

Blackbraes and Shieldhill  
Parish Church  
linked with  
Muiravonside Parish Church  
Autumn 2018



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

Locum Minister: Rev Marion Perry BD

Registered Charity

Blackbraes and Shieldhill SC 002512

Muiravonside SC 007571



## **Locum Minister's Letter**

"Aye the nights are fair drawing in"

Many people find the fast approaching autumn to be a tough season of the year. It was dark at 9.00 o'clock last night!

Not only are the nights drawing in.

The new Sessions of Church activity will soon begin too, and the Harvest will be upon us.

But the Winter chills seems so close, and Christmas still a long way off.

Christian faith teaches that God will provide for, and protect and guide those he loves. And that he will be receptive to our needs and wants even in the changing seasons.

Perhaps to help us through this time, we might find some encouragement in the Prayer of Hannah, which can be found in 1st Samuel Chapter 2 and verses 1 to 10.

This was a prayer which was sincere honest and heartfelt.

Many of us have prayed with the same level of intensity over the years for many and varied subjects, and in doing so learned more about God and ourselves than we ever thought we would.

We have learned in days of joy, and in days of trouble, that God wants the best for us. Although we may not understand how things play out in our lives, the greatest lesson to learn on the darkest of days is to trust Him.

Hannah, trusted in a God who does good things.  
In Chapter 2:

- V 1 We learn he is a saviour.
- V 2 He is holy...so good.
- V 3 He knows us intimately
- v 4 He works for peace..

All these things are so wonderful to know.

V 6 of Ch 2 explains that we have a giving God, and from v 7 onward we can see that he is concerned with the detail of peoples lives.

Hannah`s circumstances were difficult.  
But God has a way of circumventing circumstances in a way that can be awesome and wonderful. And Samuel, who grew to be a great man was given the best of beginnings in life.

Hannah prayed!  
She prayed, in company, she prayed alone too, but she prayed.  
She poured our her heart until God honoured and blessed those prayers.

The nights may be drawing in - but perhaps we may find in them,  
more time to contemplate God`s goodness.  
And more time to pray.

**Rev M Perry Auxiliary Minister. (Locum)**

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**Congratulations**

Congratulations to our Locum Minister Marion on her recent engagement. Wishing you both lots of joy and happiness in this new chapter of your lives.

God Bless you both.

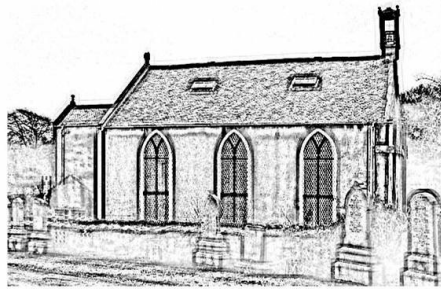
Best Wishes

from all at Blackbraes and Shieldhill and Muiravonside



**Baptism**

*'The Lord Bless you and keep you.'*



**Muiravonside Parish**

**6th May 2018**

Oliver Brian Edward Hughes



## **Funerals**

***'The Lord will protect you as you come and go, both now and forevermore'.***



## **Muiravonside Parish**

Isabella Sneddon

Julia Fowler

Alex Sonny Mitchell

John Paterson

William Dick

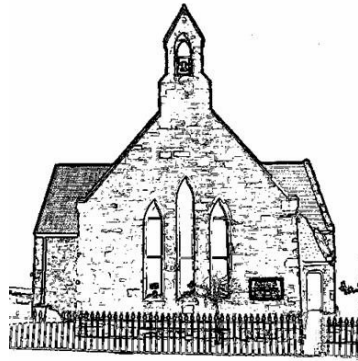
Anne Godfrey

Isabella Mary Watson

Shirley McErlane

## **Funerals**

***'The Lord will protect you as you come and go, both now and forevermore'.***



## **Blackbraes and Shieldhill Parish**

Robert Young



## **Muiravonside Choral Society**

Since 2014 Muiravonside Choral Society have donated £2,300 to various charities.

We have a Spring and Christmas Concert every year in the church and we always have a good audience for both.

We always have an open plate and are always well rewarded for the night's entertainment given by the choir.

We also do small concerts at various other churches and are given small donations for this.

Here is a list of charities that have benefited from our donations.

