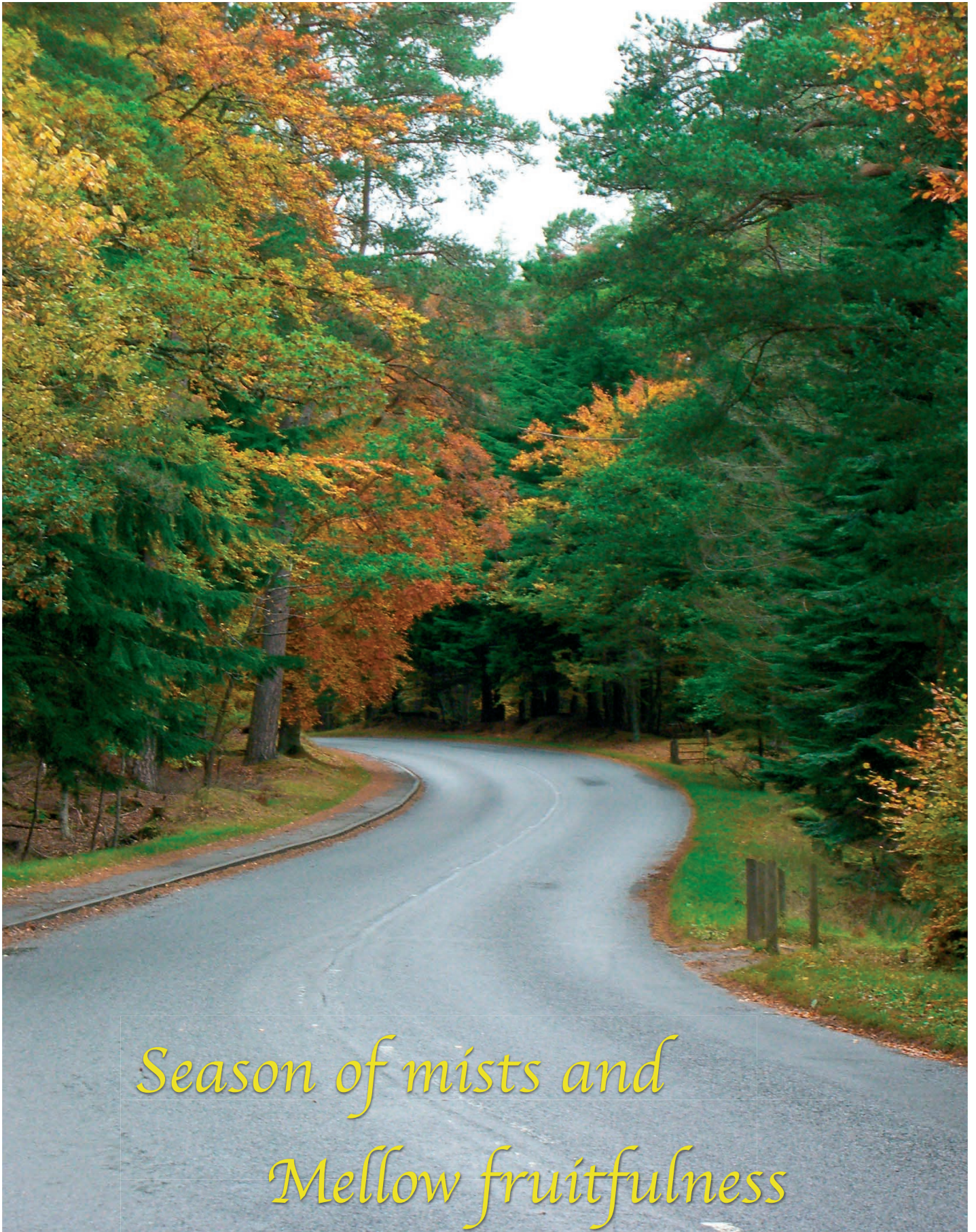


BLACKHALL BULLETIN

September 2021

PRODUCED BY BLACKHALL ST. COLUMBA'S CHURCH FOR THE COMMUNITY

No. 165



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Greetings to all in the Blackhall Community “What has the Church ever done for us?”

One of the many acknowledged comedy collaborations that has come out of the United Kingdom is the 'Monty Python' team. Whilst this group of comedians is not everyone's cup of tea - for example, my wife does not find them in the least funny - I, along with many others, often find them hysterical. The team is best known for individual comedy sketches on television, but it has also entered into the world of film and, within each film, I think, there are usually one or two sketches that particularly stand out as funny.

It may surprise you to know that I think their best film was 'The Life of Brian' which seemed, in my opinion, to have better continuity than the others. For me, one of the most memorable sketches was when the are planning to attack the Romans. The leader of the group, Reg, in trying to justify the proposed attack, raises the question 'what have the Romans ever done for us?' Another of the group comments 'the aqueduct!' Grudgingly, the leader accepts this. Then another of the group says 'sanitation' which is also accepted. As the sketch goes on each member of the group makes more and more suggestions until eventually Reg is left to say, *“All right, but apart from the sanitation, the medicine, education, wine, public order, irrigation, roads, a fresh water system, and public health, what have the Romans ever done for us?”*

Whilst this is obviously a farcical comedy sketch, there does lie within it a grain of truth about human nature. People can have short memories for the things that are achieved and benefit them. We tend to focus on the negative, on what we see as our problems rather than those issues and problems which have now been solved.

I think sometimes the Church (and by Church I am referring to the wider idea of Church rather than a specific Parish or congregation) suffers from this short-term memory. For this article, I have been thinking 'what has the Church ever done for us?' In thinking about this question, I'm going to focus only on some of the more secular aspects of what the Church has done. These Church led initiatives still go on today and are transforming people's lives. These initiatives continue to work with and benefit the community in numerous ways.

