



Forth and Clyde Canal

Blackbraes and Shieldhill
Parish Church
linked with
Muiravonside Parish Church
Autumn 2011

**From The Manse
August 2011**



Dear friends,

By the time you read this I hope that you have managed some time of rest and relaxation over the summer, and enjoyed some much needed sunshine. As church activities, committees and meetings resume at the end of this month, we have a very busy and challenging year ahead.

Sadly, financially our Church of Scotland is no longer able to pay for a full-time minister in each charge as they stand at the moment, and Falkirk Presbytery has to lose six full time ministerial posts over the next few years. Basically in the Braes area one charge will need to lose their minister. I would be lying if I didn't admit to feeling some sense of sadness at this prospect for this is the result of reduced membership and consequently less financial contributions. Like everywhere else the church needs money to do mission and ministry and to sustain its buildings which cost substantial amounts each year to maintain.

These are all issues that we have to pray about and wrestle with as we can no longer as a National Kirk, bury our head in the sand and hope that it will all go away and things can stay as they are. Due to a lack of financial resources things just cannot continue as they are, and so over the next few years the church will need to adapt and reform in ways beyond our imagining and although exciting this can also be a painful process.

Over the next year, a series of Presbytery Plan Local Consultation Meetings will take place in Blackbraes and Shieldhill Church Hall and five representatives from each congregation are being asked to attend so that the matter can be discussed in more detail and a decision reached as to how the church can serve the Braes area with one less full time minister. Presbytery has produced a DVD about the planning process and if you would like to see it then please contact myself. The DVD has also been uploaded onto Youtube and it can be viewed at <http://www.youtube.com/user/falkirkpresbytery>

In response to this reduction in full time ministry posts, the Kirk is planning on training Ordained Local Ministers who will be Ministers of Word and Sacrament but be part-time and non-stipendiary. Their training will not require them to study to degree level and will be part-time allowing them to juggle work and other commitments. Please pray that those who feel a call to this ministry shall come forward. Training for elders to conduct funerals is also available and if any elders within our churches sense a call to this ministry then please see myself for further information.

Losing one full-time minister in the Braes area will be a significant loss and the only way to respond to this loss is to release the gifts of the laity, to open up ordained ministry to more people, and to train elders within each congregation to conduct funerals and participate in worship. Perhaps this is indeed God's will, as no one minister can meet the needs of any congregation/s alone. Each minister has different gifts, strengths and weaknesses, and cannot excel in everything and meet the needs of everyone. But within each of our Braes congregations we have hugely gifted and talented people who are more than capable of participating in worship, conducting funerals and chairing meetings.

A final word in what has been for me a difficult letter to write. Please do not despair. Jesus always said to people who were troubled, 'fear not.' Our faith is all about resurrection - what dies off, although painful, is then able to produce something new and even more beautiful. The Kirk in the future may well be a lot smaller but did Jesus ever intend it to become the powerful and wealthy institution it became during Christendom? The calling of Christ to 'follow me', is costly and Jesus asks for all that we have and all that we are. It is a call not to power and greatness but to service and humility.

Despite the situation which we now find ourselves in as a Kirk, the Spirit of God is still there, hovering amongst us, touching us, moving us, bringing us to deeper faith, healing us, renewing us. Nothing can ever thwart this, no cynicism, no lack of hope, no apathy, no indifference - nothing - no, not even theological differences.

God's Spirit is with us, and so even although the future is uncertain, and there are many difficult decisions to make, we can be assured that although the church as we know it will have to die, we have the promise of resurrection. Something fresh and new and exciting, something even more vibrant, will undoubtedly take its place.

In the words of that wonderful old hymn - Onward Christian Soldiers -
'Crowns and thorns may perish,
Kingdoms rise and wane,
But the Church of Jesus,
Constant will remain.
Gates of hell can never,
'gainst that Church prevail,
We have Christ's own promise,
And that cannot fail.'

And words spoken by Jesus from the Gospel of Matthew Ch28, v18b-20:

'I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth,
Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples,
Baptize them in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit,
And teach them to obey everything I have commanded you....
And I will be with you always,
To the end of the age.....'

