

**Blackbraes and Shieldhill  
Parish Church  
linked with  
Muiravonside Parish Church  
Autumn 2021**



[www.bsandm-church.org.uk](http://www.bsandm-church.org.uk)

Interim Moderator: Rev Scott Burton

Locum Minister: Rev Sandra Mathers OLM

Registered Charity

Blackbraes and Shieldhill SC 002512

Muiravonside SC 007571



## **A Message from the Interim Moderator: Rev Scott Burton**

Dear friends,

Last month my daughter, Hope, started Primary 1 at Wallacestone Primary School – what an experience...for us all! Emotions were high for daughter and parents, full of anticipation and worry at what lay ahead. Hope had been talking over the summer that her teacher, Ms Plain, “would teach her to read” – and we parents were a wee bit unsure how to curb such expectations!

So, at last the big day came and went, and this 5-year-old quickly clocked that school was different from nursery: more structure and more days away from home. By the middle of the following week we were hearing, “do I have to go to school?” Oh no! We were “those parents” and so we did our best to help Hope adjust and persevere, as she really is a “home bird” and enjoys what she knows, and as a result she isn’t great with change. Yet, as her parents, we knew she needed to keep going and that life involves change, indeed, to be alive is to be changing, because we never stay the same.

I’ve been playing this experience over in my head in relation to our circumstances as a group of Braes Churches, and especially for you as your Interim Moderator, for we all face change, both personally and congregationally. I wonder how many of you are like Hope and are not keen on change? Are you a home bird too? Do you have expectations of church – or God – that haven’t been met or are maybe unrealistic?

At the time of writing, we are not yet in a position to know exactly what the future holds for Blackbraes and Shieldhill linked with Muiravonside Parish Churches, and it could be some time before this is confirmed. We do know the Elders will be hearing one recommendation soon from the Presbytery Sub-Group based upon their extensive research and experience. But

change is coming, just like change came for Hope at the start of the new academic year.

As your Interim Moderator, I feel a little like a did with Hope a few weeks ago – yearning to do right by you, unsure exactly how to proceed for the best, and knowing too that change is part of life, sometimes even needed. I am aware that many of us will have great uncertainty at present, whether due to the future of our buildings, or the ongoing impact of coronavirus, or maybe more personal issues.

There are no quick fixes or easy answers to these difficult circumstances and emotions, so let me instead point you towards the wisdom and encouragement of God’s Word:

‘There is a time for everything,  
and a season for every activity under the heavens:  
a time to be born and a time to die,...  
a time to tear down and a time to build,...  
a time to weep and a time to laugh,...  
a time to keep and a time to throw away,...

I know that everything God does will endure for ever; nothing can be added to it and nothing taken from it.’

(Ecclesiastes 3, selected verses)

Change can feel like an ending – a tearing down or throwing away – but sometimes, these changes can also lead to life, or are signs in themselves that there is still life, because only living things develop and change.

When there are more specifics on our situation, we’ll be in contact once more, so for now, may God’s presence and love be with you all.

Scott, August 2021

## **A Message from our Locum Minister: Rev Sandra Mathers**

Hello everyone, It seems we are now in what the fashionistas call the “tween seasons” period – that time when its not quite summer yet not quite autumn – high summer is over but we’re still hopeful of enjoying some warmth and sunshine before we decline into the cold and rawness of winter. On my way home from church yesterday I saw the first tell-tale signs of autumn as some of the trees were beginning to show some gold, a sure sign that autumn is just round the corner.

I hope that you all benefited from the warm and sunny days and hopefully many of you managed to enjoy even a few days holiday or perhaps that’s something you are still looking forward to. Its always good to have something to look forward to with real anticipation.

The seasons are changing but of course we’re all too well aware that as congregations, not just in our own area but throughout Scotland, we are facing change – important change, change I’m sure none of ever dreamt could possibly happen. By the time you receive this magazine you will no doubt know if and how that change is going to affect your congregation. If the worst happens and we’re facing closure that will be a body blow, there is no doubt about that – but the even bigger question is – are we going to allow it to be a knock-out blow?

In Psalm 107 the Psalmist begins by saying “Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His love endures for ever” but he then goes on to think about different situations that people find themselves in, desperate situations, dangerous situations, situations that made many fear for their lives, but his recurring words are these “Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble and He delivered them from their distress.” The whole emphasis of the Psalm is that God is a very present help in time of trouble – regardless of what that trouble is He IS with us in it and He delivers those who trust in Him.

God IS always with us when we look to Him in faith and trust, of

that there is no doubt. There is also no doubt that He answers our prayers – but, and it’s a big but – He doesn’t always answer in the way we want Him to. The Church of Scotland, that institution that seemed impregnable to us, is on the rocks financially speaking. Things can’t go on the way they have done for generations, but our faith is or shouldn’t be in any institution, but in the God who is the rock of both our life and faith and that institution’s life and faith.

The God we worship is the God who says through the prophet Isaiah (43:18-19) “Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing. Now it springs up – do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland.”

Over and over again God’s Word reminds us that He is the God of newness. We may like to cling to the past, to what is familiar and comfortable, but that is not God’s way – He is the God of newness, and He has a new thing in store for us – what it is at this moment in time we don’t know, but we do know that He is faithful and He will do it.

What we mustn’t forget is that we as His people have a part to play in the outworking of this new thing. We must be faithful in prayer, faithful in our giving both from a monetary standpoint and in the service He has called us to, and faithful in our loving – loving of our Saviour, of each other, and of those we are called to reach out to in Christ’s name.