Strathcarron Hospice at Home  
Strathcarron Hospice  
Friends of St Margaret care home  
Alzheimer's Society  
Sensory Centre Camelon  
Maggie's Centre  
Erskine Home  
Cars 4 u

We have also donated to both Blackbraes and Shieldhill Churches.

We hope we can continue to donate and that you will come to our concerts to enable us to do so.

If you are interested in joining the choir, we meet every Tuesday from January to May and then August to December from 2.30 until 4pm in Muiravonside Church. You will be made most welcome!



## **Nominating Committee News**

Permission has now been given to invite new applicants from outwith the European Union as we continue our search for a new Minister.

### **Congregational Prayer**

Heavenly Father,

May your strength and guidance be with us at this time,  
provide comfort and caring for our daily needs.

Encourage us as we pray for our Nominating Vacancy Members  
as they continue on the journey to find a new Minister.

**Amen**



**Submitted by John Robertson**



## **The Purpose of Industrial Mission**

Throughout recent decades, the Church was a local connection within industry and commerce, contributing important discussions ranging from unemployment recognition of Trade Unions, management styles also patterns of work. Due to ever changing workplaces, the task of an Industrial Chaplain requires to be forever challenging, as ordained Chaplains, like Parish Ministers, are thin on the ground.

Inevitably, ordained personnel will use the language of people with whom they mix most, should he or she be mixing mostly with Elders and retired at one end of the age scale, children at the other end. Only their set of concerns will appear in preaching and conversation.

How can we help?

How can we attract more working folk toward the church?

How can we reduce the need for Foodbanks?

How can we tackle loneliness?

Perhaps those questions can be met and addressed to find a way to overcome such issues in God's name, by forming a small group of men and women of goodwill within our Parish.

*“So light up the fire and let the flame burn,  
open the door, let Jesus return.  
Take seeds of his Spirit, let the fruit grow,  
tell the people of Jesus, let his love show.  
Go through the park, on into the town;  
the sun still shines on, it never goes down.  
The Light of the world is risen again,  
the people of darkness are needing our friend.”*  
(Mission Praise 1039 Colours of Day)

**Submitted by: John Robertson**

## **“Tales From a Shieldhill Garden.”**



At the end of July I was lucky enough to go on an Urquhart's Tour to Tatton Park Flower Show. This flower show is run by the National Horticultural Society and is held in a corner of the very large grounds of Tatton Park and is not as busy and as crowded as Chelsea.

Tatton Park is, today, managed by The National Trust and owned by the local county council and can be visited should you happen to be in the Stockport area. Their present project is renovating the farm and some volunteers from the farm had a display and animals at the flower show.

The wildlife charities were well represented and I chanced to hear a Bumble Bee talk. Those of you who watch Gardner's World may have seen the big bumblebee as it was shown when this programme visited Tatton Park Flower Show at the beginning of that week. Bumblebees are attracted to certain flowers because those flowers have ultraviolet light shining from them. If you have been disappointed by the results when photographing flowers, then the ultraviolet light has interfered with your photograph. Bumblebees prefer yellow, blue and purple flowers. There was a border of mixed wild flowers at the entrance to this tent and it was just buzzing.

Our gardens are important in the survival of bumblebees as bumblebees are doing much better in towns and villages compared farmland.

This show had its fair share of designed gardens but the group that really caught my eye were the three gardens that had been designed by young designers. They had to design a garden that blended with the countryside. All three had used native wild flowers and I found the result to be restful and calm. I could imagine a comfy chair, nice cup of tea and a good book and that could have been placed in any of this group of gardens. These gardens were also buzzing with bumblebees.

Our native wild flowers are beautiful and like all other wildlife is having trouble surviving. Some have particular needs and The Scottish Wildlife Trust and Plant life have reserves where some of those fussy

growers are protected. I do not allow anyone to weed my garden, even although some help would be welcome. I have some wildflowers that I am happy to encourage. In the spring there are celandines, primroses and coltsfoot. The celandines have to be controlled because they form a mat that nothing else will grow through but they are worth having for their cheery yellow flowers and they provide food for bumblebee queens when they emerge from hibernation. Coltsfoot too need controlled.