Probably one of the earliest impacts of Christianity on the world was the creation of an almost universally accepted dating system. We are presently in the year 2021 A.D. The letters A.D. stand for the Latin words 'Anno Domini' which mean 'in the year of our Lord'. The time before Jesus' coming is referred to as B.C., meaning 'before Christ'. Although we might now question the exact year of Jesus' birth, it is a fact that our entire dating system is based on the year in which Jesus was thought to have been born and that remains the case even although, nowadays, with the advent of a more secular and multi-faith culture, the dates tend to be referred to by the terms C.E. and B.C.E. which are supposed to mean the 'Common Era' and 'Before the Common Era'. I like to think of them as standing for the 'Christian Era' and 'Before the Christian Era'.

One of the biggest impacts the Church has had is on our language. The fact that we, in the United Kingdom, all speak English is largely down to the introduction of the King James Bible. Prior to that, we had numerous regional languages. Even within these regions, different areas used different words or pronunciations for the same things. The King James Bible was the first book which was read the entire length of the country. It had a huge impact in developing English as we know it today.

Included in the development of our language are numerous everyday expressions that people use without even realising that their origins are from within the Bible. Expressions such as 'a leopard can't change its spots' (Jeremiah 13:23) or 'by the skin of your teeth' (Job 19:20). There are many more which may become the subject of another article.

Within Scotland specifically, the Church has had an enormous impact. The Church led the way in challenging the power of the sovereign and Parliament in certain areas. This eventually led to an independent Church free from interference from the state which in turn led to many of the things we take for granted today.

Our entire education system stems from the work of the Church. The Scottish Reformation resulted in major changes to the organisation and nature of education, with the loss of choir schools and the expansion of parish schools, along with the reform and expansion of the Universities. In the seventeenth century, legislation, by the Church, enforced the creation and funding of schools in every parish often overseen by presbyteries of the local kirk. By the end of the 15th century, schools were also being organised for girls and universities were founded by the Church at St Andrews, Glasgow and Aberdeen. In fact, originally no one could be a professor of *any* subject without holding a degree in theology first. It is widely recognised that Scotland's university system did help to make it one of the major contributors to the Enlightenment in the 18th century, producing major figures such as David Hume and Adam Smith whose work and influence were considerable.

It was as late as the end of the nineteenth century that the Church-organised educational system was reorganised and expanded to produce a state-funded national system of free basic education and common examinations.

Nowadays, we, in this country, are justifiably proud of our welfare system. It was not always the case. From the start of the Scottish Reformation in 1560 until 1845, the responsibility for the poor fell on the (Church of Scotland) parish, and this was shared jointly by the local landowners and the kirk sessions. Each parish was responsible for their own poor, i.e. those who had settlement there, either through birth, marriage or length of residence.

In my own home town of Glasgow, the situation was more complicated. There were a number of parishes in Glasgow and they organised themselves into the 'General Session'. In 1733, the General Session managed to get the Town Council to build the Town's Hospital. This was partly a workhouse, partly a hospital, partly an old folks' home and partly an orphanage. By the end of the 18th century, a system had been established in Glasgow whereby poor people applied for help first of all to their church elder who assessed their need. If it was a small allowance that was needed, it was paid out of local kirk session funds. If the needs were greater, a person would have to apply to the Town's Hospital and they were given either indoor or outdoor relief.

I could go on and on with more and more examples of what the Church has set up and put in place that we, as a society, enjoy and take for granted. Like in the Monty Python sketch, the answer to 'what has the Church ever done for us?' becomes longer and longer the more you think about it.

However, that is in the past, what of the future? I believe that this legacy of achieving things for the greater good stands us in good stead to challenge the dominance of certain social groups over others within our country and push for even greater benefits for society. Jesus has taught us about the all-inclusive loving nature of God.

In John 10:10, Jesus said, "*I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.*" Jesus came to give something, not to get something. Christians are given abundant life at the moment they accept Jesus. However, that life is "abundant" from a heavenly perspective, not an earthly perspective. It is up to us as Christians to bring about that abundant life on earth. There are plenty more issues that we in the Church are working to resolve and situations we are working to improve including greater gender equality, less racism, fairer distribution of the world's resources, reversion of climate change etc. etc. So, I think, the more important question we should ask is 'what IS the Church doing me me/us?' If you want to know the answer to that, you are very welcome to come along and join with us and see for yourself. You will be very welcome.

God bless all in the Blackhall community,
Fergus

For details of church services on line and in St Columba's please see the church website at www.blackhallstcolumba.org.uk



NEWS FROM JUNIOR SINGERS

Like all choirs, this last year has been very different to normal for members of Blackhall St Columba's Junior Singers. In the session 2019 – 2020, we had been learning the songs of the musical, 'Captain Noah and his Floating Zoo' with a view to putting on a public performance in June 2020. We had actually progressed to rehearsing on stage and discussions for costumes had taken place – when Covid-19 put a halt to everything. For some of the singers, it was doubly cruel as this was to be their last performance with The Singers before moving on to Secondary School.



With the discovery of Zoom, we had a few sessions on-line (never as satisfactory as group singing) which culminated in the children making individual recordings at home of one of the Noah songs, which were then mixed to form one video of the children singing together. Then in late spring 2021, restrictions lifted sufficiently to allow the remaining primary-aged children to meet in Amy Donaldson's Garden, while observing all the Covid rules, after school, to sing and hopefully prepare for a possible church performance. Then – finally! – on Sunday, 20th June, a small group of children sang 'Did You Ever Talk to God Above' during morning worship. It was an emotional moment to see and hear them once more in church singing out in their usual enthusiastic fashion.

