

balerno



FREE
BUT

Blether

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



Complementary visions

This month we lead on change in Balerno Parish Church with Currie Kirk and change in St Mungo's Church. These are complementary processes which affect us all and our community. We all have an interest in ensuring that our community can continue to flourish. Change through the upcoming union between the Parish Church and Currie Kirk will be challenging. But the confidence and commitment of St Mungo's as described below should encourage us all to see the sunlit uplands and not just the trees



A joint meeting of Balerno Kirk Session and Currie Kirk Session on 26th August heard about the developing thinking within Edinburgh and West Lothian Presbytery about the projected Union of the two churches. The meeting was convened by our two Interim Moderators and heard also from representative of the presbytery including Daran Golby, Ministries Development Manager at 121.

Put briefly Presbytery were considering whether a Linkage arrangement might be put in place for Balerno and Currie leading to the appointment of an Interim Minister who would assist in developing the Union between the two congregations. Regular readers of the Blether will remember that the idea of Linkage was considered in the July 2022 issue.

The August 2024 Joint Meeting agreed that the projected linkage

should be pursued; such a linkage might be in place by the end of the year. Douglas writes more on this on page 9. Linkage would begin to pave the way for appointment of an Interim Minister one of whose tasks would be to guide the linked congregations towards a union.

Linkage will not itself remodel the institutions of either Currie or Balerno. Each will retain its Kirk Session and structure of committees for the time being. But it will start a process over possibly the next two years directed at achieving the union.

The issue of a vision for the Kirk of Currie and Balerno were that to be the name for the united charge, would become much more pressing upon a linkage taking effect.

St Mungo's share a vision for the future

St Mungo's Church are currently at the start of a process which may result in the construction of a new church building in Balerno and on 22 August they shared their vision for that future with Balerno Parish Church.

Around twenty five members of the Parish Church including our Interim Moderator,

Douglas, and Locum Minister, Derek, heard from Ollie Clegg, Rector of St Mungo's and Eric Adair the Project Director, about the development which is still very much at the initial planning stage.

Very briefly, St Mungo's have decided that they must find a permanent home for their gathered congregation in Balerno. More definite arrangements are needed to cater for their weekly services where congregations numbering over 200 are the norm. And their Wellness Centre centred on Woodcroft on Bridge Road, which provides services to the community and Balerno High School, now needs bespoke facilities. Both Ollie and Eric emphasised that St Mungo's are anxious to involve the local community as they work through the logistics of developing a detailed prospectus for new accommodation not only for services but also for the Wellness work centred at present on Woodcroft. They are looking at the possibilities of developing in the field between Woodcroft and Bridge Road and are conscious of the challenges which a site within the Green Belt and the Balerno Conservation Area presents. They will keep us in touch with matters as they progress.



We report on page 1 on two events over the past summer, each of which is highly significant for Balerno Parish Church. The first, on 22nd August, was St Mungo's presentation to the congregation on their developing plans for a new home, in Balerno, and the second, four days later on the 26th, a joint meeting of Currie and Balerno Kirk Sessions with Presbytery..

The second was clearly to facilitate progress towards the Union, but taken with the former it can be seen as a challenge to us to confront a new future. Both events underline not simply that we live in a period of change but that we are not islands but have to look, together, at shared futures.

We are at present considerably assisted by our Interim Moderator and Locum Minister, and there might be a temptation to sit back and let them and others take the strain. However Presbytery's confirmation that we may anticipate appointment of an Interim Minister, shared with Currie, provides us with a glimpse of the future in which the current overall Ministerial resource available to Balerno and Currie will reduce significantly.

Interim Ministry will prepare the congregations for union and for the challenges of operating as the Kirk of Currie and Balerno. While we will be helped along the way we will need together to develop the vision for the future of that union, and to do that we will need to have an idea of where we want our communities to be in five, ten, fifteen years time.

We need to start talking about that future sooner rather than later. The process towards Union will involve changes in the way we do things, in preparation for bigger changes. It will not simply be a question of getting finance and administration adjusted but the way the congregation works, what it wants to achieve and how it wants to be seen in this community and beyond. How and what we communicate will be central.

Kirk Session - September Layan Nasir

While we report elsewhere on the progress towards the Union with Currie, and Kirk Session's considerations of the issues arising, the Session has also been occupied with both the more routine issues in the management of the Church and also some less routine.

At its meeting in September the Kirk Session determined to respond to an invitation from the Church to connect with St Andrews Church, Jerusalem.

It had also had circulated on 5 August a note from Stewart Gillan and Muriel Pearson, our Mission Partners in Jerusalem, concerning the continued administrative detention of Layan Nasir in respect of which no explanation or reasons have been offered by the Israeli authorities who have her in custody.



23-year-old Layan, a Palestinian Anglican Christian, was taken at gunpoint from her parents' home in the West Bank in the town of Birzeit on Sunday 7 April. This was the second time Layan has been arrested. Three years ago on 7 July 2021, she was detained at her house over her participation in student union activities at Birzeit University. Her family are reported as saying that: "When she was arrested the first time, the soldiers stormed the house about 5 am, and they were quieter. This time the raid was brutal and violent, and we were held at gunpoint. The soldiers were more aggressive and seemed ready to fire in our direction at any moment." Layan's family have not been permitted to visit her.

At the end of June 2024, the Israel Prison Service (IPS) was holding 3,340 Palestinians in administrative detention..The Israeli military is also reported as holding administrative detainees, usually for short periods of time, until there is room for them in an IPS facility. In the context of internment the principle of legality means that a person may be deprived of liberty only for reasons and in accordance with procedures that are provided for by domestic and international law.

There may be little that we can do to alleviate problems in Gaza and the West Bank, but Session agreed that expressing our concern was appropriate.

The concerns of the Kirk Session in relation to this matter are therefore being brought to the attention of the Church of Scotland.



