

Minister Letter

August 2007

Dear Friends,

The months of June, July and August (not easily described as the Summer!) are all but gone, children and teenagers return to school this week, and a new session of activities begins next month. Our seminarian Jessica Wietzke returned home on 6th August having enjoyed and benefited from her time here, as we enjoyed and benefited from her involvement. Members of the congregation were able to express their good wishes for the future at a lunch following worship on 29th July, at which Jessica was presented with a painting by John Martin of our two churches. She begins her final year at Princeton Seminary next month before seeking to become a minister in the Presbyterian Church USA. The first of what we hope will be a regular "Letter from America" is included below as we are updated regarding Jessica's progress.

Also included in this issue of the magazine is an update on the roofing work at Melrose. As we were aware this was to take six to seven months to complete but work is progressing very satisfactorily despite the unhelpful weather. At the time of writing funds to the value of £80,894 have been donated which has been a wonderful response and all who have helped achieve this figure are to be thanked and congratulated. As reported in the last issue of the magazine it was agreed to raise funds as well for the new Al-Shurooq School for Blind Children in Beit Jala, Bethlehem. A progress report from them and other news is also included below. This support for work with children in the Holy Land is in addition to our support for Tabeetha School in Jaffa, run by the Church of Scotland, and from whom we also heard this summer. Children, like everyone else are caught up in the continuing hostilities and violence in that part of the world and it is good to be able, through our support for these two schools, to contribute something positive to the lives of present and future pupils. A number of fund-raising events are planned for the coming months. These are also described below and hopefully will help us reach our target of £100,000.

From the comments received it is obvious how much visitors over the summer have enjoyed the beauty and peace of Bowden Kirk, having perhaps just dropped by and found it open. Not all has been quiet at the church in Melrose during the summer months! As well as the noise from the roofing work, it has been a pleasure to welcome visitors worshipping with us, and also those who have joined us in the church hall on Wednesday mornings for tea and coffee, home baking and a chat. Thanks to all those who have helped in any way in extending this welcome and hospitality.

Yours sincerely,

Alistair Bennett

Roof Refurbishment 2007

What's happening ? Are we on Budget ? Do we need more donations ? I don't see any benefit, only ugly scaffolding and when will it be removed ?

All are questions which may be going around. Well after last Wednesday's site meeting most of these questions can be answered.

The contract is on schedule and keeping to an estimated completion date of end of October. I think I can safely say that on behalf of the client, both the Minister and I are completely happy with progress and also with the main contractor. This is evident in his constantly bringing to our attention this or that item which needs attention and better to do it now when all the expertise is on site. Yes it does cost us, but after all we are doing a job to keep the Church in good condition for the next 100 years.

Yes, we are keeping on budget, but we have used most of the contingency fund.

Yes, we would like more donations and every thing is welcome, remembering also that some of the donation fund is to go to the Al-Shurooq School for the Blind Children in Bethlehem.

The scaffolding at the front of the Church should all be away soon and removed to the back area.

Work is now being done on the roofs over the hall and ancillary buildings and the valley between them and the Church.

The back flat roof is to be recovered next, and then work will start on the hall roof. There is still a lot to do, but the front flat roof is complete and the three porches have all been re-roofed.

The high slated roof is complete with new lead work where required and all the coping on this high part has been covered in lead.

Can you see it - well of course you can, just get a hard hat and let me know when you want to go up.

For those with no head for heights, I propose to get together a photographic record, but I may not get round to this till next year so I hope that will suffice.

Comment on the ingress of water into the Chapel. This was due to the unexpected very heavy rain being too much for the plastic covering that the contractor had over the exposed gutter and the Chapel will be repainted at a shared cost by us and the contractor, as really only one wall was damaged as a result of the water coming in. Further when this was examined it was agreed that water must have been penetrating the wall unnoticed for many years and by good luck this was revealed through the incident. With the humidifier in progress there has to date been 37 gallons of water drawn from the wall.

Any further questions, comments, criticisms or donations please contact the Church Office.

