



**Sandy Simpson MBE, and Ailsa,
on his big day
Congratulations Sandy!**

**Blackbraes and Shieldhill Parish Church
linked with
Muiravonside Parish Church
Autumn 2012**



**From the Manse
August 2012**



'He took the child's father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was. He took her by the hand and said to her, 'Talitha koum!' (which means, 'Little girl, I say to you, get up!'). Immediately the girl stood up and walked around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished. He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat. Mark Ch5, v40-43

Dear friends,

Having just returned back from our holiday in Malta, it is lovely to be once again amongst friends at worship in each church on a Sunday morning. I had the privilege of returning to conduct a marriage blessing and renewal of vows for Bill and Helen McKinnon of Blackbraes and Shieldhill who celebrated 50 years of married life together. It took place this morning in church, and was a happy and joyous event not only for Helen and Bill, but also for their family and our church family too.

I was acutely aware this morning of having to rush away from Blackbraes and Shieldhill which often happens when we have a special service. When this occurs Robert kindly steps in for me and shakes hands at the door. When I left today I felt a bit sad at not being able to stay but then I had a quick glance around the church hall and realised that ministry was happening perfectly well without me being there. People were chatting to each other sharing their news and concerns, tea was being served, information was being passed around as to who has been ill in the village and might enjoy a bunch of flowers. I looked at this scene and felt God reassure me that I did not need to worry or feel guilty at having to rush away. His Spirit was there in this place and it was moving amongst the people who in turn were ministering in a wonderful way to each other.

I know that the same thing happens in reverse at Muiravonside. Normally I am a little late when I arrive for worship, but already people have been warmly welcomed into church by those on door duty, conversations have been exchanged, fellowship enjoyed, cares and concerns shared, the church beautifully prepared for worship and as I park my car Alice is reading the intimations which helps to make the best use of the time.

When I reflected upon this earlier today, I felt a deep sense of joy, in knowing that my congregations care for each other and visitors so well. Those who do pulpit supply for me when I am on holiday always appreciate

the warm welcome and also the care and attention shown to them by our congregations.

Visitors constantly describe the warmth that they feel from our churches, the sense of peace as they enter our doors, the feeling of being welcomed and accepted.

Having been your minister now for almost five years, I am convinced that our churches have a **special ministry of hospitality**. Welcoming people, caring for people, providing refreshments, making people feel comfortable, giving someone a card or flowers. This ministry is a calling, and I believe God has called and equipped our churches to serve him in this way. It is a gentle calling, a calling which to many may seem like second nature, as many of you exercise it, Sunday after Sunday, without even being aware. It is a precious calling, and the wonderful thing is that our linkage situation has actually allowed this ministry of hospitality to grow, develop and flourish in both churches.

Jesus himself exercised a ministry of hospitality, warmly welcoming people, offering people refreshments, listening to people, sharing laughter and tears. And Jesus was not afraid to touch people in an appropriate way, offering comfort and healing.

And so today, God spoke to me in a very powerful way as I travelled from one church to the other. Our churches do indeed have a **special ministry of hospitality**. What joy to know that God has bestowed upon us such a calling, and has given each one of us the gifts to exercise it, for the glory of his kingdom, and in his precious name.

***God's abundant blessing be upon you all,
Your minister and friend,
Louise***

Irene Orr thanks her friends from both churches for their cards, good wishes, and prayers during her recent illness.