Do you have a minute,

I've just had a rather alarming insight into the implications of that bit in the 10 Commandments which talks about the sins of the fathers being visited upon the children. My daughter has recently passed her driving test and so she was very pleased to be able to offer to drop me off when she was going to see a friend; I was quite chuffed that hours of practice had borne fruit and that she had the satisfaction of having completed another of the rites of passage towards adulthood.

Her driving was suddenly more relaxed and as she squeezed through an amber traffic light, I remarked on the fact that she would not have done that before sitting the driving test. "But it's what you do," she responded in a rather aggrieved tone. I could say nothing; I realised that through years of observation there was plenty of evidence in her memory to substantiate her claim.

She dropped me off and my brain went into overdrive; what other habits had she assimilated from her parent's occasional self-deception when it was convenient to follow the spirit of the law rather than the letter? Did I really think that my example had been good enough? Whether I liked it or not, I had been a role model for nearly 18 years and I was now realising that it was too late to do anything about it. What sort of a role model had I been? I can only hope and pray that the good will outweigh the rest as, in the fullness of time, she will become a role model to the next generation.

Lord, help me not to forget the importance of my example to others.

Well? What did you do in the holidays?

TANZANIA

People travel a long way to get away from it all on holiday but there probably aren't all that many who travel 7.5K miles to spend their holiday as builders labourers. But that is precisely what Neil and Anne Johnstone did when they flew to Tanzania in August as part of a team from the Vine Trust helping to build two houses for TAWREF (Tanzania Women Research Foundation) an organisation dedicated to transforming the lives of marginalised populations particularly children, youth and women.

VINE TRUST

Connecting People to Change Lives

After an extended pause including the Covid years, Anne and Neil were able at last to fulfil an ambition to join a house building expedition to Tanzania. In August they joined a group of 20 adults (aged 17 to 70+) from across Scotland and UK. The core of the team came from Larbert East Church but the first connections of the trip were made with the lovely colleagues from Inverness, Aberdeen, Glasgow, Kincardine, Falkirk, Galashiels, Castle Douglas and Portsmouth.

The quick headlines from Anne and Neil are that this was a deeply rewarding and humbling experience, but they saw that hope can be realised through compassionate works. No matter what you read or see on TV, Neil and Anne say that the first-hand experience of community hardships and living conditions was very chastening.

But it was not just an educational trip; six days of hard work on two sites providing the labour to two contracted *fundis* (builders) was at the heart of the activities. Poor accessibility and costs meant that the building methods were basic



and the volunteers made much use of "chain-gang" methods to move earth, rocks, sand and bricks. However Health and Safety under-pinned the approach and each work session started with a review of the site risk assessments. Working in temperatures of up to 29 degrees Centigrade meant that skin protection, headwear and water breaks were standard.

Within the fortnight both houses reached roof level and the *fundis* would go on to complete the roof, plastering and windows.

The group just happened to be in-country as five other houses were completed; these being the result of great efforts over the summer by Scottish Schools parties from Perth Grammar, Galashiels Academy and Milne's High School from Moray. Anne said recounts to the Blether that,

"This was an amazing day as we all attended the official opening and handing over the houses to the deserving families. We witnessed the vacated "dwellings" and saw the joy and hope of the mother and children as they entered their new homes for the first time."

The handover of these five marked the completion of 147 houses built in the Moshi area by Vine Trust in partnership with TAWREF.

There is much more to be said about this amazing adventure and readers should note the date of 6 November when Anne and Neil will give an illustrated talk to the Guild. We are assured that you will hear about Chagga caves, Jambo bwana, the amazing Defrosa, Kilimanjaro coffee, planting



The chain gang in action



Neil said he'd try to get us a picture of himself carrying a hod of bricks on his back. Has he just put this one down for a wee rest we wonder while Anne continues in the chain gang?



from this



to this



Whither Balerno?



Balerno Parish Church What are we?

On page 2 of this edition of the Blether we highlight the 'challenge for us to confront a new future' as we anticipate the appointment of an Interim Minister who is shared with Currie. A part of that challenge is to acknowledge where we are and our character traits as a congregation. We all might have our own ideas of how we think we are, but we probably don't share these ideas as much as we should.

At a Kirk Session Conference in 2018, the elders had a fairly full and frank discussion about where we were and the direction that we should be heading. The exercise was engaging and prompted a report, an outline of which appeared in The Bridge in the spring of 2018.

The overall picture given in the report was of a Kirk Session which felt a need for change and movement with the times. While there was not a demand for radical change at that time, there was a consistent view that there had to be more done to improve the demographic profile of the congregation and to make the church more attractive to younger people through a more flexible style and a willingness to explore 'fresh expressions of worship.' However, the report reflects a lack of an agreed sense of urgency to address the issue of declining membership.

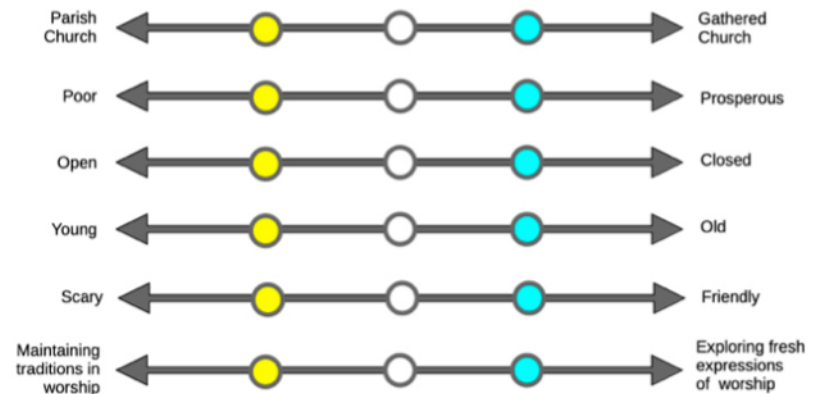
There was a clear indication that it was felt that the church needed to be more outward looking towards the community and it was agreed that there should be an exploration of the practicality of appointing a full time Church Community Builder to join the ministry team in BPC. However, despite the best endeavours of a small working group, this particular ambition failed to become a reality.

