

balerno



FREE
BUT

Blether



Issue number 32
April 2024

Malleny House

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

Easter Bunny Revelations!

The editorial team of the Blether had their attention drawn to a rumour of a plan by the Easter Bunny to stage a coup and assume world-wide control of the future celebration of Easter. It was thought that the plan was to be implemented on the public holiday of Easter Monday when it was anticipated that no-one would notice what was happening – or take it seriously. However, a representative of the Easter Bunny has assured us that any such rumour is totally without foundation. In a statement, he said that, “Although there can be no doubt that slick promotion over the last couple of decades has brought Easter Bunny into a position which almost rivals Saint Nicholas in terms of popularity, there are currently no plans for EB to take any initiative for further self-promotion. The demand for chocolate consumption is sufficient to ensure that people are increasingly receptive to the message of Easter Bunny which means that there is no need for anything which might be described as a take-over.”

The precise identity of Easter Bunny is somewhat unclear as biographical details are limited. We are not even clear on Easter Bunny's gender, something which has always been a difficult thing to establish with the rabbit fraternity and so, for the purposes of this investigation, we will simply refer to Easter Bunny as EB. Reports of a hare delivering eggs at easter time to 'well behaved' children, first appeared in Europe as far back as the sixteenth century. "Oschter Haws", or Easter Hare as he was known, was reported to leave colourful eggs in the garden for children to find.

In the eighteenth century, there were reports from North America of children in immigrant Dutch communities who would sometimes leave out their hats with edible flowers in them to encourage the EB to leave colourful eggs. It is probably safe to assume that it was then only a matter of time before this was recognised as a marketing opportunity for EB so that instead of continuing in amateur and voluntary activity, EB went into partnership with chocolate manufacturers. It is unlikely that EB could have attained world-wide renown without the professional support of those confectionary manufacturers who have arguably exploited EB for their own commercial gain.

There is a body of opinion that resents the way in which the EB 'partnership' has 'hi-jacked' Easter, and perhaps not without some justification. There is no reference at all to EB in the scriptures but despite the lack of connection to the Easter story, EB has perpetuated old traditions where the rabbits and hares, along with eggs, are symbols of spring and renewal that have become integrated into the holiday's celebration through the centuries. Nonetheless, according to some folklore, it was an old Christian tradition in the observance of Lent for eggs not to be eaten during Lent. Instead, they were preserved or hardboiled and saved for Easter so that there was an abundance of eggs for decorating, hunting and rolling.

And so it is that EB's professional partnership with the confectioners has not, yet come to totally obscure the Christian message of Easter. Easter Eggs – whatever they are made of – continue to remind Christians of the rolling away of the stone from the tomb in the garden of Gethsemane on the morning of the Resurrection. It doesn't mean that they don't enjoy their Easter Eggs like everybody else – it's just that they are a reminder of another sort of new life!

In conclusion, in the course of our investigations, we were able to clarify that EB does not have a base of operations on Easter Island which got its name when discovered by a Dutch explorer on Easter Sunday in 1722. (NOTE no rabbits were injured in the writing of this article)

All in an April Evening

an invitation to levity!

It was in the aftermath of the pandemic that our resident male voices, singing under the name of **One Bar Rest**, organised the first 'Supper and Song.' The format of the evening followed that of the regular Dinner Discussions which were held monthly before the pandemic with the meal provided by Mackenzie's being followed by entertainment from the three vocal groups within the congregation.

No-one set out with the anticipation that this might be an annual event, but this will be the third evening to be present what appears to be a popular recipe for an evening's entertainment. As the original title of 'Supper and Song' has been more recently used for Sunday evening worship, it was agreed that a new name was needed for the evening and since the date which was most suitable for the performers of the three ensembles *turn to p2*

If you think about it, there really isn't anything like money – it's such an individual character. People give it to you for performing a task for them but you can only spend it once. You can give it to someone else to look after it, then reclaim it then give it to another guardian. You can divide it between several persons in whatever shares you choose – this will allow you to spend one or more shares as required.

In your younger days, did your mother have a series of jam jars in the pantry, so that when father came home from work he would hand over most of his wage which mother split between the jars – milkman, rent, housekeeping etc. Well that's what we poor people did anyway!

So, enough of the history lesson – how does that relate to modern living?, and what did others have to say?

