



Summer
2022

ST MICHAEL'S TOWER

The Magazine of St Michael's Parish Church
Edinburgh

Contact details

Minister:	Rev. Andrea Price 13 Dovecot Park, EH14 2LN Tel: 0131 443 4355 E-mail: APrice@churchofscotland.org.uk
Session Clerk	Mr Douglas Bannatyne, 6/6 Appin Terrace, EH14 1NN Tel: 444 2935 E-mail: douglasbannatyne@msn.com
Chair to the Board	Rev. Andrea Price 13 Dovecot Park, EH14 2LN Tel: 0131 443 4355 E-mail: APrice@churchofscotland.org.uk
Clerk to the Board	Mr Michael Bareford Tel: 07469810559
Treasurer	Mrs Moira Gray, 54 Stevenson Avenue, EH11 2SN Tel: 337 9028 E-mail: moira_gray@blueyonder.co.uk
Safeguarding Officer	Miss Moira Miller
Cradle Roll Elder	Mrs Babs Webster, 322 Oxbgangs Rd North, EH13 9NE Tel: 441 1328 E-mail: babs.webster@hotmail.co.uk
Organist	Mr Stuart Montgomery, 2 Henderson Row, EH3 5DS Tel: 556 2092 or 07713606117 E-mail: stuart.montgomery3@btopenworld.com
Fabric Convenor	Mr Bill Bremner, 104 Balgreen Road, EH12 5UB
Gift Aid Treasurer	Tel: 337 7048
Traidcraft	E-mail: bill.bremner@blueyonder.co.uk
Church Secretary	Fiona Lunn, Church Office.
Tower Editor	Tel: 478 9675 E-mail: office@stmichaels-kirk.co.uk

Dear members and friends of St Michael's,

Recently I learnt a new word: "liminal". Do you know it? It describes things that exist at the threshold (or border) between one thing and another.

At first I thought it a strange word. Yet it seems now very relevant. There are so many thresholds and borders in our lives and especially in our time.

With the summer coming some of you will be looking out your passports to be able to cross borders on your holidays. Some of you may have young people on the threshold of moving to new schools or even leaving home to go to study or work in different towns.

Some of you may be in the liminal space of having to deal with aging, maybe considering moving because you want to downsize or need more help in a care home. Or you may have to get used to living differently for health reasons, retirement or the death of a loved companion or friend in your life.

These are all thresholds, borders or liminal spaces. And they can be both challenging and exciting, demand our attention, flexibility and willingness to change.

But, as you face your liminal space, remember that these borders and thresholds do not stay the same.

As a teenager I used to live quite near an old border: the Limes in Germany. The Limes Germanicus was the fortified frontier between the Roman Empire and the unsubdued Germanic tribes from 83AD to about 260AD. It is now hardly visible apart from some interesting archaeological sites as in Xanten.

The Berlin Wall was another fortified frontier trying to keep people apart, which lasted from the 1960s to 1989. The great wall of China too is now a historic place for tourists to visit but was a serious statement and frontier in its day.

Frontiers shift and become redefined by people living on both sides.

The bible tells of the people of Israel travelling all over the then known world. Abraham starts in Mesopotamia and travels to Palestine, then Egypt and back to Palestine. Moses is born in Egypt but leads his people into the promised land after long travels through deserts and wilderness.

Jesus and his friends travelled around Galilee and then up to Jerusalem. Paul travelled from there around what is now Turkey and Greece and ends up in Rome.

Again and again people in the Bible cross borders and have to learn to live and survive in new lands. Jesus encourages us to break down barriers of all kinds; barriers of gender, class or race can be overcome, he teaches.

And on all their journeys, whether physical or spiritual they learn that God, the maker of heaven and earth, is with them and guides them if they listen for his voice and still, calm influence of love.

