

May 2009

Dear Friends,

Given the small number of people who attended the Annual General Meeting of the congregation I would again like to take the opportunity in this issue of the magazine to record my thanks to a number of people on behalf of the congregation. Our music staff, Jim Marshall and Jim Letham at Melrose, and John Wilson and Allan Barr at Bowden deserve our thanks – Allan also plays at our monthly mid-week service – as do our choir for their contribution to our worship. Thanks also to our secretary Joyce O’Neil, our church officer Ian Douglas, and Mig Moore and Karen Armstrong for cleaning duties at Melrose and Bowden respectively. I would also want to repeat the thanks recorded to Susan Swan at our Kirk Session and Congregational Board meeting for again acting as independent examiner of our church accounts. Finally, of course, thanks to all those office bearers and volunteers in so many areas of our congregation’s life for their contribution.

At the time of writing the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland is meeting in Edinburgh and inevitably some issues attract press attention while others are ignored. Contained in our Financial Report later in this issue of the magazine is an acknowledgement of our contribution as a congregation to the Ministries and Mission Fund of the Church. As indicated we are amongst the minority of congregations making a net contribution to the cost of parish ministry throughout Scotland. Of great concern to the Ministries Council is that while the scheme at this time was expected to be supporting around 800 ministers the actual number of ministers at the present time is 964. This is because of relatively high recruitment and more people remaining in ministry beyond the age of 65. As a result the Council is facing an annual overspend of around £5.5 million and hard decisions will have to be made in the near future. At the same time a commission of the Assembly will be reporting next year on the feasibility or appropriateness of the Church maintaining a parish structure throughout Scotland.

While the issue of the call to Queen’s Cross church in Aberdeen of the Rev. Scott Rennie, an openly gay minister, has dominated media coverage it is in part only symptomatic of a much wider debate about the form and nature of the Church of Scotland at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In many places the traditional ethos of a “parish church” has largely disappeared with congregations becoming ever more remote from their communities and their concerns. In that context it was interesting to read one major newspaper describe the Assembly’s decision as that of an enlightened Church for a modern Scotland.

.Yours sincerely,

***An Invitation to Holy Communion  
Last Sunday of June, July and August  
9.30a.m.  
Bowden Kirk***

## **GUILD NEWS**

We give thanks to Greta, and our Committee, for gladly bearing the FUN of leading Guild Members through the latter half of our Programme. We had sad times (three of our Members passed on to Higher Service) and happy times, with a visit from Bob Johnston, and a wander round Venice, 'guided' by Elizabeth with her slides, and also our Invitation Tea, which was a great success and which meant we could give to the MS Society £170.50, which was very pleasing. Our thanks go to our generous givers. Our Outing to the Mill Wheel Restaurant was a real success, and our thanks to Members who taxied us to and fro', and afterwards we either had a walk to the river or a short drive to a local Nursery, before the drive home. Gale force winds did not deter us!

Our Summer Rally will be to Broughton Church this year --- a long while since we ventured to the North West! - Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> June , at 7.30pm. Anyone able to go please telephone Greta, Grace or Elizabeth Fraser.

Have a lovely summer break and do keep in touch with each other, as holidays allow, and we will meet up again on the 8<sup>th</sup> October at 2.30pm, in the Chapel.

A 'Smile' for summer and our thanks to the Herald Diary.

'The long and short of it'

A Reader was standing at a bus stop, on the South side of Glasgow, the other day, watching a gaggle of folk get on a bus when a prim, elderly lady next to him commented 'See how short skirts make men polite?' – she then explained, 'Have you ever seen a man, of any age, get on a bus in front of one?'

## **Grace MacKinnon, Joint President**

### **MID-WEEK LUNCH**

Future mid-week lunch dates:-

Wednesday June 24	Margaret's team
Wednesday July 22	Pat's team
Wednesday August 26	Kath's Team
12.15 – 1.30p.m.	price £2.50

There is an Ecumenical Service at 11.45a.m. prior to the lunch for any who would like to attend.

### **Financial Report for 2008**

As anyone who has studied the annual statement of accounts will know they are lengthier and more complicated than formerly to comply with the requirements of the charity regulator. Below, therefore, is a very much abbreviated report of our financial situation at the end of 2008.