W. Somerset Maugham's theory was that 'Money is like a sixth sense without which you cannot make a complete use of the other five' It was Spike Milligan (it could only have been Spike Milligan) who stated that 'Money can't buy you friends but with it you can get a better class of enemy'. Lastly, Oscar Wilde, in a Picture of Dorian Gray, quotes 'I don't want money – it is only people who pay their bills who want that and I never pay mine'.

There is no doubt that in recent years prices for goods and services have rocketed, and Balerno Parish Church isn't

Money Matters

notes from the Treasurer

exempted from this. It would be wonderful to have a sort of 'Get out of Gaol Free card' but that only exists

in the minds of players of a well known board game. Let's look at what we must pay out – a random check shows that our insurance premiums have risen 23% and lighting and heating by an estimated 90%. Just imagine if we didn't have sufficient income to pay those bills? – could we lose our church? – and what about our Mill Café, would that have to close? Okay so these two might be the most extreme examples but we can't simply sit back and do nothing – that would be to almost invite problems.

Last month I wrote to our church members on behalf of the Kirk Session with a request that they might agree to increase their regular giving and our heartfelt thanks go to the ones who so far have agreed to do so. So please, as you read this, have another look at your finances – is there perhaps a contingency which doesn't get regularly used? – if so please consider giving that to the church, and remember, if you are a tax payer, that nice taxman will add 25% to whatever you give. Our church and its activities are the heart of our village – let's try not to put that at risk – we need them there so that we can continue to enjoy them for many years to come.

Thank you, David Booth

All in an April Evening

contd from p1

was in April, 'All in An April Evening' was suggested.

This was the title of an iconic piece of choral music written by Hugh S Robertson for the Glasgow Orpheus Choir which he established in 1906. Members of the Orpheus Choir were all amateur singers from Glasgow – many of them from church choirs and other musical societies – but Robertson's aim was to have a choir which had its own uniquely blended voice with no individual voices standing out. The choir enjoyed a worldwide reputation which endures to this day with recordings still available, something which Robertson could not have anticipated when he started out.

It might be possible to claim that our three vocal groups all have their own unique 'voice' but I think we can confidently predict that there will be little demand for their recordings in 100 years' time. However, the most important aspect is that, like the members of the Orpheus Choir the three groups all enjoy singing and hope that you will enjoy a musical programme should be varied with the humour and rhythm that we have come to expect as well as some more reflective pieces.



Tickets, price £23 are available from the Church Office and include drinks with the meal. We suggest that you book now to avoid disappointment as the evening has proved to be popular in the past.

Presbytery Plan update

Hello to Kirk of Currie and Balerno!

The Water of Leith Cluster Group agreed on 27th February to recommend that the name of the new united church be *Kirk of Currie and Balerno*, and that recommendation was adopted by Balerno's Kirk Session at its meeting on 28th. That doesn't mean that that will be the name but it is a step further down the road.

The Cluster Group also agreed a broad outline for the Basis for Union although there are issues to be investigated including the status of some of the Church property, and the terms of access to funds realised by the sale of any church buildings. There are also other issues, including as there always are, about finance and more will be known when the annual accounts season is complete.

Questions are being asked of 121 about the status of funds which arise from the sale of property brought about by the Union. Such proceeds will be held by the General Trustees for the benefit of the new congregation, ordinarily the Trustees hold funds for capital projects. However questions arise about whether such funds may be released for mission related purposes.

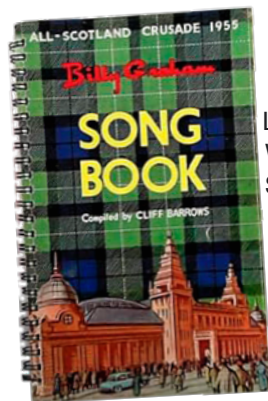
The meeting appreciated that it was unlikely that funds would be released except where there was a clear statement of purpose, and that that would involve development of the mission and aims of the new congregation. A subgroup of the Cluster Group is considering issues arising in that context.

The question was also raised as to what progress was possible towards the union while the Minister was indisposed.

The Cluster Group will meet next on 8th April.

A Tale of Evangelism & Mission

but perhaps not what you might have expected



Life in the aftermath of the Second World War was not easy, but Churches in Scotland flourished as ministers encouraged the men who had come home from the war to go onward as 'Christian soldiers' to build the peace. There was a consensus around the view that if the energy that had been spent on the destruction of wartime could be harnessed and channelled

constructively, then the world could become a better place. The slum clearance which had been started by the Blitz continued in a more controlled manner and new housing and new communities appeared.