Yesterday I spent an evening on the computer with a mother and daughter from Ukraine filling in Visa applications for them. Once their visas come through they hope to travel from Poland across many borders, where they are now, to come and stay with us to start a new life. Their home in Kharkiv is not safe at the moment - if it is still standing. I have not dared to ask yet.

Whatever borders you have to cross in your life, whatever "liminal space" you have to live in at the moment, know this: God is with you, loves you and wants to give you strength.

Pray for refugees all over the world. And pray for all here in Edinburgh and in our congregation of St Michael's that we may travel looking forward not back, that we may travel in faith, hope and love.

Come and join us on a Sunday morning, for coffee in the church garden or for Lunch and Games over the summer.

And please get in touch if you need a chat or want to help.

Bless you all

Andrea, your minister



Membership Classes

Do you, or someone you know, want to join the church?

I will be running a class for a young couple over the summer and anyone is welcome to join in.

Do get in touch if you are interested. Phone: 0131 4434355 or email aprice@churchofscotland.org.uk

Presbytery Mission Plan - update

All congregations in the Church of Scotland are still awaiting the completion of the AMBA report by the General Trustees. After visiting every church building and looking at it for its fabric condition and suitability for modern use, they will give a recommendation about its future.

All sessions in Edinburgh and West Lothian Presbytery are at the moment being visited by members of the Deployment Group of Presbytery to voice their thoughts and feelings at the proposals in the Mission Plan.

St Michael's Session will be visited sometime after 28th June as various holidays of key players are getting in the way. Every elder will then be able to say how they feel about the proposal for St Michael's to become part of one parish with two ministers consisting of Barclay Viewforth, Craiglockhart, Polwarth and St Michael's Congregations.

In the meantime the four ministers have met, and we also had a meeting with the ministers, the session clerks and one elder from each church to speak about this possible future of being church together in our area.

At this meeting the ministers were asked to think about some pulpit exchanges with each other and to begin planning some seasonal activities together. It was also proposed that each congregation should nominate two people to plan a joint event.

No doubt the Mission Planning of all Presbyteries will be a big topic at the General Assembly (21st -27th May 2022).

The next Presbytery meeting is on 21st June 2022 and will also be discussing progress and problems, new developments and opportunities.

As someone wise said:

"Life can only be understood backwards;
but it must be lived forwards." (Soren Kierkegaard)

May God give us his wisdom, strength and love to walk on in faith and do the best for our people.

Andrea Price

Lunch and Playgroup

During lockdown many of the ladies who used to run the toddler group retired. So now, with no toddler group operating out of our building, the question is this: can we offer a modern version of a playgroup at St Michael's?

Would it be fun to meet with mums and dads and their preschool children? Would it be nice for us older folk to come along too, and play and chat with them and with each other?

If your answer is yes, then make sure you come to our trial **Wednesday Lunch and Play sessions** which will run over the summer and see what happens. Come along yourself with any children or friends, bring a picnic lunch, and join in the chat or participate in the games we prepare. Coffee/tea/juice will be provided.

The event will take place every Wednesday from 1pm – 3pm and will begin 15th June and run till 24th August. If successful, the event may be extended.

Any help you may be able to offer is also very welcome. If the weather is good we will be in the garden. Otherwise we will meet in the hall.

Good Parking News

We have received permission from the manager of the Springwell Medical Practice to use their car park off Ardmillan Terrace when they do not need it. We are delighted and thank them for their cooperation.

So if you want to come to St Michael's by car on Saturday's, Sunday's or any evening and can walk a little way up the hill, you may now park your car there.

Morning Coffee @ St Michael's

If you are not busy or away on your holidays but have a "staycation", come and join us in the garden, or in the hall, at St Michael's on Wednesday mornings for Morning Coffee at 10.30am.

Bring the children and let them run in the garden or hall. All ages are welcome.

We will run the event every Wednesday from 15th June, through to 24th August

Time Out – 30 minutes of quiet

Once a month, on the last Wednesday of the month, we offer a short time of reflection and prayer in St Michael's Church.