Thanks again

Irene



Baptisms

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

Blackbraes and Shieldhill Parish

Cooper William McGowan
Myles Iain James Boa

Muiravonside Parish

Alana Hunter
baptised together with her daughters
Jessica May McIntosh and
Emily Ann Elaine McIntosh

Michelle Margaret Hunter
baptised together with her son
Leo Allan Aroll Taljaard

Funerals

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

Blackbraes and Shieldhill Parish

Mr Paddy O'Toole
Mrs Greta Adam
Mrs Jamesina Barr
Mrs Ina Hall
Mrs Elizabeth Ferguson

Muiravonside Parish

Mr Robert Ure
Mr John Thomson

Weddings

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

Blackbraes and Shieldhill Parish

Sandra Brooksby and Steven Davidson on 14th July
Cheryl McIntosh and Colin Wilson on 21st July
Karen Manson and Martin Bell on 28th July

Muiravonside Parish

James Gilvear and Emma Wilson on 12th May



Drew's
view

The Visitor from 1992

Have you ever wished that you could see twenty years into the future?
What will the world be like then?

Believe it or not, twenty years ago, while I was at University, I got the chance to do just that - and I still have the documents!

Back in April this year, I was in the loft looking through some papers which I store up there. My intention was to sift through them and try to work out which ones to throw out. This doesn't come at all easy to me, as I am an obsessive hoarder and usually just end up having a nostalgia trip by reading each one from cover to cover, then simply reshuffling them into a different pile! Hours can effortlessly slip by when I do this and it is often dark by the time I come back down again! It was while I was doing just that, I came across a misfiled University folder from almost exactly twenty years ago which had "Friday, 17th April 1992" in bold black letters written near the top.

However it was the title below that was much more intriguing and caught my eye. It simply said rather mysteriously, "Journey to 2012."

For a moment I puzzled about this before rather cautiously opening the folder. I simply couldn't place what the document contained and wondered what I would find. Then, as I read the first page, it all came back. I was looking at the results of what was, in effect, an experiment in time travel!

How it all came about was that when I was studying German, my main subject, I also had to complete a module for one term only, in another field. We were encouraged to choose something that was completely different so that we could explore a subject that was perhaps out of our comfort zone or something we would not normally do. A friend suggested, "Why don't you try psychology? I've heard it's lots of fun and there's never a dull moment!"

I had seen some of the psychology postgraduate students in the café and could understand why my friend had said this. They were very colourful characters although they mostly went about in white coats. Almost all of them had long bushy hair which was always in a state of wild disarray and many had luxuriant beards. There was another one who looked like a youthful Sherlock Holmes. He had really bushy sideburns and despite only being about twenty two years old, smoked a large very decorative pipe. (Smoking was still allowed in those days.) Apparently my friend's sister was studying psychology, hence the inside knowledge, but what really clinched it for me

was that the sister had rather cryptically remarked to my friend, “You get to do experiments!”

I had walked by the University laboratories. They looked really exciting and mysterious places because you could only see into them through a door with a small window in it and it was impossible to observe what was happening inside. Strange eerie sounds were sometimes heard echoing from these mysterious rooms and this gave them a certain mystique. I imagined being wired up to all sorts of amazing machines which randomly emitted sparks, in a “Frankenstein” – like laboratory, while postgraduates were diligently trying to psychoanalyse my head in a brave attempt to detect any brain activity. Or even better, I might get a chance to try this out on someone else! So I immediately signed up.

In reality, what I found was that the really exciting experiments were carried out only by the postgraduates. However there was one ray of hope. The experiments that they conducted needed lots of volunteers. In other words - me!

Of course, in the army there is an old saying, “Never volunteer!” Those words of wisdom also seemed to extend to the realm of students. As a result, some incentive was needed and the University had a novel way of getting round this. All volunteers were instantly given five per cent of credits towards their final grade. This was in real terms, a gift of five percent towards passing the course for just a couple of hour’s work, which was also lots of fun. As you can imagine, there were lots of takers!

The experiments were posted up on the notice board every Monday morning and there was a lot of competition between each postgraduate student as they tried to attract volunteers by making each experiment sound as exciting as possible.

One boasted: “Optical illusions that will blow your mind!”

Another invited the participant to: “Experience weightlessness, just like in a trip through space!”

However, it was the third one that had me running up to the notice board for a closer look. “Journey to 2012. - Travel twenty years into the future and give us your thoughts on what you see.”