It must be said that our lack of prayer, of giving lovingly and sacrificially and our lack of outreach, have played a large part in the present circumstances, but that is past and the past can’t be undone but the future lies before us with all its opportunities and promise of blessing if we are prepared to walk in God’s way and work in His way, looking to Him in love, in expectancy and in hope, a hope that is ‘sure and steadfast’.

I close with the words of Joshua to the Israelites as they stood

at the beginning of a new thing – their entry into the Promised Land, a new thing that demanded every ounce of their commitment, determination and courage. “Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified, do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.” (Joshua 1:9).

Blessings to you all

*Sandra Mathers*

Locum Minister



## Letter of Thanks from Ailsa Simpson

From the very first Sunday I arrived at Blackbraes & Shieldhill Parish Church to play for the morning service, I have been touched by the warmth and friendliness of the congregation – and, although a long lie on a Sunday became an increasingly-distant memory, I have never regretted ceding it to the church each week.

Over the years I have seen many changes – changes of ministers, changes of hymn books and changes of organs. I shall not forget the first organ ... which had developed a wheeze and sometimes simply ran out of puff ... nor the piano, both of which certainly belonged to a different era some time before the twenty-first century. And I shall not forget the fun we had on the day the Reverend Jim Drysdale, Mrs. Drysdale, Alex Christie and I ventured into foreign parts ... Ayrshire ... in search of a new organ. Our quest was successful; and it has been my privilege and a great pleasure to play such a lovely instrument.

The new organ encouraged the choir and myself to seek out music new to the Church; and we always enjoyed finding new carols for Christmas. The Christmas season is a very special time in the Christian year and has always been a special feature for me, with the added excitement of extra services and ... of course ... the Guild Party. However, on matters of more mundane worship, I think it is only fair to say that Shieldhill's favourite hymns coincide pretty closely with my own favourites.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my years at the keyboard of the organ: but, sadly from my personal point of view, I feel that the time has come for me to allow a younger and fitter person to occupy the organ bench. I would like to thank everyone most sincerely for the welcome, the friendship, the fun and the support I have enjoyed while it has been my role to lead the praise. However, I am simply vacating the organ bench; I intend to be seated on the pews in the heart of this warm and caring congregation in future weeks, months and, hopefully, years, seated among the friends I have made and whose friendship I value highly.

*Ailsa Simpson*

## On Holiday from the Garden

When we were on holiday in Galloway, we visited The Isle of Whithorn. It was a clear day and the views across The Solway Firth towards The Isle of Man and beyond were lovely. There are two memorials to the fishermen who were lost when their boat the Solway Harvester sank in January 2000.

The Isle of Whithorn also is the place where St. Ninian began his ministry.

St Ninian's name is remembered throughout Central and Southern Scotland. Churches, schools, streets are places where his name crops up.

Who was St Ninian?

St Ninian lived just after the Roman armies had left Briton. The Picts were formidable fighters both on land and on sea. At one point they had stretched as far as Wales and Cornwall. This terror lasted during the last half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC. Only when the native peoples retaliated the Picts were sent north into their original northern home. Gradually they became less warlike and became farmers and producers of artwork. What had happened to them? They had become Christians.

This establishment of the Christian Faith is often accredited to Patrick and Ninian of Candida Casa. Both men were accredited with performing miracles, none greater than the miracle of the great calming of the Picts.

It is only in recent years that more has become known about St Ninian, perhaps if more had been known about him, he would have been a strong candidate for our national saint.

For many years all that was known about St Ninian was found in ancient manuscripts

The Venerable Bede recorded a short passage about St Ninian and his church, the Candida Casa or The White House. This was a stone church, the like of which had not been seen before. Bede says that St Ninian travelled to Rome. Apart from Bede's passage there is a Latin poem, "The Miracula Nynie Episcopi"

( The Miracles of Nynia, The Bishop), written by a monk in in the 8<sup>th</sup> century monastery of Whithorn. There is also a prose, 'The life of St Ninian' written by Ailred of Rievaulx in Yorkshire. This was written about 1167 and Ailred visited Galloway and took great interest in all that was happening there.

St Ninian dedicated his church to St Martin. Both Bede and Ailred say that St Ninian visited Rome. It is thought that he sailed up The Loire as it is claimed that he crossed the Alps. If he returned home along the same route he could have stayed with St. Martin in Tours. It is thought that he brought French stonemasons back to Galloway. The church that he built was made of stone with white plaster on the outer walls.

Whithorn became a place of pilgrimage. For someone to qualify as a pilgrim, that person should travel with a relic. By the time that James 1V went to Whithorn as a pilgrim, there were not many relics of St Ninian left. There were two arm bones and James had them encased in silver to preserve them. They survived The Reformation and were moved to the Scots seminary at Douai in Northern France along with St Margaret's head shrine. Nether survived The French Revolution.

Today Whithorn is a pleasant little town, and its museum is worth a visit. The Latinus Stone is there, and it dates from the time of St Ninian. The museum is linked to the 12th century priory. There is also stuff from excavations around Whithorn.

The Isle of Whithorn is charming. There are the well-preserved ruins of a medieval chapel which well may have been the stopping off place for pilgrims. St Ninians cave is sign posted from here, along the edge of a farmer's field. The Isle of Whithorn and Whithorn are included in the modern-day Pilgrim's Trail.

I believe that there is a party of clergy and others who are planning to follow the Pilgrim's Trail, arriving in Glasgow in time for COP26. They will include Whithorn.