Time: 7.30pm – 8pm

Dates: 25th May, 29th June, 27th July and 31st August



For the first time, we have been invited to join in with the Canal Festival. After a 3 year break they have planned it, and the famous Raft Race, for Saturday 18th June between 12noon and 4.30pm.

We hope to have a stall with a Teddy Bear Tombola and various games to offer fun for all passersby and to advertise St Michael's Church, its lovely windows and even lovelier people.

Look out for us in Harrison Park East or West (tbc) with our two gazebos and stall.

If you would like to help for an hour or two on the stall we would be delighted. Or just come by for a chat.

St Colm's @ St Michael's Guild

Each year the Guild follows a theme under whatever 3 year strategy is decided upon. 'Look Forward in Faith' is our current strategy and the theme this past session has been 'Lights and Bushels'. A discussion topic is also given from Guild Office and this session it has been about embracing change; a very apt subject given the Presbytery plan for Churches, Ministers and how it will affect congregations and Guild too.

A very lively afternoon was had as we were asked how best to use our gifts/talents to help Church, Guild, and community. A printed questionnaire was distributed to each table and was readily completed with much discussion. It was gratifying to hear how others saw gifts in people that they were unaware of. The answers to the questionnaires have been kept for reference in future sessions! Aye a touch of Robert Burns was in the air 'O wad some Pow'r the giftie gie us, To see oursels as ithers see us!' In this case it was all good!

On 9th March we were privileged to have the new general Guild Secretary, Karen Gillon, speak to us, a highlight of this meeting was Karen presenting 5 members with long service certificates: between them over 140 years!



At that same meeting the collection taken, £117, was in aid of the reformed Church in in Poland, the Church of Scotland in Budapest and the Roman Catholic foundation in Lodz, all helping refugees fleeing from Ukraine.

At our next meeting, Carol Findlay from Faith Impact Forum was able to show us, via her mobile phone, one of the Christian distribution centers where our money was helping.

Our AGM with an Easter tea rounded off the session proper, although we held a 'spring/summer' meeting on 4th May with Duncan Shelton from the project 'Home for Good'. He explained how this Christian charity is passionate about finding a home for every child who needs one. He gave us more detail about the project, especially the supported lodging scheme to help teenagers aged 16 plus when out of the care system. A very worthwhile project to support.

Despite not meeting as often as we would like over the past year we have managed to financially support the Home for Good project, £200. The sum of £298 was raised for Malawi Fruits from the purchase of Advent cards distributed by our speaker from that project, some members also sent separately and even members grandchildren were encouraged in this giving. We have managed to support Christian Aid and, more locally, the Church here and the Toy Library at St Martin's. Our fund raising auction mentioned in the last Tower helped a great deal. We cannot say that we have hidden our light under a bushel, indeed we have shone a light of hope and love in many areas here and abroad.

Another platform where we hope to shine a light is at the Guild Big Sing during Assembly week on May 24th. Our Guild has been asked to provide a speaker on the allotment which the vulnerable deaf are working on at Slateford Green: this project received £750 from the Guild Initiative Fund during the lockdown period, and ties in with the theme for next session 'Wee Seeds Big Trees'. We have been asked to choose a hymn for that evening and we have chosen hymn 243 'Touch the earth lightly, use the earth gently.....' It was considered ideal for the 'green' work being carried out by the deaf and where touch is an essential method of their communicating with the world. It also reminds us of our responsibility to be stewards of this earth, God's creation.

The Guild annual Gathering is to be held in the General Assembly Hall on Saturday 10th September. We hope to have 3 representatives attend.

We are now beginning to plan our syllabus for next session and hope to start meetings on Wednesday 14th September at 2pm. and fortnightly thereafter. All are welcome to Guild meetings, come along - give it a try! The Guild wish everyone a summer of joy and relaxation.