In the meantime I do hope this helps keep you in the picture.
Alastair Matthew, Fabric Convenor

LETTER FROM AMERICA

I arrived home safely on Monday, August 6. Wednesday and Thursday I met with the session of my home church in Omaha, Nebraska, to be approved as a Candidate for Ministry in the Presbyterian Church (USA). I also met with my Committee for Preparation of Ministry, which next approved me as a Candidate. And finally, August 18th, I will meet with my presbytery to be officially approved as a Candidate. I am also studying for four ordination exams I will take August 24-5 on Theology, Worship and Sacraments, the Gospel of John (Biblical Exegesis), and Church government. My aunt from Texas is here for a few days and so we've been out showing her the Iowa countryside. I am also meeting up with other friends and family whom I haven't seen for a year.

The temperature was quite a change from Scotland. It was in the 90s and very humid (there's a heat advisory out for today). Driving home from the airport, I was engulfed by the clear blue sky and six-foot tall cornfields of the Iowa plains. My mum's flowers blooming remind me of Scotland and all the fabulous gardens and trails. I have very fond memories of Bowden, Melrose, and the Borders, and will cherish these forever. I am glad to have heard from a few of you already and would enjoy hearing from any of you who care to write: PO Box 100, Greenfield, Iowa 50849 USA or jessica.wietzke@ptsem.edu

Blessings, Jessica

Mid-Week Lunch

Future dates:

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Wednesday, 26 th September | Margaret's team |
| Wednesday, 24 th October | Pat's team |
| Wednesday 28 th November | Kath's Team |
| Wednesday 19 th December (Xmas Lunch) | Margaret's Team |

12.15 – 1.30pm – Price £2.50

Due to increasing costs the price for lunch will rise to £2.50 in September.

Pat Mackenzie

GUILD NEWS

After our Summer break I would like to welcome back all our members and anyone who would like to join us and be part of the Bowden & Melrose Parish Church Guild. Our three year theme is 'Let's Live Body Mind and Soul'. This year our theme is 'Honouring the Mind'. The committee have put together a very interesting programme of speakers, which I am sure you will all enjoy.

Our first Guild Meeting will be our Dedication Service conducted by the Rev Haisley Moore. This will be held on Thursday 11th October at 2.30pm and will be followed by our usual tea.

I would like to remind you that we will be making up the Christmas Shoe Boxes again this year for collection by **MONDAY 5TH NOVEMBER**. There will be leaflets available in the church porches giving guidance and suggestions as to what items could be put into the boxes. We had a very good response last year and I want to thank everyone who

supported this worthwhile appeal. Boxes were received from the members of the Guild, the congregation of the churches the Sunday School and also the Inner Wheel Club of Galashiels. By filling a shoebox with little gifts you can bring someone great joy and make a difference to their Christmas.

Can I remind Committee Members that our next committee meeting is on Tuesday 2nd October at 2.00pm.

Eileen Redhead
President

SUMMER COFFEE MORNINGS

There has been much scone and pancake making in Melrose this summer to supply the weekly Coffee Mornings in the Church Hall! Despite endless rain and the scaffolding around the Church many people have climbed the hill for a chat and company each Wednesday morning. The support of local people has welcomed visitors from "a' the airts", and shared interest in our roof-work and swapped stories of similar fund-raising efforts at their own place of worship.

Quite a few couples on holiday were returning for their third year, and one couple said they were house-hunting after enjoying their holidays in Melrose so much. We hope our welcome has played its part in this decision.

We had two days when numbers were much greater. A party of 22 international students came from a summer school in Churches' House in Dunblane. They were our guests for refreshments before going on to visit Melrose and Dryburgh Abbeys. A card of thanks from them is displayed in the Gattonside porch. Later in July the Country Dancing group which Jessica attended met to have their own party to say goodbye and to present their gift to her. They now think they will make it a regular mid-season occasion. I think that day you could have heard the chat level down in the High Street!

For these visits and each week's coffee morning we have had such good support from volunteers (some new this year), supplying food and giving their time and energy and chatting to visitors. Thank you all very much. Let's hope everyone has found it an enjoyable experience.