References:

Wild Men and Holy Places by Daphne Brooke

Saints of Scotland by Edwin Sprott Towill  
Pilgrimage in Scotland by Peter Yeoman

And many people will come and say;  
“Come, lets us go up the mountain of the Lord,  
To the house of the God of Jacob;  
That he may teach us concerning His ways  
And that we may walk in his paths”.

Rena



## The Blythwood Trust Shoebox Appeal 2021

I hope to support The Blytheswood Trust's Shoebox Appeal this year. I have a few shoeboxes that I collected from a shoe shop before lockdown last year. At the moment they have downloadable sheets of suggested box contents and I have a few from past years that I can give to people. The suggested box contents do not change from year to year.

They appreciate that people may not have been able to obtain boxes and so a draw string bag may be used instead. The bag size should be maximum size of 40cm x 30cm. The sort of bag that could be a gym bag. It should not be made of plastic as the bag will be useful to the people.

It is desirable that each box/bag should have:

Toothbrush and Toothpaste.	Small toy, (no homemade stuffed toys.)
Hat, scarf, gloves	Sweets (no chocolate and best before date no earlier than March 2022)
Soap	

Please see the next two pages for Box/bag filler ideas

**Rena**



Box/bag filler ideas.

<b>Boy/Girl aged 3-7</b>	<b>Boy/Girl aged 8-12</b>
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Plasticine	Pyjamas	Sewing kit	Lego
Simple sewing Kit	Toy car/truck	Craft kit	Modelling clay
Dressing up	Toy animals	Paint by numbers	Tennis ball
Chalk	Paints	Jewellery/beads	Vests
Crayons	Picture snap cards	Socks	Watch
Underwear	Wooden toy	Pyjamas	Playing cards
My Little Pony	Small ball	Colouring book	Sticker book
T-Shirt	socks	Stationery	Draughts
underwear	Shorts	Skipping ropes	Socks
Sticker book	Vest	T-Shlirt	Marbles

**Please see overleaf for teenagers and adults**

<b>Teenage Girl</b>	<b>Boy</b>	<b>Woman</b>	<b>Man</b>	<b>Elderly woman</b>
Make-up	Shorts	Make-up	Domi- noes	Nail brush
Craft Kit	Tennis ball	First aid kit	Pack of cards	Magnify- ing glass
Jewellery	Rubix cube	Sanitary products	Draughts	Umbrella
Hairbrush	Draughts board game	Perfume	Tape measure	Hand cream
Nail Varnish	Aero- plane model	Shampoo	Tin cup	Folding walking stick
Domi- noes	Wind-up torch	Tape measure	Belt	Slippers
Perfume	Domi- noes	Apron	Braces	Apron
Hair band	Deodor- ant	Measur- ing spoons	Wind-up torch	Candle
Small watch	Small watch	Kitchen utensils	Pen knife	Tin cup
Diary	Thermal vest	Small scissors	Shaving brush	Small clock
Manicure set	cap	under- wear	Pen	Tights

## **IF ONLY**

I wish, I wish, I wish in vain

I wish I was a baby again.

A baby so helpless and so weak,

so gentle, cuddly, and so meek,

to be fed, changed and pampered too,

kisses and smiles like I once knew.

None of the world's problems I'd need to know,

no awful wrinkles I'd need to show.

I could lie and watch folk run around,

I could only wonder where they're bound.

No work to do ,or things to mend,

no chatting, gossip, or friends to offend.

No winter weather to make me freeze,

no nasty winds to make me wheeze.

No teeth to make me grit and chew,

no dentist to visit like grown-ups do.

This worlds become an awful place,

greed and war-race fighting race.

Will man with man ever try to agree?

Will people ever again be free?  
They say they're fighting for people like 'ME.  
I'd only be tiny, but I couldn't agree.  
I'd lie in my pram and I'd gurgle with glee,  
everyone then would take notice of me.

**By the late Christine McCrae.**  
**Submitted by Etta Napier**

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### **Website**

Our magazines are now available on our website :

[www.bsandm-church.org.uk](http://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, you would receive the magazine in colour. It could also be enlarged if you need to see it in large print.

Dear Church Members,  
Shieldhill and California Community Council (SCCC) is looking for new members. Elections are to take place when the current term ends in November.

Community Councils are the lowest form of government and are statutory consultees. Community Councillors are all volunteers. There are no affiliations to any political parties or groups and SCCC maintains a good working relationship with Community Councils in Falkirk and further afield.

All community councils within the Falkirk Council area run for 4 years after which new elections take place. The four years for this session will end in November 2021 with newly formed Community Councils starting in January 2022. There should be 7 members in SCCC but currently that number is down to 5. We are looking for members to join now or otherwise attend the monthly meetings and apply to become members in November.

SCCC members like all other community councils wish to look after their areas for the betterment of all residents. We provide a voice for you as a recognised statutory body.

With the direct involvement of SCCC:-

- There is a local pharmacy in Shieldhill
- The buses still pass through the West End of Shieldhill
- The local path network to Shieldhill and California was established
- The bridge over the Polmont Burn to Bellsrig Wood was reinstated allowing our children to walk safely between schools.
- We have £5000/annum from a wind turbine contribution
- Gained £33,000 in awards for village groups from the Coalfields Regeneration Trust
- Coal bed methane extraction and fracking was stopped in Scotland
- Prevented the formation of a landfill site at Darnrigg

- Both villages have defibrillators.