Perhaps the most significant outcome of these discussions was a clear indicator that there was a need to improve our communication, a concern which continues. Communication in the 21st Century involves word of mouth, print, the internet and social media and there is a serious question about whether we make the most of opportunities to spread our message.

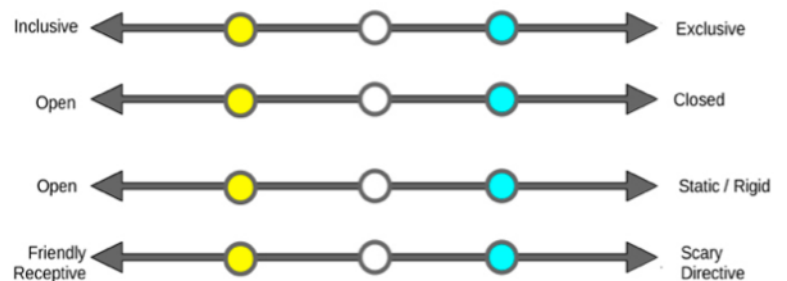
However, there are two distinct sides of the coin of communication; these are the means and the message. It doesn't really matter how good your handling of the means of communication is if there isn't a clear message. As we move forward to the process of linking, we perhaps need to have a clearer idea of who we are and who we want to be if the prospective union with Currie is to have any chance of being a happy marriage.

If you want to see details of the report from the Kirk Session Retreat in 2018, then it is still available on the church website. We may have moved on from there, but, nearly seven years later the questions that it poses remain relevant, especially as we navigate ourselves back into discussions about union.

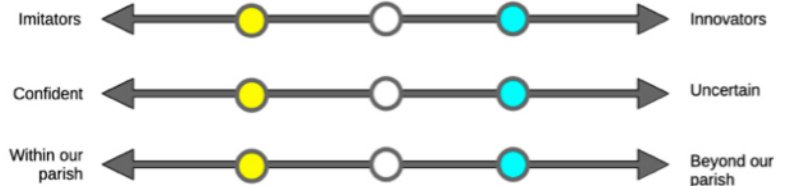
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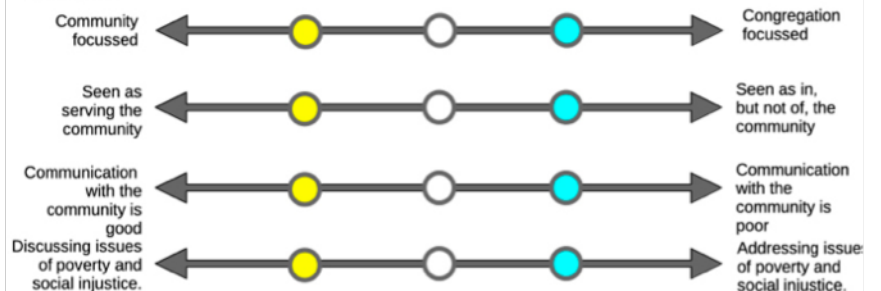
2. Style



Mission



Outreach



JB 050118

note for the diary

Apple Day is on Saturday 12 October at the Farmers Market, and there is an Apple Pie competition. So why not have a go?

And well done Derek for volunteering for the onerous task of being on the panel of judges. Judges have to taste all the entries. so the advice is not to have breakfast that day, perhaps?

WHO'S WHO IN THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND



Navigating around the acronyms and offices of the Church of Scotland, before you get into the world of the Barrier Act, Deliverances and the like. The language of the Kirk can seem strange. So here's a simple introduction to some aspects of Kirk language; First the people and offices.

MODERATOR: Well, we all know about 'THE Moderator' – or to give him or her their full title, the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, who chairs, or moderates, the General Assembly. Elected by a committee annually, the Moderator is usually – though not always – a parish minister, who takes a year's sabbatical to carry out their duties of representing the Church of Scotland at home and abroad. This year's incumbent is the Right Rev Dr Shaw Paterson - when he steps down from his role at next year's General Assembly he will be known as the Very Rev Dr Shaw Paterson.

But we also have other Moderators. There is a Moderator for each local Presbytery – usually a minister but sometimes an Elder. Presbytery meets once a month to discuss the latest church business, local developments etc (as you can imagine, Presbyteries have been very busy recently!) Each parish has a representative Elder (our present one is Ian Alexander)

When a charge is vacant, Presbytery appoints an **INTERIM MODERATOR**, usually a neighbouring or a retired minister. Rev Douglas Nicol is serving as our Interim Moderator just now, he will chair Session, preach occasionally, and guide us through the process of the tasks ahead of us ie liaising with Currie and the eventual appointment of a new minister.

And Kirk Session is presided over by a **MODERATOR** – usually the parish minister. Anyone wishing to speak at a Session meeting must do so through the Moderator, addressing them directly.

There is an enormous amount of work to be covered in any parish, and sometimes the load has to be spread among several people, with different roles and responsibilities. A **MINISTER OF WORD AND SACRAMENT** – conducts worship, preaches the Word of God, and celebrates the Sacraments (ie weddings, funerals and baptisms) Not all ordained ministers will have a parish – many are more drawn to work in chaplaincy, team ministry, working in Central Offices or University teaching, etc.

As well as our Interim Moderator, at the moment we have a **LOCUM MINISTER**, Rev Derek Munn. He is an OLM (see below) and his duties involve regular preaching at Sunday services plus two days a week involving pastoral work etc.

