

The Parish of Bowden & Melrose

Magazine

March, April & May 2012

February 2012

Dear Friends

One of the things we will be looking at in the future is the layout of the parish magazine as it is not perhaps in the most attractive format to encourage reading! However I would ask you to take a little time to read through this issue as it contains some important information.

First of all I would draw attention to the matter of visiting members and parishioners in the Borders General Hospital. I have always regarded this as an important part of my ministry, spending time each week on such visiting, and at this time of year seeing perhaps twelve to fifteen people each week. This was made possible through the provision in the Chaplaincy Centre of a list on hospital inpatients, by town address, to visiting ministers. This provision ceased in December 2010 because of the requirements of data protection and patient confidentiality.

Therefore I only know of someone's presence in hospital if I am informed by a member of the family, a neighbour or friend. I would be only too happy to receive such information either directly or through the office. In the meantime I apologise if you have not been visited when in hospital but I now very much depend on being informed.

A recent meeting of the Kirk Session included an item regarding the future of the eldership in Bowden and Melrose Parish Church. The background to the discussion included issues which had been of concern to the Session for some time. The age profile of the Session is becoming increasingly elderly and it has been difficult to recruit younger members to the eldership. In recent years a number of elders have found they are no longer able to carry out the traditional elders' duties with regard to district visiting, resulting in a number of districts having no elder. Although in a number of cases alternative arrangements have been made for the distribution of the parish magazine, around 150 presently are being posted.

In addition the new styled Presbytery visit focuses less on the past five years but more on the plans and aspirations for the next five years and therefore invites us to look ahead over that period (which incidentally would take me to retirement age!). It does also ask the question if the age of the eldership reflects that of the congregation while recognising that many congregations have an elderly profile.

The Session reflected on the following:

1. Elders' Districts

In addition to the shortage of elders to maintain the present system there was a recognition that many members and adherents probably felt that they did not require an elder's visit and would be happy simply to receive a copy of the quarterly magazine. If this is indeed the case then the time spent by elders on such visits could no doubt be put to better use. It is

probably our more elderly members who are most appreciative of a visit and this would continue through a Pastoral Visiting Team. Such a group already exists and would be augmented by those elders who wished to continue visiting.

It was therefore decided to depart from Elders' Districts and on the occasion of the delivery of this issue of the magazine ask members and adherents if they would like a quarterly visit or simply receive the magazine.

At the same time it was recognised that with modern means of communication some members might be happy to receive the magazine and other correspondence as an e-mail attachment or accessing the church website and if so to indicate this by e-mailing the office. This might take time to establish but would be a considerable saving on stationery and postage. Those wishing to receive the magazine as at present would continue to do so.

2. Constitution

At present we have a Kirk Session and Congregational Board but have now the opportunity to move to the new Unitary Constitution which many congregations have already done or are considering. We have already been holding joint meetings of Session and Board as under the new Charity Regulations all office bearers (elders and congregational board members) have responsibility for the financial affairs of the congregation. Under the Unitary Constitution there would only be a Kirk Session to which various committees of the Session would report. These committees would include Finance and Fabric (already in existence) and it was suggested Pastoral Visiting, Communication, Worship and a committee responsible for Social and Fund Raising Events. Not wishing to lose the expertise of existing Board members it would be the intention to invite them to be ordained as elders or if they preferred serve as co-opted members of the relevant committees. Members of the various committees would be asked to serve for four years placing a limit on the commitment they were being asked to make. There would always be the possibility of re-election or co-option if desired. It would be envisaged that the Kirk Session would meet quarterly and only on further occasions if required.

What might it mean for recruitment to the eldership?

It would be hoped that we might have more success in recruiting younger members to this model of the eldership. A potential elder might be invited to serve on a particular committee for a four year period and during and beyond that time assist with door and communion duties. The Kirk Session also decided that with the implementation of the new model we should also invite members who have been ordained as elders in their former congregations to become elders of Bowden and Melrose on the same terms as above. It was felt that this courtesy should be shown in recognition of their ordination.

