

February 2009

Dear Friends,

As mentioned in the last issue of the magazine a brief visit to Israel and Palestine was undertaken by Carrick McLelland, Allan Cumming, Robin Sloan and myself at the end of November and Robin kindly reports in the trip in an article for this issue. At the time of writing Al-Shurooq School is completing its move to the new premises and greatly looking forward to the children settling in to their new much improved premises. The Christmas Eve offering was to be donated to the school as well as supporting Tabeetha School, the Church of Scotland School in Jaffa. The offering from the Christmas Eve services amounted to almost £3,000 ensuring we are able to meet our commitment to fund a residential event for a Tabeetha class for this year as well as offering further support for the children of Al-Shurooq. All four of us, as well as others who have visited the school would be delighted to see our support for the new school continuing, and I would be happy to hear suggestions or receive offers of further fund raising events for this special project fund. We had hoped to have a fund raising golf event last year which unfortunately didn't get off the ground and so all golfers are invited to sign up again and encourage friends to do likewise. The proposed event was a match play competition with opponents deciding on which course the tie should be played. The entry fee will be £20 with a plate competition for 1st round losers to ensure that everyone gets at least two rounds of golf for their entry fee. So, calling all golfers – please sign up on the entry sheet which will be available on Sundays or by phoning the office.

In November we had a Presbytery visit led by the Rev. Calum Macdougall, minister of Eddleston and Peebles Old who conducted worship at our two morning services in January. The report is due to be received by Presbytery at its meeting in the beginning of March. While complimentary on many aspects of our congregation's life surprise was expressed that we no longer have Sunday School, although it was recognised that we are offering a monthly family service and attempting to involve young families in that way. We would be delighted to see more families involved and extend a special invitation to the next series of services. These are planned not to clash with mini-rugby events or school holidays and will take place on 15th March, 19th April and 17th May at 10.00a.m. and lasting around 30 minutes. In addition, as in previous years, we would like to invite all children who have been baptised into membership of the congregation in recent years to the Mothering Day Service on 22nd March at 11.00 a.m. Please consider entering these dates in your diary now and coming along – the atmosphere at these services is very relaxed and you will receive a warm welcome.

Looking towards Easter, with Lent beginning in a couple of days, as in previous years there will be a short act of worship each morning in Holy Week as publicised below with invitations to worship with the congregations of Holy Trinity and High Cross on the Thursday and Friday evenings. Easter coincides with the Melrose Sevens this year (although some might put that the other way round!) and it's often a time when family or friends come to stay. Bring them along on the Sunday morning as we would be delighted to welcome them to our Easter celebrations.

Finally, could I emphasise that while hospital and other visiting occurs on a weekly basis, including visits to Edinburgh and other hospitals, if you would like a visit or know someone who you think would appreciate a visit, please do not hesitate to contact either myself or the church office and I will then visit as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

***An Invitation to Holy Communion
Last Sunday in March, May and Easter Sunday (12th April)
9.30a.m.
Bowden Kirk***

World Day of Prayer

This year the service in Melrose is in Holy Trinity Church on Friday 6th March at 2.30pm. The service has been compiled by the women of Papua, New Guinea, and the theme they have chosen "In Christ there are many members, yet one body".

Although it was originally the "Women's World Day of Prayer". Over recent years the word "Women" has gone from the title and the services are open to men as well. All are welcome to come to the service and also to the "cuppa" afterwards.

If you have any queries about the above please ring Jenny Lindsay on 01896 823460

Mid-Week Lunch

Future dates:

Wednesday, March 26 th	Margaret's team
Wednesday, April 23 rd	Pat's team
Wednesday 28 th May	Kath's team

12.15 – 1.30pm – Price £2.50

There will be a short ecumenical service of worship at 11.45am in the Chapel prior to lunch for any who may like to attend.

This is a late opportunity to thank everyone who made the Xmas lunch such a success. The many helpers in the kitchen who give their time and skills so willingly, the Clef Club musicians who entertained us and of course Ian who sets up the hall and clears away the debris after we are gone.

Margaret's team made the January lunch special too, as a celebration of Rabbe Burns 250th Anniversary. It included a traditional meal with an address to the haggis, a piper, country dancing demonstration and singing of Burns songs. Where else could you get so much for £2.50?

Special thanks must go to Jaqui Waugh and her family who peeled and cooked all the tatties and turnips. Their fingers must still be sore.

The "staff" are relieved that Burns will not have another big 0 for many years.