These are just a few examples of important achievements. The Community council is important but, for the most part much of what we do is rarely spoken about. We need more volunteers especially with the elections coming up. I would ask that if you want the Community Council to continue representing you and protecting the things we value then act now. Speak to your family, friends and neighbours about joining the Community Council. If they live outwith of Shieldhill and California ask them to join the Community Council in their area. It is important we retain our voice when and where it matters. Help the Community Council to continue supporting our community. Contact SCCC via email

[shieldhillandcaliforniacc@virginmedia.com](mailto:shieldhillandcaliforniacc@virginmedia.com)

Thank you.

Jit Singh ( For and on behalf of SCCC)

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 [@ShieldhillCaliforniaCC/](https://www.facebook.com/SHieldhillCaliforniaCC/)

 <https://twitter.com/SCCommCouncil>

This was written by Mr. Sam Elliot, Bo'ness, Norma Jack's uncle, for Mrs. Strathearn's class at a school in Bo'ness. When he retired he used to work with the children making a variety of models and learning about them.

Is this the house that Jack built? or was it Mr. E  
who made this little clachan for everyone to see.

It has two little beds of straw with seats to have a rest  
a door that's open all the time and a window to the West.

It has a fire going too with pots and pans as well  
A great big hole up in the roof to get rid of the smoke and the  
smell.

Spare firewood in the corner to keep the fire bright  
because, when night time comes along, the fire gives them  
light.

It will be nice and cosy for the people who live there  
But I think we'll like our own house best because it's not so  
bare.

We all have nice hot water and everything we need  
While the people in a clachan will find things hard indeed.

Lift the roof and enjoy the sight, I hope you find that all is right.

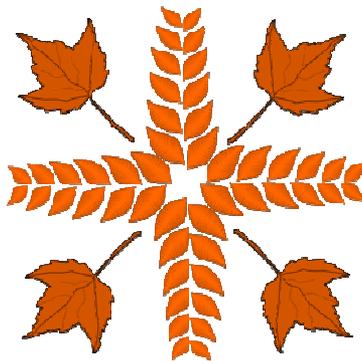
The people were poor, like a little mouse, So be glad you have your own nice house.

.....

The clachan he made was 2 ft square and 2 ft high. The walls were "kid on" stone and the roof was wood frames covered with straw.

Apparently, when the people moved to some other area they took the roof with them. There was plenty of stone everywhere but not much wood.

**Submitted by Norma Jack**



## The Lamp Lighter

Robert Louis Stevenson was born in Edinburgh on the 13th of November 1850, his father Thomas was an engineer who was known for building deep sea light houses and a good example of his work can be seen at Arbroath.

RLS abandoned two university courses before realising his dream to become a writer. Two of my favourite books are Treasure Island and Kidnapped.

In 1876 while staying near Paris he met an independent American lady with two daughters. Their friendship continued and in 1879 he travelled to California and married Fanny in 1880 and this changed his life.

In 1888 they set sail around the Pacific Islands staying on each island for a short time before finally settling and building a house near Appia on the Island of Samoa, where he lived until his death in December 1894. The climate improved his health and he continued to write and is still the most popular writer of the 19th century.

As a child Robert Louis Stevenson did not enjoy good health and often watched the leerie, which is the Scots word for lamplighter, light the lantern outside his house in Heriot Row Edinburgh.

At Christmas I received a Scots poetry and Anthology book and inside was the lamplighter poem which I remember from my schooldays and this brought back happy memories.



## THE LAMP LIGHTER

My tea is nearly ready and the sun has left the sky  
Its time to take the window to see leerie going by  
For every night at tea time and before you take your seat  
With lantern and with ladder he comes posting up the street  
Now Tom would be a driver and Maria go to sea  
And my papa's a banker and as rich as he can be  
But I, when I'm stronger and can house what I'm to do  
Oh leerie, I'll go round at night and light the lamps with you  
For we are very lucky with a lamp before the door  
And leerie stops to light it as he lights so many more  
And O, before you hurry by with ladder and with light  
O leerie, see a Little child and nod to him tonight

**Robert Louis Stevenson**

An apple green street lantern stood tall and strong outside the door of the house where I lived as a child. The gas light cast a warm soft glow compared with the sharp light given out by the electric lights outside my door today.

The leerie lit the lamp every evening just before dusk but I ne'er saw him when he came to put out the light in the morning. He covered his route on a bicycle and used a lighting stick to put out the light.

Electricity replaced gas in the 1950s and some may remember this song from the 1940s called -

## **The Old Lamp Lighter**

He made the light a little brighter

Wherever he would go

The old lamplighter

Of long long ago

His snowy hair was so much whiter

Beneath the candle glow

The old lamp lighter

Of long long ago

You'd hear the patter of his feet

As he came toddling down the street

His smile would have a lonely heart you see

If there were sweethearts in the park

He'd pass a lamp and leave it dark,

Remembering days that used to be

For he recalls when things were new

He loved someone who loved him too

Who walks with him alone in memories

He made the light a little brighter  
Wherever he would go  
The old lamplighter  
Of long long ago

Now if you look up in the sky  
You'll understand the reason why  
The little stars at night are all aglow  
He turns them on when night is here  
He turns them off when dawn is near  
The little man we left of long ago

He made the night a little brighter  
Wherever he would go  
The old lamplighter  
of long long ago

**Book Ref-** A Gathering A personal anthology of Scottish poems  
**Edited by** Alexander McCall Smith

**Lorna Coulter**



## South Africa Link



### **Editor's note—**

Ivar Struthers who keeps in touch with Graham and Sandra Duncan has received the following from them which is reproduced below.