And many thanks to Ian Douglas who has always had tables and chairs set up ready, and swept up our crumbs afterwards!

Although our purpose has not been to raise money we have finished with a profit of £451.66 (with one more to go), which will be donated to our Project Appeal - the Al-Shurooq School for Blind Children in Bethlehem.

Jean Thomson

IT'S TEA TIME AND YOU'RE ALL INVITED

It's called Tea Time. And it's a new event for Christian Aid that couldn't be easier to organise. Just ask your friends to give a donation to Christian Aid in return for a cup of tea. By simply inviting friends or colleagues for a cup of tea on 21st September (or anytime) you'll be helping some of the poorest communities work themselves out of poverty. If you are interested in hosting a Tea Time then please order your free event pack by calling Christian Aid on 0870 076 7766 or visit www.christianaid.org.uk/teatime

TABEETHA SCHOOL, JAFFA, ISRAEL

As you know our Christmas Eve Offerings allow us to sponsor children at Tabeetha School to go on a trip to Neve Shalom. Here below is a recent letter received from Year 9 (3rd Year) following this year's trip.

"Dear Friends in Scotland

Thank you for sending us to Neve Shalom this year. The weather was very good and we really enjoyed it.

We learned about the history of the village and how it was started as a place for Muslims, Jews and Christians to live together in peace.

We had an interesting workshop with an Israeli man called Shai where we thought about different ways to solve conflict between groups. We learned how to imagine ourselves inside the mind of the person we disagreed with and to see the problem through her or his eyes.

We got on very well as a group and felt very relaxed together. We liked our rooms and there was lots of food.

Thank you very much for your kindness".

THE AI-SHUROOQ SCHOOL FOR BLIND CHILDREN, BEIT JALA

(Extracted from their quarterly letter)

"Progress in the new school building is moving smoothly. Most of you who have dealt with building projects before know that they do not usually go as planned; there is always the delay and the unexpected extra expenses. While digging the foundations in one part of the land, NO treasure was found, but instead digging further down than anticipated was required to reach solid rock. So deep, that it would actually make an additional underground floor! We decided to make use of the additional floor as the space could be used as store rooms, boiler and maintenance rooms and an indoor playroom with facilities for the children.

Once the underground floor was completed, skeleton works on the first floor were rapidly executed and we will soon be ready to finish the concrete works of the first floor. Inauguration is going to be a bit delayed – we are aiming at April 2008."

"For our annual excursion this year, we decided to visit Emmaus, the village in which our six year old Mohammed Al-Fakih lives. His parents run a public swimming pool, and as we were offered free admission, we took the chance. Only a few years ago, it took us fifteen minutes to go from Jerusalem to Emmaus; yet on 13th June it took us two and a half hours each way. We had to go first to Ramallah, and then travelled west through several isolated villages, on terribly rough and narrow roads. Once there the children spent all day in the pool having a marvellous time. This trip made us appreciate the trouble and expense encountered whenever the parents bring their child to and from the school. For

Palestinians living in the country, life is made more difficult day after day, with the apartheid wall encircling round every area. No one is encouraged to visit that village any more, despite its beauty and its Christian history”

“We are quite uncertain as to how things will work out for the three Gaza children we have in our care. They have been waiting anxiously for the summer holidays to return home and be with their families. At the moment no one is allowed in our out of Gaza. We pray and hope that by the end of the month, the International Red Cross may be able to take them back”

FUND RASING EVENTS

A very successful and enjoyable Summer Fete was held in Bowden village hall at the end of July and almost £1200 was raised for Church funds. Thanks to all those who organised, helped and contributed to this annual event in any way.

A number of events are planned for the coming months, the proceeds from which will go to the Special Fund for the church roof at Melrose and the Al-Shurooq School for Blind Children in Beit Jala, Bethlehem. The school’s head teacher is Helena Shehadeh, herself blind and an elder of St. Andrews Church of Scotland in Jerusalem. The school provides an education, otherwise unavailable, to blind and partially sighted children.

Wednesday, 31st October – Halloween Party

This will take place in Melrose Primary School with support from Melrose Guides. Dookin’ for apples, treacle scones and an introduction to the original meaning of Hallowed Eve! A family event!