These yellow, daisy type flowers have no leaves when they flower but they have huge, umbrella type leaves in the summertime. Primroses were grown from seed as was the tiny cranesbills. Scotia seeds specialise in wild flower seed. They are an excellent source of seed. A few years ago, one common spotted orchid appeared in my azalea bed and now I have a clump of them. Last year I found a lovely, deep purple early orchid in the rockery. Orchid seed is like dust and my orchids were probably blown from The Moss. There are also elder bushes and cotoneaster and a wild fuchsia have all just appeared. My preference is herbaceous flowers and many of those provide ample seed and the seedlings can be moved elsewhere or potted up to be handed on to friends.

Many years ago I bought an *alchemilla mollis*, a cultivar of lady's mantel. This seeds everywhere and so it must be dead headed at the end of its flowering but the extra work is worth it for the mass of little lemon flowers.

This land has so much diversity, all part of God's plan. Bumblebees need flowers; we need bumblebees to fertilise plants that produce seed that is turned into our food. The joy I have when I see a nice flowerbed, particularly one that is buzzing.

A few years ago I had a large Scottish thistle that appeared in the corner of a vegetable bed. Good soil and a bit of fertiliser, this was magnificent plant. Near the end of the summer it had the fluffiest seed heads imaginable. I was just thinking about cutting it down before not only my garden would be full of big thistles but the neighbours too when one sunny afternoon my thistle was a host to goldfinches.

These beautiful wee birds love thistle seed and they cleared it. If you are out and about and you happen upon a bed of thistles, look out for goldfinches. A group of these charming wee birds is called 'a charm'. Very fitting I think.

The Great Creator created this wonderful earth that we are in custody of. His hand made this diversity of species. Every thing has its place and everything relies on everything else.

God looked at everything and was pleased.

**Rena**

Tea, coffee and a chat are always available in the hall after services. Please stay if you can.



Just a little note to say Thank You for your kind words and get well wishes and of course, the beautiful flowers I received from the church after my brief hospital stay. All was very much appreciated.

Thanks

**Jean x**



Just to say Thank You for the lovely flowers and good wishes after my fall on holiday.

**Pearl Foley**



## South Africa Link



### News from South Africa – Easter 2018

Dear Friends,

As always, Christmas came and went very quickly as has Easter. It has been a busy year so far, as always. Graham was in charge at St Andrew's over the Christmas period as Zwai took long leave to prepare his PhD proposal. It was a quiet period, thankfully.

Easter was to be more relaxing but Zwai had to go to the Eastern Cape for a family funeral and Graham had to take all of the Easter services: Thursday evening Tenebrae, Good Friday morning service and Easter Day communion. Fortunately, he was assisted by a young lady minister in the congregation, Rev Fundiswa Kobo, a theology lecturer at the University of South Africa and Dr Zoro Dube, a lecturer in New Testament Studies at Pretoria University. Zoro is the first academic probationer in the church and Graham was asked to be his supervisor. We knew his father, Phineas Dube in the 1980s at the Federal Theological Seminary. Phineas worked for Africa Enterprise, an evangelical organisation which was responsible for our orientation programme.

We are now taking our post-Easter break at our favourite hotel at Cathedral Peak, deep in the Drakensberg mountains where we have been holidaying after Easter for a number of years. It is very relaxing and great for relaxing and catching up as usual. We are here with two Lutheran friends, Bos and Malish Tlhoale, who travelled to the UK with us last year.

While Sandra continues with her editorial work and providing never-ending hospitality, Graham has been busy with a number of other activities.

His contract at the University was renewed and, in addition, he has taken responsibility for the first-year class on the History of

Christianity aspect of the course in Theological Orientation. This is because the lecturer has been appointed the new Dean of the faculty and is no longer free to teach. This year's first-year class is over one hundred students which is our largest intake for some years. They are quite an energetic group! In addition, he is leading the Presbyterian class on Practical Formation. His research continues with regular requests to prepare papers on various issues, the latest being on 'The role of women in South African Presbyterianism'. Two of his Zimbabwean students, Farai Mutamiri, Dean of the Anglican Cathedral in Harare, and John Chawarika, rector in an Anglican parish in Harare have successfully completed their PhD degrees and will graduate at our autumn graduation later this month.