As was said at the beginning, it has been a difficult year for the Junior Singers as we couldn't really recruit for new members under such circumstances. These regulations, however, may hopefully have changed by the time our new session starts on Thursday, 2nd September (3.45 – 4.30pm). If you have children in the P3 – P7 age group, or know of any who may be interested, please feel free to phone Amy Donaldson (332 1354) and we'll provide any extra information. All boys and girls in the above age group are welcome – the only requirement is an enjoyment of singing.



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***“One more step along the world I go...
From the old things to the new,
Keep me travelling along with you”***

For so many years while I was teaching, this lively song was a regular feature of the Primary Farewell Assemblies, where my role as a High School Guidance Teacher was to acknowledge the brilliant work the P7 had done that year and assure the parents of the welcome that awaited their children in their new “houses” at Auchmuty High.

This Autumn, four years into retirement, the words of the song actually seem more relevant than ever. Not only the Blackhall School Leavers, but all of us, have faced the challenge of moving “from the old things to the new”, learning to cope with all the changes that have resulted from the events of the last eighteen months.

For our family, the biggest change has been the arrival of wee Arty, born last September. I’ve been fortunate to be able to spend so much time with my youngest grandchild, in his “bubble”, and over the summer he has been taking his first steps. Always more keen to be up on his feet than to crawl, he found that, with arms upstretched and hands grasping ours, he could move forward and get hold of whichever toy or book he had spotted across the room. As his strength and balance grew, he gradually progressed from being fully supported to pulling himself up to stand and sidestepping round the furniture; then, holding on tightly to a little wooden baby-walker, he could push forward without our help – until he had to turn a corner! Today, he has been intent on walking with just one hand held, and he will soon experience the delight of walking independently. (In fact, by the time you read this, Gran will probably be exhausted from chasing round after him, keeping him safe!)



Over the summer we have all been learning to let go of the restrictions that were in place to keep us safe. While many of us embraced each step forward, just like little Arty, desperate to be independent and free to go where we choose, many of us have preferred to take things more gradually, wary of the consequences of moving too fast. As with all of life’s journey, however, it is so much easier if we have someone to rely on, someone to walk alongside us, to give us a supporting hand. That’s the encouragement of the repeated chorus line of the song, “travelling along with you”, putting our faith and trust in God himself, who has offered to be our constant companion. It reminds me of the image from Psalm 23, of God as a shepherd, leading his flock “in the paths of righteousness” to settle in “green pastures”.

As we move forward as a community “from the old things to the new”, re-establishing relationships and activities that are so vital for our lives together, we might want to echo the words of another verse from that simple school song –

***“Give me courage when the world is rough
Keep me loving when the world is tough”***

Throughout the changing scenes of life, when the path becomes steep or the way forward seems unclear, we can reach out to God in prayer, drawing on his strength to cope with whatever lies ahead.

“Keep me travelling along with you”

MS



We have just been informed that the Art Club can start up again at the end of August and we are excited about this after such a long time of not being able to meet. By the time this goes out we should have been able to have had a couple of art sessions – I wonder how much painting will get done versus the chat that there will inevitably be!

Many of us have struggled to get the paintbrushes or pencils out over the last few months as we need the encouragement of others to do so. The good weather has also made it more tempting to be outside and potter in the garden or visit parks.

Now that we can do so, visiting family and friends, who we have not seen for a long time, has also been more of a priority to painting.

Admittedly there are a few members who have kept painting and have built up a considerable number of completed paintings. Hopefully when we do get back, we can put photos of paintings done during lockdown and beyond on our notice boards in the halls.

Through weekly newsletters, Valerie has shared with members what others have been doing, what holidays have been taken, what online art courses members have done, what exhibitions are worth visiting and any other information that might be of interest to keep us all connected.

Valerie Gordon

TUESDAY TOPICS

Hello members and friends of Tuesday Topics, Blackhall St Columba's Church.

We now have good news regarding resuming our meetings. Plans are underway to start our new session on 11th January 2022! However, this will depend on any restrictions that might still be in place at that time. Current restrictions do not allow us to meet in the Small Hall, and instead we are booked to meet in the Church Sanctuary. Full details will be sent to members nearer the time.

We do hope you are all well.
Very best wishes.

Jacky Cowie, Secretary
Eleanor Lowrie, President

NORTH WEST HERITAGE

As the Bulletin goes to press our local history group has not yet organised meetings for Session 21/22. Due to social distancing and cleaning practices, there are currently restrictions on the use of local church halls. If these restrictions continue there is much more demand for the larger halls and we accept that regular church groups have priority. We are therefore waiting for the next round of guidelines in August before arranging a syllabus. This may mean that the session may not start until a bit later i.e., October rather than September but we do hope to be able to have meetings arranged at some point in the session. While it is disappointing to miss the opportunity for advertising meetings through The Bulletin at this time there are always posters in some local shops, Library and the church vestibule. We also have flyers in Blackhall Library giving details about the group and listing the talks on the current syllabus.

If you are interested in attending future talks/meetings, please contact the Secretary Charlotte Cowe on 336 2494 or email her at charlotte@dmains.co.uk. She will be pleased to keep you updated as to any progress.

Charlotte Cowe
Secretary

Edinburgh Floral Art Club

The Chairman and Committee of Edinburgh Floral Art Club hope to welcome members and friends, old and new, to the AGM and a floral art demonstration in Blackhall St Columba's Church Hall, on Friday 10th September at 2pm.

This will of course depend on Scottish Government and Church of Scotland Covid19 guidelines at this time.