Wednesday, 21st November – Cookery Demonstration

To take place in the Greenyards and a demonstration by Burts Hotel chef on the preparation of a three course Christmas lunch. An event for the men!! Over a glass of wine get your Christmas menu organised.

Saturday, 8th December – Christmas Fayre

This will take place in the Corn Exchange on the Saturday afternoon prior to the annual Carol Service in Melrose Abbey organised by the Melrose Traders Organisation. All the usual stalls but also including crafts, Christmas theme stall, quality used toys and quality children’s clothing. Look out for publicity and tickets soon.

Friday, 4th April 2008 – Attic Auction

On the same lines as previous events and in the past a major fund raiser. Hold on to items in the meantime and collection details will soon be available. On the basis of past experience it will not be possible to collect large items of furniture (sofas, wardrobes, etc) unless they are valuable antiques!!

We hope these events will be well supported, be fun and enjoyable, and help to achieve our overall target of £100,000.

TAKE SOME WATER WITH IT' – says ROSIE

Rosie returned to official duties in June, after her winter's rest and annual service, and is now in full flow, refreshing her plants, day by day.

The Melrose in Bloom Committee, on the other hand, have not had a similar rest since last year, having had to make decisions and prepare well in advance for the summer season, and then to implement the cleaning and servicing of the planters and baskets before the planting out.

Led again by Auntie Viv, who has demonstrated her powers of persuasion and direction, she and her worthy team have done a splendid job in presenting "oor toon" in a lovely display of mixed colours. All have played key roles: Ray, as ever, the unsung heroine out in sun or rain tending the plants from the boot of her car, where a wonderful array of gardening secrets, watering cans and tools live for the summer months; Big Dunc, yet again using his wizardry to produce the watering rota for the morning and evening shifts; Brother John, in charge of maintenance and technology, combined with a mastery of dump disposal; and Owen, the quiet man of observation, action and audit; and the rest of the devoted band who make the whole operation work so smoothly.

The watering squads have changed little since last year, with all the crews doing their task under the watchful eye of the dominatrix. There's little chance of being allowed to go wrong!

Bill and Ben were an exception. They had hoped to do their Laurel (wreath) and Hardy (annual) act for another year, but *anno domini* required Ben to have some servicing and repair work.. Now well on the mend (and a member of the growing [Melrose Parish] Church Re-fitted (by) Orthopaedics Club, known as the **CROCs**) he provides valuable consultancy advice to his mate from his eyrie on the Terrace.

Bill overcame this temporary disruption to the team by taking on an apprentice – Barbie, his other half. She has had a steep learning curve to master, but has swiftly adapted to learn the new skill of handling the lance and possessing her soul in her old customary patience (akin to that of Job) while Bill does a Lewis Hamilton at the Rosie wheel. It was no easy start to the season for the driver either, having to undergo a first morning's retraining course on the job under Ray's gimlet eye: not one for the fainthearted, but at least he was spared the written test.

Following the re-design of the Market Square and the High Street Rosie's route has altered slightly. She now has to negotiate the chicanes of the 'Piazza', and steer a particularly tricky manoeuvre down the pavement from the Square to just below the Town House, before bouncing down into the one-way traffic flow and the home straight. So far, so – no bumps.

The waterers' role is not, however, without hazard: not least in the avoidance of the paparazzi (what it is to be a celebrity) and their flashing zoom machinery as Rosie steams by. We have to protect her privacy as best we can.

Your "toon" is looking splendid this year (and so are the villages, be it said, housing some of the planters). It is a great credit to the volunteers, the trade and private sponsors and all the others who have made their contributions to a real sense of achievement. Although the Committee felt they could not participate this year in national competitions because of the building works in the town centre, they managed to continue to put Melrose on parade as a colourful welcome for visitors and a source of pride to ourselves.

Rosie is going well and hopes to be back next year, doing her bit to encourage people, as the little red leaflet says, to 'Make for Melrose'!