Whose we are and Whom we serve, Fay Anderson, Guild co-convener

Thank you and Farewell to Fiona MacMillan

Since July 2012 Fiona MacMillan was the friendly face of St Michael's in the office, at the end of the telephone and computer. Fiona has decided to retire and devote her spare time and energy to her family, being a loving daughter to her father, wife, mother and grandmother.

At the morning service on 24th April we thanked Fiona and celebrated her time with us. As Douglas Bannatyne said, she was not just a part time secretary for us but “administrator, janitor, maintenance technician, refuse collector, roll keeper, beadle, secretary of the Friendship Club, editor of the Tower magazine and contributor to it in the “Church House Chatter” articles, mediator and much more.”

Her caring and friendly voice and advice will be missed by many and we let her only reluctantly go....So she is still editing this edition of the Tower magazine while we are working on finding a replacement for her.

Fiona, we thank you and wish you and all your family God's blessing for the years to come. And please stay in touch with St Michael's.

And Welcome Fiona Lunn

The staff committee lead by Jamie Baxter has been busy and, after interviews, we are replacing one Fiona with another Fiona as our new part time administrator.

We are delighted to welcome Fiona Lunn among us and are looking forward to working together and getting to know her. Here is what Fiona wrote to introduce herself to us:

“As another ‘Fiona’ I am hoping to keep up the good work undertaken for many years by Fiona MacMillan.

I'm Fiona Lunn and I joined St Michael's in May as an Admin Assistant. Over the years I have worked in a variety of organisations – including a University Library, an architectural practice and a Water Authority - but I have spent most of my career working in an administrative capacity within the Financial sector.

I was lucky enough to be able to take early retirement and managed to fill my time with travel, fitness and learning for a year before global events intervened. I am now delighted to be finding my way towards a ‘new

normal' at St Michael's. I have a lovely commute along the canal where I can take in the ever-changing sights and sounds of nature.

I have recently returned, albeit at a more sedate pace, to my exercise classes and, having been inspired by a few weeks travel around Italy, I continue to attempt to learn Italian. For the last year I have been keeping busy by volunteering with a Pain charity as a transcriber of their Podcasts.

I look forward to being able to meet many of you in person over the coming months."

St Michael's Traidcraft Stall

Thank you to all those who have supported the Traidcraft stall over the last few months. Your purchases help farmers in the poorest countries of the world to earn a fair price for their goods.

We make a small profit on the goods we sell and this is split between St Michael's General Fund and Traidcraft Exchange.

Perhaps you could commit to buying one of your grocery items from Traidcraft. We stock tea, coffee, rice, pasta, lentils, peanut butter, cookies and much more.

The stall is open for business every Sunday morning before and after the service. We can order any item from the current catalogue, so if there is something in particular that you would like but you do not see it on the stall, then please ask.

Sheila & Bill Bremner

1. How does Moses start his morning?
2. Did Eve ever have a date with Adam?
3. What kind of person was Boaz before he got married?
4. Who is a penguins favourite relative?
5. Why did Eve want to leave the Garden of Eden and move to New York?

Music at St Michael's

After the success of last year, we shall again be running a series of concerts in the church during the last week of the Edinburgh International Festival, that is from Saturday 20th August to Saturday 27th August.

The programme is not completely finalised yet, but the series will start again with our own Stuart Montgomery. Other artists who have been booked include Brian Bannatyne Scott (bass) and friends who are giving us A Night at the Opera, Gordon Ferries (guitar), the brass group Brass Tracks and Bruntsfield Baroque.

Like last year, there will be no advance ticket sales and donations will be accepted after the concerts with 70% going to the artists and 30% to the church. It is hoped that concert goers will donate what they would expect to pay for a ticket to a comparable concert.

Extra car parking will be available at the Springwell Medical Centre in Ardmillan Terrace.

Watch out for further publicity giving starting times and please spread the word!

Neil Price

SONGS OF EDINBURGH

Many of you may remember the wonderful concert in the church last August when Brian Bannatyne-Scott and Beth Taylor, accompanied by Michal Gajzler, performed the "Songs of Edinburgh", music composed by Tom Cunningham, setting poems by Alexander McCall-Smith.