Hello everyone!

I've just received an email from Sandra and Graham Duncan in South Africa. They are both well and have just had their second Covid19 jags. The situation in South Africa, however, has not been good recently and they have been receiving confusing messages about what is happening in the country at the moment. They have come across an excellent article about the situation and have asked me to forward it to their mission partners. I've copied it below. Please remember to keep Sandra and Graham in your prayers.

Good wishes, Ivar

Dear Friends,

Many of you outside of South Africa are wondering what is really going on. So here is a very simple outline. The thing is obviously far more complex and nuanced than can be set out in a brief note but this will give you some picture of what is really happening.

Following the 1994 democratic elections in South Africa, South Africa did really well economically until about 2008. That was also the year that Jacob Zuma was elected president of the ANC. At that point in time, some of us had a sense of disquiet already. But little did any of us understand then the extent of the corruption and weakening of government institutions that would follow. We have no clear idea of the extent of what was stolen during the Jacob Zuma years, other than that it is a stupendous sum of money which this country certainly cannot afford.

Eventually however the internal tide within the ANC started to slowly turn against Jacob Zuma. On 18 December 2017 Cyril Ramaphosa was elected as the president of the ANC (and also subsequently became the president of South Africa). But it was a very narrow margin of victory.

The thing about Cyril Ramaphosa is that he is fundamentally a principled man. And certainly, determined to clean up the history of corruption we have seen since 2008. Various steps have been taken by him and the ANC under his guidance to give effect to this. One of the things that was done was to establish a commission chaired by Raymond Zondo, who is the Deputy Chief Justice of South Africa. The purpose of this commission was to investigate the corruption issues and to expose them to the light of day.

Jacob Zuma was required to appear in front of the commission. He effectively refused to do so. He was ordered by the Constitutional Court to do so. He defied the order of the Constitutional Court. The Constitutional Court in turn ordered his imprisonment for a period of 15 months for contempt of court. This, whatever you call it, is fundamentally the rule of law in action. Initially there was resistance to imprisonment by Jacob Zuma and his supporters. A week ago, however Jacob Zuma submitted himself to imprisonment. And then all hell broke loose.

What you need to understand is that Jacob Zuma has his powerbase in KwaZulu Natal, where the riots have been at their worst. This is also, as the name will tell you, the home territory of the Zulu nation. And Jacob Zuma is a prominent figure in the Zulu nation. Within the Jacob Zuma camp, individuals set about instigating the so-called protests, riots and looting that you have seen in the media. To a significant extent they leveraged the problems of poverty and inequality in South Africa to achieve their ends. Very often in this country we have areas where many very poor people are resident adjacent to commercial complexes. This was an ideal combination to exploit. In addition to that there are the existing fissures along race lines that exist in our society which were also available to leverage. Audio files doing the rounds encouraged people to attack and destroy

what are perceived to be white and white owned businesses. In the end though, many black business people also suffered considerable losses.

The gameplan was to create a situation which would force the hand of the current government. Ideally, it would result in an overreaction by the security forces, with the result that many of the poor and vulnerable would be killed (which is what happened at Marikana a few years back). If that occurred, it would likely force the resignation or removal of Cyril Ramaphosa as president. Meaning the Jacob Zuma camp would have achieved their objective. This is one reason why the security forces have been so careful not to use excessive force in dealing with the riots and the looters.

While there is still a lot of instability in KwaZulu Natal and certain pockets in Gauteng, what is now starting to emerge quite clearly is that the gambit by the Jacob Zuma camp has failed. South African society of all walks has turned its face against this insurrection. In effect, an attempted coup has failed.

South Africans are a strange nation in many ways. They argue and fight amongst themselves but when pushed to the edge, they always pull together for the common good. This has happened again and again over the decades. This has been perhaps a necessary test of our democracy and of the rule of law. Make no mistake but that South Africa has many very real challenges. But South Africa will pass through this and will put the locust years behind it.

**Clem Sunter**

## **How to Deal with Flooding and Groundwater in your Garden.**

Erratic weather in recent years has made flooding a common issue.

Gardeners both professional and private have seen their pride and joy destroyed by heavy rain and the result of standing water. Plants that are left to saturate for any length of time will drown as the water fills air pockets normally present in the soil.

You can help by the right preparation and prevention.

Look at your garden and how it will drain. Even adding a slight slope in your patio area will help the flow of water away from your house. Digging trenches or adding a perforated drainage pipe can help drain lawns and flower beds. Limiting paved and concrete and the creation of beds and borders close to the house will help drainage. Roots break up soil, improve its structure and make it drain faster.

If a particular part of your garden is prone to flooding, choose plants that can withstand some waterlogging. Willows, flag irises and violets are good plants to begin with.

Flooding can be brought about by a range of factors including run off from heavy rain, raised ground levels and blocked or surcharged drainage systems. It is recognised that climate change may play a major role in increasing the risk of flooding in the future.

**Surface water drainage**, the regulations note the mandatory standards to new buildings.

Every building and hard surface within the curtilage of a building must be designed and constructed with a surface water drainage system that will

- a) Ensure the disposal of surface water without threatening the building and the health and safety of the people in or around the building, and
- b) Have facilities for the separation and removal of silt, grit, and pollutants.

For safety reasons it is essential that surface water is not permitted to

collect or remain on all access routes to buildings, particularly with elderly and disabled people in mind. Ponding in winter can cause slippery surfaces that can be hazardous to pedestrians.