Isabel Ingram

BADMINTON CLUB

The Badminton Club *hopes* to be able to restart on Wednesday 22nd September. As with other organisations, this will depend on Covid 19 restrictions at that time. The Club has two sections:

Wednesday 8.15 – 10.15 pm

Thursday 9.30 am – 12 noon

The Club welcomes new players. Please contact Linda Finnie, at lindafinnie@hotmail.co.uk for more information.



• Edinburgh •

ITEM LIST

Fruit	Food cupboard
Tinned peaches	Rice Crispies
Tinned mixed fruit	Corn Flakes
Tinned pears	Weetabix
Tinned grapefruit	Porridge
Vegetables	Coco Pops
Tinned beans	Variety packs
Tinned peas	Pasta
Tinned sweetcorn	Rice
Tinned potatoes	Noodles
Tinned tomatoes	Instant noodles/pot noodles
Tinned carrots	Instant rice packet
Tinned mixed veg	Instant pasta packet
Meat and Fish	Stock cubes
Tinned Tuna	Mayonnaise
Tinned Salmon	Ketchup
Tinned Sardines	Jam
Tinned Mackerel	Sugar
Meatballs	Herbs and Spices
Chilli	World foods
Spam	Coconut milk, black eye beans, kidney beans
Tinned Pork/Ham	Jasmine rice, basmati rice, "Old El Paso" Tex mex
Hot dogs	Items, herbal teas, couscous, lentils, dried beans and
Corned beef	Pulses
'Ready' meals	Cleaning products
Spaghetti Bolognaise	Laundry detergent
Spaghetti in tomato sauce	Bleach
Ravioli	Anti-bacterial spray
Spaghetti hoops	Toilet cleaner
Macaroni cheese	Washing up liquid
Soup	
Puddings	
Custard	
Rice pudding	
Biscuits	
Crisps	
Drinks	
Tea	
Coffee	
Juice cartons – apple, orange, other fruit juices	
Diluting juice	
Toiletries	
Hand soap	
Shampoo	
Shower gel	
Toothbrushes (adult and child)	
Baby wipes	
Tissues	

Fresh Start

helping people make a home for themselves

As this goes to press we are unable to give information about restarting our regular collection of items in the halls for Fresh Start. However there are opportunities to donate goods for the starter packs and the shop by taking them directly to the Fresh Start warehouse at 22-24 Ferry Road Drive. They are open to receive donations Monday to Thursday from 9am-4pm.

Fresh Start has now opened a homeware shop alongside the pantry and so, as well as donations for Starter Packs and food for their packs and pantry (see page 8) , there is a further list of items which they can accept.

The **HOMEWARE SHOP** will accept the following:

Cushions

Throws or blankets

Children's bedding

Vases

Mirrors

Small pictures

Photo frames

Bathroom accessories such as towel racks, bathmats, toothbrush holders etc.

Tea pots and tea sets

Wine and beer glasses

Kitchen utensils

Small electrical items such as lamps and standard lamps, crockpots/slow cookers, blenders, clock radios.

Please only donate items which are on the above list or the Starter Pack or Pantry lists as the warehouse has limited space and has must pay for disposal of items which are not on the lists. (The starter pack list can be found in June's Blackhall Bulletin)

Thank you for all your support and your continued donations of goods to Fresh Start. We hope that soon circumstances will allow for resumption of our weekly collection in the halls but meanwhile Fresh Start will be delighted to receive donations at their warehouse.



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KNIT AND NATTER

Well, it is finally looking like good news. As things look at the moment, I am hopeful that we can meet again in September, beginning on Monday September the 6th. We are to have a new home in the Sanctuary so no more checking which hall we are in each week. Our time doesn't alter, we will still meet at 7.30pm.

As with everything in these uncertain times we will have to wait and see, but fingers and needles crossed. By the time you are reading this I will have delivered all our knits from the last good while to Pregnancy Counselling and Care who are looking forward to receiving them.

We would be delighted to welcome any new faces to our group whatever your level of skill is. Please don't think you mightn't be good enough, and if you are new to knitting, we are happy to help you get started. Nattering and friendship are equally important.

For further details please contact me at stcknitnatter@gmail.com

Lilian Cockburn



CAMEO (Come And Meet Each Other) Club

Life is slowly getting back to some sort of “normality” but for Cameo we have to wait until the Church of Scotland regulations and Scottish Government guidelines allow us to meet again at St Columba’s Church.

There is some sad news to report since we last met. Two of our faithful members, Mrs Isla Greenwood and Mrs Elizabeth (Betty) Harrison have sadly died. Isla kept a watchful eye on the birthdays of all our members - she duly sent a card to arrive on the exact day. The recipients greatly appreciated a card from the Cameo Club. One of our younger volunteers, Vicky Mamani, is continuing this worthwhile task.

Unfortunately, there is no positive word about starting up before January. The situation is the same as when we wrote the article for the Blackhall Bulletin in June. We will continue to update you as to when it may be possible to meet together again for coffee and a chat. Like members, we are looking forward to that day!

Meantime - keep well and stay safe.

Margaret Brown. Fiona Drinnan
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Coming again soon we hope !