This is Graham's last year as a member of the Religious Studies and Theology panel of the National Research Foundation. He continues his work with the Council for Higher Education and is busy assisting with the applications for registration of several colleges which have not registered their colleges or qualifications with the statutory bodies in South Africa. This is a complex matter. This arose out of his involvement with a sub-committee of the Church Unity Commission (CUC) in South Africa, which is considering issues and challenges in theological education nationally. The CUC has expanded the work of this sub-committee to include the Lutherans, the Dutch Reformed churches and Roman Catholics. We have also appointed a group of female theologians to assist us in our deliberations to make our work more inclusive.

On the home front we had a two-week visit from David and Chris in March, along with a month-long visit from an old friend from Aberdeen, Heather Clark. They were all in need of a break after (during?) the dreadful Scottish winter. This coming weekend we will see Justin Taylor with his family. Justin was our former student and Graham's research assistant. He has just completed his probation in the Church of Scotland successfully and is being considered for a call. If all goes well, Graham will attend his ordination during the summer before Sandra joins him for a family wedding in August.


At the national level, we have said goodbye to Jacob Zuma (Thanks

be to God!) though he keeps on popping up not least for his trial on 16 charges of corruption. Then we have commiserated with the people of Cape Town in the midst of their ongoing drought. And most recently the nation is mourning the loss of struggle icon Winnie Mandela, whose enormous contribution to a democratic South Africa was eclipsed by her character and moral flaws, characteristics we all share as part of sinful humanity. As they say in revolutionary circles – a luta continua! – the struggle continues!

This comes with our prayers and Best Wishes!

Graham & Sandra


(Editor's note—Graham and Sandra's letter about Easter was just received a few weeks ago, but still has lots of very interesting news, hence its appearance in the Autumn edition.)



**Christian Aid**

At the start of Christian Aid Week we held a snack lunch after the church service which was well supported by members and friends. Thanks are due to all who gave lunch donations and other individual donations, as well as Christian Aid money boxes and jars filled with coins. A total of £525 was raised and sent to Christian Aid along with many completed gift aid forms. Thanks to everyone for their generosity in helping to raise this amount for this worthy cause.

**Marion Zacks**





## **The Cracked Pot**

An elderly Chinese woman had two large pots, each hung on the ends of a pole which she carried across her neck.

One of the pots had a crack in it while the other pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water.

At the end of the long walks from the stream to the house, the cracked pot arrived only half full.

For a full two years this went on daily, the woman bringing home only one and a half pots of water.

Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments.

But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection, and miserable that it could only do half of what it had been made to do.

After two years of what it perceived to be bitter failure, it spoke to the woman one day by the stream.

“I am ashamed of myself, because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your house.”

The old woman smiled, “Did you notice that there are flowers on your side of the path, but not on the other pot’s side?”

That’s because I have always known about your flaw, so I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walk back, you water them.

For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate the table.

Without your being the way you are, there would not be this beauty to grace the house.”

Each of us has our own unique flaws. But its the cracks and flaws we each have that make our lives together so interesting and rewarding.

You've just got to take each person for what they are and look for the good in them.

So, to all of my cracked pot friends, have a great day and remember to smell the flowers on your side of the path!

From a Chinese story

**Submitted by: Rita Braes**



## Church Guild



One of the highlights of the Guild session is the Annual Gathering, this year on Saturday 1 September, which has been held for the last number of years in Dundee's Caird Hall. A few of the Blackbraes and Shieldhill Guild will be among the 2000 attending and will share in the day of worship, celebration fellowship and fun.

The 3 year strategy "Be Bold Be Strong" has ended and now the Guild is being challenged to think about the new 3 year strategy, "One Journey Many Roads".

As Christians we are all on a journey and every road we personally travel may have many twists and turns. The theme for the first year is "Seeking the Way". There are many stories in the bible of people travelling sometimes alone , sometimes together but always putting their trust in God. We might follow their example. As we set out on this new challenge, we will be excited by new discoveries. We are ready for the adventure.

The council Dedication Service is in Brightons Parish Church on Thursday 27 September at 7.30pm. The Church Guild session begins on Wednesday 3 October when we will welcome our locum, Rev. Marion Perry. Male, female, young and old all are very welcome. Join us at 7.30pm for faith, fun and fellowship and that important cuppa and chat. See you there!