ORDAINED LOCAL MINISTRY: OLMs work part-time, unpaid, as Ministers of Word and Sacrament. Sometimes this is in a team with parish ministers (like Rev Rita Welsh at Holy Trinity Westerhailes, working with the Foodbank among many other things!) or acting as Locum to a vacant charge.

THE DIACONATE: Deacons/ Deaconesses are ordained to offer Ministry of Word And Service. They cannot offer the Sacraments, but work within communities and groups, assisting parish ministers in their work.

And on the last one - Diaconate - The word deacon is derived from the Greek word *diákonos* (διάκονος), which is a standard ancient Greek word meaning "servant", "waiter", "minister", or "messenger".

It is generally assumed that the office of deacon originated in the selection of seven men by the apostles, among them Stephen, to assist with the charitable work of the early church as recorded in Acts chapter 6.



A tribute to Betty

Betty was a much loved member of the volunteer staff at the Mill Cafe.. She passed away peacefully at her home in Balerno in August

Betty volunteered in the cafe for 12 years, 3 days a week. She loved volunteering in the cafe and thrived getting to know her community. She cared about everyone that came through the doors and loved watching the children grow up and chatting to all. The Mill's facebook page has many tributes to Betty especially from the new parents who brought their very young children in to the Mill.

Betty enjoyed meeting new volunteers and would happily take them under her wing.

We will all, volunteers, staff and customers miss her laughter ringing through the hall and her company. Betty could have won gold if tottering about in heels were an Olympic sport; she could take off across the church garden with a tray full off coffee and not spill a drop or get her heels stuck in the grass.

Betty was always dressed beautifully, she was a bright, elegant and determined soul.

She always enjoyed a very frothy Cappuccino at 11.30 ish everyday with as much froth as possible built to a peak, a couple of marshmallows and a light dusting of cocoa which she would happily scoop up with a teaspoon while always still on her feet!.

the number of tributes

Energy - Towards a Sustainable Future



An article in the March 2024 edition of The Blether, 'Being a Sustainable Congregation', outlined concerns and opportunities relating to the amount of energy we use and what it is costing us.

Since then a small committee has been formed, we are presbyterian after all, but this project is not a 'one-man' job it needs a team to tackle it anyway.

Business Energy Scotland (BES) Energy Efficiency Assessments

Business Energy Scotland (BES) has conducted an Energy Efficiency Assessment of our properties and produced two reports, one for the church building and the other for the halls. The reports confirm the validity of the items mentioned in March and quantify the costs and benefits of addressing all the areas, namely

- LED lighting
- Improved insulation of the Ogston Hall
- Installation of solar PV and batteries
- Improved management controls of our heating system.

Each of these areas is in effect a sub-project on its own and the aim is to address all of them in time. For each area the BES reports identify costs, annual savings and likely payback. There are also suggestions for grant funding through the government's SME loan scheme which will make 75% of the loan awarded into a grant.

An extract from the BES report on the Halls

Description	Annual Savings	Investment	Potential Grant	Payback in years, with a grant
Loft / Ceiling Insulation	£184	£7,000	£5,250	9.5
Internal Wall insulation	£319	£8,400	£6,300	6.6
Heating Controls	£557	£4,000	£3,000	1.8
Lighting Systems and controls	£620	£5,000	£3,750	2
Solar PV	£3,424	£24,000	£0	7
Total	£5,104	£48,400	£18,300	

NB The grants referred to in the reports come through the Energy Saving Trust as part of a government SME loan scheme. This scheme does not include solar panels so alternative sources of funding will need to be sought.

Lighting Systems and Controls

The team have analysed the current lighting, we have at least 4 different types of lighting in our buildings, and assessed what

- can usefully be carried out by ourselves,
- is best left alone and
- is best carried out by an electrical contractor.

Invitations to tender have been sent to three electrical contractors and a start has been made to completing an application to the Energy Savings Trust for funding.

Insulation and Solar PV

The first stage in these two sub-projects is to establish the suitability of the roofs structurally. This requires a structural survey to be carried out. Only when this is completed can we expect contractors to provide informed and accurate estimates of the costs involved. At the time of writing the team are awaiting approval from the finance committee to spend the £1,900 + VAT necessary to progress further.

Potential Impact

Taken together these sub-projects have the potential to provide us with a win/win situation. Reducing our energy costs will help towards the financial viability of the congregation, it will reduce our carbon footprint, BES predicts that these measures will reduce our energy usage by 28,600 kWh pa and reduce the amount of CO2 by 6.3 tonnes, and it will demonstrate our fiscal and environmental responsibility to the wider community.

What can you do?

If you have read this far you will realise that while grants are available to cover the bulk of the costs they don't cover everything. Once we have established what funding is needed and what the grants will cover then everyone will have the chance to help. In the meantime there is scope for involvement in helping to progress any of these initiatives particularly if you can help access sources of funding. The team will be delighted to hear from you and to welcome you aboard.

Martin Petty mpetty712@gmail.com 0131 449 4175



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 Café. A warm welcome awaits families, walkers, locals – in other words, the whole community. It is bright and spacious and the food is fantastic. You will find good quality coffee, freshly-baked scones, cakes and much more besides. Try it once and we guarantee you'll be back!



Why not try one of our bacon rolls or fresh-griddled pancakes? Every day we have two varieties soup, lovingly made by our Mill volunteers and staff. Or try our baked potatoes, toasted sandwiches or paninis, with a variety of tasty fillings to choose from.

We use Fairtrade products wherever possible.

The Mill Café, St Joseph's Centre, 2 Main Street, Balerno EH14 9EH



An Ode to The Mill

by

Susan Macfarlane

Mill Volunteer

The Mill in Balerno is the place to be

If you fancy a coffee or maybe a tea!

The scones are the best, I've heard folk say
Coz they're made from scratch...fresh every day

Wholesome soups also star

Just check the board to see what they are

Served with a sandwich, it's known as a deal

What more could you wish for your lunchtime meal?