The songs have now been released on a short 20-minute CD, being a live recording from that performance. It is very easy listening, amusing and touching at the same time.

We have been given several copies of the CD and they can be purchased for £5 each, all funds going to the church. For this, we are extremely grateful to Alexander McCall-Smith.

If you would like a copy, they will be available at the church, or you can ask Andrea or Neil Price direct.



Given the current crisis in Ukraine, Fresh Start have been asked to produce more Starter Packs for Bethany who will be supplying people with these items to help them settle here in Edinburgh. Therefore they are asking for donations of the following items:

- Crockery, cutlery, pots and pans
- single and double bedding (no duvets or pillows please)
- blankets, throws
- towels
- curtains
- cleaning products
- toiletries
- small electricals such as toasters, kettles, microwaves, hand blender/mixers and food.



They have plenty of pantry memberships for those who move into their local area so this means they need to keep the Pantry well stocked.

The Fresh Start Community Hub has been officially opened and this space houses their cooking classes, training initiative, meeting spaces and a

welcome space for people to drop in for a cuppa and receive advice and information about the services Fresh Start can offer.

Fresh Start love all your donations, but there are some items that they are having to buy for the started packs at the moment. In particular these are toiletries and cleaning products. If you can pop an extra shampoo, toothpaste, shower gel, deodorant or cleaning product into your shopping basket Fresh Start would much appreciate it.

We are immensely proud of the support that St Michaels gives to Fresh Start so please keep up the good work.

If you are able to bring your donations to the church that is great, but if you would like us to come and collect from you then please call us on:
0131 441 1328.

Alasdair and Babs Webster

The Friendship Club

TEMPERAMENTAL, is a word we often use to describe opera singers, actors, or media personalities. We read about pop stars trashing their hotel rooms when their gig doesn't go as well as they expected.

The Concert Pianist, Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli often cancelled his Concerts at the last minute if he wasn't in the mood to play. People who took the chance of buying a ticket to hear him said that, when he did turn up, his playing was sublime. The Concert Pianist, Evgeny Kissin cancelled an important London Concert at the last minute. The billboards outside the venue displayed his name in large letters,

KISSIN – underneath some cheeky person wrote:-
MISSING.

Artists can be temperamental, but it is not often realized how temperamental musical instruments can be. Central heating, dampness, thunder and heat-waves, all affect instruments. String instruments suddenly go out of tune, or a string snaps, usually just before a Concert, or (if you are really unlucky, during a Concert). It happened to Nicola Benedetti when she won "Young Musician of the Year". The replaced string then slides and misbehaves until it becomes stable. The lute, mandolin and harp can be awkward to tune, although modern tuning devices are a God-send and have made these instruments popular again. Pianos need specialised tuners, but extraneous noise can be a nuisance, (when upper partials of the sound vibrate against light bulbs, glass picture frames, or vases).

Another instrument famous for being temperamental is the French Horn. It is said to be notoriously difficult to play. I remember going to see a ballet in London which was ruined by a tone-cracking French Horn in the Orchestra Pit. I had a friend who played the French Horn. He was trying to lose weight

and was existing on salads. He could not eat cucumber before a concert, in case he hiccupped into the French Horn!

When Stuart Montgomery told me that he was bringing a young lady to play the French Horn for the Friendship Club, I wondered what to expect. From the very arresting opening fanfare of Concerto No. 2 by Richard Strauss, I realised that Esme MacBride was an excellent Artist. The Audience were enthralled with her playing: no cracking tones or hiccups could be heard! She breathed beautiful legato phrases and bold contrasts of tone and dynamic enlivened her performance. Mr. Montgomery played the orchestral piano reduction of the Concerto. Orchestral reductions are not easy to play; the piano has to sound like a large, Romantic Orchestra. Mr. Montgomery played well, allowing the French Horn to shine and he imitated the timbre of the accompanying orchestral instruments with great skill. Stuart Montgomery also played the organ and piano. He played Mozart's A minor Rondo, one of Mozart's finest pieces and the very appealing Debussy "Children's Corner Suite". The Concert closed with a hymn-tune medley, which was very popular. I could hear some people singing under their breath and tapping their feet. The date of the Concert was 14th February, St. Valentine's day. A day to fall in love with Music, beautifully played and thoroughly enjoyed.