It should be stressed that all of the above is not simply a matter of re-organisation. It is an attempt to involve younger members in the ongoing life and planning of the congregation's future. I am sure this is something we would all wish to see.

This quarterly issue of the magazine usually includes an abbreviated version of the annual statement of accounts which is included below. To what is written there I would wish to add my thanks to members for their continued generosity in supporting the work of the church. However the financial position of the Church nationally is not so strong and as such a National Stewardship Programme has been authorized by the General Assembly in which all congregations are instructed to participate. Please take time to read the article on

finance as well as the leaflet "Challenge to the Church" which we are required to distribute at this time. The Kirk Session and Finance Committee have tried to deal with this as sensitively as possible given the present financial and economic situation and its effect on many.

Finally, apologies for this rather long letter! As we look towards Easter thank you again for your continued support and for all that is positive in the life of the Church.

Yours sincerely,

Alistair Bennett

***Sunday 8th April (Easter Day), last Sunday April and May
9.30a.m.
Bowden Kirk***

GUILD NEWS

We welcome March, by having our World Day of Prayer on Friday the 2nd March at 2.30 pm at the High Cross Catholic Church. This service is ecumenical, set out, this year, by the women of Malaysia.

We also have another external meeting on Tuesday 13th March at 2.15 pm when Melrose and Peebles Presbyterial Council meet at Earlston Parish Church for their Annual Business meeting and service. Thursday 8th March at 2.30 pm our Speaker is Patricia Maitland-Cullen giving us an insight into "Trimontium from the Ormiston." On 22nd March we are having a speaker informing us about "Fresh Start Borders", a group set up initially in Selkirk to gather in household items for distribution to those who are unfortunate enough to be setting up a home with little or no means of funding the necessities for living. This afternoon might be a catalyst for us all to start Spring cleaning, and disposing of unwanted household items!

Our own AGM takes place on 12th April, when we will deal with the business side as quickly as possible, and then be treated to "Slides of Egypt" with Gordon Scott. The Invitation Tea is on 26th April, when we anticipate having a number of invited guests, along with our regular members and friends. A "Musical Afternoon" with our own Jim Letham, no doubt with some revelations of his work with music, choirs and orchestras over his working life. Thursday 10th May is pencilled in for our Guild Summer Outing – details of this will be announced to the Guild in March/April. It is hoped to have an event in June to mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, and arrangements for this are ongoing at present.

The Summer season rounds off with another Melrose and Peebles Presbyterial Council meeting, at St. Boswells Parish Church, on Wednesday, 6th June at 7.30 pm. This will be a "Songs of Praise" to celebrate the 125th birthday of the National Guild.

One final note thanks to everyone who supported our recent Palm Court Tea which raised the wonderful sum of £377 towards this years Guild Projects.

We welcome members and friends of the congregation to all or any of our meetings.
DO COME ALONG!

Elizabeth Fraser
President

MID-WEEK LUNCH

Future dates:

Wednesday, March 28 th	Margaret's team
Wednesday, April 25 th	Pat's team
Wednesday 23 rd May	Kath's team

12.15 – 1.30pm – Price £3.00

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.

FINANCE

As mentioned in the minister's letter, by an instruction of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland all congregations are required to take part in a National Stewardship Programme. Included, as part of that programme, is the distribution of the leaflet "Challenge to the Church," with its opening letter from the present Moderator, the Rt. Rev. David Arnott, to all members and adherents of the congregation.

With a decreasing and predominantly elderly membership over recent years it is not surprising that the Church is facing financial difficulties. This has seen a reduction in the budgets of the various Councils and Boards of the Church and at the present time a significant planned reduction (around 150) over the next two years in the number of parish ministers. This is to address the Ministries Council's recent annual deficit of around £5million.

The National Stewardship Programme suggests a number of forms which such a programme might take, to be monitored by local Presbyteries. In general these all involve visits to members of the congregation inviting them to review their giving, but it is not intended to undertake such a visiting programme at this time.