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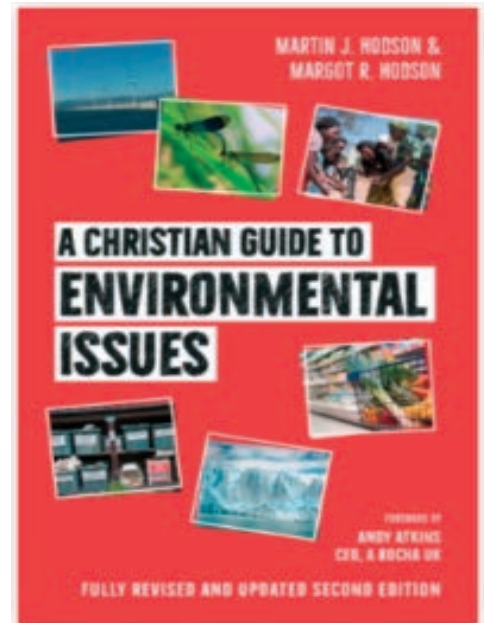
BOOK REVIEW CORNER

A Christian Guide to Environmental Issues

By Martin Hodson and Margot Hodson, BRF, £9.99

Environmental sustainability is a major issue for us all. In this extensively updated edition, Martin and Margot Hodson consider eight of the key current environmental problems, giving the biblical basis for looking after the environment and helping to integrate environmental thinking into the reader's understanding of Christian faith.

This guide includes ethical reflections, Bible studies focusing on a different biblical doctrine for each chapter, and eco-tips to enable practical response. Among the issues covered are climate change, food, biodiversity, and population, together with the relationship between environmental problems and issues relating to world development.



Sarah Eberle's Psalm 23 Garden

Design tips for a calm green space

Sarah Eberle's Psalm 23 Garden – design tips for a calm green space

Bible Society, £6.50

Sarah Eberle, winner of 17 gold medals at Chelsea and Hampton Court Flower Shows, has designed the Bible Society's entry garden for the RHS Chelsea Flower Show this month (September 2021).

The theme of the garden is Psalm 23, and this is the full-colour book of photographs to go with it. Based on the themes of rest and peace, it offers a place of refuge and restoration, which is reflected in the meditations and stories within the book.

The book also offers tips from Sarah Eberle on how to create your own peaceful outdoor space.

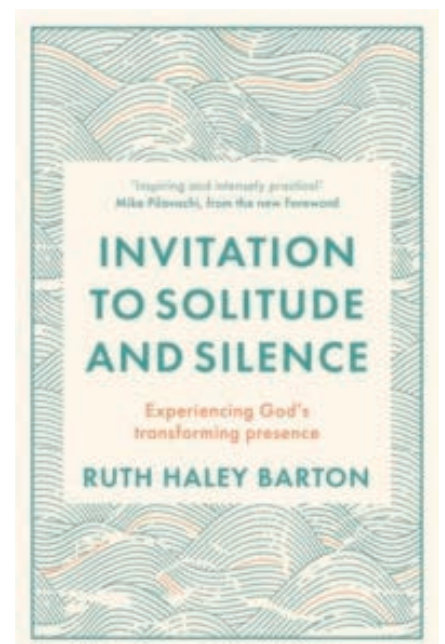
Invitation to Solitude and Silence – experiencing God's transforming presence

By Ruth Haley Barton, SPCK, £9.99 (new edition)

This is a practical introduction to the spiritual practice of silence and solitude.

Much of the Christian faith is about words – preaching, teaching, talking with others. But the hectic demands and noise of daily modern life can drown out God's words and keep us from fully meeting Him.

The book explores the power of quietness and stillness in connecting with God. Filled with practical exercises, it will be helpful for anyone looking for spiritual disciplines to help them connect more fully with God and practices to aid their spiritual formation.



Point of Concern

In the past, *The Bulletin* used to have a 'Point of Concern' page where issues concerning us all were looked at and considered from the Church of Scotland viewpoint. In this issue, with wildfire raging in Greece and in some US states, we look at Climate Change from the World Mission section of the Church of Scotland website pre the COP26 in Glasgow in November. It is not only wildfires and heat, but flooding and droughts that are causing problems. Please read on to see what we can do.

Why should Christians care about the planet?

In the very first book of the bible, in Genesis 1, God says: "Let us make human beings in our image, make them reflecting our nature so they can be responsible for the fish in the sea, the birds in the air, the cattle, and, yes, Earth itself." It's a pretty clear message that God wants us to look after planet earth.

What are we doing to the planet?

OK, back to basics... Our planet is surrounded by atmosphere – a layer of gases that act like a blanket. Without it we would freeze, but make it too thick, and the planet starts to warm up.

We're doing two things to increase the amount of these "greenhouse gases". We're burning more fossil fuels, and we're cutting down the trees that absorb greenhouse gases from the atmosphere.

Global average temperatures are increasing each year, and according to NASA, 2016 was the hottest year globally since records began in 1880!

Just think about your average day. Your gas burning boiler probably kicks in before you wake up, to heat your house and your hot water. You then start switching on lights and appliances, using electricity that might be produced by burning coal. You have your breakfast – the cereal has been planted, harvested, and transported using diesel. The milk has come from cows who (accidentally) emit methane (another greenhouse gas) and must be transported by a lorry burning diesel. You then go outside and get into your car, which burns petrol. An aeroplane flies overhead, burning kerosene. You get the idea! Over the past fifty years our western lifestyles have become more and more dependent on oil and other fossil fuels, and our greenhouse gas emissions, or carbon emissions, have increased in line with this.

Does climate change matter?

One of the major impacts of the planet warming up is that the arctic ice caps are melting. And as the seas warm up, the water in them expands. These are two of the factors that contribute to raising sea levels, causing problems for low-lying islands and coastal communities around the world. The increase in water temperature also causes coral bleaching.

An increase in temperature is also causing glaciers to melt. In many countries around the Himalayas people rely on annual melt-water from the glaciers for their water supply. As the planet heats up, some weather systems become more forceful, and there is an increase in the frequency and severity of extreme weather events such as floods, droughts, and storms, all of which can lead to food shortages.

How is climate change affecting people in less developed countries?



People all over the world are being affected by climate change however those in less developed countries are feeling the impact more severely. Many of our partners in Africa and Asia are small-scale farmers relying on rain-fed agriculture. When there are droughts or floods the impacts can be devastating.