**God bless,
Your minister and friend,
Louise**

Baptisms

**'Whoever welcomes a little
child like this in my name,
welcomes me'.**

Blackbraes and Shieldhill Parish

Ryan Alexander McNelly
infant son of
Gordon and Laura McNelly

Weddings

**'Meanwhile these three
remain - faith, hope and love.
But the greatest of these is
love.'**

Blackbraes and Shieldhill Parish

Kelly Chadwick
and Richard Templeman
on Friday 29th July

Caroline Tsang
and Jonathan Baker
on Saturday 27th August

Funerals

***'The Lord will protect you as you come and go,
both now and forevermore'.***

Blackbraes and Shieldhill Parish

Mr Michael Donoghue
Mr John Fyfe
Mr William Deans
Mrs Charlotte Finnegan

Muiravonside Parish

Mrs Kathleen Body
Mr Gavin Kelso



Drew's
view

Everything has its Time

There is a remarkable photograph which was taken back in the 1930s, that nowadays is still sold as a poster, or sometimes as a fully framed picture in many high street shops. The photograph, even to this day, in an age where nothing would surprise anyone, nevertheless always manages to elicit an exclamation of amazement, mixed with a sense of awe, when viewed for the first time and every other occasion after that.

The picture was taken in 1932, by a gentleman of the name of Charles C. Ebbets - a professional photographer and it depicts eleven construction workers nonchalantly eating their lunch. This scene would normally be an unremarkable everyday event which would be quite boring when taken at face value. However there is something a bit different about the lunch venue. The eleven men are seated on a girder which would eventually become part of the 69th floor of the R.C.A. Skyscraper, with their feet dangling hundreds of feet above the New York City streets!

The men are wearing none of the safety features that you see today, such as harnesses or hard hats. There are also no safety nets. They are simply just sitting on the narrow girder, sharing sandwiches from their lunch boxes, and chatting to each other. The eleven men are as relaxed as you or I would be in our own living rooms, despite the fact that the streets are so far below them that they almost cannot be seen. I know one thing for certain. I would never be able to join them for lunch, despite the wonderful view of the city and the abundant supply of fresh air!

Whenever I see this photograph, one thing that always strikes me despite the awesome location and circumstances it was taken in, is how different God has made us as people and how magnificently we can cope with different situations. It is fascinating that the people in the photograph can be so comfortable and at home in a situation that would scare many people to death.

The other thing that strikes me is a sense that everything has its time and of course, very soon after the photograph was taken, the girder that the men were sitting on would be built upon. The photographer has captured a unique memory that would otherwise be gone for ever, as the skyscraper would soon be completed and the eleven men would move on to another job. Maybe they had happy memories of their lunch in such an unusual location. Or perhaps they were just glad to have a job, even if it was a very dangerous one, at a time when work was so scarce during the Great Depression of the 1930s.

It always fascinates me how God has made us all unique in a sense that we all have a talent for personally being comfortable in a situation that another person, from a stranger even right down to a member of the same family, wouldn't like to attempt. I know that I would not be able to join the men high up in their eyrie, but I greatly admire them for being able to do this. It is what makes us all different.

Everything has its time. When we are having a really good time, such as a holiday in a beautiful and relaxing location, or when things are going very well, we often wish that this happy period of our lives would never end. But of course, it always inevitably does and we think back wistfully about this wonderful time in our lives. However there is one consolation in all of this. The concept of everything having its allocated time slot and coming to an end also applies to experiences that we are perhaps not comfortable in. I know that when it comes to visiting the dentist for example, most people suffer a myriad of emotions in this situation, from slight foreboding, to utter dread. Personally I am very fortunate because for some reason I have no worries about it whatsoever.

Of course people's apprehension in this situation is a well know thing. Dentists are well aware of this and try their utmost to make their patients feel comfortable. I once used to visit a group of dentists, who had an admirable strategy for attempting to make their patients feel at ease, especially while they were sitting in the waiting room and probably trying not to think too much about the next half hour or so. Taking pride of place, right in the centre of the waiting room, was a tank containing lots of tropical fish of all sorts of colours and sizes.

This was truly a commendable idea as it was very popular with adults and children alike. There was only one drawback. The surgeries which surrounded the waiting room had rather thin walls and when the drills all started up; the vibrations made the water shimmer like someone was shaking the tank. Little waves would appear on the surface. The fish seemed to be delighted by this and would swim around rapidly in animated little schools in great excitement!

However it was a different story for the people sitting around the tank in the waiting room who were looking increasingly unnerved. Whilst I was watching this little spectacle, I was thinking about how even in a situation like this, everything has its time and it comes to an end. I silently wished my fellow patients well, knowing that soon their treatment would be over and they would be on their way home.

In the Bible, the concept of time is illustrated in various places, but no more so than in the book of Ecclesiastes which has one of my favourite pieces of

Scripture.