The Finance Committee and Kirk Session have reflected on the programme, our own finances, and the circumstances of our members in general in the present economic and financial situation. Indeed our own projected deficit for 2012 is around £10,000.

They would first of all wish to thank all members for their financial support of the congregation. You will see from the summary of the accounts for 2011 that as a congregation we make a significant contribution to the central funds of the Church and would be included in the 25% of congregations who assist in the cost of ministry to the remaining 75%. In addition we support our own chosen special projects which will include this year the local "Margaret Kerr Unit Appeal"

which in time will provide a specialist in-patient palliative care unit at the Borders General Hospital.

Further, they would simply invite members to take this opportunity to review the level of their giving to the Church recognising that many members are also generous to other charities. It is not the intention to carry out a personal visit to all members but simply to leave it to members to make their own decision against the background of the deficit we are budgeting for this year and the overall situation of the Church.

Amongst the practical terms listed on the back page of the National Stewardship Programme leaflet, members, who pay tax, are particularly encouraged to sign a Gift Aid Declaration if they have not already done so and also to consider giving by bank standing order. This can be done by contacting Joyce in the church office or Ian Purves, our Gift Aid Convener.

Also discussed again was the issue of “passing the plate or offering bag”. Many do this as they give to the church through a standing order. It was observed, however, that this perhaps does not look well, especially to visitors, who simply see the offering bag being waved away! It has been suggested therefore that even a token offering would be a better example and that those giving more than a token be encouraged to use the FWO envelopes, allowing the tax to be reclaimed.

In time we will have to report to Presbytery the success or otherwise of our campaign and, despite the economic circumstances, hope we might be able to report a positive response.

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR 2011

As anyone who has studied the annual statement of accounts will know they are lengthier and more complicated 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 2011.

Ordinary congregational income amounted to £133,933 with a further £17,842 being donated to restricted funds, e.g. the Organ fund, Special Projects fund etc. Ordinary expenditure for the year amounted to £131,135 giving a surplus on the General Fund of £2,798. We would like to acknowledge Legacies received from Mrs Gwyneth Hunter (late 2010) and from Mrs Evelyn Dobson and Mrs Joan Varley in 2011. Total funds held at the end of the year amounted to £208,024 with the main funds as follows:

Fabric Fund	£30,654
Reserve Fund	£79,979
General Fund	£43,002
Organ Fund	£17,288

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 £115,620 following paying for Fabric Expenses.

Our biggest item of expenditure is our allocation to the Ministries and Mission Fund and the following information regarding our 2012 allocation was received from the Church’s Stewardship and Finance Committee. “The information below shows 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 (£31,035) plus employer's national insurance and contributions to the Church's pension and housing funds.

Bowden and Melrose **£82,607**

Parish Ministries (86%) **£71,042**

The cost of ministry in your parish: £39,895

Contribution to the cost in other parishes and training: £31,147

Mission and Renewal (6%) **£4,956**

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

Support and Services for Councils and Congregations (8%) **£6,608**

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.

Alastair O'Neil
Treasurer

CONCERT TO MARK THE CENTENARY OF BOWDEN KIRK ORGAN.

A concert featuring organist John Kitchen (Edinburgh University and City organist) will be held on Saturday 12th May at 7.30 pm in Bowden Kirk.

Full details will follow nearer the time. Admission will be by donation programme.

Refreshments will be available after the concert.

An extract from the history makes interesting reading.

"The inauguration of the new organ was on Saturday 25th May 1912. The Rev. John Burr MA. dedicated the organ and Mr G.R. Colledge LLCM, organist and choirmaster of Selkirk Parish Church, presided at the organ assisted by choristers from his own choir. The soloists were Miss Fanny Scott, Miss Maggie Simpson, Miss Lizzie Johnstone and Mr George Hume. A very full programme of organ and choral music was presented and apparently much enjoyed by a very large congregation. On the following day there were two services, the Rev John Burr officiating at the 12 noon service and the Rev Geo Lawson MA of Selkirk at the 6.00 pm. The organ was played on both occasions by Bowden organist Mr Wilkinson. An extensive musical programme was presented by the Bowden choir at the evening service. The organ was built by Arthur Ingram & Co. of Edinburgh and cost £400.