The fact that the people in the countries most affected by climate change are also the people who have a very simple lifestyle, with significantly smaller carbon emissions, is an injustice referred to as "Climate Justice".

As Christians we have a responsibility to take action to change this situation. In Leviticus and throughout the bible we are told "love your neighbour as you love yourself". It therefore follows that we should reduce our carbon emissions and halt the increase in

global temperatures as soon as possible.

So, what is anyone doing?

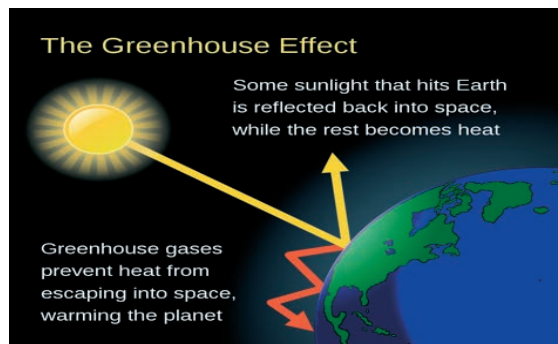
It's not all doom and gloom. Amazingly in 2015 every country in the world sat down together in Paris and agreed that climate change is a serious issue and that attempts must be made to avoid the global average temperature from increasing more than two degrees.

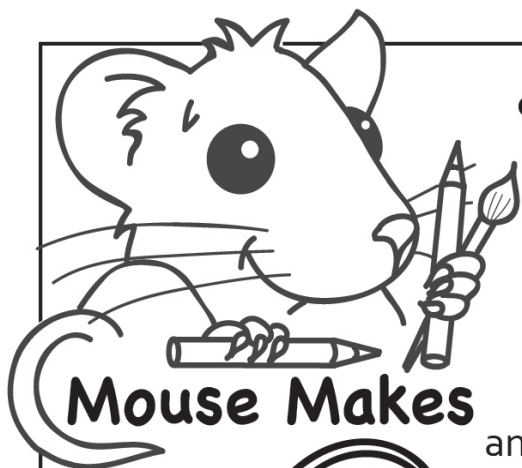
The Scottish Government has possibly the most ambitious climate change targets in the world and already more than half of our electricity is produced from renewable sources.

Eco-Congregation Scotland has been formed to help churches to tackle climate change by raising awareness of it, taking practical action to reduce the carbon footprint of church buildings, and to reach out both locally and internationally.

What can I do?

Individually, you can think about how your choices affect your carbon emissions. You could walk or cycle instead of always driving, or you could investigate buying an electric car, especially if you are a two-car family. You could decide to always take the train to London instead of flying. You could make sure your house is as well insulated as possible to reduce the amount of energy needed to heat it and change to LED light bulbs. You could make sure you are recycling as much as you can. You could ensure that you buy your electricity from renewable sources, or better still start generating your own using solar panels, or other micro-renewables. If you have financial investments, make sure that your money is supporting the development of renewable energy rather than fossil fuels. You could ask your local politician what they are doing about climate change, and when you vote you could take this into consideration. You could go and plant lots of trees! You could pray.





Mouse Makes

Read the story in Mark 1:1-20



Once there was a man who went out to sow corn. As he *scattered* the seed in the field some of it fell along the **path** where it was stepped on and **eaten** by the birds. Some of it fell on **rocky ground**, when the plants sprouted they **dried** up because the soil was dry. Some of the seed fell among **thorns** which grew up with the plants and **choked** them, and some seed fell in the **good** soil; the plants grew and produced corn - a **hundred** grains each!



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HAVE YOU CONSIDERED COMMUNITY GARDENING?



What a strange summer this has been! It is not often one's greenhouse crops stop growing due to excessive heat and three months ago little did we expect the summer of 2021 to be yet another year of a drought. I am sure like me your garden has produced numerous successes as well as points of interest, and, in my case, bumblebees nesting in my stone steps from the kitchen was certainly a highlight. Have you been lucky in having lots of bumblebees in your garden and if so, have you investigated their likes and dislikes? If not, do look at <https://www.bumblebeeconservation.org>.

There is also a major trend away from using summer bedding plants such as begonias, and impatiens and to use annual mixes containing calendula, clarkia, cosmos and nigella; if these names sound familiar it is because these are the hardy annuals used by our parents and grandparents to give colour as well as to encourage pollinators such as bees, butterflies and moths. Nothing is ever new, and we can learn much from the way our grandparents gardened.

One result of these extending restrictions has been the massive increase in gardening as a form of relaxation and given the option of a two mile run or two hours pottering in the garden, I know which one I would choose. One way for widening one's knowledge is to become involved with one of numerous gardening groups that have sprouted up locally such as *Friendly Garden Visits EH4*, who use social media to connect and then visit gardens within the greater Blackhall/Davidson's Mains area. Alternatively another new group that started at the beginning of lockdown is the Friends of Lauriston Castle Estate

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/349756012683030> whose main purpose is to improve the plantings around the Castle as well as reinvigorate the Royal Scots Memorial Garden. Working beside others is often therapeutic plus one picks up simple gardening tips, as well as being able to sit and talk on a bench. In many ways this is a mutated form of The Friendly Bench concept <https://www.thefriendlybench.co.uk>. Why not email the group at Lauriston for more information? friendsoflauristoncastleestate@gmail.com



As I imply, community gardening does involve much interchange of ideas. Recently when visiting a group, I was encouraged to spend time discussing with a retired molecular biologist different composting regimes such as incorporating shredded paper and cardboard with grass clippings together with weeds, but stressing not to add any pernicious weeds or diseased plant material as the heat of a domestic compost heap will not kill or destroy the fungal spores of the infected tissue. We also discussed the molecular breakdown of herbicides in the soil and their long-term effects. Perhaps you may wonder how two OAPs can find such a conversation riveting?