The team of people that runs the place

Cooking and serving with such good grace

Are a friendly bunch who like having fun

Laughing and joking 'til the work's all done

So if you'd like to lend a hand

Volunteers are much in demand.

Open Tuesday to Friday, nine to two

Come meet your friends, both old and new!

It's time for the annual Blythswood shoebox appeal again!



Filling a shoe box for some of the poorest people in Eastern Europe, which is delivered in time to make a huge difference to Christmas for them. The box can contain toiletries, socks, underwear etc - scarves, hats, gloves - sweets, pens and coloured pencils, tiny gifts, anything suitable for your chosen 'person'.

We've listed below the hints from Blythswoods website about possible filler ideas

The Blythswood Tract Society was started in Glasgow in 1966. The group was made up of young men with a passion for Jesus and sharing the gospel. They engaged people in conversation on the city's streets, handing out Christian messages and sharing the good news of Jesus living, loving and dying for people before rising again. The Society's name simply came from the area in Glasgow where they had a tiny office, near Blythswood Square.

Girl / Boy 3-7	
Plasticine	Pyjamas
Simple sewing	Toy car/truck
Dressing-up	Toy animals
Chalk	Paints
Sticker books	Picture snap cards
My Little Pony	Wooden toy
Colouring book	Small ball
Crayons	Socks
T-shirt	Shorts
Underwear	Vests

Girl / Boy 8-12	
Sewing kit	Lego
Craft kit	Draughts
Paint by numbers	Modelling clay
Jewellery/beads	Tennis ball
Socks	Vests
T-shirt	Watch
Pyjamas	Playing cards
Colouring book	Sticker book
Stationery	Socks
Skipping ropes	Marbles

Teenage Girl / Boy		Woman	Man	Elderly woman
Make-up	Shorts	Make-up	Dominoes	Magnifying glass
Craft kit	Tennis ball	First aid kit	Pack of cards	Umbrella
Jewellery	Rubix cube	Sanitary products	Draughts	Hand cream
Hair brush	Draughts board game	Perfume	Tape measure	Folding walking stick
Nail varnish	Aeroplane model	Shampoo	Tin cup	Slippers
Dominoes	Windup torch	Tape measure	Belt	Apron
Perfume/After shave	Dominoes	Apron	Braces	Candle
Hair band	Deodorant	Measuring spoons	Wind-up torch	Tin cup
Small watch	Small watch	Kitchen utensils	Pen knife	Small clock
Diary	Thermal vest	Small scissors	Shaving brush	Nail brush
Manicure set	Cap	Underwear	Pen	Tights

More information available from Bill and Margaret Black,
mtblack@blueyonder.co.uk or 449 6707. Delivery by 27 OCTOBER please.to
Bill and Margaret Black
11 Larchfield
Balerno



Fairtrade News

Fairtrade Foundation's (FT's) new September 'Fortnight' went well locally, as we tried to support our fellow-people worldwide in their work for a fairer future. Churches, retailers, and public buildings

displayed poster publicity, with more via the C&B News, Balerno Blether, and online. At BPC, The Mill's delicious extra FT-themed bakery whizzed off the plates, and lovely FT flowers decorated the Church. Generous customers, and supporters new and old, made the Farmers' Market FT food and craft stall so worthwhile. Handcrafted postbox toppers in both Currie and Balerno still help remind us to 'Be the Change', supporting FT via our year-round shopping. All three local schools made our Fortnight for us by backing a Balerno Schools FT art competition early in 2025: it's been part of our local calendar for nearly twenty years now, with its 'presentation morning' almost always at BPC, and fuelled by great Guild baking. Urged to seek our politicians' FT commitment, we welcomed MP Dr Scott Arthur's signing the Foundation's FT pledge, and his promised help with Edinburgh's 2025's International FT Conference. And we're so grateful for our MSP Gordon MacDonald's Parliamentary Motion endorsing FT, both generally, and via 'Balerno' details which specifically include The Mill. Since when, we understand its reporting and sharing has taken off like a rocket, thanks to Ministers Derek and Douglas.

Again, thank you so much to everyone - too many to mention by name here - for your vital support both of these local efforts, and of the wider aims of Fairtrade; and if we've missed mentioning other local FT Fortnight efforts here, sincere

apologies. We next meet @ 1.30 pm in St Joseph's Hall, Monday 28 October, to plan ahead. We'd love you to come and help plan too – please!

Lesley Henderson



Stirred by the Storm

Book review

Blether doesn't publish many book reviews, but *Stirred by the Storm* is special. The authors, both very successful and much-loved parish ministers in Edinburgh, one of whom used to live in Balerno, will be known to a number of our readers. They have a wealth of practical experience and wisdom.

Depending on your perspective this booklet can be read as critique of the Church of Scotland's direction or as a series of signposts to meeting the needs of the present and the future; to making much better use of the resources in our congregations; to connecting with our communities, almost providing a manual for change. Above all it shows that despite the current chaos and lack of clarity in the church there are ways forward, there is hope for the future.

This 125 page booklet is written in very readable chapters covering very little theology but asking a many focused questions. In one chapter the authors go into some detail describing how the congregation of Bremen Cathedral took action to welcome people in and transform the way their building is used. Closer to home they describe how a rural congregation in the East of Scotland, at a very low point and whose minster had been long term sick before demitting office, was revived under the leadership of an interim moderator/locum.