Bill - and Barbie

'Houston, we have a problem'

Wasn't that the message that one of the Apollo missions sent back to NASA HQ, when the crew realised that things were going wrong? The Editor (so called) of this magazine also has a problem, but whereas the Apollo crew made the requisite repairs and got home safely, the jury is out on the likely fate of the erring Editor. As can be seen, he badgers people for articles for the Magazine. The Melrosian refers, at the Trimontium Stone during the Festival Saturday morning Tour of Ceremonies, to the late Dr James Curle, the archaeologist, as 'our esteemed fellow-townsmen'. The same could well be applied to Dr Ian Houston, the Convener of Ceremonies, in whose capable hands lies the organisation of what happens at the various stops on the Tour (the Masonic Stone, Trimontium, Gattonside, Abbotsford, Darnick Tower, The Abbey). A reply to a letter from Dr Houston, an erstwhile charging "sodger" in 'Princess Ida' etc on the Melrose stage, and a similarly erstwhile rugby referee on the Melrose pitch, requesting your assistance at some point en route is not to be delayed, even if it is just to say 'wilco'. It seemed a good idea, therefore, to seek from the good Doctor some personal thoughts on the experience of running the Tour of Ceremonies, following in the footsteps of other Festival colleagues over the years. To say that Ian leapt at the chance would be inaccurate, but he gave the request considerable thought and eventually let the Editor have a splendid one-page (I think) contribution with a generous 'Do what you like with it'. It was quickly skimmed and as quickly put, with gratitude, in a safe place in the normal open-cast filing system, to await the next far-off Magazine deadline. (They keep being changed and they are far-off, aren't they?). After all this palaver you're getting the drift, I'm sure.

I confess. The location of the safe place is off the Editor's radar. Alack and alas he has mislaid it. He would be on his knees in abasement (but that would not be good for at least one knee, and which basement anyway?). The only refuge lies in asking for forgiveness in the words of a Pope, (Alexander Pope in his aptly-titled 'Essay on Criticism') 'To err is human; to forgive ... divine'. Apologies, Ian.

(One thing: you're off the hook: he'll never dare to ask you again).

'Ticals and 'Zontals

Yes, it was Haisley Moore, who was this year's orator at the Crowning, by Jill, of Festival Queen Erin. How does the speaker pitch such a talk to such a wide Borders audience? Haisley said he was engaging with the children, and the adults could listen in. Overall he engaged with everyone, and ticked off a myriad of boxes, from the immediately serious – the sad loss of the Grammar School teacher, Beverley Sinton, and Alistair Bennett's helping the school to cope - to the joyfully jokey and the interactive and the personally grateful, tracking across the world and up and down the Borders.

His audience were set agoing with the story of the Ohio wedding he had conducted where the bride was described as 'Vertical' – her ancestors had been there for generations – while the groom, who came from another state, was 'Horizontal'. Could that not be applied to his Melrose audience? To make it easier, who were 'Ticals and who were 'Zontals? Before we knew where we were hands were waving in turn to denote (a) the locals and (b) the incomers, and voices raised to cry ' I am a 'Tical ' or I am a 'Zontal'. That was only the spark to start, but the touchpaper took light, and the Moore fireworks went off in all directions. In full view of the crowd but behind the speaker the black clouds began slowly moving down from the Eildons and his verbal bangs began to have lightning flash

accompaniment round the loudspeakers. Eventually the rain came after a splendidly brief vote of thanks, but not before some memorable quotes:-

‘Where ‘Ticals and ‘Zontals meet can be a place of **friction** or **friendship**. Do you tick the friendship boxes, when newcomers arrive?’

‘The overriding virtue of all the Border festivals is that (rugby) rivalry and friction are set aside, and friendship (and sometimes romance) reigns and rules’.

Melrose, though, was the jewel in the Borders crown – and the trumpet sounded all the notes. For example - Historical, Cultural and Literary capital of the Borders (the Abbey and Robert the Bruce, the Lit, the Book Fair, the Talisman, Trimontium, the music, Sir Walter [his street names were in Wishaw, like everywhere else]; and equally the Sporting capital, too (Ned Haig, our annual Sports and family traditions, the IRB’s Melrose Cup, the SRU’s Ned Haig Cup) ‘a living local legacy on a world-wide scale’. Scottish education and Scottish hospitals came in for the immigrant Moore family’s praise and thanks for a land, in and beyond the Borders, where you run out of superlatives.