Ordinary congregational income amounted to £146, 383 with a further £9,094 being donated to restricted funds, e.g. the Organ fund, Special Projects fund etc. Ordinary expenditure for the year amounted to £142,535 giving a surplus on the General Fund of £3,848. Total funds held at the end of the year amounted to £197,473 with the main funds as follows:

Fabric Fund	£51,239
Reserve Fund	£79,979
General Fund	£40,857
Organ Fund	£17,753

Other smaller funds make up the balance. In addition funds are held on behalf of the congregation by the Church of Scotland General Trustees. These are held to be used for fabric purposes and at the year end were valued at £59,704.

Since the year end the former manse of the Bowden and Newtown congregations has been sold and has resulted in approximately £119,000 being added to the above funds held by the General Trustees on behalf of Bowden and Melrose.

Our biggest item of expenditure is our allocation to the Ministries and Mission Fund and the following information regarding our 2009 allocation was received from the Church's Stewardship and Finance Committee.

"The information below show's how your congregation's contribution is used to support Parish Ministries, Mission and Renewal, general support and services provided for congregations and the councils of the General Assembly. The cost of ministry comprises your minister's stipend (£30,426) plus employer's national insurance and contributions to the Church's pension and housing funds.

**Bowden and Melrose** **£85,362**

**Parish Ministries (87%)** **£74,265**

The cost of ministry in your parish: £39,100

Contribution to the cost in other parishes and training: £35,165

**Mission and Renewal (5.5%)** **£4,695**

This supports the Church's wider work at home and abroad

**Support and Services for Councils and Congregations (7.5%)** **£6,402**

This provides financial, legal, safeguarding and other services, and meets the cost of the General Assembly and Moderator

I hope that this helps you to understand Ministries and Mission Contributions"

As will be seen from the above our contribution almost covers the entire cost of ministry in another parish requiring support.

### **CHRISTIAN AID WEEK**

Thanks to all the collectors, helpers, bakers of scones and servers of tea and coffee and to everyone who contributed in any way.

At the time of going to press the amount received is £3,480.87 this is broken down as follows:

Melrose Lunch Club £150.00

Coffee Morning £586.40

House to House £2,744.47

Your continued support is very much appreciated.

## **SUMMER COFFEE MORNINGS**

As in previous years the summer coffee mornings will be held in the church hall on Wednesday mornings from 10am – 12noon. The hall is available only in July and August this year but by that time the sun should be shining! We would hope that the mixture of local people and visitors can intermingle and get to know each other, and feel welcome.

The list for helpers is in the Gattonside porch, and guideline leaflets are also available. Any queries can be answered by Jean Thomson 823112 or by the church office 823339.

Donations from last year's coffee mornings went to:

The Church, the Autistic Centre in Tweedbank, Melrose Age Concern and Gibson Park Playgroup.

## **FUNDRAISER**

The Borders branch of the MS Society and Friends of the BGH are having a joint fundraising event on Sunday 19th July from 2.30 - 5.00pm. This is to raise money for the provision of extra overnight accommodation for relatives and carers of critically ill patients, and for the upgrading of quiet areas in the wards.

There will be the usual stalls - plants, books, tombola, lucky dip, face painting, crafts, cake and candy, preserves etc. – hopefully on the Weirhill, weather permitting! Afternoon teas will also be available in the Church Hall consisting of sandwiches, cakes, traybakes etc.

We hope you will come along and support this wonderful event.

## **JUTE SHOPPING BAGS**

Thirty years ago, in 1979, **Traidcraft** was established as a Christian response to poverty through trade. The first products launched on the British market were made from Jute in Bangladesh including the basic shopping bag at 85p. We can now see an increasing number of such bags on the High street as the message gets across about disposing of the number of plastic carrier bags. Bangladesh has banned the plastic carrier bag as it clogged up the drains and exacerbated flooding.

I have just visited Bangladesh with a dozen others on a 'Meet the People' tour organised through Traidcraft, celebrating 30 years of fair trade. Bangladesh is not a tourist destination. Indeed a poster in the government sponsored hotel in Rangpur declares 'Visit Bangladesh before the tourists come.'

Quoting from the 1979 Traidcraft catalogue "the policy is to deal with producer groups organised for the benefit of all their members...where the emphasis is on people not profit... it is a positive and creative way of enabling people in developing countries attain self sufficiency through equitable and just trade".