“To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven. A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted. A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up. A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance. A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing. A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away. A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak. A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.” (Ecclesiastes Chapter 3: verses 1 – 8)

I like this piece of Scripture because not only does it address the concept that there is a time for everything both good and bad, it also illustrates that we live in a world of changes and that every change concerning us, within the timeframe and season of it, is unalterably fixed by God. But God in his wisdom has a purpose for doing this. So I always think that when a task I am doing runs its course and comes to an end, I should take things as they come, even if I sometimes don't understand at the time why God has changed things. There is always a good reason and it later becomes clear that God is simply steering me in another direction.

Everything may have its time. But some things are timeless and cannot be taken away, such as happy memories. They can never be erased if we don't want them to. God has made sure of that. All sorts of things may change around us and sometimes we feel that things may never be the same again, but in normal circumstances, we have the ability remember things as they were if we want to.

These happy memories live on the other side of time and remain with us all our lives.



Website

Our magazines are now available on our website www.bsandm-church.org.uk. If anyone would prefer to access them this way, instead of paper format, please let your Church Elder know.

As well as saving paper, and trees, an advantage of using the internet is that you would receive the magazine in colour. It could also be enlarged if you need to see it in large print.

Time to stand and stare

I wish this world was a quieter place,
With people moving at a slower pace.
No time to look at the flowers and trees,
And golden leaves on the autumn breeze,
No time to see a rainbow bright,
Of the golden moon and stars at night.
God created all these things,
The butterflies with their gossamer wings,
Take time to listen to the birds that sing,
For God created everything.
He gave it all to you and me,
It is up to us to look and see.

Andrew McDermott - Muiravonside

A Smile

A smile costs nothing, yet means so much.
It enriches those who receive without making poorer those who give.
It takes but a moment, yet the memory of it may last forever.
A smile creates happiness in the home, and is the sign of friendship.
It brings cheer to the discouraged, sunshine to the sad and is
nature's best antidote to trouble.

Yet a smile cannot be bought, begged, borrowed or stolen.
It is of no value to anyone unless it is given away.
Some people are too tired to give you a smile
so give them one of yours.
No-one needs a smile as much as he who has none to give.

A Little Nostalgia

Whilst holidaying recently on the Isle of Wight, we enjoyed visits to three island churches. As we stood in each church, savouring the quietness and peace of our surroundings, we experienced in each, a definite sense of history as we thought of all those who had worshipped within their walls in the past.

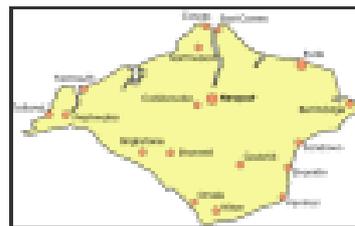
St Mildred's at Whippingham, near Osborne house, a favourite home of Queen Victoria, Prince Albert and her nine children was the church where the Royal family worshipped. It held many memories and artefacts of its past royal connections but still today, the Vicar preaches the word and serves the present community.

Godshill is a small picturesque village. On a hill beyond the old village stands the Anglican Church. A very interesting cemetery circles the old stone building. We marvelled in the warm sunshine that for centuries, the villagers had climbed the winding path and steep stone steps to worship in this building.

A sharp contrast to the church on the hill was the church on the Main Street dated 1835. This was the Methodist church, a rectangular building with wooded interior which had been visited by Charles Wesley. The bible, showing the daily reading lay open on the lectern. Above the open door we read "In Christ's name we say welcome."

We had enjoyed a reflective and blessed time in each building but we were touched by the poem we took away from the Methodist church.

*We greet you friend, whoe'er you are
Who have to our village come
And paused a while within these walls
Before you journey home.
As nature's beauty you have seen,
We hope you feel refreshed
And, by the Giver of all good,
May you be truly blessed-
Strength for the future and God's Peace
While here, you may obtain;
We pray "God speed" and say "farewell"
And hope you'll come again.*



Robert T and Lorna C



Church Guild



The next Guild session is almost upon us and the committee has been working hard to compile the new syllabus.

In this the final year of our three year strategy “What does the Lord require of you?” we are being called to walk humbly with our God in our Christian life and witness. Within this theme, we are acknowledging God as creator of the world so we should thank Him for the wonders of creation. With His gift to us comes a responsibility to care what is happening now in the world and to ensure that future generations will continue to care for his creation. We may question at times our stewardship of the world but Mother Teresa said: *“We ourselves feel that what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean but the ocean would be less because of that missing drop.”*

Caird Hall Dundee is again the venue for the August annual meeting entitled “Called to Walk Humbly with God.” Among the 2000 attending will be five from Blackbraes and Shieldhill. We look forward to it.

The Council Dedication service is on Thursday 22 September in Larbert East Church at 7.30pm when members and friends will be welcome.