In 1953, an evangelistic campaign was launched to "Tell Scotland." It was the result of the collaboration of eight protestant denominations in Scotland for the purpose of spreading the gospel further throughout the country. The Tell Scotland Crusade was not the first evangelical campaign to be promoted by churches in Scotland, but it marked the beginning of a relentless decline in church membership with the Church of Scotland losing nearly one million members over the next 70 years. What went wrong?

Perhaps some of the answer can be found in looking at some of the people involved. Among the personalities who emerged from the Church of Scotland to play a major part in the promotion of the Crusade two stand out. The Rev Tom Allan had established himself as an effective communicator on radio as well as being an innovative parish minister and his personal charisma won the support of churches throughout Scotland when he was appointed Field Organiser of the Tell Scotland Crusade. The Rev George F. MacLeod was on the planning team, having already gained a reputation in establishing the Iona Community and showing that there might be alternatives to conventional parish ministry.

The Tell Scotland Movement adopted three general principles, agreeing that the key to evangelism lay with the parish or local congregation and that mission should be an integral part of life within the local Church. Whatever the method of mission might be, it was agreed that the layman had a vital and strategic part to play. However, the original vision for the delivery of the Crusade was radically changed when the organisers heard of the success of Dr Billy Graham's crusade in London in 1954.

Tom Allen went to investigate and returned with encouraging reports. Despite the fact that many of the organising committee had serious misgivings, Dr Graham was invited to bring his crusade north as the All Scotland Crusade which would be promoted under the Tell Scotland banner. The narrative of that campaign was spectacular in terms of the media attention for the crowds which were attracted to rallies but such was Billy Graham's charisma as a professional evangelist that he overshadowed his hosts and their efforts. His hymn sheet was focussed on a shorter term response than that which had originally been envisaged by the Scots.

While the Tell Scotland movement continued into the 1960's, its leadership was divided between those who had warmed to the style of Dr Graham's revivalist message and those who wanted to take mission in a different, more socially oriented direction. Tom Allan resigned as Field Organiser of Tell Scotland to become the parish minister of St George's Tron in Glasgow from which base he continued to hold popular evangelistic

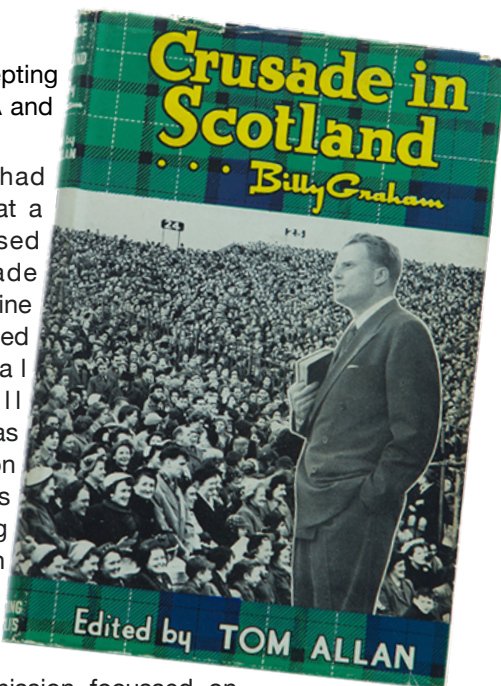
rallies as well as accepting invitations to the USA and Canada.

George MacLeod had always suspected that a traditional rally-based professional Crusade would fatally undermine the originally envisaged congregational emphasis of Tell Scotland which, it was hoped, would build on existing relationships and extend existing Christian communities. His ministry continued through the Iona Community with a mission focussed on worship, political involvement and a ministry of service.

Despite their apparent differences over the strategy of the Tell Scotland movement, MacLeod and Allan were products of their environment. In the long term, the need to address deep seated problems of poverty, unemployment, delinquency, homelessness, criminality and abuse were at the heart of the mission of these two men. It was in the course of his ministry that Tom Allan set up a partnership with the Social Responsibility Department of the Church of Scotland – now known as Cross-Reach - to set up a counselling and rehabilitation centre in the city and developed association with the Lodging House Mission to help the homeless.

While the Tell Scotland Movement has all but sunk into obscurity, the Tom Allen Centre and the Iona Community both continue to promote the teachings of the Bible in their own way in response to perceived need.