On my visit I was able to see the outcome of 30 years of fair trading and hear from the women themselves how fair-trade has improved their lives.

The primary aim of all the organisations we visited is to employ poor rural women; many of them widowed or divorced who have no other source of income. The money they earn from sewing in their own homes or from working in cooperatives has enabled many to send their children to school and improve their living conditions. We met

women doing intricate embroidery and others making hand made paper from jute and cotton waste; these eventually emerged as beautiful hand made greetings cards sold not only by Traidcraft and Oxfam but also by Marks and Spencer.

Bangladesh is a fascinating country, very flat, very poor and at times very wet. Endless rice fields stretch to the horizon. Thousands of bicycle rickshaws compete for road space with brightly coloured lorries, buses and cars. Power cuts happen several times a day because generating capacity is insufficient to meet the simultaneous needs of industry, homes and irrigation. But the people (88% Muslim, 10% Hindu and 2% Christian or Buddhist) are friendly, dignified and hospitable.

I brought back hundreds of photos and many examples of beautiful silk, cotton, paper and jute handcrafts and would be happy to show them to anyone interested.

**Jenni Young: 01896 822439**

## **COMMUNITY COUNCIL BOOKSHOP**

Spring Cleaning your bookshelves? Books on any topic, in saleable condition are always welcome for the August Community Council Bookshop Event on 28 and 29 August. Books can be handed to or collected by Val Miller (tel 01896 822578). Funds raised are for local projects.

## **SUMMER FETE**

The annual summer fete will be held on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> August in Bowden Village Hall from 2.00pm. – 4.00p.m. There will be the usual stalls and teas. Volunteers will be most welcome and are asked to contact either Liz Sanderson (01835 822736) or Moyra Inglis (01835 823482) as soon as possible as a preparatory meeting will be arranged.

## **MELROSE SEVENS** (by our Sports correspondent, Mac Brown)

Over the years Melrose Sevens has provided a fitting stage for some of the finest exponents of the sevens game. One of the greatest of these, the Fijian Waisale Serevi ('legend' in Fijian) brought down the curtain here this year on an astonishing career. However, as one fell another star arose – Earl Lewis, the flying winger from Johannesburg, who electrified the large crowd with superb running and skill. The South African side played with ferocious intensity from first whistle to last and Mr Lewis made all the difference when they beat Melrose in the final. With the score at 21- all it looked as if the host club would bring the cup home to the Greenyards, but Earl Lewis and his colleagues scored a further two tries to take the cup back to South Africa for a fourth time.

The day was blessed with glorious weather which was matched by the rugby, much to the delight of the large crowd. The Sevens Committee are to be congratulated on the organisation (even street closures!) together with the many volunteers who are needed on the day.

Doc Houston, Roy Mack and myself were joined in the announcing team by Alistair Houston. The space allocated to us seems to be growing tighter, perhaps in inverse proportion to the spreading waistline of....one of us. It's a frenetic time for us, but thankfully this year there were no unpronounceable names to contend with. We hope the part we play adds to the enjoyment of the day. It certainly gives us pleasure.

The second Vets Tournament held on the Friday attracted teams from as far afield as Ledbury in the West Midlands and Morgan in Dundee. In the final the Border Reivers turned the tables on a very strong Ulster 10, which included a hardcore of the Ulster team which won the Heineken Cup.

### **Pipped by the Post**

After the Sevens, Cup fever took hold in Melrose. The quarter final on 18 April saw Melrose deservedly beat the newly-crowned Scottish Champions Ayr in a tense match at the Greenyards and a week later we eased past Haddington (who almost caused a major upset, phew!).

For the first time the Scottish Rugby's Cup finalists from the previous year returned for another encounter at Murrayfield. Heriots were looking to avenge last year's defeat; Melrose to equal Boroughmuir's record of three wins.

Heriots started at a furious pace and were leading 10-3 at the interval. Melrose came to life in the second half but over-eagerness led to missed passes and lost chances till James Lew, the Australian centre, in sheer determination and with half the Heriots team clinging to him, ploughed over the line, for Scott Wight to convert. With time running out and Melrose 19-18 in front they were penalised 50 metres from their own line and Heriots' Graham Wilson, from way out on the touchline, converted to make it 21-19 to Heriots with seconds to go. Heriots were penalised for a ruck infringement and Scott Wight, stepping up to take the kick and save the match, saw his kick hit the post, bounce on to the crossbar and back into the field of play.