Free draining run off can be achieved by laying the surface to a fall, sufficient to avoid ponding, that allows the water to drain to a pervious area, such as a grassy area provided the infiltration capacity of the ground is not overloaded.

Surface water discharge to a public sewer via a soakaway or silt interceptor must have the consent of the drainage authority.

**Compiled by members of Blackbraes and Shieldhill Parish Church and endorsed by the FDC flooding officer.**

**Submitted by Jim Currie**



Dear Friends

On behalf of the Session Clerk, the Kirk Session I would like to thank you most sincerely for your continual generous support to Muiravonside, the work to upgrade the exterior of the Church is still ongoing and it is because of your generosity we are able to carry these repairs.

When completed the repairs should keep Muiravonside wind and watertight for many years to come.

The Bank Balance at 31/07/2021 was £28,774.20 this included £787.56 from Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme further income from the Gift Aid Scheme £1,569.50 will show in the August income'

Blessings to all from Moira Sharp :Treasurer



## **Prayers for others**

Heavenly Father as we worship today in the comfort and safety of this Sanctuary we place in your hands the Christians across the globe who are unable to come to you with their prayers as they fear retaliation from their aggressors help them find safe welcoming havens in order to worship as we here do.

We pray for the families and friends of those adults and children who have lost their lives to drowning in recent weeks give them strength and healing at this sad time.

As Global Warming continues to rise we pray for those throughout the world who are losing loved ones, homes and businesses to wild fires and floods.

We also ask that you remember the many millions of people who are becoming homeless due to Covid 19 unable to pay housing costs due to job losses.

We here in Muiravonside pray for our own members who due to frailty or illness are unable to be with us today keep them safe and maybe one day they will again be able to join us in worship.

As we leave Muiravonside today be with each and every one of us and with our families and friends throughout the coming week keep us safe in the knowledge that you are by our sides in everything that we do.

We ask these prayers in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ

Amen

**Written and read by Moira Sharp 01/08/2021**

## Quiz Time!

Recently, Liz MacGowan kindly produced another quiz for us, this time on the subject of 'Famous Landmarks.' The quiz raised £87 so a big Thank You! to all who took part.

The winners are 1st : Maisie Mortimer

2nd : Christine Christie

3rd : Susan Ferguson

Although the quiz has now taken place and the winners announced, it is reproduced below for any folks who want to try it at home just for fun.

1. A Circular Monument made of rock.
2. A Large Gorge.
3. Scottish water spirits in the shape of a horse.
4. Home of the Apprentice Pillar.
5. Higher than a hill for this sweet bread.
6. A very large person walks this path.
7. A fortress overlooking the Forth.
8. Poppies laid here in remembrance.
9. The German fleet met a watery grave here.
- 10 Home of the Fairy Flag.
11. A tall building - not quite straight.
12. Where the Beatles met on a zebra crossing.
13. A fruity construction.
14. An Aboriginal Stone.
15. Michael Angelo's place of worship.
16. A sculpture leading to freedom.
17. Not the Blackpool one!
18. A teddy bear would get the train here.

### **Quiz (continued)**

19. The "Bairns" keep this circular device.
20. An old Edinburgh church has this old policeman
21. A large division in the far east.
22. Australian musical theatre.
23. William's son has this fortified building.
24. Not the third for this train crossing.
25. A biblical garden design.
26. A Canadian cascade.
27. Vera Lynn sang of this landmark.
28. Harry Potter's railway crossing.
29. No more stealing at this chateau.
30. An oyster's jewel in a sheltered port.

Answers on page : 42

**Submitted by Liz MacGowan**



## **The Miracle at Brockville Park**

I have complete admiration for people who are good at sport.

During the last few weeks of course, the Olympic Games have been playing out on tv and before that, the big football tournament. I have spent these last few weeks marvelling at gymnasts who seem to be able to defy gravity at will. I have gasped in wonder at skaters who whizz round the ice and seem to leap about ten feet in the air then descend spinning like a top so fast that they look blurred. (How do they not get dizzy?) (I would be dead!) Then almost immediately they do it all again!

During the football tournament, I witnessed overhead kicks where the footballer was almost upside down as he took the shot at goal. I watched amazed as free kicks were being taken where the ball curved round in an arc and landed in the goal with complete precision at an angle where the goalie would have no chance!

I have a right to marvel at these things because as you all know, I am the worst sportsman in the world!

In previous essays, I have documented some of my brief excursions into the world of sport where chaos has then rapidly ensued. I have played rugby on a muddy pitch which looked like a quagmire and forty minutes later would come off with my rugby shirt and shorts still in pristine white. I have described tennis balls being hit with such force that they ended up hitting the roof of the sports centre and when they eventually came back down to earth after what seemed a very long time – they were out!

Football? – aargh! - It is maybe best not to mention that at all. It is just too horrific!

However, you will perhaps be amazed when I tell you I once

played in a football match at Falkirk's old ground, Brockville Park where Morrison's supermarket is now situated!

I can actually hear your gasps of horror at this revelation and I'm sure that I just heard a few screams as well!

It actually took place while I was at secondary school. A few football matches would take place each year between the neighbouring secondary schools just before the summer holidays and what made it really exciting was that they were sometimes held at Brockville Park. We even all got an afternoon off to watch the match! The schools naturally chose their best players and it was great fun watching the game take place while the pupils from each school who were watching tried to drown each other out as they cheered for their school.