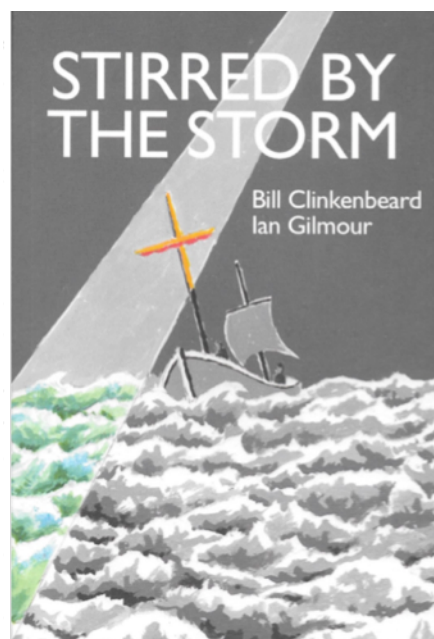
There are many reasons why you should read this book. It could be that you want to see what the husband of a local GP and a very good friend and mentor of our late Louise Duncan think. It could be you're interested in the wide perspective that the authors bring to their subject. It could be because you are uncertain about the future and direction of our congregation or the Church of Scotland as a whole.

The reason doesn't matter this is a must-read booklet and the

sooner it is read the better.

Stirred by the Storm – by Bill Clinkenbeard and Ian Gilmour costs £10 and is available from The Cornerstone Bookshop in Edinburgh (<https://cornerstonebooks.org.uk/online-shop/>).

All profits are donated to Water Aid.



WHAT'S NEXT FOR CURRIE AND BALERNO

update from

Douglas Nicoll, Interim Moderator, Balerno

and

Anne Logan, Interim Moderator, Currie

As Interim Moderators, we are delighted that the locums, Rev Susan Galloway (Currie Kirk) and Rev Derek Munn (Balerno) are now in place, and we are sure the congregations are enjoying their respective ministries.

Discussions with Presbytery and within the Kirk Sessions are continuing. It has been acknowledged that, for a variety of reasons, both congregations would benefit from a little bit of building up before going forward into a full Union. The Presbytery is well aware of the future potential of Currie and Balerno and would like to make that Union as strong as possible. As was mentioned in the previous statement, it is thought that a temporary period of linking would help that process by allowing each congregation to move to a stronger place.

In addition, Presbytery hope to deploy the resources of the National Church by appointing an Interim Minister who would serve both congregations during that period of linking. Interim Ministers are experienced ministers with specialist training who are appointed, for a short period, to lead congregations to specific outcomes. In the case of Currie and Balerno, that would be to bring the two congregations and the two Kirk Sessions, which have quite different ways of working, together effectively. There are still agreements to be reached with the National Church, but we are hopeful that will happen shortly and the timetable for the process is set out below.

The Basis of Linking will appear on the Church websites once finalised. Copies will be made available on request.

Meantime, all the very excellent work on the Basis of Union which was carried out by the Water of Leith steering group will not be lost, as Union between the two congregations remains the overall goal, hopefully within a couple of years.

We are grateful to Presbytery for their care for the congregations as we move forward together.

Rev. Dr Anne Logan. Interim Moderator, Currie Kirk

annetlogan@sky.com

Rev. Douglas Nicol, Interim Moderator, Balerno Parish Church

Douglas.Nicol@churchofscotland.org.uk

Tuesday 8th October, 7pm Gibson Craig Halls: Joint Kirk Session meeting to consider Basis of Linking: Kirk Sessions separately vote on Basis of Linking and Interim Ministry.

Sunday 13th October: Congregational Meetings at close of Worship to vote on Basis of Linking.

Thursday 17th October, 7pm Gibson Craig Halls: Presentation to both congregations on Interim Ministry. Congregations then vote separately on Interim Ministry.

The Cowrie Shell

Please forgive the layout of the Bletter this month! Last minute problems with the publisher system meant that part of the penultimate draft got lost and so the final draft was made up in part from pdfs of earlier drafts. Anyway the important thing is that the pictures supplied by Derek from sunny Orkney have made it through to printing - hooray! Derek's picture at the top of the page was taken on holiday at Brough of Birsay and the other show one of the two shells which apparently promise great wealth, and which King Gezo of Dahomey, now modern Benin, said he preferred to gold. So next time you're on the beach..... make sure Derek's looking for a shell for you too.



Searching for the one

A minute from Derek
Locum Minister

I'm writing this while on holiday on Orkney. Yes, we've left it late this year - but we have had the satisfaction of being able to answer people who've returned from their travels that 'oh! we've still to go our holidays actually!' A risky strategy for September in Orkney - but it's paid off so far. The weather has been warm and sunny and none of the characteristic wind has blown us away.

We've spent a lot of time on the various glorious beaches - our favourite has been at Brough of Birsay, where an interpretative panel told us to look out for cowrie shells. Apparently, if you keep one in your wallet you'll never run out of money - imagine that. So eyes down, we searched and searched and didn't have much luck - the shells are quite small and difficult to spot. Especially on a sandy and pebble-strewn beach covered in all sorts of shells! After an enjoyable time looking though, we eventually found ... two cowrie shells!! One each - so we should be ok for a loan of a fiver!

This time of searching reminded me of the parable Jesus told of the woman searching for her one lost coin. In this parable Jesus is reminding us that every one of us is precious to God. He will never give up on any of us, however lost we may become. Jesus continues this discourse with two other parables - the lost sheep and the prodigal son. All three are reminders of God's love for all and his active seeking of sinners.

We will hold on to our cowrie shells carefully- it took a lot of searching to find them. We will treasure them, not because we believe our wallets will magically fill, but because we are reminded by them of a happy day on the beach, but most of all a constant reminder of how precious we are to God.

Caption competition

Pirate? I've been called worse!

Now we know that the expedition to Tanzania was a serious business but we couldn't resist taking this piratical image and posng the question to you, our valued readers; What do you think Neil is saying to camera?

Bear in mind that Neil is a life long Queen of the South supporter, and the look on his face might suggest he wouldn't welcome comments about his team.



The Guild

Strategy: Let us Build a House. Theme: Sure Foundations.



If you are looking for something to do over the winter months, why not think about coming along to the Guild.

The Guild is a faith-based movement within the Church of Scotland, who have branches in many parishes.