Of course I knew that there is no such thing as time travel, but the postgraduates looked so convincingly like mad scientists that for a second I wondered if somehow these boffins had come up with a way of travelling into the future. When the big day came, I was invited to meet my experimenter for a briefing in the café and I wondered beforehand if I should perhaps bring an astronaut suit along with me! I spotted him right away. It was the guy with the long sideburns and he was puffing away merrily at his pipe.

“Aha! So the latter day Sherlock Holmes is in charge of time travel,” I thought, as I introduced myself. He turned out to be a really nice guy who was very down to earth and just as excited at being involved with the experiment as I was. Apparently nineteen other people were taking part as well at different times over the next few days. We walked along the corridor to the laboratories and I was introduced to the “Time Machine,” which turned out to be a large silver cubicle with a sliding door. Inside was a very comfortable reclining chair with a seat belt, complete with what looked like goggles and stereo headphones. There was also a small table which could swing over the chair, complete with a folder containing a questionnaire and pen. I fastened the seatbelt and held my breath.

The door swished closed with an almost silent whoosh, then, with a crackle of static, a voice came through the headphones. “I would like you to travel with your mind for twenty minutes to the year 2012. Have a look around and leave a message from your inner mind to your future self and the people there!” boomed the voice of my experimenter through the headphones, in an old fashioned and deeply dramatic tone, just like those newscasters you used to hear in *Pathe* news broadcasts in cinemas throughout the land.

“Once your time is up, I’ll bring you back and I’d like you to fill in the questionnaire on the table describing what you saw and what your message was. The headphones that you’re wearing will cut out all outside sounds and the goggles will extinguish all light, so that you can totally concentrate and see what life will be like in twenty years time.” He then added rather cheerily, “Enjoy your trip!”

After the initial disappointment of discovering I would be travelling with my mind rather than hurtling through time and space into the future on board this cubicle, I thought, “This is still really cool.” I sat back and relaxed, with my goggles and headphones on, feeling a bit like Biggles. I thought about the year 2012, which seemed so impossibly far away. I tried to work out how I could visualise what it would be like. Almost immediately the answer came. In the still and quietness, a remarkable thing happened. In this dark serenity, I felt very close to God and immediately remembered a piece of scripture from Ecclesiastes which says, “When things are going well for you, be glad and when trouble comes, just remember: God sends both happiness and trouble; you never know what is going to happen next.” (Ecclesiastes Chapter 7, verse 14.)

In other words, I knew that I wouldn’t be shown the future. This isn’t allowed. But I also remembered that God is timeless. As I sat back in complete comfort reclining on this armchair, in the darkness and gentle silence, God’s quiet voice reminded me that, “There is no difference in the

Lord's sight between one day and a thousand years; to him the two are the same." (2 Peter Chapter 3, verse 8.)

I knew for a fact God would still be with us in 2012, so that was one aspect of the future that I could report back with the utmost confidence and conviction. As a result, I could also predict that the University Chaplaincy Centre which I frequented regularly would definitely be there twenty years later and would still be a place of refuge where students who were not even born yet, could go for fellowship and a cup of coffee.

The experimenter asked me to leave a message to my future self and the people in 2012. What a fascinating task. I tried to visualise myself in that year, so far away, in the second decade of the next century. What would I look like twenty years later? What should I say? Would I recognise myself? Then it came to me how to pass the message across time and space. God's quiet voice came through again. He would know where I would be twenty years in the future, so I decided to send my message with God's help in the form of a prayer. I asked him to send his love and blessings to everyone in 2012 and if by his grace I was still around then, I gave thanks and asked him to send his love and compassion to my future self wherever I may be and whatever I would be doing then.