JB



Flowering the Cross

Putting flowers on the cross at Easter represents the transition from Good Friday to Easter, from meditation on the death of Jesus to celebration of his resurrection. A stark, empty cross is transformed with



flowers, to serve as a symbol of Jesus' resurrection and His continuing presence in the world.

In some protestant congregations, the tradition of "The Flowering of the Cross" is incorporated into worship. Members of the congregation bring flowers or greenery to church to decorate a bare wooden cross, which has been prepared for the purpose. It is some time since we last incorporated this process into Easter morning worship in Balerno, but this year we hope that we will be able to decorate the wooden cross in front of the church appropriately as a reminder to the community of Christ's victory over death.

JB

Do You have a minute Lord?

I always get a bit perplexed with Easter. I suppose that it's a combination of things. There's the rather black narrative of the events leading up to the crucifixion infused with betrayal, human weakness and a sense of despair as everything leads to the Cross on Good Friday. There is almost a sense of fatalism which develops as we move inexorably through Lent towards Golgotha and the 'Green Hill far away.' Then we have the celebration of Easter morning which, given the significance of the Resurrection, seems all too short. While I may not have a problem with the idea that I am a 'sinner' who is less than perfect and 'could do better if he tried,' I struggle with my understanding of the true meaning of everlasting life.

Maybe that's why I feel that I can empathise with the disciple Peter and his repeated denial that he was an associate of Jesus. It's easier not to be identified as someone who has beliefs which might be regarded as not being entirely rational or logical. That can be embarrassing because even if we were articulate enough to put our thoughts and beliefs into words, many of us are not adequately confident about what our real beliefs are.

I think that that explains why I have always derived reassurance from Jesus's command to, 'Love one another.' I can understand that simple instruction, but the idea of, 'taking away the sins of the world' rather stretches my comprehension. The sins of the world are certainly many and varied, but perhaps if there were more love for one another, the body of these sins would be much diminished.

It seems like the right place to start, but I'm afraid that you will have to regard me as, 'a work in progress.'

Contributed



Change at



The Mill Cafe

There have been changes in the MOU team, the Mill Operating Unit is the Kirk Session committee that oversees the operation of our wonderful Mill Café. Two of our members Annabelle and Ken McCunn have decided that it is time to move on to other activities. The first thing to say to them is thank you, it has been a pleasure working with you and we are very grateful for your contributions to the work of the MOU and the Mill.

When I asked other team members about Ken and Annabelle the first comment was that they are a team, they work together, support and complement each other. They have also worked very well as part of the team that is the MOU.

When our bookkeeper resigned, at very short notice, Ken stepped into the breach, this gave him a chance to use his accounting skills to understand, improve and simplify our financial reporting. This he did very effectively and then, with Annabelle, they set about recruiting a replacement bookkeeper – another success.

Annabelle helped with HR advice and the procedure for the safe use of the kitchen by other organisations. Quietly and with no fuss Ken took on the role of writing articles for The Blether and C&B News, this he did very well, indeed one of the challenges in writing an appreciation of their time on the MOU is that Ken is ideally suited to the task.

There were times in the year when Ken and Annabelle would visit catering establishments other than the Mill. This was of course all in the line of duty and a desire to see what other establishments were charging and to assess the quality of their products.

We wish them both all the best for the

future and a big thank you for being part of our team for all that they done as part of it.

Martin Petty
Convenor of MOU



Noticed anything different lately?



The Mill Cafe

Photo shows Mill volunteers Maureen, Dina, Alice, Linda, Sandra, Moira, Betty, with Lynsey and Jackie behind

The Mill Café is open Tuesday to Friday, 9am to 2pm, and on the second Saturday of every month when the Farmers' Market is on.

Have you noticed anything different about the Mill Café recently? It could be the smart new aprons, some black and some red, that the volunteers and staff are now wearing, not to mention the new name badges.

This new look has been made possible thanks to a Community Chest grant which the Mill received, allowing it to make the new purchases. The Community Chest was set up in 2017 by Currie Balerno Rotary Club and is now funded and managed by Rotary and Balerno Village Trust. Its purpose is to assist local projects that benefit the community.

The Mill is now quite a buzzing operation, serving the local community, providing great food, coffee, warmth and cheer for all who enter. The new workwear provides protection for the team who produce the food and serve the customers, while projecting a hygienic, professional image.

It is not just the aprons that are important in that regard. It is the name badges too. At first glance, they might seem like a small detail, but they represent something much bigger. Manager, Lynsey Inglis, was keen that every volunteer and member of staff should feel a strong sense of belonging and know that they are valued and vital members of the team.

