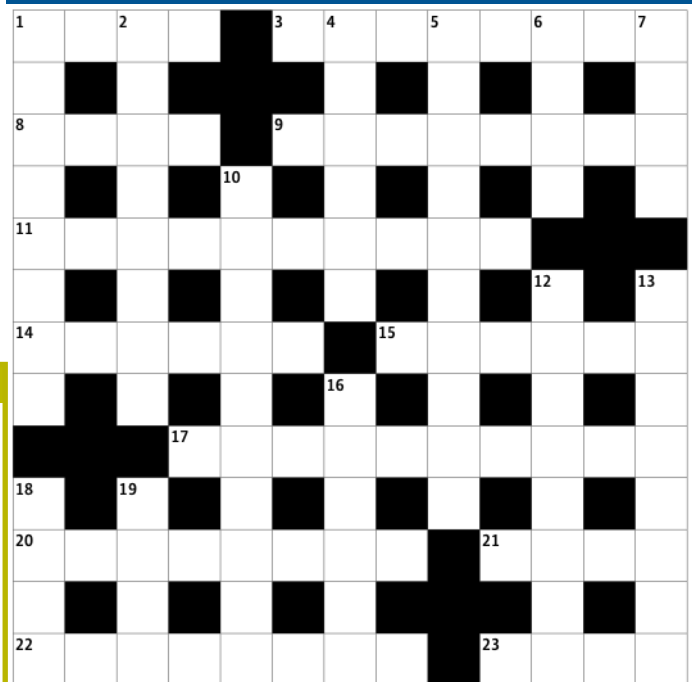
The Blether gives a huge welcome to Kay Coull, Elaine McCulloch and Marion Milne as our new Session Clerks. They were elected by the Session at its September meeting and will be formally appointed when they take the oath at morning service on Sunday 1st October.

We are all hugely grateful to them for stepping up to the plate so to speak and we will all look forward to working with them in what is and will be a very busy time for Balerno Parish Church. You can find their contact addresses in the useful numbers column; don't worry Kay, Elaine and Marion, your time is no longer your own! The Blether will offer a more fulsome welcome in the November issue.

The arrival of new Clerks means that Malcolm Ogilvie is at last able to retire from a tour of duty of some six years. He will, he says be making good use of lots of new spare time! David Booth delivered the thanks of the congregation to both Malcolm and Susan at morning service on 24th September, and we're printing a copy of Malcolm's reply in this issue.

The Blether also offers Malcolm and Susan our sincere thanks and the thanks of the congregation for all that they have done during his term of office.

October 2023 Crossword



Across

- 1 Mention and identify (4)
- 3 Lower jawbone (8)
- 8 Well ventilated (4)
- 9 Game with pitchers (8)
- 11 Balkan country on the Adriatic (10)
- 14 Small edible crustacean (6)
- 15 Depressing experience (6)
- 17 Solid figure with eight plane faces (10)
- 20 Discourteous (8)
- 21 Brandy-like spirit distilled from grape residue (4)
- 22 Behind (in France) (8)
- 23 Uncouth youth (informal) (4)

Down

- 1 Accident narrowly avoided (4,4)
- 2 Sailors (8)
- 4 Gobsmeared (6)
- 5 Firmly established (4-6)
- 6 Prejudice (4)
- 7 Fish (often jellied) (4)
- 10 Pasta in long slender threads (10)
- 12 Earnest plea (8)
- 13 Hence rag (anag) - red wine grape (8)
- 16 (Proverbially mad) milliner (6)
- 18 Intellect (4)
- 19 Incentive (4)

Publication of the November issue will be on Friday 28th Oct

Copy and publication dates for November issue



Please note that THE COPY DATE for the November 2023 issue of the Blether is **14th October**.

Publication date for October issue is Fri 28 October.

Copy *must* be in the hands of the Editor by the COPY DATE

NB COPY RECEIVED AFTER THE COPY DATE FOR WHICH IT WAS SUBMITTED MAY NOT BE INCLUDED.