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Blackhall Guiding

After the summer break all units are looking forward to getting back together for more fun and adventures



Some of our Rainbows (as well as a Leader) were very excited to receive their green Blue Peter badge after becoming 'Climate Heroes'. Our program activities will be equipping us with 'Skills for our Future' as a couple of Rainbows work towards the Gold section award. **Claire Slaine - 157 Rainbows**



202 and 202B Brownies had lots of fun outdoors come rain or shine at the end of term. From horse riding, kite making and ending the term with our annual sausage sizzle. As our real Disneyland Paris trip was cancelled I took the girls on a surprise 'virtual' trip to Disneyland Paris where they took

part in different Disney themed activities. This term the girls look forward to more adventures starting with paddle boarding and kayaking with the help of a donation from the Blackhall Sports Committee and completing more badges to gain their theme awards. **Nicole Harland - 202 and 202B Brownie Leader**



Guides are continuing to enjoy meeting outdoors for the time being. We're also looking forward to our 'day camp' at Fordell Firs, where we will do some traditional camp activities as well as an adrenalin-fuelled zip wire. **Lorna Kelly - 202 Guide Leader**



Rangers have enjoyed making campfires in the woods and on Cramond Beach. We have also made our way into town to enjoy some Taco Bell and do scavenger hunts and we look forward to continuing to meet outdoors and learning some camping skills.. **Chelsie Wyatt - Ranger Leader.**

Volunteer with Girlguiding Edinburgh?

Could you spare some time to volunteer with us? It's an exciting time to be part of Girlguiding as we get to grips with our most exciting (and biggest) programme overhaul in 100 years!

At the moment some of our units are looking for more enthusiastic leaders/unit helpers to join their packs. If you would be interested, please email the address below or apply using the link below Full training and support provided. See our website or register online for more information:

<https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/get-involved/become-a-volunteer/>

GGUKBlackhallDistrict@outlook.com



Blackhall

Nursery News

September 2021



Blackhall Nursery is situated within the wonderful nature resource of Ravelston Park and Woods. At Blackhall Nursery, we put the children at the heart of everything we do. We provide a safe, healthy and happy environment where children grow and develop through play and active learning.

As always, the summer term has passed by in a flash. The children have been very busy learning through play. Outdoors has become very important, particularly this year and the children have benefitted from some new purchases of ‘loose parts’ – open-ended resources such as pipes, planks, tyres and guttering, where they are only limited by their imaginations. This has supported their physical development as they have carried, dragged and lifted items into position. Problem solving skills, negotiation and teamwork have been evident too as they work together to create some amazing structures.

We have enjoyed sports day, watched our tadpoles change into frogs, caterpillars into butterflies, harvested our home-grown vegetables and more! Now it is time to say goodbye as lots of our children move on to Primary One and we look forward to welcoming a new cohort due to start in August.

Blackhall Nursery is a registered Scottish charity working in partnership with the City of Edinburgh Council. We offer full day (6 hours) places for 3-5 year olds during term time.

You can place your child’s name on the Nursery waiting list from their 2nd birthday by downloading an application form at www.blackhallnursery.co.uk or by contacting the Nursery for an application form on 0131 332 8296.

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BLACKHALL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Primary 2 have been exploring their local community in Blackhall and have made junk models of some of the landmarks in the area.



BLACKHALL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Primary 5/4 chose to learn about Iceland as their topic. They have been learning about the Northern Lights and created this striking artwork to show the colours and movement.





CRAIGLEITH MEN'S PROBUS



Little did I think when writing in late May that “soon we will be looking forward to returning to Blackhall Bowling Club, once a risk assessment has been carried out, for our fortnightly meetings” that in late summer 2021, this would still be our message. However, unlike many other Probus Clubs, and similar organisations who have ceased to operate, Craigleith Probus has continued to flourish throughout lockdown with regular Zoom sessions with conversational banter so that we can all keep in touch, as well as meeting up informally ‘on street corners’ thus abiding by the restrictions. At time of writing our Annual Spring Lunch at Bonhams, scheduled for September (*perhaps not knowing the difference ‘tween spring and autumn comes with age!*) will still take place but an update will follow closer to the time.

Jim, our well organised Speakers Secretary, has arranged a range of interesting talks, which will be on the first & third Wednesday of the month starting in October, with themes as varied as ‘Did the real SS Titanic sink?’, and ‘The Golden Years of Scottish Football’, although some may disagree that the Golden Years were in the 1950-60s. Another theme being explored is one of ‘The Red Light Zone’, which I am sorry to say refers to a laugh ‘n’ tell of BBC Radio and not about areas of Leith, which would in fact involve a talk on Leith Community Growing in Pots!

However, the location of our meetings is still a matter of conjecture. It is hoped they will be within Blackhall Bowling Club, but, although not desirable, they still be via Zoom. Whatever occurs details will follow to all existing members and can be also accessed by emailing infocpc21@gmail.com.

Perhaps the underlying message is that Craigleith Probus is still at the beating heart of the Blackhall community, as in previous years, and will certainly not be a group of grey haired old fuddy duddies.

Do get in touch with us if you want any more information by emailing us at infocpc21@gmail.com or email me at johnmaclellanuk@gmail.com, finally remember that no Probus meeting is ever complete without a mug of coffee (or tea) and just a few chocolate biscuits!

John MacLennan: Past President
<https://craigleithprobus.myfreesites.net>.