The name badges are also aimed at customers, helping to add a personal touch to the friendly greeting and service that awaits them when they visit the Mill. Thank you, Currie Balerno Rotary Club and Balerno Village Trust!

Ken McCunn

Precentors, a Kist of Whistles, and rebellion over Saturday practice

Balerno Parish Church Choir from the history books

The Psalms were the bedrock of our musical tradition in Scotland. Singing unaccompanied, led by a Precentor, the congregation sat to sing but stood for the (often lengthy) prayers and this was only reversed in 1877. The Precentor stood at a desk, and in 1847 in preparation for the induction of the Church's second minister, the Rev William Dickson, the ladies of the congregation were asked to make a cover for this desk using 'crimson silk velvet' - actually the first record of organised work by the ladies of the congregation. But views on church music were changing, and the United Presbyterian Church began introducing hymns into services. In 1854 a special Congregational Meeting agreed in principal to do this, but it wasn't until a few years later that this happened, after a thorough renovation of the church building. In 1863 they adopted the UP hymnbook, hymn boards were hung on each side of the pulpit - and the Precentor was instructed to form two choirs. When, in 1877, it was suggested that Balerno Church adopt the widely spreading idea of reversing the tradition of

standing to pray and sitting to sing, the congregation voted in favour of it. At the same time, a 'Harmonium Committee' was set up to purchase a 'kist of whistles' as it was referred to. Eventually an electric harmonium was acquired, and a pipe organ was installed in 1973.

The post of Precentor was by now evolving into that of choirmaster, holding weekly classes on the theory and practice of music for a small fee. In 1902 Miss Giffin became Choirmistress, cycling from her home in Edinburgh to Balerno every Sunday regardless of the weather until she left in to take up a post in Africa. Her successor wished to hold choir practice on Saturday afternoons, but this was vetoed because this was when the choir all went into the city, either by train or the new bus service!

Over the years, the congregation built up a tradition of social fellowship and the Choir played a huge part in this, providing entertainment at social events as they evolved into the much valued asset that we have today.

Lesley Burt

The Marion Milne Kindness Award



On Friday 1st March, children of Nether Currie Primary School and some parents gathered together in the concourse of Balerno High School to remember Marion Milne who, as well as being one of the Session Clerks of Balerno Parish Church, also had a day job as Administrator at the school. House Captains paid tribute to Mrs Milne reflecting the high regard and affection with which she is remembered. Representing the Pentland Gymnastics Club, Theresa Mitchell and Claire Sills told the children that the club are to introduce a new award entitled the MARION Award which will be presented annually to the young gymnast who is Motivated, Active, Responsible, Inspiring, Organised and Nurturing.

The Head Teacher, Mrs Kirsten Johnston, unveiled a glass memorial to Marion which will hang in the school and introduced the children to the Marion Milne Kindness Award which will be awarded annually to a pupil in the school who has shown exceptional kindness. The spectacular glass was produced by local artist, Scott Irvine of Harmonies in Wood and contains images relating to the school, Pentland Gymnastics and Balerno Parish Church, all of which were an important part of Marion's life.



Copy and Publication Dates

May 2024 issue

THE COPY DATE
for the May 2024 issue of the
Blether is
Friday 19th April

Publication date for May
issue is Friday 25th April.

**Copy must be
submitted by
the Copy Date**

The Kirk Session met on 28th February after a break since November and was convened by the Interim Moderator, Rev Sheena Orr. 25 Elders were present and seven apologies noted.

The principal business was consideration of the considered the Annual Accounts, which, following their presentation to the meeting by the Treasurer were accepted by Kirk Session. The Treasurer's presentation included details of our present financial situation which was very concerning to the Kirk Session. A short discussion of the circumstances ensued including issues concerning the capitalisation of the Mill dishwasher, which the Finance Committee were asked to consider..

The Accounts were subsequently presented to the congregation at the Annual Stated Meeting on 17th March.

Kirk Session noted advice from Presbytery in relation to appointment of new elders, taking into account the upcoming Union with Currie but determined to proceed with ordination.

Kirk Session Notes

Kirk Session further considered that a Budget paper which had been lodged to late for consideration at the February meeting should be remitted to the Finance Committee for advice. An extraordinary meeting of Session might thereafter be held to consider recommendations. A Project Group was also proposed to consider ways of alleviating the financial burden, and two Elders are to meet with the Session Clerks to consider furthering specific projects including Solar Panels, LED lights and buildings insulation.