I wasn't of course, permitted to see what the future would hold for the year 2012. But I was allowed to guess what life would be like. In 1992, I used to travel often from Falkirk to Stirling on the bus as I loved visiting the castle. The journey at that time took about thirty-five minutes. I had imagined that we wouldn't be travelling around in cars or buses in 2012. They would be things of the past, as there would be no need to rely so much on oil any more. Instead, we would have some form of teleportation, rather like when Scotty beams people around the Universe in "Star Trek." I also thought there would be great advances in medicine. I wrote later in the questionnaire about how we would have much more leisure time. I imagined a world that would be unrecognisable back in 1992.

In no time at all it seemed, my twenty minute visit to 2012 came to an end and the experimenter gradually beckoned me back to 1992 - to a world where mobile phones were huge, iPods were unheard of and Wi-Fi didn't exist. I thanked my experimenter for a wonderful experience, gathered the folder to write up my notes later and as I was walking towards the laboratory exit door with the small glass window, another truly remarkable thing happened. I felt a sudden feeling of joy and absolute peace, as if somehow my message of God's love and blessings to 2012 was being returned through God from my future self. As I approached the door, I raised my hand in acknowledgement and



future?

whispered seven words which seemed to come straight into my head with this feeling of joy.

“Jesus, the same, yesterday, today and forever.”

Twenty years later, almost to the very day, I brought the folder down from the loft. It was Monday the 16th of April 2012, the day before the anniversary. I knew I just had to go back to the University, have a look around, mark the occasion and see if the laboratory was still there, as well as all the old haunts I used to go to, such as the café and the Chaplaincy Centre. But first I had to do something. Later in the morning, I travelled by bus from Falkirk to Stirling, basically on a nostalgia trip. During the journey I thought about how very little has changed over the intervening years. We still have buses as well as cars that run basically on the same four stroke internal combustion engines that they had then. I was surprised, but at the same time delighted to find that the journey to Stirling took about forty-five minutes – a little longer than it did in 1992! This was due to the bus calling in at the new hospital, as well as many more traffic lights and slightly different traffic systems. I wonder what my experimenter would have said back in 1992 if I had told him that!

The next day, Tuesday the 17th of April, I drove to the University and timed it so that I would arrive at near enough the same hour that the experiment had been taking place, exactly twenty years before. I was delighted to find the Chaplaincy Centre was still in the same corridor and same room. One of my predictions had come true! After stopping there for a coffee, I walked along to the corridor where the laboratory was. It was still there! As I approached, I saw it had been refurbished to quite an extent and the new door now had a slightly larger window.

I looked at my watch. Half past two. Just about the exact time I would have been finishing there twenty years ago. I said a silent prayer and asked God to send his love and blessings through twenty years of time and space back to this room, both to myself and the nineteen others who took part in the experiment so long ago. I hoped they were all still around in 2012 and doing well. The laboratory wasn't being used, so I walked up to the door and looked in the larger window.

Was it my imagination, or did I see a ghostly figure who looked so impossibly young and yet instantly recognisable, walking towards the other side of the door? He looked up just at that second. I was sure he couldn't see me, but a sudden look of amazement and utter joy appeared on his face. He raised his hand and his mouth silently spoke some words. I couldn't hear him, but I didn't need to. I knew what he was saying as he faded back to a time when so many of my dear friends and loved ones were still alive.

“Jesus, the same, yesterday, today and forever.”

Introducing ... Louise Park

My first memory was when I was three years old. My mum had died when I was one and a half and her parents had moved in with my dad and me to look after us because dad was a baker and worked unsociable hours. My grandparents were taking me for an outing to Dunoon but, because I'd lived all my life until then in Motherwell, I had no concept of the sea or of ships so, when the ferry was coming in to dock, I apparently screamed blue murder because I thought I was going to have to paddle or swim out to meet it.

Another early memory was of being taken to Sunday School by my dad and singing 'Hear the pennies dropping, listen as they fall'. The church we attended in Motherwell was in the centre of town and, like everyone else, we always walked to services. Sadly, with redevelopment of the area about fifty years ago, the building had to be demolished.