The Balerno branch meet from October to March, on the first and third Wednesday of the month, in the Ogston Hall, (opposite Scotmid) from 7.30pm until around 9pm.

We have a varied programme, and the meetings are open to everyone. Please see the programme below.

Members pay a subscription, but if you have not been before the first year is free.

Think about joining us for some or all of our meetings.

If you need further information, please do not hesitate to contact Kay Coull. coullkay@hotmail.com or telephone 0131449 6151

Guild Programme 2024-25.

All meetings in the Ogston Hall at 7:30pm unless otherwise stated.

October 2024.

Wednesday 2nd: Dedication and Communion service in the Ogston Hall with the Rev Douglas Nicol.

Monday 7th: Lothians Guilds Together meeting: St Ninians Craigmailen Church, Linlithgow at 2pm. Dedication and Communion service with Rev Rhona Dunphy

Wednesday 16th: Shelter Scotland with Samantha Myers.

November 2024.

Wednesday 6th: Guild Project: The Vine Trust in Tanzania with Neil and Anne Johnstone.

Wednesday 20th: The Colinton Tunnel.

December 2024.

Monday 2nd: Lothians Guilds Together Christmas event at Chalmers Memorial Church, Port Seton at 2pm.

Wednesday 4th: The work of St Vincent De Paul.

Dec 24 contd

Wednesday 18th: Christmas Lunch at the Riccarton Inn 12.30pm.

January 2025.

Wednesday 15th: Quiz Night and Bring and Buy Sale.

February 2025.

Wednesday 5th: Spring Flower arranging demonstration with Shelagh Anderson.

Wednesday 19th: History of Balerno, Part 2, with Douglas Lowe.

March 2025.

Wednesday 5th: Street Pastors with Lesley Turner.

Tuesday 11th: Lothians Guilds Together AGM with the new Moderator of Presbytery. St Anne's Church, Corstorphine at 2pm.

Wednesday 19th: Guild AGM and social evening

May 2025:

Guild Outing. June 2025: Fundraising event.

Currie Remembrance Poppy display

There will be a display of hand-crafted poppies at Gibson Craig Hall, Lanark Road West, Currie, Edinburgh in line with the period of National Remembrance in November - all knitters/crocheters are invited to contribute if you can).

The Memorial Boards in Currie Kirk commemorate those with association to the parishes of Juniper Green, Currie and Balerno who gave their lives during World War 1, World War 2 and more recently.

We will create our own Garden of Remembrance around the War Memorial at Currie Kirk and pay tribute to those who did not return to their families and friends. In addition, there will be a written piece, documenting as many of the names as possible.

If anyone has information about any of the names listed on the Memorial Boards please speak with John McAuley or Diane Brown or Currie Kirk Office at 451 5141.



FreshStart The Autumn Collection

A collection of household goods for Fresh Start will take place on Friday 11 and Saturday 12 October, 10.00 - 12 noon and Sunday 13 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

449 4375

well done, George!

George Harrison is pictured with his prize winning veg collection - and several other prizes - at the Currie Show on 31st August at Balerno High School. George wasn't the only prize winner, of course but since he's also, with the help of the Committee just about all of the shows, over the last thirty years we'd like to say



Thank You!!!

2024 was the Society's
156th annual show



Date for the diary

Broxburn and Livingston Brass Band
play
A Concert for Christmas on
Saturday 14 December 2024
at
Balerno Parish Church

further dateils in
November Blether and
on Facebook

The Treasurer's Thumb

as I was saying before beng rudely interrupted

I am sure that somewhere in the deeper recesses of what might euphemistically be referred to as the 'Blether's filing system' there is some mention of 'leftie'. Such mentions are references to my mirror image to be found at the end of 'left arm' which hangs to all intents and purposes at the end of the known universe. Now, between you me and the nearest gatepost he is, and I'm truly sorry to have to say this, in my experience an idle and certainly less than vcompletely competent so and so. When challenged he will inevitably take refuge in the proposition that were the Great Man to be 'left handed' then he would be only too pleased to take the strain, and then yours truly could be the 'idle so and so' - he knows what I think.

Well really, I mean to say, 'if this then that' but it's not like that is it? The truth is 'leftie' ought to be doing much more to justify his keep. I know that if the Great Man were to play golf then being right handed, leftie would be in the lead. But he doesn't and so he's not. And besides which life isn't a game all of the time, and anyway golf is more of a battle than a game.

Leftie could, for example, learn to type and that might encourage other 'lefties' - there are millions out there - to halve the time taken in preparing this rag in which I already nvest far too much time - excellent publication though it is; and I have seen documentary evidence from the highest level to support that that is indeed an 'official' view. But as last month I digress and again as last month I apologise for that failing.

Which brings me back to passengers, not simply Leftie, nor the man on the Clapham omnibus but the person on the 44, or possibly even the 32 which provides an opportunity for an almost wholly new experience for those seeking hills and coast in a single journey.

Of course care must be taken if seeking to co-ordinate a journey so as to link say the 12 with the 32 at the Gyle, and one must avoid concluding that since that makes 44 so it must get you home. If you miss it it you will be left standing unlike Leftie who will be swinging along with the Great Man and yours truly; because we're very attached to him



Look out for tickets for
One Bar Rest and Friends
at Christmas
 30 November
 at
 St Joseph's Hall!



Woof, woof...

O my friends, I am not well – I really haven't got the energy to do anything, and that, after my setting up as the butchers watchdog or seagull chaser, is not a good thing. I can't let the butchers see me in my current state nor do I want anyone muscling-in on my patch whilst I'm incapacitated. I feel so lethargic and decidedly antisocial. I snapped at my owners this week – their own fault, as I was determined I wasn't going for my walk, whoever tried to persuade me. I've tried to keep out of sight – I don't want this spreading around the canine community so that someone else is tempted to benefit from my problems.