The Session also received a report from the Mill Operating Unit advising that two valued members of the Team, Ken and Annabelle McCunn had stepped down and also that Jim Todd had agreed to join the group. Session thanked all involved for their commitment and service. Session was also advised of continuing efforts to fill the post of Safeguarding Co-ordinator.

Kirk Session also noted the terms of a letter from Presbytery concerning the Minister's current absence on sick leave.

Kirk Session is next scheduled to meet on 17th April.



Fairtrade News, 2 March 2024



Yes, there was enough snow to make us jumpy just before March 2's Fairtrade (FT) Morning in the St Joseph Centre, but only on the tops – phew!

So things went ahead. The Guild's lovely warm hospitality in the Ogston Hall was so welcoming; big thanks to them and all the other amazing bakers. Children enjoyed their Trail, quizzes and other activities, supported partly by the Co-op; lots of Banana Smoothies were pedalled, thanks yet again to kind local members of the Edinburgh Bicycle Cooperative, and Scotmid sponsorship of ingredients; a tasty Mill cake and a FT chocolate hamper were won; a great FT info stall, Co-op FT sampling stall, and a Seed Swap from Pentland Eco Group brought lots of interest. The three 'Selling' stalls with goods from True Origin, Hadeel and the One World Shop all reported a worthwhile morning, their takings heading back to suppliers around the world whose need is greater than ever.



wasn't put to the test, as all stayed well!

The financial results? We're told Church magazines like this kind of detail, so here it comes! Not counted in this total are the 'selling stalls' reported total takings of just over £500. Aside from these, the Guild's refreshments and baking brought £312.35 on the day with a further £104.85

from late sales/donations on March 3; competitions and Smoothie Bike £87, stallholder and other donations £80. After expenses are met (Market Operator's Licence, donation to BPC for use of Halls, children's prizes, purchase of FT choc hamper, total c £180) just over £400 remains, of which £350 is earmarked for Transform Trade once formal approval from the FT Group is complete, and at the time of writing we're almost there. The balance will be temporarily held in BFTVG's account to deal with regular yearly expenses like FT group memberships.

More detail will be available at our AGM, 7.15 pm Monday 22 April in the Ogston Hall. We'd love to see you there for many other reasons too; lots more help is always needed to plan ahead, and most welcome, so please join us! Find us also on balernofairtrade@gmail.com.

Meanwhile, once again, a huge THANK YOU to all whose help in so many ways made 2 March's FT Morning possible. Mentioning individuals is risky, but Pam, and many family members, worked their socks off; it simply couldn't have happened without you! LH





Easter's early this year.

I know, I wish they didn't keep changing the date! Why can't they stick to one date like Christmas?

This is a debate that's been going on almost as long as Easter has been celebrated! Actually it's always on the first Sunday after the first full moon on or after 21 March – the Equinox – and it's always linked to the dates of Passover. Quite simple, really...

OK... and Jesus was believed to have been crucified at Passover. I get that. But why not just stick to the first Sunday after March 21st?

St Bede asked more or less the same question in the 8th century! He also wrote about an Anglo-Saxon deity named Ēostre who was accompanied by a rabbit – or hare – and represented the rejuvenation of springtime. So maybe Christian iconography appropriated symbols from older, pagan religions, blending them in with its own. But we only have Bede's word for it, of course!

Ah, the Easter Bunny! He's everywhere now, isn't he? Bringing the Easter eggs!

And that's another thing – Easter eggs!! Originally they represented the stone being rolled away from Jesus' tomb – there are references going back to the 13th century, – now they're an excuse for over-indulgence!

Come now, that's a bit harsh, surely? After all, if we've all been giving up chocolate for Lent, maybe it's time for a bit of indulgence? Maybe we should bring some in our pockets to sustain us on the Walk of Faith between Balerno and Currie on Good Friday!

You know, that's a great idea! Meet you at 11am, outside the Mill!

The Treasurer's Thumb Searching for a role

Well, you find me today in melancholic and reflective mood, which yes, I know, you will think unusual, as indeed it is. But it is nevertheless a sad and unavoidable fact, that today is not a rip roaring good day, and that despite the fact that Spring is all around.