## **Guild Diary 2018**



27 September Council Dedication Service Brightons Parish Church  
7.30pm Thursday

3 October Rev. Marion Perry

17 October ALTERnativity Marjorie Williamson

18 October Council project evening Larbert West Parish Church  
7.30pm Thursday

1 November Crazy for You Theatre Outing Thursday

14 November Faith in Young People Boys Brigade Guild project  
Partner

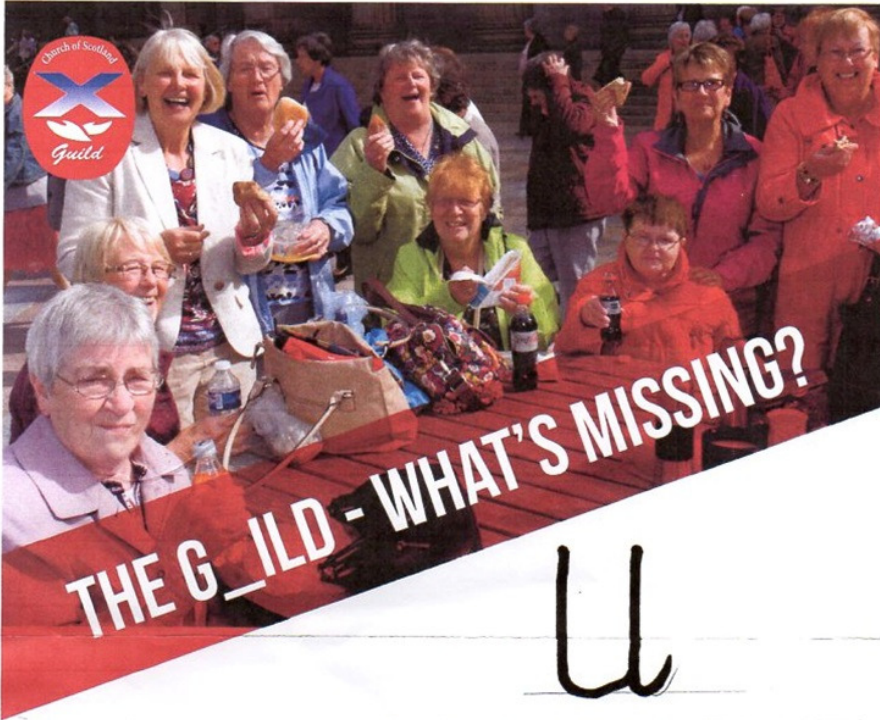
28 November St Andrew's Night Ian Scott and friends.

12 December Christmas party

### **Whose we are and Whom we serve**

**Lorna Coulter**





U

Join us on Wednesdays  
7.30pm in the church hall

We'd love to see U

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE GUILD AT [WWW.COS-GUILD.ORG.UK](http://WWW.COS-GUILD.ORG.UK)



Drew's  
view

## Familiar Things

I've not got a very good track record with sports. I made this discovery quite early on in life when I was still at school. Perhaps it was because I wasn't able to run fast. Possibly it was a lack of coordination. Maybe I was simply not a team player. Probably it was a combination of all three. In any case, I knew I wouldn't be winning any prizes for sports. You may think I'm being a little bit hard on myself and I can't have been that bad. But I can assure you - I was!

We used to play rugby each week in the middle of winter when the pitch was at its muddiest. Only I and another boy, who later went on to become a nuclear scientist, were the only people who could go on the pitch which resembled a quagmire and come back off it half an hour later with our rugby strips in pristine condition of dazzling white. It was a bit like the commercial for Daz soap powder - but in reverse!

One year I had a notion, much to the collective horror of the entire school's Physical Education Department, of joining the school football team. I wasn't selected and the collective sigh of relief was so loud that even I could hear it as I walked along outside the school changing rooms.

The strange thing about all this is that despite my awful track record with sports, I look forward to the Wimbledon Tennis Fortnight every year and watch every moment of it. I can even tell you who has won it for quite a long time back and how often it's been won by the same person.

It's not that I'm even an avid tennis fan. I don't follow any of the other tennis tournaments such as the French Open or the Davis Cup matches. I never attempted to even try the sport out until I was in my early forties. Tim Henman and Andy Murray have always done a first class job, I felt. I only ever attempted to play tennis once and only because I was forced into it by a now long departed girlfriend who happened to be a keen sportswoman. (A bit of a miss-match you might say and you would be right. She hadn't been at school with me and was unaware of my notoriety!)