Pat Mackenzie

Worship for Holy Week - Easter Worship 'One of the Crowd'- Monday 6th April – Friday 10th April

We will again hold these short services in the Chapel at 10.30a.m, followed by an organ or piano recital in church, then have a cup of coffee. Please reserve these dates in your diary, and encourage your friends to do likewise, so that we can make these Holy Week times of contemplation a helpful addition to our other well-established Easter Practices.

Members of Holy Trinity and High Cross have been invited and in turn have invited us to the Maundy Thursday communion in Holy Trinity and the Good Friday service at High Cross. The times of these services will be confirmed in the weekly notices.

GUILD NEWS

After a busy Christmas season the Guild has settled down to a quieter period. We started the year with an entertaining talk by Jill and Haisley Moore, next we went to Priorwood Court to entertain the residents there with a musical quiz using Scots songs, it was the 'Burns Season'. We were made most welcome. The next meeting was cancelled because of the weather – Dr and Mrs Eade have been put on hold for another time.

In the meantime we have some interesting meetings arranged – Anna Walker is bringing her dancers to entertain us, then we have Rev Jim Campbell from Selkirk telling us about his visit to Malawi. Bob Johnston is giving us a gardening talk in March – in time for the growing season. Our own Elizabeth Fraser is showing us slides of Venice and to finish the season we have a speaker from the M.S. Society.

We do need new members as sadly we have lost one or two faithful members lately and it would be great if we could recruit some new faces.

Keep looking at the Church Notices for information about dates etc.

A warm welcome awaits you.

Greta Leitch
President

CHRISTIAN AID CAMPAIGN 2009

Christian Aid week this year is 10th – 16th May and as always is a very important week in the life of the church. The theme this year is 'Keeping Hope Alive – Be the Lifeblood' If you would like to become involved in Christian Aid and help during the week or organise a specific fundraising event then please contact the Church office – 823339 or speak to Mr Bennett. As ever we do need more organisers and volunteers, particularly with the House-to-House collections so do please try and help. Last year's Christian Aid Week in Scotland raised just over £2million and your efforts played a large part in making this happen – so thank you on behalf of Christian Aid and their partners

GOOD NEWS FOR FAIRTRADE Spring 2009

Thank you to all who regularly support Traidcraft by buying Fairtrade goods after the Melrose church service on the first Sunday of each month and from successful Christmas sales and Spring coffee mornings including Saturday 21st February at the Trinity Centre.

UK sales of Fairtrade goods grew by 72% in value in the past year. 25% of all roast and ground coffee sold in British supermarkets is now certified as Fairtrade- that's one cup in every four.

There's no doubt this is something to celebrate but is it enough?

The truth is that despite the impressive growth of Fairtrade, it is still limited to a small number of goods sold in a handful of rich countries. For most developing world producers, selling onto global markets means dealing with large corporate buyers whose main concern is maximising profit by keeping prices low.

Even companies that source some of their product lines along Fairtrade principles may carry out the bulk of their trading in ways that are harmful to poor communities.

It is not as if the rules governing global trade as a whole are becoming more ethical. In fact the ongoing push by the EU and other rich nations to force FREE trade measures on the developing world will mean more and more of the world's poor being subject to the price fluctuations, product dumping and unequal power relations of the global market place.

Many people remain blissfully unaware of how the global trade system is stacked against poor and developing countries.

Wouldn't it be great if every product in the supermarket was ethical? If you could be sure everything you bought was fairly traded, sustainably produced and helped to lift a family out of poverty.

We now have that chance in Melrose to shop for a number of different groceries at the new FAIRTRADE SHOP in the Wynd.

Opening on Friday 6th February you can buy most of Traidcraft's fair-trade foods, some Palestinian products from Hadeel and much more.

Opening hours are TUESDAY-SATURDAY 9.30am-5pm.

We will still be selling Traidcraft products after the Melrose church service on the first Sunday of each month but encourage you to use the opportunity to see a greater range of products and buy throughout the week.

Further information: www.traidcraft.co.uk and www.fairtrade.org.uk

Jenni Young 01896 822439

SUMMER WEDNESDAY COFFEE MORNINGS

As in previous years it is intended to hold Wednesday coffee in the church hall from 10 – 12noon, hoping that it will be a meeting point for all who wish to keep contact during the summer months and welcome visitors to Melrose.

A list of helpers will be in the Gattonside porch during May, when it is hoped some new people will join with previous helpers to make these mornings welcoming and worthwhile. Any enquiries to the church office 823339.

MINISTERING IN MELROSE

An article with this heading appeared in issue 16 (winter 08) of the Eildon Tree, a local magazine devoted to new writing, and we are grateful to Mrs Margaret Jackson Young, the Melrose author, for allowing us to quote from it.