Being an only child at that stage I loved the young company at Sunday School, Brownies and Youth Group and eventually became a helper with the Brownies. When I was ten years old my father remarried and four years later my sister Gillian was born. I was over the moon and took her everywhere with me.

My grandparents at that time moved to Laurencekirk where I started to spend all my school holidays. I remember saying from a very early age, about seven I think, that I hated Motherwell and wanted to live in the country so, of course, I was in seventh heaven when I was among farming folk around Laurencekirk.

In 1962 my father was told by the Council that, because of the redevelopment of Motherwell Town Centre, his bakery and shop would be demolished but that he could be given a shop but not a bakery in a new shopping centre. As a result we, as a family, set out to find another bakery to buy. My main input was to insist that it was not to be south of Queensferry!

Bearing in mind that every town I those days had a privately owned bakery, we had quite a choice. We viewed one we all liked in Bridge of Allan but missed it by a day. On Reflection I can see that we were being told that that was not the right one and, when we bought 'The Wheatsheaf' in South Queensferry High Street, it needed a lot done but it was the right one.

The seller, Rachel, was a lady who was retiring and she was to continue staying in the flat above. We loved her and she loved to come down to help on a Saturday morning.

She was a very down-to-earth person and, when Princess Margaret came to open the new South Queensferry High School, she had gone to witness the proceedings but came back to report that 'She was wearing her bits (boots)!' I was very sad when Rachel died because she had been such a great character.

On arrival in South Queensferry we joined the Parish Church. The town was half the size it is now. The minister was Douglas Stirling and I became friendly with him and his wife, Betty. They retired to Linlithgow and I still keep up with Betty.

I renewed my interest in taking Sunday School and Guides then extended that to taking Guides at Westerlea for girls with cerebral palsy. These girls were wonderful to work with because they were always so happy. On one occasion I asked the Rotary Club of South Queensferry if they could help my disabled Guides because I knew that one of them could borrow a big working boat at Port Edgar. On the appointed evening the Rotarians arrived and did all the heavy work like lifting wheelchairs, etc. The girls loved it and we finished with a 'barby'. Apparently - and they admitted this later - the Rotarians had been quite apprehensive but then declared that they had never enjoyed themselves so much.

At one point I decided to take my Sunday School to a wedding, a christening and a communion. In those days the children were not usually present at communion so I was explaining to them about the bread and wine and suggested that they should just pass the elements to me when one wee boy asked if he couldn't just take his own sandwich!

One of the highlights of staying in South Queensferry was when the then Provost, Jimmy Milne, arranged for me to go to the top of the Forth Road Bridge. It was amazing looking down at everything in miniature.

After Douglas Stirling retired I was privileged to be appointed to the vacancy committee to find his replacement and the whole congregation was delighted when the Reverend John Carrie accepted our call. From the very beginning John was full of energy and enthusiasm that never waned. It was rooted in his faith and he certainly passed that on to all of us. He was very involved working with youth and in the community and he was inspirational. He made me want to be part of this love for life and that, I think, was the start of the deepening of my faith. I loved my years in South Queensferry and when I married Fred in 1984 I was happy to follow him to Polmont.

Not long after I was lucky to find and receive the warmest of welcomes from everyone at Muiravonside Parish Church where I settled in so easily and happily. From that time I have found that, when I turn off the main road and

drive up the lane to Church I feel at home because of the peace and the friendliness of my Church family.

Over the years I have found myself just slipping happily into various aspects of the congregation's life – the Sunday School team, the Prayer Group that meets in our house, the after Church cup of tea and most recently an Elder in District 1. One of my joys is visiting the people in my district particularly just popping in to see those who find it more difficult to get to Church.

Fred and I look forward to many more years of happy association with Muiravonside.