On February 28th, Andy Amour of Edinburgh Street Pastors told us all about the good work they do at night with people who go out drinking and get into difficulties. He demonstrated that a kind word at the right time can help people to turn their lives around. He said that it was difficult to get volunteers to work with distressed souls who use alcohol or drugs to numb life's pain. Most Friendship Club members felt too old to volunteer to participate, but we were full of admiration for the work of the Street Pastors of Edinburgh.

Our final speaker was Mr. Neil Price who spoke about his very interesting ancestors. He brought films and The Rev. Andrea Price read a letter about the horrors of the war in Crimea. Parallels could be drawn with the destructive war in Ukraine today. The Russian Concert Pianist Evgeny Kissin called Putin's circle, "Bloodthirsty criminals". He also said "Far from all who initiate criminal wars are punished, but none escape the judgment of history". I think that was a very brave statement. I doubt if Kissin will ever be able to return to his homeland. A temperamental pianist he may be, but he is a man of integrity and courage. I admire his brave heart, may God keep him safe.

Ruth Andrews

Medicine Blister Packs

It is with regret that we will no longer be collecting medicine blister packs in the church for recycling. We have taken the majority of what we had already collected to Superdrug in Dundee, but this is simply not sustainable in the long term. There are no pharmacies in Edinburgh that currently collect these for recycling!

However, there must be billions of these blister packs going to landfill every day throughout Scotland and beyond. At present, as far as we are aware, local kerbside recycling does not cater for these. Please can we encourage you to raise this issue by contacting your local Green councillors and/or MSPs, asking them to look into this issue. Together we may just make a difference.

Save Money and Save the Planet



At Sainsburys, Murrayfield, you can recycle glass bottles, plastic bottles and drinks cans of any kind and get 5p for each item. The machine then produces a receipt which you can use to get money off your next shop. Win Win!

Gardening Chapter 4 – composting

It has been a long hard slog over the past couple of years hasn't it. So much uncertainty, so much pain and sadness. And I don't know about you, but as we emerge from the covid years, it feels to me that a great deal has changed and that a lot of what we took for granted in the past simply isn't functioning as it used to. This applies to practical circumstances – for example the occasional empty section of shelving in the supermarket because a delivery has been delayed because the driver tested positive, or the people who have lost confidence about going out and are staying at home, reducing the attendance at church. And of course reduced congregations mean a reduced income for the church at a time when the costs of maintaining and running the building are rising all the time. In some ways life feels a bit end-of-time-ish.

But in the natural world this happens all the time. Annual plants grow, flower, set seed and die. Some herbaceous plants grow and bloom and then die back to rest and be revived in time for the next summer. Some trees lose all their leaves in the months of winter dormancy – only to 'come alive' again the next spring with a new covering of fresh green foliage all powered up to feed the plant and rejuvenate the soil in which it is rooted. Left to itself, nature has its own way of dealing with these end-of-times signs; leaves and plants die and fall to the ground where they protect the soil from the compaction of heavy rain and snow, and bit by bit the miracle workers in the earth – the worms and other invertebrates – drag the organic matter down to where it decomposes and improves the quality of the soil and indirectly its fertility too. Out of what can seem like a negative situation comes the potential for new or reinvigorated life.