On this occasion, the prefects in the fifth and six year of my school had visited a neighbouring school a few months before and we had been given a tour as part of a project to foster friendships between the senior pupils in different schools. The prefects there happened to have a very good football team at the time and were very proud of their achievements over the years! Of course my school didn't want to be undone and was just as proud of our past record! What happened next? Yes - you've guessed it! Some friendly rivalry ensued and they challenged our prefects to a special game!

Back in the mid nineteen seventies, school football was played almost exclusively by boys (until "Gregory's Girl!") Nowadays of course, we have boys and girls teams as well as men and women's which is fantastic.

The only problem was that during this particular school year, although we had some prefects who were great players, we didn't have a lot of male prefects in the senior school of the fifth and six year. We were outnumbered quite a bit by girls! However, after some rapid calculations it was worked out we would have just enough boys to make up a team from the prefects along with two substitutes. The match was fixed and to everyone's delight was going to take place at Brockville in front of all the pupils from the two schools.

The rather disconcerting news was that I would have to be included to make up the numbers and I was called up!

My notoriety on sports fields even then was legendary. However, our Head Boy who was also the captain of our team was very philosophical. (He also desperately wanted the game to go ahead!)

So he just shrugged his shoulders and said, "We'll put Drew down as the second substitute. He probably won't even have to set foot on the park!"

There was a unanimous and very loud sigh of relief. (Even louder than the one I used to hear every time I walked past the school changing rooms when I wasn't selected for a sports event!)

The big day finally arrived and it was great to see parts of Brockville that an ordinary spectator wouldn't see such as the dressing rooms and we were even shown the Manager's office.

The rest of my team looked excited and raring to go as well as the PE teacher who was accompanying us. I was too. After all, I was the second substitute! If all went well, I could just sit and enjoy the game from one of the best seats in the house - the players' bench! Although we were considered the underdogs for this particular match, you wouldn't think it as the PE teacher and our Head Boy who was the team captain gave us a small briefing.

Although I was really just there to make up the numbers and everyone knew that, to my surprise, the Head Boy had a special briefing just for me! He was a very good player and his speciality was taking these shots at goal where the ball curves round in an arc.

He came over to me and said, "Drew, it's very unlikely we're going to need you, but if by any chance you do find yourself in the game, just try to look busy and follow us from a safe distance as we go around the park, but always just keep back a bit. If the ball does come to you, pass it to one of us or hit it as hard as you can towards the goal" He then laughed rather nervously and added - "Make sure though you are aiming it at

the right one!"

He had one last bit of advice. "If we take a corner, the goal area will be crowded, so just stand a little bit to the side of the goal towards where the corner is being taken from and the ball will just sail right over your head to where it is much more crowded with players."

With that last bit of advice we were on our way and greeted to a tremendous cheer as the two teams came out onto the pitch. Together with the PE teacher and the other substitute, I headed straight to the players' bench and sat back, ready to enjoy the game.

The first half was actually quite uneventful. Both teams had chances which were not taken and the ball tended to go back and forward up and down the park with not much result for all the effort that was involved. Half time came and it was still no score which in a way was good news as at least we would have everything to play for in the second half.

That was when things began to happen and start a chain of events that would turn out to be extraordinary.

They started quickly. Just four minutes into the second half - what football statisticians and analysts would call the 49th minute - one of our players was chasing the ball, stumbled and fell a bit awkwardly. He wanted to carry on, but it was obvious he was walking with a limp and the decision was made right away to substitute him and on went the first substitute. There was only me left now if anything else went wrong and for the first time, I was aware that my cosy position on the player's bench wasn't as safe as I had imagined.

The game soon got going again. We almost got a goal – one of our Head Boy captain's legendary bendy free kicks which just went narrowly over the post. We continued to keep possession

and for a while I forgot about my precarious position on the substitute's bench.

That was until the 72nd minute!

It was then that one of our players was the victim of quite a hard tackle by the opposition and it was obvious he wouldn't be able to play on. The Head Boy looked towards me from the pitch. "You're on Andrew!" shouted the PE teacher beside me, patting my back. "Good Luck!"

On I went in a bit of daze and as I did, I said a silent prayer which helped immensely. I seemed to get settled quite fast and just followed the plan of looking busy and being just behind the play but not too near! The ball never came near me and I actually began to enjoy orbiting the park as the players went back and forward. One very funny thing that happened was that I seemed to have been assigned a marker by the other team! He followed me about, absolutely bamboozled, as I didn't seem to be playing in any particular position and he looked so puzzled, I thought at one stage he was going to ask me what I was doing!

After about ten minutes though, I think he must have suspected our cunning plan that I was just there to make up the numbers and began to drift further and further away, realising that I was no threat. He was probably fed up not to be getting a chance to play the ball.

I carried on quite happily by myself, knowing there wasn't a lot of time to go now. The ball had gone over the line and we were awarded our first corner since I went on the field. Just as the captain had said, all the players were grouped in a crowd before the goal and I stood just to the left of the goal towards where the corner was being taken away from the crowd of players. My marker had joined me again about a couple of feet away to the

right, slightly ahead of me!

It was then things happened very fast. The corner was taken and whizzed over my head. I turned round to see it headed away by one of the defenders, but it went just outside the 18 yard box right into the path of our captain and I knew what was going to happen next. He was going to do what we used to call one of his bendy kicks. He hit it with tremendous force. He was just a little out in his calculations and it rocketed off the post with the goalie diving at full stretch.