My University has a National Tennis Centre - no less - and that summer, they were having a special offer going on during the Wimbledon Fortnight to try and promote tennis in Scotland. It was possible to hire one of their prestigious indoor courts at the unbelievably low price of £2 a session (excluding balls which were £1

extra.)

This offer was understandably very popular. Undaunted by my protestations of complete ineptitude, as well as my increasingly desperate protestations that I didn't own a racquet, my girlfriend simply disappeared into her cupboard, brought out a spare one and bravely, or rather foolishly as it later turned out, drove me to the Tennis Centre. She dropped me off right at the door and told me with an air of triumph that she had already booked a court for us, so that I couldn't get out of it by making out they were fully booked.

She soon learnt the horrible truth. Maturity does not enhance sporting abilities and at one point, I hit the ball so hard and completely incorrectly that the ball actually hit the roof, (which is quite a feat as it is really high!) Not only that, it would have ended up in the other courts if there hadn't been a large floor to ceiling net separating them.

Needless to say, when the ball eventually came back down after what seemed a really long expanse of time - it was out! I left the building with new respect for Messrs Henman and Murray. As we drove back home, my girlfriend sat silently in the car, rather stunned. I must add that we never went back to the Tennis Centre again as a couple.

You can understand now why I don't exactly volunteer to take part in sporting events and that I wouldn't really have much interest in watching any. So why, you might ask, do I watch the Wimbledon Fortnight every year and have done since my childhood? I've often wondered about the answer to that as well and then it gradually dawned on me.

It's the familiarity of the tournament taking place every year and the associations it has with my childhood. When I was at school, Wimbledon always took place just after I had finished for the summer holidays. It was the first thing I saw on the tv during these early days of the long summer holidays, when it seemed that time stretched out a lot longer, so there were always happy associations with this event.

It represented familiarity and stability. It also heralded the beginning of a sense of freedom for a couple of months and meant that another school term had passed. It was also, at that time, a very sedate sport, which played on the tv quite soothingly in the background and had associations with pleasant summer things like strawberries and cream, as well as endless sunny days.

Even to this day, when I watch the tournament, that sense of familiarity is still there. Certainly, the Centre Court has been

modernised a lot over the last few years, with the inclusion of a new high tech scoreboard that brings it into 21st century. There is also a roof which can be closed over the Centre Court when it rains. Next year, Number 1 Court will have a roof as well. However, the tennis court that you see on tv today, is basically unchanged from how it appeared 30 years ago - or even 50 years ago for that matter. It is somehow reassuring to see this in a world which has almost changed out of recognition since my younger days.

There is another thing in my life, which is familiar, reassuring, and I'm glad to say, never changes. That is the presence of the Lord. He never changes and will remain the same forever, despite all the events that take place in my lifetime here on earth, good or bad. His presence is familiar and just as reassuring as it was 40 years ago in my childhood, when I was causing chaos on various sports fields. I feel the same reassurance every time I walk past our Church.

The foundation stone was laid for our present church building at Shieldhill on 31st December 1864 and for me, the building is a reassuring presence because it has always been there, years and years before anyone in our present congregation was born. It has outlived kings and queens. It has seen wars come and go. It has weathered storms and been a source of comfort to many generations just like Muiravonside Church has as well. In an ever-changing world we need some kind of continuity, a kind of corner stone, which maintains our stability and it is always very reassuring to have the Lord's presence with us in our Churches.

The present Church at Shieldhill has been with us for 154 years. The present Church building at Muiravonside has been with us for 212 years and there was originally a building there that goes back all the way to around 1500. Yet, it seems like both Churches have been here forever, because they have been around as far back as each of us can remember in our own lifetimes. However, this is a very short time when we try to imagine the time span of the Lord's presence.

I got really curious about the Lord's presence through time and on one occasion tried an experiment. I imagined I had a time machine that could travel 1 year per minute. I then tried to measure how long it would take to travel back in time to various key events such as the birth as Jesus. First of all, to put things in perspective, it would take 57 minutes to travel back to the year of my birth. To go back to the year that the foundation stone for our church at Shieldhill was laid - 1864, would take 154 minutes, or just over two and a half hours.

Various scholars have put forward different dates for the birth of Jesus and the calendars were also measured differently over the centuries. Let's say for argument we went back 2018 years, using our own present Gregorian calendar system for measurement. This is a date at which the scholars would immediately scoff and say I was wrong. But even if it was correct, our time travel would take at least 2018 minutes or over 33 and a half hours.