You see, I find myself with time on, if I had any, my hands. By that mean of course, because I lack metacarpi, that I suffer from a surfeit of opportunity. What am I to do with all this down-time? To explain, I write this after the end of the financial year, and that is a period of angst because The Great Man is finishing The Accounts;. So I am not required Why? Because he engages only the forefinger on keyboard, and there is nothing more. So I am near redundant and were I not attached to him, literally, I might otherwise expect to have been 'let go'. But because I cannot 'go' I am therefore 'at leisure', and that as we all know, thumbs included, is a 'bad thing'.

Now there is a difference between *enforced idleness* and the *furtive seizing at an opportunity for unproductive inactivity*. They may look the same, but they're not. Picture, if you can, on the one hand, himself, appearing, but only *appearing*, to gaze at a profit and loss account, while on the other, yours truly is denied the opportunity for wholesome work firstly because himself is in fact doing nothing and I cannot do anything else when I am pinioned by the wrist to the desk. I did not choose to be at so called *rest* while being thumped up and down on the table top however gently, as his thought meander we know not where. No, I'm sorry but I am temporarily redundant, lacking choice or purpose.

Naturally I begin to reflect on my lot. And that is not good, because it unleashes ambition and a longing for achievement. Why, for example, could I not, a journeyman thumb, have been the witch's thespian thumb, whose tingling forewarned of something evil coming - yes, yes I know, MacBeth Act IV Sc1. I could after all have had a life on the stage, provided of course I was associated with the right witch, although I don't know their names, and knowing the familiars Grimalkin, Puddock, and Harpier probably isn't enough. But, on reflection, there aren't really many good parts for a Thumb are there? There's one in Romeo and Juliet, but that part's not too attractive since Sampson threatens to bite me, and anyway there's nothing for the thumb, however talented, after Act 1 Sc 1. Pity. I could always try the Clubbed Thumb Theater Company in New York I suppose?

But what's this? I am called on once more to action? Huzzah! The accounts are completed, passed, verified. Things are back to normal . and I am released from my torpor.

Woof, woof.....

Hello my friends – its me again. You'll be pleased to hear that my little scheme for visiting the butchers was working well, until that is, Charlie became suspicious that I may upset the butcher and therefore, he too could lose his little perk and so I was 'warned-off' so to speak (and Charlie is much bigger than me!). In future, if I wanted my share, then I'd only have to go when Charlie was there.

Now, you my regular readers will recall that at this juncture something would be bound to go wrong, and sure enough, this was to be no exception. I had forgotten, but my half-yearly trip to the Vet for my check-up was due the following week and I knew what that entailed – the wagging of the Vet's finger followed by dietary instructions. I don't know how to read my weight as recorded by his scales, but clearly something was wrong. Apparently I now weighed a whole kilogram more than at my last visit. She who 'walks' me insisted that I only received biscuits in a little gravy plus my water, but the Vet was adamant that could not be so. Naturally, I sat there looking rather sheepish (I thought only sheep did that?) but I'd obviously been rumbled.

As I sat in the lounge window, longing to be at the butchers, I spotted Charlie outside the house. I think he guessed what was wrong, but then he'd once again have the butcher all to himself!

I must stop here, as my doggie tears are approaching and we chaps can't be seen in such a state. Just how many more disappointments can life bring?

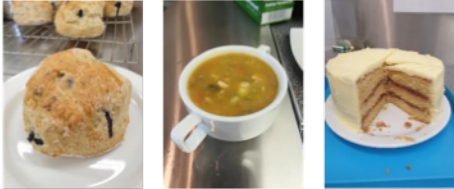




Come visit The Mill Café at the
St Joseph's Centre.
Open Tuesday to Friday,
9.00am to 2.00pm.

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

Scones at the Mill Café are made on the premises, fresh every day. That's why they taste so good. The same goes for the two flavours of soup we offer every day - all lovingly made by Mill volunteers and staff. The baking is home-made too, and delicious!



Our bacon rolls are also pretty special. Each roll has no less than three rashers of bacon, with all of the fat round the sides removed before it is served to you. That could be why they are a favourite of so many of our customers. In addition, we offer fresh-griddled pancakes, baked potatoes, toasted sandwiches and paninis, with a variety of tasty fillings to choose from. Visit us soon and try it for yourself!

We use Fairtrade products wherever possible.

The Mill Café, 2 Main Street, Balerno EH14 7EH.

Picture of the month - April 2024

So where is this? And what on earth is that thing for? A coffee at the Mill for the first correct answer!

The March Picture of the Month had two, yes that's TWO winners; so does that mean this competition has caught the public's imagination?