We all came home saddened, but remembering the last dramatic quarter which lifted a mediocre game into a wonderfully memorable cup final which, but for a lick of paint, could have gone our way.

### **IONA ASSOCIATES GROUP: BORDERS**

Last year a small group of people began meeting regularly in Denholm Village as supporters, friends and associate members of the Iona Community. Though few in number, our group covers the whole of the Scottish Borders and North Northumberland. Our next gathering is planned for Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> June at 10.30am at the home of Alan and Ly Foulkes in Gattonside. We usually hold a short act of worship, followed by a group discussion or workshop on a common Christian theme. All are welcome, and are invited to bring a contribution of food for a shared meal afterwards. We hope that Mary Low will lead our prayers and discussions for the day, as we reflect on the life and ministry of Columba and the early days of the Celtic church on Iona and beyond. For further details please phone 822903 or 820456.

### **MINISTERING IN MELROSE** (Second excerpt from Margaret Jackson Young's account)

Rev. George Thomson (minister at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century) had several sons and daughters too, but none surely was more like their father in terms of honesty, uprightness and sheer eccentricity, than his namesake. As for Good Fortune, that had not smiled on the younger George Thomson either.

In childhood, a wrestling game with another boy had resulted in an injury which led to his losing a leg. (It should be noted, however, that his public-school-like refusal to name the other boy was looked on favourably in some circles). As for a career in the Church, whereas the father had had to wait many years to succeed to his charge, the

son, educated at Edinburgh University and licensed by the Presbytery of Selkirk, was never to achieve a pulpit of his own.

For a time he assisted his father and was well-liked by the Melrose parishioners on account of his kindness and geniality but he had a strong tendency to daydream, in the pulpit as elsewhere. On the other hand he displayed courage, ability and even athleticism.

Despite the wooden leg he is said to have walked to Edinburgh, around forty miles, in nine hours; climbed the Eildons; enjoyed horse riding; and was once spotted leaping over tombstones in the Abbey kirkyard. Only once, it seems, did his most efficient prosthesis become a hindrance. Again in the pulpit at Melrose, George was reading his sermon. Well aware how Presbyterians felt - and in some places still feel - about read sermons, yet fearful of a memory lapse, he had written his address for that day on separate sheets of paper and stowed these carefully between pages of the pulpit bible. All was going well, until suddenly sheet after sheet slithered unstoppably from the Good Book on to the pulpit floor. It was a narrow 'box' pulpit, but he needed these notes. Bending in a confined space while wearing a wooden leg is not easy, but George tried, anyway. He got down, couldn't come up again, and so immediate rescue was required.

[Next time – George as tutor at Abbotsford]

#### **\*A.N. OTHER RELIGION**

\*As is our wont, we buttonholed a local member of a club and suggested that he (in this case) tell us, in a spirit of community sharing, about their activities.

What did he give us? His heart/club/spade/diamond felt testimony, with the above heading. Many thanks, partner!

'A few years ago - no - /many /years ago, when I was living and working overseas (and before television was universally available) much of my spare time in the evenings was taken up by card playing. This was mainly Whist, since I had graduated from Find the Lady, Pontoon, Brag and Poker.

One evening, my next door neighbour, who had just recently arrived, invited me in for a card game which I had not played before. This was Bridge. A quick hour explaining the game, and another hour playing - and the seed was sown.

Fast forward some forty years and I find myself spending almost all my spare time at the Bridge Table, where I have seen many a disaster - and just a few miracles.

So, for me Bridge has become another religion!

#### **Jack of Hearts**

#### **MELROSE REGISTRATION OFFICE**

To improve the service to the public it has been decided to introduce an appointment system at Melrose Registration Office. The new system is now in effect for all callers to the office. Appointments should be made for registrations and all other matters involving the Registrar.

Appointments can be booked in advance by phoning the Registration Office on 01896 823114 or alternatively appointments can be made through the SBC Contact Centre, Paton Street, Galashiels (01896 662719).

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Whilst casual callers can still attend at the Registration Office if they wish without having first made an appointment they cannot be guaranteed to be seen as booked appointments will take precedence.

The opening hours for Melrose Registration Office remain:

Mondays, Wednesday and Fridays 10 – 1pm

Tuesdays 2 – 4pm.

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