Let's be really adventurous and go back further to Noah's time on Earth. (Again, pick your favourite Scholar or Theologian for a date – they will all differ!) I've chosen approximately 2500 BCE, which is the consensus of most biblical historians. Adding on another 2018 years to take us up to present, our time machine would need 4518 minutes or just over 3 days to take us to Noah's time.

Now, let's be extremely controversial and cause a really big theological barney by attempting to propose a date for the Creation. According to the King James Version of the Bible, the Flood was 1656 years after Creation. So if we take that calculation, we would have a date of 4156 BCE. Therefore adding on the other 2018 years would give us a total 6174 years. As a result to get us back to the approximate time of the Biblical Creation, our time machine would take 6174 minutes, or around 102 hours. A bit over 4 days, in fact.

In other words, after God created us, he has been with us for a very long time! Even since Jesus' lifetime, the expanse of time that has passed is hard for us to imagine. This is especially so when we consider the average lifespan that we have on Earth. However, the marvellous thing about this is that the presence of the Lord is still with us and completely unchanged.

Everybody has his or her favourite piece of Scripture. Some people favour the Psalms, especially the ones asking us to praise God. All of us will have a favourite hymn that inspires us with the Lord's presence, or uplifts us when we are down. My personal favourite piece of scripture comes from Hebrews. It reads:

"Jesus the same yesterday and today and forever." (Hebrews 13:8.)

I like this simple affirmation because it implies that no matter what happens in our lives, or no matter how much the world changes, the Lord has always been with us and will always be there for us. It is the one thing in life that will always be the same and we can totally depend on this.

I did go back to the National Tennis Centre recently and the very nice



people there actually let me in! However this time, I was only spectating at a Tennis Tournament that was taking place. As I enjoyed watching people play, who obviously knew what they were doing and were excellent at their sport, I did happen to glance up at the high roof and noticed that the lights all have protective covers around them now.

“Very sensible,” I thought.

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### **The Power of Prayer**

**T**he power of prayer is such a comfort.  
**H**elping us to cope in times of need.  
**E**ternally gifted to us by our Lord.

**P**roviding such hope for us all.  
**O**pening up a sacred dialogue.  
**W**ith Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.  
**E**nriching our relationship with God.  
**R**eleasing our worries and cares.

**O**ffering us such blessed hope.  
**F**eeding our spiritual hunger.

**P**utting our minds at rest.  
**R**ealising we are not alone.  
**A** chance to pray for others.  
**Y**oung or old, near or far.  
**E**ntrusting our deepest cares.  
**R**enewing our love with God.

**Drew Robertson**

## **A Little Nostalgia**

I confess, I am a hoarder. Over the years, cupboards and corners have become filled with papers, letters, books and boxes with photographs and keepsakes. This year I decided and was motivated to discard anything past its sell by date. My cupboards should then be more orderly and not filled to capacity.

Recently, tucked in a dark corner, I discovered a set of books written by Charles Dickens, the Victorian author, possibly a remnant of my secondary school days. The books brought back memories of a respected English teachers whose literature classes I really enjoyed.

I lifted one with the title "A Tale of Two Cities". This was my favourite Dickens story, perhaps because it was one of the shorter ones. Written in 1859 and published in weekly installments, it is set in the time of the French Revolution.

A young Frenchman settles in England away from the troubles but on receipt of a letter returns to France only to be arrested for allegedly family crimes. Despite his not guilty pleas, he is condemned to death but is saved from his fate when his friend Sydney Carton takes his place on the guillotine.

Thumbing through the yellowed pages I turned to Chapter 1 and read again a favourite opening poetic paragraph

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness. It was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity. It was the season of light, it was the season of Darkness. It was the spring of hope, it was winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us."

I find in these words similarities in the bible in Ecclesiastes Ch 3 and wonder if Dickens had been inspired to write this paragraph along the same lines as Ecclesiastes.

In another box, I found this gem. This too was inspired by the bible reading.

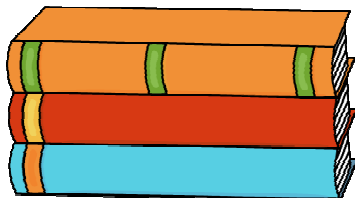
Below is an abridged version.