Blackbraes and Shieldhill Guild session begins Wednesday 5 October at 7.30pm in Shieldhill Hall. No age barriers, men and women acceptable, friendship and a warm welcome guaranteed! This session we will walk with humility through God’s good creation as we pray:

*Gracious God
We thank you for the many gifts bestowed on us.
May we never knowingly misuse these.*

Lorna Coulter

Tea, coffee and a chat are always available in the hall after services – please stay if you can.



Always with God

He was with me at the start,
as I breathed my first breath.
When I saw the world he created,
for the very first time.

He was with me as a child,
as I got to know his world.
So much to see and explore,
learning new things every day.

He was with me in my teens,
as I learned about him.
The joyous good news,
of everlasting life.

He was with me as a young man,
when life seemed eternal.
So many things to do,
so much energy and drive.

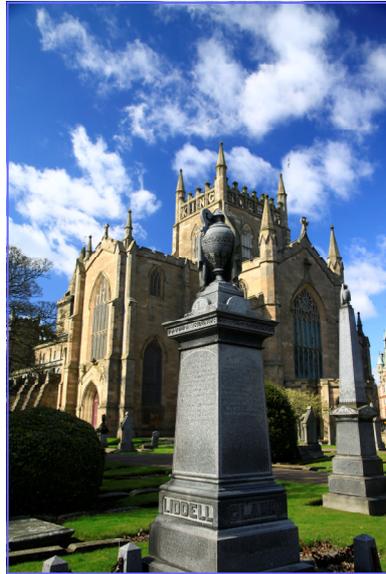
He was with me in middle age,
as I rushed on with my life.
Many things still to achieve,
ambitions to fulfil.

He was with me in old age,
when I had much more time.
To do lots of new things,
but no energy to do them.

He was with me at the end,
in the last moments of life.
I felt him drawing close,
enveloping me in his love.

He is with me in death,
but there are no tears.
No regrets, just joy,
because I am with him.

By Andrew Robertson



Dunfermline Abbey, burial place of
King Robert The Bruce
Taken by Thomas Ramage
Muiravonside

Ann and Willie Henderson
wish to thank all their
family, friends and
neighbours for their good
wishes, gifts, flowers and
cards received on their
recent Golden Wedding.

We were delighted to
receive them.

Many thanks
Ann and Willie x

Muiravonside Parish Church Choral Society



We had a very successful ending to the Easter term with a choral rendition of 'Joseph'. A huge thank you to Jacqueline, whose fingers I hope have recovered, and the members of the choir who sang so well. The audience enjoyed the performance and gave generously, some of the proceeds purchased a lightweight wheelchair to aid the less mobile of us to get into the Kirk.

The Christmas term begins on Tuesday 30th August at 3.30pm in Muiravonside Kirk when we will be preparing for the concert in December, date to be confirmed.

New members welcome - ability to read music not essential, just a love of singing.

Jan Strudwick

Dates for your diary



Sun 4 Sept	Sacrament of Holy Communion	
Wed 14 Sept	Rendezvous	1.30 p.m.
Wed 12 Oct	Rendezvous	1.30 p.m.
Wed 9 Nov	Rendezvous	1.30 p.m.
Sat 12 Nov	An Evening of Sacred Music - McRoberts Male Voice Choir	7.00 p.m.
Sat 26 Nov	Christmas Fayre & Brunch	11 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Wed 30 Nov	St Andrew's Night Concert - Forth Bridges Accordion Band	7.30 p.m.

Notes From a Shieldhill Garden



'Each little flower that opens; Each little bird that sings; He made their glowing colours; He made their tiny wings.' say the words of the well-known hymn.

In my garden this summer I, like some other people that I have spoken to, have noticed butterflies do not appear to be very plentiful this year compared to some other years. I think that Shieldhill 's altitude is a bit high for some of the butterfly species but in some years there are influxes of certain species. The most common butterfly this summer in my garden is the Small White although they have not caused much damage to the cabbage crop. On The Moss it is the meadow brown that predominates.

We can help butterflies by providing food plants in the garden. They need to drink nectar as this gives them the energy that they need to stay airborne. Many of the plants that are best for butterflies are hardy perennials and are easy to grow. In the spring, Aubrietia, Pansies, Wallflower and Primroses are all plants that will give a boost to newly emerged butterflies. The favourite autumn plant is Buddleia- Plant Life like us to dead head this before it seeds because it spreads into the countryside and it is a non-native plant- but they will also drink nectar from Michaelmas Daisies, Mint and Thyme. Great plants like mint, thyme marjoram, marigolds and nasturtiums can be grown in tubs and window boxes and so the smallest garden can provide nectar plants.