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Blackhall Probus Club



The Blackhall Probus Club is part of a UK-wide group which organizes social events for retired gentlemen in the local area. With a membership of around fifty, we normally meet on the first and third Thursday of the month from October through to May at the Blackhall Bowling Club on Keith Row at 10:00 to chat over tea/coffee/biscuits before listening to a talk given by experts and enthusiasts across a diverse range of subjects. We also organise two lunches and a summer outing each year to which partners are invited.

Due to Covid-19, our programme last year was curtailed somewhat but we still had regular meetings via Zoom which were well received by our members. Talks included topics as diverse as “*The life and times of Deacon Brodie*”, “*Attitudes to illegitimacy*” and “*The preservation of ancient human remains*”. Our new session commences on 21st October which will be a Zoom presentation by one of our members who will describe his experiences growing up in South Africa. As for face-to-face meetings, we hope to re-start these in spring 2022 or earlier, subject to Government restrictions.

We are always pleased to welcome new members, so if you would like to join us, please contact the Secretary for more details.

Keith Gilroy, Secretary,
Blackhall Probus Club

Phone: 0131 312 6060 Email: ksgprobus@virginmedia.com

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BLACKHALL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

Like many other groups and societies 'the horti' is suffering from lack of clarity in how it can meet. At present the restrictions limit the numbers allowed in the church premises, with number restrictions, and any meeting held cannot involve any practical demonstrations.

There was, in the early summer months, a most enjoyable visit to one of our members' gardens in Gardiner Road, and if there is a demand these can easily be repeated. It is interesting to note that the idea of such exchanges of ideas by garden visits has also been undertaken by a similar group Friendly Garden Visits EH4 with get togethers being organised via Facebook social media platform.

However once restrictions ease one can sure a buoyant gardening group in which gardening tips and plant exchange will rise like a phoenix.

If you would like to get more closely involved in a rebooted 'horti', let us know. Contact Sheena, the horti President, via blackhall.horti@gmail.com, or comment or message us via the Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/211472892232483>.



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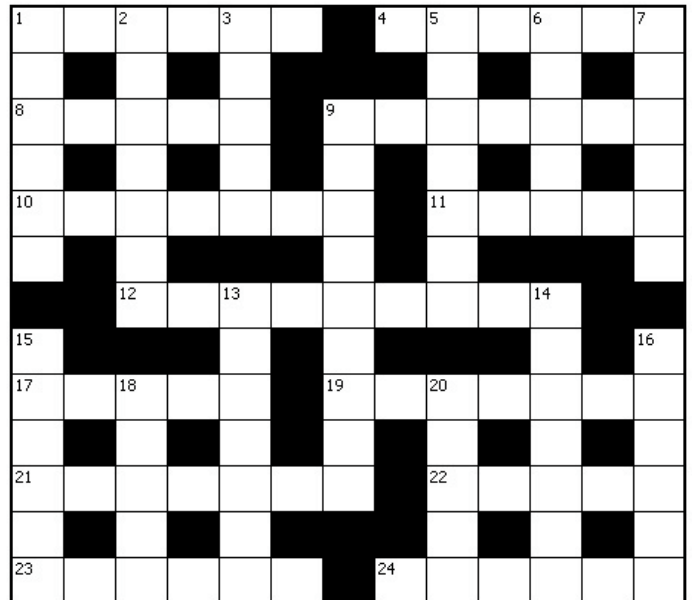
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Crossword clues

Clues Across

- 1 'Through [Christ] we have gained by faith into this grace' (Romans 5:2) (6)
- 4 Deprives of sight (Deuteronomy 16:19) (6)
- 8 The words of a hymn do this (mostly) (5)
- 9 Faithful allegiance (1 Chronicles 12:33) (7)
- 10 Belgium's chief port (7)
- 11 Where John was baptizing 'because there was plenty of water' (John 3:23) (5)
- 12 Imposing height (Psalm 48:2) (9)
- 17 Jesus' tempter in the wilderness (Mark 1:13) (5)
- 19 Comes between Amos and Jonah (7)
- 21 'Your will be done' ... as it is in heaven' (Matthew 6:10) (2,5)
- 22 Gale (Matthew 8:24) (5)
- 23 Axle, eh? (anag.) (6)
- 24 'Out of the... I cry to you, O Lord' (Psalm 130:1) (6)

Clues Down

- 1 Popular Christian author and humorist, Plass (6)
- 2 Transparent ice-like mineral (Revelation 4:6) (7)
- 3 Method of compelling surrender by surrounding target of attack (2 Chronicles 32:1) (5)
- 5 Expose (Isaiah 52:10) (3,4)
- 6 Lonny (anag.) (5)
- 7 Utterance (1 Timothy 1:15) (6)
- 9 Husband of Deborah, the prophetess (Judges 4:4) (9)
- 13 Burial service (Jeremiah 34:5) (7)
- 14 What Christ threatened to do to the lukewarm church in Laodicea (Revelation 3:16) (4,3)
- 15 Simon Peter climbed aboard and dragged the net (John 21:11) (6)
- 16 His response to Jesus' decision to return to Judea was 'Let us also go, that we may die with him' (John 11:16) (6)
- 18 There will be weeping and gnashing of ... (Matthew 8:12) (5)
- 20 Walkway between rows of pews in a church (5)



Blackhall St Columba's Church of Scotland, Edinburgh
 Scottish Registered Charity No SC008756

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Church Secretary
 Ms Joy McGonigal-Paget
 in Church Office from
 Tues-Fri 10.00-12.30p.m.
 Tel/fax 332 4431

DEADLINES

Kirk News – Sunday 12th September

Please send all items to the Editor;
 Christine Denham, c/o Church Office
 Home tel: 336 5943 or e-mail:
kirknews@blackhallstcolumba.org.uk

Blackhall Bulletin- Sunday 31st October

Please send all items, including Advertising
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