A time for dying and a time for rebirth,  
A time for the spirit and a time for earth  
A time for laughter, a time for tears,  
A time for courage and a time for fears  
A time to cling and a time to release  
A time for war and a time for peace.  
A time to talk and a time to be still  
A time to care and a time to kill.  
A time alone. A time for romance.  
A time to mourn. A time to dance  
A time to keep. A time to lose.  
A time to be told. A time to choose

There's a reason for everything under the sun  
A time to do and a time to be done  
A time to laugh and a time to cry  
A time to live and a time to die

My "reddin oot" has been progressing slowly but I am making a difference. The books by Charles Dickens have gone into the charity bag although I have kept one book and I'm sure you can guess which one.

### Lorna Coulter



## **The Paradox of our Age**

We have bigger houses but smaller families;  
more conveniences, but less time.

We have more degrees but less sense;  
more knowledge but less judgment;  
more experts, but more problems;  
more medicines but less healthiness.

We've been all the way to the moon and back,  
but have trouble in crossing the street to meet the new  
neighbour.

We built more computers to hold more copies than ever,  
but have less real communication;  
We have become long on quantity,  
but short on quality.

These are times of fast foods but slow digestion;  
Tall man but short character;  
Steep profits but shallow relationships.

It's a time when there is much in the window  
but nothing in the room.

**H.H. The XIVth Dalai Lama**  
**Submitted by : Rita Braes**

## Families

Some families are big  
Some families are small  
But no matter what size  
It's the same for them all...

Families are fathers that frown and say  
"We didn't do things like that in my day!"  
That shirt's rather bright! That skirt's far too tight!  
Now tell me again where you're going tonight?"

Families are Mothers who flap and fuss  
"Hurry up now or you'll miss the school bus!  
Straighten your tie, tidy your hair  
Are you sure those big ear-rings are what you can wear?"

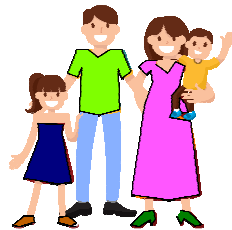
Families are brothers that joke and tease  
And when you're not looking, they give you a squeeze.  
They think they're much bigger and better than you  
And far more important in all that they do.

Families are sisters who share all your things  
Your bedroom, your records, your bracelets and rings.  
They use all your perfume and ladder your tights  
They keep you awake playing music at night.

But God's family's a unit where we all belong.  
He supports us in trouble when things have gone wrong.  
He shares in our gladness, our sadness and fears  
He loves us and cares for us, through all of the years.

From a poem by Sarah Diplock

**Submitted by Etta Napier**



### **Website**

Our magazines are now available on our website :

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

If anyone would prefer to access them this way, instead of paper format, please let your Church Elder know.

As well as saving paper, and trees, you would receive the magazine in colour. It could also be enlarged if you need to see it in large print.

### **Muiravonside Church Facebook Page**

Muiravonside Parish Church now has a Facebook page which gives all the latest news of events and can be viewed at:

<https://www.facebook.com/muiravonsideparishchurch/>



# Poetry Corner

## **The Gift Wrap and the Jewel**

I looked in the mirror and what did I see?  
But a little old lady peering back at me  
With bags and sags and wrinkles and wispy white hair  
And I asked my reflection, how did you get there?  
You once were straight and vigorous  
And now you're stooped and weak  
When I tried so hard to keep you from becoming an antique  
My reflection's eyes twinkled and she solemnly replied  
You're looking at the gift wrap and not the jewel inside  
A living gem and precious of unimagined worth  
Unique and true, the real you, the only you on earth  
The years that spoil your gift wrap with other things more cruel  
Should purify and strengthen and polish up that jewel  
So focus your attention on the inside, not the out  
On being kinder, wiser, more content and more devout  
Then when your gift wrap's stripped away  
Your jewel will be set free, to radiate God's glory throughout eternity!

**From a poem by Wanda B Goines.**

**She was 92 when she wrote this beautiful poem.**



### **A Quick Message from the Editor**

Just another quick note to thank everyone for their magazine articles. We have had such a wonderful response again, both from Blackbraes and Shieldhill and Muiravonside.

It is always such a pleasure to receive these articles and it is even more exciting compiling them and seeing the magazine take shape.

Thank you again and I look forward to the next magazine which will be the Christmas edition.

**Best Wishes from**

**Drew**