While the goalie was still on the ground, slightly clear of the goalposts and before my marker or I could react, the ball rocketed towards me from the post and struck me in the chest so hard I was knocked over. For a second or two I lay dazed wondering what on earth had hit me. Then I became aware there were cheers resounding around the ground which were becoming deafening. Players from my team were trying to pull me up and were yelling “Well done Drew!!!”

It was then I realised that ball had ricocheted off my chest and had rolled into the goal too fast for my marker or the defenders who were still standing at the other side of the goal after the corner kick to clear it. We were one nil up with only about five minutes to go!

I can tell you these were the longest five minutes of our young lives, but we held on and after a few minutes of injury time, the final whistle blew! The pupils from our school who were spectating emulated the famous “Hampden Roar!”

The only goal I have ever scored in my life was of course, “The flukiest of flukes!” – “The Mickeyest of Mouses!” My teammates didn’t seem to think that though as they led me around the ground in an impromptu lap of honour! I still couldn’t quite believe what had happened and the next day when we were all

back at school, I thought they would just dismiss it all and put it down to a fluke that happened just at the right time.

I was actually treated like a hero! Our school had beaten what was a much respected team at the time and their unbroken record of wins had come to an end. Nobody at school seemed to care how it was achieved!

Once back home that evening, I reflected on the silent prayer I had said that gave me great comfort as I ran rather hesitantly on to a very large football field. It was based on a piece of Scripture I had come across a few weeks before during a youth Bible Study meeting and was a short sentence from Psalm 115, verse 11. "Trust in the Lord, all you that worship him. He helps you and protects you."

I asked for his help and protection, but I didn't ask him to make me a hero. I just pleaded with him to help me through the next fifteen minutes or so and help me not to do anything drastically wrong that would undo all the good work that my teammates had done so far. I just put my trust in him and immediately felt much better and ready just to go with the flow. When the astonishing and unexpected goal came, I had no part in it. The ball just simply bounced off me after being propelled off the post towards me with a force that was much fiercer than it should have been to the extent that it knocked me over.

God wouldn't send the Holy Spirit to affect the outcome of a school football match. That would be unfair to the other team, the spectators and everyone else on the field. But he would send the Holy Spirit to help a young boy who was pleading for his help, was desperately trying not to let his teammates down as well as having no confidence in himself or his abilities to show him that sometimes the unlikeliest person in the world can become a hero.

I suspected he did just that.

The whole experience taught me to never put yourself down no matter how hopeless you may think you are at doing something. God will find a way for you to triumph and you will find it will happen in the unlikeliest of circumstances, almost

with a sense of humour thrown in as well.

What touched me the most in the aftermath of the match was that my school put up large fliers on all the notice boards with a glowing report about the game. The score was also written out in the way it would appear in newspapers or on tv.

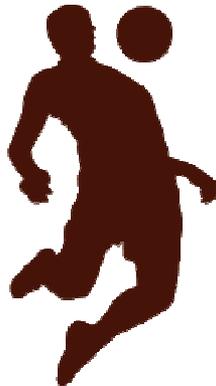
Graeme High School 1                      St Mungo's High School 0  
(Andrew Robertson, 85<sup>th</sup> minute)

However, I really feel that the score should have read something like this.

Graeme High School 1                      St Mungo's High School 0  
(Holy Spirit, 85<sup>th</sup> minute)

For a few days at least, I felt like comic strip hero "Roy of the Rovers" – or perhaps it should be "Drew of the Rovers!"

### **Drew Robertson**



## **CHRISTIAN AID**

Due to lockdown restrictions we were unable to hold our usual Christian Aid lunch again this year. However, our Church did raise a total of £188 from donations to support Christian Aid Week, the majority of which were gift aided. Thanks to everyone who donated so generously. With Christian Aid admin. staff working from home and all monies now being processed in London rather than Edinburgh, I have just recently received written acknowledgement and thanks for the Church's gift.

Regarding the Kiltwalk in April which Rena, Andy and I took part in, our sponsorship total was £480 and with the 50% top-up from the Hunter Foundation this raised £720 for Christian Aid's work. A big thank you to all who supported us.

**Marion Zacks**



## Famous Landmarks Quiz Answers

How did you all fare? I'm sure you did very well!

1. Stonehenge
2. The Grand Canyon
3. The Kelpies
4. Rosslyn Chapel
5. Sugar Loaf Mountain
6. Giant's Causeway
7. Blackness Castle
8. The Cenotaph
9. Scapa Flow
10. Dunvegan Castle
11. Leaning Tower of Pisa
12. Abbey Road
13. The Dunmore Pineapple
14. Ayre's Rock—Uluru
15. Sistine Chapel
16. Statue of Liberty
17. Eiffel Tower
18. Paddington Station
19. The Falkirk Wheel
20. Greyfriars Bobby
21. The Great Wall of China
22. Sydney Opera House
23. Fort George
24. Forth Railway Bridge
25. The Eden Project
26. Niagara Falls
27. the White Cliffs of Dover
28. Glanfinnan Viaduct
29. Dunrobin Castle
30. Pearl Harbour

## **Latest News re Muiravonside Church Repairs**

Regarding the work being carried out at Muiravonside Church involving replacement of wet dash on exterior of the Kirk, further repairs are ongoing with scaffolding still in place.

**John Robertson**



## **Rendezvous Group**

The monthly Rendezvous Group will restart on Wednesday, 13th October at 1.30pm in Shieldhill Church hall. It will be so good to be able to meet again after such a long period of time. All are welcome to come along to this group, enjoy the fellowship and various events, such as a visiting speaker, entertainer, etc. as well as refreshments.

**Marion Zacks**