The ‘Fun and Friendship’ Festival oration was topped off by the announcement that there would be questionnaires on its content (and a tiebreaker) for P7 on the morrow and the ex-Melrosians at their dinner – and prizes. And the last line of this *tour de force*? ‘Thank you, Scotland; God Bless you, Melrose’.

A ‘POSTED MISSING’ POSTSCRIPT

While the Editor was chasing ‘The Lassies o’ Melrose’ (the *tune*, of course, now happily recovered thanks to George Bunyan and to be sung on an appropriate occasion) he wrote for assistance to Rev Jack Drummond, author of ‘Here’s tae Melrose’, the Melrose Song which is sung at Festival Time, Newstead Burns Supper etc. Mr Drummond couldn’t help, but sent the published four-page, red-cover full version of the Melrose Song, containing a surprise - a fifth verse, which is not usually sung, but which still has a message in these times and, even for one example, sums up the story of the two Newstead brothers who died in WWI :-

“ Let us think once again of the bravest of men
Who sleep in a foreign field.
They laid down their lives for their country and king
With a spirit that would not yield”.

The third verse has us riding ‘round the bounds of our ancient town’ from Newstead to Darnick (‘Turn Again’) and ending up at what we have been singing as ‘St Mary’s Stane’ – to rhyme with ‘Again’. We end up, of course, at the *Abbey* on the Saturday morning and the rhyming word needed is - ready? – ‘f-a-n-e’ ! *Fane* comes from *fanum*, a poetic Latin word for a temple, which is what the Abbey is ie ‘St Mary’s fane’.

ALL TOGETHER, NOW....

Hymn 622 in the new CH4 is a splendid hymn to a well-known tune 'Woodlands', which we also sing to Hymn 518 'Lift up your hearts!'

There are five verses in 622, the first line of which - 'We sing a love that sets all people free' – is continued, with variations, in the first lines of the next three verses.

The fifth verse leads to the climax:-

'We sing the Holy Spirit, full of love,
who seeks out scars of bitterness,
brings to our wounds the healing grace of Christ:
come, radiant love, live in our hearts today.'

Below the last line we are told the name of the modern composer - June Boyce-Tillman – born in 1943. That's the last verse in the Melody-only hymnbook issued to members of the congregation (and which people say is heavy to handle). If you're in the choir (or if you're in the congregation and determined to have the Full Music version with all the voice parts, as well as the melody – and boy, is that heavy) this is what you have (and sing) at verse five:

'We sing a burning, fiery Holy Ghost
that seeks out shades of ancient bitterness,
transfiguring these, as Christ in every heart:
come joyful love, live in our hearts today.'

Powerful stuff – and even more powerful when you compare the verses.

Then your eye is caught by two lines in italics at the bottom of that verse:-

'Previous editions contained a fifth verse not written or sanctioned by the author. This has now been replaced with the correct, authorized version.'

Whatever we do in future, let's not leave it out. Print, Pritt stick and replace – a wee job for someone? And, what's the story behind these italics?

ROTAS- ROTAS-AND MORE ROTAS

To enable all church facilities to run smoothly we need a band of volunteers to give their energy and time to carry out various duties. For a number of reasons these numbers are in decline and in particular the crèche on a Sunday morning. The following is a list of areas where willing hands will be made most welcome, the more people on a rota the less often a duty is required.

If you would like to join a rota then please contact Joyce at the office on 823339 who will be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

Creche Rota on Sundays

Coffee Rota on Sunday

Cleaning Rota, part of a team of 2/3 ideally 3

Door Duty on Sundays welcoming people to church and taking up the offering

Delivering the quarterly church magazine

Counting the Offering with Joyce at the office on Monday mornings

Flower Rota helping with flowers in church

Mid-Week Lunch helping every three months