As you can imagine, I had to undergo the usual trip to the vet, and in his opinion, I was losing weight. As you know I've always tried to keep myself in peak condition – the ladies like that but this feels like something totally different. I have been having difficulty breathing although how do I tell him that? Amazingly, he somehow managed to work it out for himself – I do sound chesty and so it would have been easy to guess.

Now he's discussing with the family whether I could have been poisoned in some way? Please don't let him determine that it's titbits that one of the butchers gave me – can't see how it is as the main butcher is very high class and the shop is spotless. The vet asked them, had I been having hallucinations? – how stupid can adults be? – I wouldn't be able to pass on that information even if I was.

Then he asked them, had I taken any paracetamol, ibuprofen or cannabis? What's the matter with this guy – does he think I'm a junkie?

Then I think we may have cracked the mystery – 'him and her' are forever sprinkling slug pellets in the garden and it's not beyond the bounds of possibility that somehow, I've managed to swallow some. As far as I can tell, that is the vet's best guess, and he prescribed the usual expensive medicine to deal with it.

All this malarkey has given me a rare old fright I can tell you and the sooner this medicine starts to work the better. By the time of my next letter for you I hope to be feeling much improved and, more importantly, be ready to go back on (butcher's) duty.

Cheerio for now,

Grrr



October 2024 Calendar

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

October events

- 2nd and 16th Oct** - Guild - see article for details
5th and 6th Oct - Balerno Music Festival events
6th Oct - HARVEST - non perishable donations please
6th October, 7pm Gibson Craig Halls: Joint Kirk Session meeting
12th October - Farmers Market Apple Day and Apple Pie competition
13th October: Congregational Meeting after Worship re Basis of Linking.
17th October, 7pm Gibson Craig Halls: Presentation to congregations on Interim Ministry. Congregations will thereafter vote separately on Interim Ministry.
13/14th October - Fresh Start collection - see article
27 October - Date for delivery of Blythewood hoeboxes see article

First Tues of each month- Garden Group; meet in garden
 Every Fri - 9.15am - Fitness class - Ogston Hall - £7 per class;

Picture of the month

OCTOBER 2024

Surely someone can get this one?

Last month's was a dawdle, but maybe one free coffee isn't enough?

It was, of course, a picture of the early Harvest at Dean Park.

And yes we were more that simply surprised we were absolutely gob-smacked that no-one claimed the PRIZE. Please tell us that someone, anyone, recognised the scene! Otherwise the Editorial Team will simply consume the coffee fund themselves

This month's pic is really really really soooooo simple. Have a go!



Stirling Crisis

are
The Jazz Party

Sunday 6 October
St Joseph's Centre
Balerno

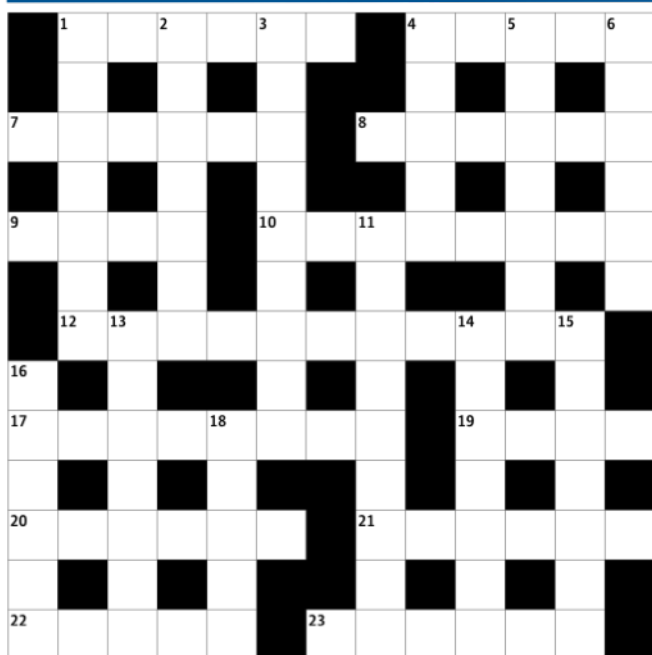
7.30pm 'til 10.30

tickets £18
to include light snacks
from

Balerno Parish Church office
and online from balernochurch.org.uk



October 2024 Crossword



October 2024 solution

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

Across

- 1 Discourage (3,3)
- 4 Monk's garb (5)
- 7 Rather - with less delay (6)
- 8 Runner-up's award (6)
- 9 Enthusiastic enjoyment (4)
- 10 Mad, bad Roman emperor, assassinated AD 41 (8)
- 12 Study and collection of coins (11)
- 17 Team game with sticks (8)
- 19 Fall in drops (4)
- 20 £10 (6)
- 21 Do something as a favour (6)
- 22 Austrian symphony composer, d. 1809 (5)
- 23 Header (anag) (6)

Down

- 1 Essential dietary requirement (7)
- 2 A Christmas Carol character (4,3)
- 3 Predictions (9)
- 4 Country forming the western part of Hispaniola, independent since 1804 (5)
- 5 Temporary encampment (7)
- 6 Jungle hero created by Edgar Rice Burroughs (6)
- 11 Type of tenure (9)
- 13 Eerie (7)
- 14 Gratify one's appetites (7)
- 15 Mass of small rounded pebbles (7)
- 16 Brood of chicks (6)
- 18 Large expanse of water (5)

Remembrance 2024

Early notice that the Poppy display for Remembrance Sunday will be installed in towards the end of October and that volunteers will be sought to assist in that process, probably on Friday 1st November.

Useful Numbers

Locum Minister Rev Derek Munn
dmunn@churchhofscotland.org.uk

Interim Moderator Rev Douglas Nicol
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
balerno.sessionclerk@gmail.com

Treasurer:
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Fabric Ctte:
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Copy for the November issue of the Blether must be submitted by 19th October.