The Large White and the Small White are commonly call cabbage butterflies but they also lay eggs on Nasturtiums and on a variety of wild plants. The Large White lays just one egg on a leaf and does not pose a problem on the cabbages. The Small White lays clusters of little yellow eggs and those can cause a problem. I pick the caterpillars off, as I don't use chemical bug killers. These will also kill beneficial insects.

Some years are blessed with influxes of butterfly numbers. A few years ago there were lots of Painted Ladies. Painted Ladies cannot survive our winters and so they migrate to North Africa in the autumn and make the return journey in the spring. They follow suitable breeding weather and can be found from Morocco, throughout Europe from south to north, a true nomad. One spring when I was still teaching one of the children's grandmothers gave me an Insect Lore butterfly kit. We hatched five Painted Lady butterflies. The butterflies emerged during a spell of cold, wet weather and we had to give them flower heads that had been brushed with sugary water. They were released in the school garden during a break in the clouds. Other species hibernate in the pupa stage to emerge in the spring.

Butterflies are considered to be good biodiversity indicators as they respond rapidly to change, have wide range of habitat choice and have popular appeal. The government, followed by the EU, set a target to reduce habitat loss. The EU required habitat loss to have ended by 2010. Butterflies were chosen as an indicator that the target was being met.

What is it that attracts us to butterflies? They are indicators of warm, summer days, float elegantly and silently from flower to flower, and are quite beautiful to look at. God's paint box was at work when He painted them.

Happy butterfly watching
Rena Moore

Poetry Corner

An Ancient Country Prayer

Give me a good digestion Lord,
And also something to digest.
Give me a healthy body Lord,
With sense to keep it at its best.
Give me a healthy mind, O Lord,
To keep the good and pure in sight,
Which seeing wrong is not appalled,
But finds a way to set it right.

Give me a mind that is not bored,
That does not whimper, whine or sigh.
Don't let me worry overmuch about,
That fussy think called 'I'.
Give me a sense of humour Lord,
Give me the grace to see a joke,
To get some happiness from life,
And pass it on to other folk.

Rita Braes - Muiravonside

Butterfly Crafts

Make a mobile that shows the metamorphoses of a butterfly from egg to larva (caterpillar) to pupa and to adult (butterfly)

You will need

- Coloured craft paper or gift-wrap
- Pencil
- Scissors
- String
- Glue stick
- A paper plate
- Pens, crayons or paint
- Stapler or sticky tape



This is what you do.

	<p>Draw a spiral on the plate. Cut along the line.</p>
	<p>Decorate the plate using pens, crayons or paint.</p>
	<p>Using green paper, draw a leaf and cut it out. Either draw, cut out or punch little bits of paper and glue them on to the back of your leaf. These are eggs.</p>
	<p>Draw and cut out a caterpillar. Colour it and decorate it. It spends its time eating leaves.</p>
	<p>Draw and cut out a pupa. This changes into a butterfly</p>
	<p>To make butterfly wings, fold paper in half and draw half a butterfly, the middle of your butterfly is on the fold. Cut around the wings, do not cut the fold. Draw a pattern and use lots of colour to decorate it. Cut out a body for your butterfly. Give it a round head.</p>
	<p>Glue or staple the stages of the Butterfly's life cycle to lengths of string Staple the strings to the paper plate. Hang your mobile up.</p>

Butterfly Cakes

You will need

120 grammes Self-raising flour
120 grammes caster sugar
120 grammes soft margarine or butter
2 medium eggs
1 teaspoon of baking powder



Method

Switch on the oven at 190° centigrade, Gas mark 5
Get ready 18 paper cup cake cases or grease a bun tray.
Sieve the flour and baking powder together and put in the bowl of a food mixer. Add the sugar, the margarine or butter to the bowl. Break the two eggs and put them in the bowl.
Put the beaters on the food mixer and mix for about 2 minutes. Your cake mixture should be smooth and everything should be well mixed together.
Spoon the mixture into the paper cases or into the bun tin. They should be fill about to just below the top.
Put into the oven and bake for about 15 minutes, until they are firm.

Mix up some butter icing.

Take 50 grammes butter or margarine and 100 grammes sieved icing sugar. Beat the butter until it is pale and soft and then beat in the icing sugar until it has all been used up.

When the buns are cold, slice the top off. Cut the sliced bit into two pieces. This makes the butterfly wings. Put a blob of butter icing on top of the bun and stick the two wings in place. Do this with all of your buns.

Boys and girls these are your pages.
Give your stories and news to Yvonne if you
want to put them in the magazine.
Have fun!