John Wilson

CHRISTIAN AID CAMPAIGN 2012

Christian Aid week this year is 13th – 19th May and as always is a very important week in the life of the church. Christian Aid works to bring an end to poverty around the world – tackling its root causes as its effects. We help people of all faiths and none. 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 in the Melrose and Tweedbank areas so do please try and help. This year help with the administration i.e. making up bags etc.. would also be appreciated - please speak to Joyce in the office if you are able to give some time in this regard. You will see from the calendar that the coffee morning will take place at the beginning of Christian Aid week (12th May) rather than the end.

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.

COME & SING! BRAHMS REQUIEM

Since our very successful *Come & Sing* event last year we have had many requests to do it again in 2012. So here we are inviting you once again to join us in Melrose to sing another gem in the choral repertoire, the ***Brahms Requiem*** using the English score.

This special event is planned for **Saturday 26th May 2012**, quite a long way off but we are very anxious that you should get it in your new diary! We are very fortunate that **Marion Dodd**, well known to so many music-lovers in the Borders, has agreed to conduct, accompanied by **John Bryden** and **Nicholas Wearne** together playing Brahms' own arrangement for two pianists. We will have two professional soloists and we are very grateful that they are all giving their time.

The venue will be the Melrose Parish Church and the day will consist of an afternoon rehearsal and an evening performance open to the public.

The aim is to raise funds to enable us to continue to bring to our members and audiences in Melrose the very best of chamber music performed by musicians of international standing. Our second aim is to provide an opportunity for singers from far and wide to come and make music together in beautiful Melrose.

So do please come and join us to sing these wonderful works in a lovely setting – if you feel you don't know the music, you soon will, guided by our chorus master and supported by many others who will have sung these works before!

Full details and registration form can be obtained from:

Hedydd Anderson

Woodlea, 53 High Cross Avenue, Melrose, TD6 9SX

Tel: 01896 822773

E-mail: woodlea.anderson@btinternet.com

THE 3 KS – KOLKATHA, KATHMANDU, KALIMPONG: AN UNFORGETTABLE TRIP

Fancy an elephant trip in the jungle, a crocodile-watching trip in a dug-out canoe, or a flight round Mt Everest?

These were a few of the experiences we shared last November. Who were we?

Muriel Mackenzie from Eildon and Linty Gibson, my wife Moira and I from Gattonside formed the Borders contingent of a group of 17 led by the Rev John Webster from Arran. It comprised singles and couples from Arran, all areas of Scotland and also from England.

Two years ago my wife had visited Nepal and India with John and another group. Such was her enthusiasm for the experience that she had persuaded us to take part in the 2011 trip. It was amazing and unforgettable - so how about taking part in the 2012 trip?

Don't think you're too old, as Muriel is in her 80s and we are in our 70s. The memories of the places you visit and, most of all, the people you meet will stay with you forever.

The tour had an option – a visit to Chitwan National Park, or a trek from Lukla to the Buddhist monastery at Tengboche at a height of over 12,000 ft. Linty and the younger members opted for the trek – a four-day hike/climb which was extended by bad weather, ending with their being helicoptered out.

Kolkata (Calcutta) – what an introduction to India. Noise, smells, vivid saris, hundreds of yellow taxis, families living on the streets, rich and poor together in a crumbling city.

We joined the group in Kathmandu, which has the most under whelming airport. Outside, a cacophony of noise – ancient taxis everywhere, their drivers desperate to capture tourist fares. Then the city – my first experience of staggering poverty. It left me stunned. But as we explored its temples, shops and carpet workshops (the latter refuges for women) with the aid of John and our local guides, everywhere meeting such friendly people, shock turned to admiration, coupled with guilt for our profligate western ways.