Louise Park

National Stewardship Programme

As part of the National Stewardship Programme, we are being encouraged to give our time and talents as well as money to support the church. The Minister and Board of Blackbraes and Shieldhill thought it would be useful to publish the monthly free will offering amounts in the magazine.

Here are the latest figures:

April £1976.51

May £1675.00

June £1510.50

To put these figures in perspective, we send £1646.90 to Ministries and Mission in Edinburgh each month as our contribution to the wider work of the Church.

This makes it even more important that we give our Time and Talents to fundraising throughout the year - to continue our upkeep of the Church so that it continues to be warm and welcoming to all who visit.

Thank you

Christine Jones

Church of North India 1992

We arrived in North Delhi, India, just before the New Year. After settling into our quarter, in the West End, our home for the year, Mark started his course at the National Defence College (NDC). The students included not only the military but members of the India Civil Service, National Railways as well as students from nineteen other nations.

We asked our new Indian friends where the nearest church was and were told that St. Martin's Church, Delhi Cantonment, a red brick Garrison Church built during the Raj, was the closest. We duly started attending. The Church was huge with an extremely high ceiling; I suspect this was to keep it cool when full of soldiers and their families

The Reverend Raj Murch greeted us- I think we were the first British worshipers for some time!! The services were conducted partly in English and Hindi, with prayers some split between the two languages and we had two sermons one in Hindi and then repeated in English.

It was marvellous when the hymns were sung; tunes and words familiar to us, but your fellow worshipers would sing in whatever was their local tongue, creating a wonderful cacophony of sound and tongues. The organ had long since ceased to be used but Mr Williams would come rushing in with his portable electric keyboard, set up and began playing!

Doors were open throughout the service and people, birds and I dread to think what other creatures, would wander in and out to join in or leave us as they wished, not everyone stayed for the full service. I shall never forget a pair of birds doing a courtship dance on The Table. Fellowship afterwards was in the surrounding grounds and the congregation were very welcoming. They were surprised to see us as they thought we would have gone into the centre of Delhi to the Cathedral but we were very happy with them.

Towards Remembrance Day some of the NDC students attended a service. It was a marvellous ecumenical day with not only Christians but Sikhs, Hindus and various others joining in to remember those of the Indian Forces who had given their lives in the Two World Wars.

Our year in India finished all too soon and we left in December for our next posting in Bushey, Hertfordshire. In a year we had visited over half of the twenty six states and Mark had travelled to China, Hong Kong and South Korea on the NDC overseas tour. We returned home with a much deeper understanding of how Great Britain is respected across the world.

Rita Braes



South Africa Link



Dear friends

We got your deposit thank you very much indeed.

I am sending it to Shupi. She has got the chance of a second hand wheelchair which will enable her to get around better so this together with some money received from Cumbernauld Old will pay for it.

Isn't God wonderful. The day I received your email she had phoned me. She can't speak well and so her mum came on and told me about the wheelchair and asked if there was any way I could assist them and I had the money from Cumbernauld Old but it wasn't enough. Then along came your email just at the right time! How amazing is that?

Unfortunately her progress is very slow, she tries so hard but it is so sad. I feel terrible when she phones or I call her because I have no idea what she is saying and her mum says she insists on talking to me herself! I find it quite depressing sometimes.

I can't thank you and all the people who have donated enough for your care and kindness. It helps me as well as Shupi because when I feel a bit down I remember your kindness and think at least things are better than they would be without you because we can assist with things like food and getting her this chair to give her a tiny bit of independence and dignity in her affliction.

So please be assured that your very generous help is as always put to good use. Thank you so much for continuing to remember us.

Best wishes
Sandra Duncan





Guild



What a summer! I don't refer only to the rain which poured down on us in June and July. It was party time in June to mark the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth and now in July and August we are knee deep in Olympic sports. The jollification continues in September. The venues are being prepared, tickets are selling fast because the Paralympic Games begin in a fortnight. For most of us, television has brought the happenings into our homes and I hope that there has been an event that you have enjoyed.