Please note the photographer, and those known to have accompanied him or her at this shoot are fortunately ineligible to enter. as obviously is the Editorial Board.

For the record March's picture 1 was taken at the junction of Kirkgate and Harlaw Road. Picture 2 is back in the cupboard for another day!



April Calendar

Unless otherwise notified Sunday worship is at 10.00am every Sunday, at Balerno Parish Church

Easter Sunday

31 March - Easter Sunday Balerno - 10.00am
NB Clocks go forward on 31 March

Events in April

17 April - Kirk Session - St Joseph's Hall - 7.30pm
25 April - One Bar Rest and Friends invite you to - 7.30pm

'An April Evening'
at St Joseph's Hall at 7.30pm
see ad on p2 for ticket and book details

Useful Numbers

Minister

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
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Treasurer:

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Pam McKeon 449 2541
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Mill Café:

Lynsey Inglis
themillatstjosephs@gmail.com

Balerno Blether:

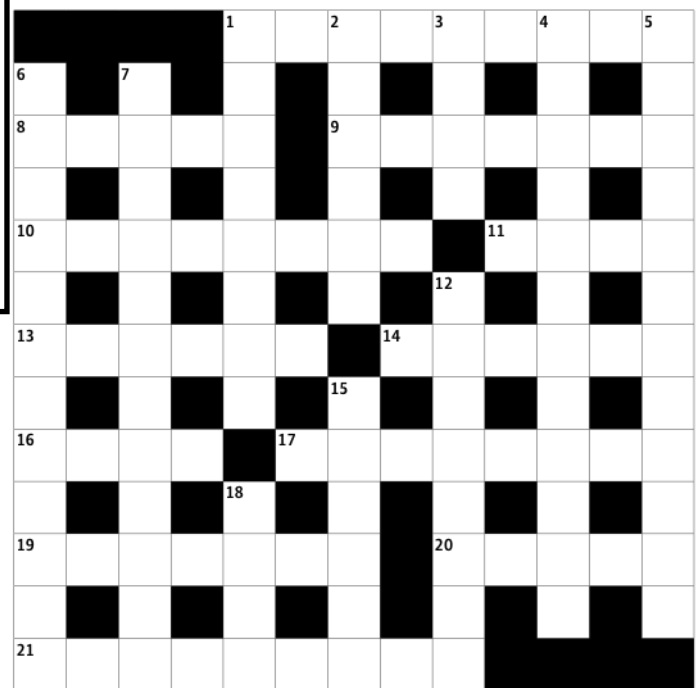
Lesley Burt 449 4314
lesley.burt70@gmail.com

March 2024 solution

S	I	C	K		C	O	N	F	U	S	E	D
A		O	P		N		O	E		A		
P	O	M	P	O	U	S		L	O	C	K	S
L		B	U		H		I	T		H		
I	N	O	F		A	T	O	M	I	C		
N			F		K			O		S		
G	R	A	P	E	H	Y	A	C	I	N	T	H
S		M			G		A			O		
	A	N	G	L	E	R		N	E	H	R	U
P	E	O			O		V	U		L		
R	E	S	I	T			U	N	A	R	M	E
O		I		T		N		S		U		E
D	I	A	M	O	N	D	S		T	S	A	R

During Dr. Groenewald's current absence on sick leave please refer all pastoral issues for which you might wish to speak to the Minister to either of the Session Clerks, Kay Coull or Elaine McCulloch. For all other issues on which you might wish to speak to the Minister please contact the Church Administrator.

April 2024 Crossword



Across

- 1 Do several things concurrently (9)
- 8 Deplete (3,2)
- 9 Blue or white cheese originally from Leicestershire (7)
- 10 Copied (8)
- 11 Unit of distance (4)
- 13 Mug (6)
- 14 Spice, mainly from Indonesia, made by grinding seeds of an evergreen tree (6)
- 16 River of the Yorkshire Dales (4)
- 17 Client (8)
- 19 Distended (7)
- 20 Lennox or Leibovitz? (5)
- 21 Unwilling (9)

Down

- 1 Cartographer (3-5)
- 2 Diminish (6)
- 3 Part of the eye (4)
- 4 Now (2,4,6)
- 5 Nursery school (12)
- 6 Crosser of the Rubicon, 49 BC (6,6)
- 7 Author of The Hunting of the Snark (5,7)
- 12 Take away (8)
- 15 Old gold coin, worth 21 shillings (6)
- 18 Group of countries acting together (4)