The bus journey to the peace of Chitwan was a memorable seven-hour experience of precipitous pot-holed roads, with signs of avalanches here and there. Here we saw the scary crocodiles, rode on the high-backed elephants in the jungle, travelled to an ancient mud-walled village on oxcarts and visited elephant training and breeding centres. Everywhere we met children – in their school uniforms, or their Sunday best or in rags – but all of them happy and delighted to meet us. Who could forget our guide – Suk? He was a fount of knowledge, courteous, kind, contented with his lot. He led us everywhere, our visit culminating with an early-morning sighting of a massive rhinoceros in the river.

On to Darjeeling in our people-carriers, and another breathtaking drive as we seemed to climb to the top of the world. Here we enjoyed a taste of luxury in an old colonial hotel and a trip in the narrow-gauge Toy Train – a marvel of engineering. There were staggering mountain views everywhere.

Next stop Kalimpong – by now we were almost blasé about potholes and steep mountain ravines. Here we visited Dr Graham's Homes, a residential school established in 1900 for 1,500 children, many of whom came from the streets of Kolkata. Recently damaged by an earthquake, the school faces huge challenges. What memories we have! The tear-inducing sound of the school pupils singing their hearts out, or the littlest ones in the nursery singing to us with such innocence, and the delight that the simple gift of tennis balls and frisbees elicited. We also visited a school for Tibetan refugees and a Catholic school for the poorest hill children, each of whom is taught to play a musical instrument. There we enjoyed a fantastic performance of Joseph and his multi-coloured Dreamcoat.

Finally, a drive to catch the night-sleeper train from Siliguri to Kolkata – another unique experience, where we enjoyed the friendship of total strangers. It *is* the trip of a lifetime. You return humbled by the generosity, grace and warmth of the people of Nepal and India, so many of whom have so little. So join us next time. Either speak to us or phone John Webster on 01770 700 747 before 31st March for the November 2012 tour.

David Peters in association with **Muriel Mackenzie**

COMMUNICATIONS

You will see from the inside page that our website and email addresses have changed namely **Email** bowden.melrosepc@btinternet.com & **Website:** www.bowdenandmelroseparish.org. John Henderson is busy working on the content of the website and should you have any ideas or thoughts as to what you would like to see on the website then he will be delighted to hear from you or alternatively contact the office.

You will have been asked if you wish to continue receiving our quarterly magazine as at present. At the same time it was recognised that with modern means of communication some members might be happy to receive the magazine and other correspondence by way of email or accessing the church website and if so please email your contact details to Joyce at the church office on bowden.melrosepc@btinternet.com. This might take time to establish but would also be a considerable saving on stationery and postage. Those wishing to receive the magazine as at present would continue to do so.

SPRING CLEAN

At home, if you are clearing out bookshelves, books can be delivered to or collected by Val Miller, 822758 for the Community Council 'Bookshop' in August. Proceeds to local projects.

In and around Melrose, Darnick, Gattonside and Newstead, the Community Council Annual Spring Clean Week will be April 21 to 29 (slightly longer than a week!). For details of how to join in and make our area sparkle, phone Val, as above. Many hands make a huge difference!

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Parish Register

Baptisms

18th December James William Cowens, Philiphaugh Old Mill, Selkirk
Brodie Stephen McLean, 16 High Cross Avenue, Melrose

12th February Gabrielle Daisy Gillian Bodill, 33 Larkhall Rise, London SW4
Rueben Michael Newins, 9 Dingleton Apartments, Melrose

Funerals

2nd December Mrs Moreen Stirling, 6 Ormiston Grove, Melrose

13th December Mrs Ellen (Ellie) Green, St Johns Care Home, High Cross Avenue, Melrose

6th January John Liversedge, 29 Jenny Moores Road, St Boswells
Mrs Sheila Cox, The Penstead, High Street, Melrose

13th February Mrs Janet (Nettie) Gribbin, Bidston, Waverley Road, Melrose

20th February Clem Johnston, 20 Monkswood, Gattonside, Melrose

New Members

By Certificate of Transference

Mrs Valerie Steel, 26 Harleyburn Avenue, Melrose