The celebration mode continues for our Guild because session 2012 -2013 marks 125th anniversary of The Church of Scotland Guild, formerly Woman's Guild. The celebration will be launched at the Annual Meeting in Dundee on 25 August when some of us will be there. This will be an exciting time since 6 new projects will be revealed and the Moderator Rev. Albert Bogle from Falkirk Presbytery will address the 2000 strong audience.

Guild members, like Olympians, are challenged, committed and firmly focussed. What could be more appropriate than as a strategy for 2012-2015 than "Whose we are and Whom we serve" the motto which has been at the heart of guild work for 125 Years. "A Faith to Proclaim" is the theme for the celebration Year. Guild members have been doing this effectively for years!

Are you free on a Wednesday evening? We meet in Shieldhill Church Hall fortnightly at 7.30pm. We hope that there is an activity to suit everyone on the Syllabus and we can promise faith fellowship and fun throughout the session with always a friendly chat and refreshing cuppa. Come and join us. Men and women welcome and no age restriction. Below is our planned syllabus until December, I do hope there is an evening to attract you.

Lorna Coulter

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| 3 October | Rev Louise McClements |
| 17 October | Al Shurooq School Bethlehem Elaine McDiarmid |
| 31 October | Outing to "Boogie Nights" Falkirk Bohemians |
| 14 November | Year 125 Let's Celebrate |
| 18-25 November | Guild Week |
| 28 November | Christian Aid Valerie Brown |
| 12 December | Party Time |

Notes From a Shieldhill Garden.....Well, Not Quite



*Sing to God, sing praises to his name;
Lift up a song to him who rides upon the clouds. (Psalm 68: verse 4)*

One of the biggest events this summer was The London Olympic Games; the Thirtieth Olympiad. I was one of the lucky people to get a ticket for an event and so had the opportunity to visit London. The weather was good and London showed its best face to the watching world.

From the moment that I arrived in Kings Cross Station, I was aware of the great efforts that had been made to ensure that nobody got lost getting to venues and this was the first place where I met the pink people. For me, those people were the face of the Olympics. They answered all sorts of questions. I needed their help when I went to Greenwich Park with my one ticket to see part of The Dressage competition. In Cannon Street Station, I needed to know if I was in the correct station. Not only did my pink person confirm that I was in the correct place, she checked train times and found my platform for me. These people were at venues, stations and places within the city centre.

Another group of Olympic helpers were the purple, red and fawn people. Now these people had specific skills. I spoke to one who was a nurse and she had come to the end of a week where she had been working at the football matches in Newcastle. They were at venues. They carried baskets for the athletes, they controlled people movement in Hyde Park, were concerned with safety there; another cog that helped The Thirtieth Olympiad to be a success.

The army checked security at venues. This gave the public an opportunity to meet this group of soldiers and gave them to meet the public, particularly large numbers of the public who were having a good time.

These groups all liaised with the police, particularly the two groups that were volunteers.

London was looking good. The hanging basket and flowers displays were just lovely and the gardens in James Park were in full bloom. St James Park that joins on to Hyde Park makes this wonderful green space in the centre of the city. The several big screens that were here gave The BBC coverage of the games and were busy throughout the games. The triathlon was held here and the marathon and walking races were held partly in these parks. The ducks in The Serpentine must have had a bit of a shock as all those swimmers took to the water.

The Games would not have been the success that it was if those groups of people had not worked so well together, Sebastian Coe certainly could not have organised all this on his own.

I think that the Olympics have introduced us to a lot of other sports, ones that we would not have been very aware of before. My ticket was for dressage at Greenwich Park. I loved it. The skill of the riders and the cleverness of the horses, the trust between rider and horse; that team is one of the most successful at this years games by winning two gold medals and one bronze. This was added to by a gold medal from the horse jumping team and a silver medal by the three day event team.