"If you happened to attend a rugby match at Melrose's famous Greenyards, and the game - perish the thought – were momentarily to flag, you might find yourself glancing towards the Parish Church, an elegant building on the nearby Weirhill. I doubt though, if anyone today could fully appreciate the sentiments filling the mind of a certain Reverend George Thomson, one March day in 1808, as he laid the foundation stone for that church and 'consecrated it by prayer before a great number of spectators'.

Poor Mr Thomson had ministered, since his ordination in 1788, within what Dorothy Wordsworth chose to call 'the ugliest church that was ever beheld'. She continued 'If it had been hewn out of the side of a hill it could not have been more dismal; there was no neatness or even decency; and it appeared to be so damp and so completely excluded from fresh air that it must be dangerous to sit in; the floor is unpaved and very rough. What a contrast to the beautiful and graceful order apparent in every part of the ancient design and workmanship' Nor was Miss Wordsworth's critical outburst the only one. In 1776 an earlier unnamed visitor had concluded his tirade saying 'What idea concomitant to religion can dictate filthiness and confusion in the house of worship, I know not. Many of the old churches of Scotland I have seen filthy and foul, but for uncleanliness this place exceeds them all'. This place? It was Melrose Abbey – admired by tourists since Sir Walter Scott took it under his wing, now in the care of Historic Scotland, and surely one of the Jewels in the Crown of that organisation.

The ancient abbey had suffered everything a long history could throw at it. Warring armies, furious reformers and acquisitive gentry had all done their worst. By 1618 it had become

almost totally ruined, with this protestant meeting-house that so offended Miss Wordsworth, tastelessly erected within the remains. Here the townspeople worshipped grimly of a Sunday, while through the week local builders and such would come and help themselves to stone, timber, lead, iron and whatever else took their fancy. The place had turned into a virtual builders' yard. Yet this was where Mr Thomson, and many before him, had done their best to preach the word of God. That foundation stone on the Weirhill must have meant a lot to both minister and congregation.. And if James Tait (writing in 1891) is correct, George Thomson deserves most of the credit for the changes being made. In his book, Border Church Life, Mr Tait tells us 'Mr Thomson induced the heritors to remove the church from the abbey ruins, and build a new one at a little distance from the town'.

The new church was completed by September 1810, to everyone's delight. It was talked of as 'the beautiful new church of Melrose': 'a much handsomer edifice than most country churches': 'a very beautiful building with a handsome spire'.

[It is this handsome spire, with the carved Latin date MDCCCX on its tower, that remains today. The present church was built in 1911]

BAAGS

Borders Asperger & Autism Support Group (Scottish Charity No.SC 032508)– needs books Derek Purvis, Chairman, writes to ask for donations of unwanted books which his group arranges to have sold on the internet to raise funds to help supply information, toys and aids to the Asperger and Autistic people who need them.

He indicates that if you contact him on 01896 668961 or on baagsmail@yahoo.co.uk he will arrange to have books uplifted. His address is 1 Cotgreen Rd, Tweedbank. The website for further information is www.baags.co.uk

A BOWDEN ANNIVERSARY

A service will be held this year to commemorate the completion of the ten months' 'restoration' of Bowden Church in March 1909. The beginnings of the story are contained in a leaflet from the minister Rev John Burr, dated December 1906, from the Manse in St. Boswells, seeking subscriptions. 'The decay of the roof, for the renewal of which the Heritors are of course responsible, has suggested the advisability of the larger work of a careful and reverent restoration'.

The completion of the works and the story of how it all came about is contained in another publication by the Rev. Mr Burr, a 36-page, red-covered booklet, published in January, 1910. As befitting one of the oldest Parish Churches in Scotland, older than Melrose and Dryburgh Abbeys, having been founded in 1128, much discussion was involved, three plans made and then merged, and permissions sought from and granted by landowners.

Except for the proceeds from a small Sale of Work by the Woman's Guild the money required (some £2,000) was raised entirely by subscription, country-wide and overseas.

The original rectangular church had transepts added – and removed later – and over the centuries galleries were added and the pulpit and communion table were centred on the long south wall, with the pews facing them. The restoration kept the familiar external lines and remodelled and renewed the interior, with a chancel, a chancel arch and a vaulted timber roof. The Nave was heightened; the Belfry rebuilt; the Chancel/Nave uncouth roof slope was 'replaced by a massive gable, surmounted by a Latin cross'

Rev. Mr Burr sums it up thus: 'The Church of Bowden is now not only one of the most ancient, but also one of the most beautiful of Scottish country churches, and will descend to posterity at once an interesting monument of the past, and a beautiful and useful feature of the present and the future'.

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