Not all of my time in London was spent at The Olympic Games. Those of you who Love The Hippodrome, I recommend Shakespeare's Globe. It has been beautifully renovated, has benches to sit on and standing room; the actors come into the audience, in fact one feels included in the play. It is recommended that you take a cushion and it is possible to hire cushions because the benches are quite hard. We saw a very funny Taming of the Shrew. In fact it is a long time since I have seen or read a performance of this play and I am going to read it again out of my collection of plays.

In Jesus' time, he and his disciples had to manage large crowds of people; He organised the feeding of four thousand people and the crowds crowded around Him. He introduced them to something new; his teaching about God was quite different from what they had been used to and The Bible tells us that many people followed him as we follow him today. He did not work alone. Certainly God, The Father, was with Him but He also chose disciples. As the years passed, other people took His teaching all over the world.

The atmosphere in London at the time of the Olympics was lovely and, for some of the time, the weather was good. One could feel the presence of Jesus there.

Rena

Young Folks Bit

I met my son when I was in London and, when we were walking to Hyde Park, we discussed the new sports that are added to each Olympic Games. The talk went on to daft sports that could be Olympic Sports. We thought of tiddly winks and snail racing to name two.

Which daft sports would you add to the Olympic Games?
If you invent a sport, what are the rules?
Do you have a favourite sport that is not included that you think should be?

Let us hear your ideas.





Christian Aid Week 2012

This year the door-to-door collection in Shieldhill and California during Christian Aid Week raised £1787.70 - an excellent amount considering the financial pressures on everyone these days. Thanks are due to everyone who contributed and also to the volunteers who helped with the collection.

A further £114.30 was raised by a number of people who collected small change in the Christian Aid money boxes or in their own jars. Thanks to all concerned!

A snack lunch held at the beginning of Christian Aid Week raised a further £75. Thanks to all who supported this event.

The breakdown of this year's Christian Aid Week total for Shieldhill and California is, therefore, as follows:

	£
Door-to-door collection	1787.70
Money boxes/jars	114.30
Snack lunch	<u>75.00</u>
Total:	<u>£1977.00</u>

Thanks are due to everyone who contributed towards this total and also to the volunteers who helped to collect, count and bank the money. We pray that with our help Christian Aid will continue to change people's lives for the better and help end poverty.

Marion Zacks
Christian Aid Organiser



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.

You can also find photos, news, and the **Minister's Blog** on our website.

Why!

Who's the man in the centre?
Why's He hanging there?
Is He the greatest offender?
Is he worse than the other pair?

Surely He must have done something
to be there as one of the three
Surely, He's not there for nothing,
fixed to the central tree.

You're right, He is there for a reason
not for crimes He has done.
Although suffering there for a season,
He has no sin of his own.

It's for you He's there midst such persons,
dying in sorrow and shame,
He'll forgive you all your transgressions,
Aren't you glad He came.

Robert Thompson

**Following an enquiry,
Moses was disqualified from
the Olympic
100m freestyle.**



Fairtrade certified
MALTESERS hit
stores



Sweet news for cocoa farmers in West Africa, and for chocolate lovers in the UK, Fairtrade certified MALTESERS now in UK stores everywhere!

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



God's Still, Calm Voice

God's still, calm voice
Offers peace and protection
Delivers lots of hope
Soothes our restless souls

Saves us from harm
Teaches us wisdom
Instils calm in a storm
Leads and guides us
Lifts up our spirits

Consolidates our faith
Answers our prayers
Lives in our hearts
Motivates and moves us

Vanishes our doubts
Overcomes our fears
Invokes tears of joy
Comforts when we are sad
Encourages us as we listen

By Drew Robertson

I would like to thank everyone for their condolences, cards and church flowers on the sad and sudden death of my sister. Thanks also to Louise for her cards, prayers and much uplifting visit.

Thanks to all
Jean McMillan