In our gardens we can help this process along by composting organic waste. You don't need to have a formal and arguably unsightly, plastic compost bin. You can simply make a pile in a corner somewhere out of sight and throw on to it the plants you cut down, the smaller prunings of trees and shrubs and the leaves that have gathered on the grass. There is no need to clear leaves from the flower beds – indeed it is a mistake to do so because they have a purpose – to protect the soil. But to rake them from the lawned area will save them from blowing around and getting slippery where they will inevitably gather on steps and in corners all around the garden. Of course, if you use an open pile, you would not put onto it any food waste, because that might potentially attract rats.

Less unsightly and more versatile than a 'dalek' style compost bin is a wooden slatted bin which sits in contact with the ground but rises above it and can be covered over. There will be no danger in putting tea bags and

coffee grounds into something like this. But you could also simply get some chicken wire and make a container fixed into the ground with some canes threaded through the holes of the netting, to stop the compost from being spread around by birds or the wind.

But maybe I have got ahead of myself. Perhaps we need to look at how to compost.

In the best of all worlds you would have two compost collecting areas side by side. In year 1 you collect in one of these – mixing green sappy material and brown twiggy material. It is said that you need a proportion of 1:9 (green:brown) to keep your compost healthy. But we need to remember that all the cell walls in green leaves count as “brown”. It is not the colour that is important – but the make up of what you put into your compost. “Brown” refers to carbon and “green” to nitrogen – simplified to the colours because in the main grass and fresh leaves are full of nitrogen while dead leaves and twigs are full of carbon. Where possible layer the different components, especially if you put grass clippings into the compost. If you do this, you need to mix in twigs and scrunched up newspaper or cardboard loo roll centres so the grass clipping don't turn yellow, slimy and smelly!

Especially in the summer you will find that one week you fill up the compost bin and by the next week it seems to have gone down by as much as half. This is decomposition in action. Nature is simply magical. As nitrogen rich materials rot down, the temperature in the compost rises and that attracts in various beasties who will chomp the larger pieces of material into smaller ones so that they can rot down more quickly – that's why the level drops.

When there is space you can top up the compost with new material. If things begin to slow down it may be because there is too much weight on the pile and there is not enough oxygen to keep the reaction going. The solution is simple – get a fork and lift the contents up to allow air in. This is one of the great advantages of a wooden slatted compost bin which has louvres on the side which let air in, but stop the compost from falling out.

If you get to the stage at the end of the summer when you know there is good ready compost at the bottom – if you have a second bin at the side, simply turn the compost from one bin to the other – leaving the as yet un-composted material from the top of the first bin – at the bottom of the second and the finished compost from the bottom of the first, ready to use on the top of the second.

It is easy to be daunted by the numbers – but just remember to mix greens and browns and aerate when necessary and you will make the most

wonderful stuff you will ever be able to give your soil. And you don't even need to dig it in – indeed you should never dig your garden (more of that in the next chapter!) – just spread it on the surface of your flower beds and the worms will do the work for you.

Compost improves the drainage and structure of soggy, heavy soil. It also improves the water retention and structure of dry sandy soil. It feeds the soil microbes which make nutrients available to the plants. That's why it is often called 'black gold'. It is the most wonderful gift from God. And it comes from end-of-time materials from your garden.

Composting helps me to remember that sometimes we have to let things go to make space for new things to grow and flourish in our lives – but the experience of what has gone will enrich what replaces it – just as compost enriches your garden.

PS The compost bin will also become a winter habitat for little beasties sheltering from the cold and will also increase the biodiversity of your garden by an enormous percentage. It always amazes me that I put in twigs and leaves and the compost I take out is full of worms and other creatures that give life to my soil. Our wonderful creator God is still at work - with a just little help from his friends! - and year on year from the old comes the new, an everlasting expression of the love of God for his creation.

Who am I? (Answer on page 21)

I come from a holy land,
I know about sun and sand.
I join with a happy band.

The Bible calls me by name
And joy is my claim to fame.

Strike me hard and I will sing,
Shake me hard and I will swing.

All the bells around me ping,
I am such a joyous thing!

You can take me out to dance
And carry me while you prance.

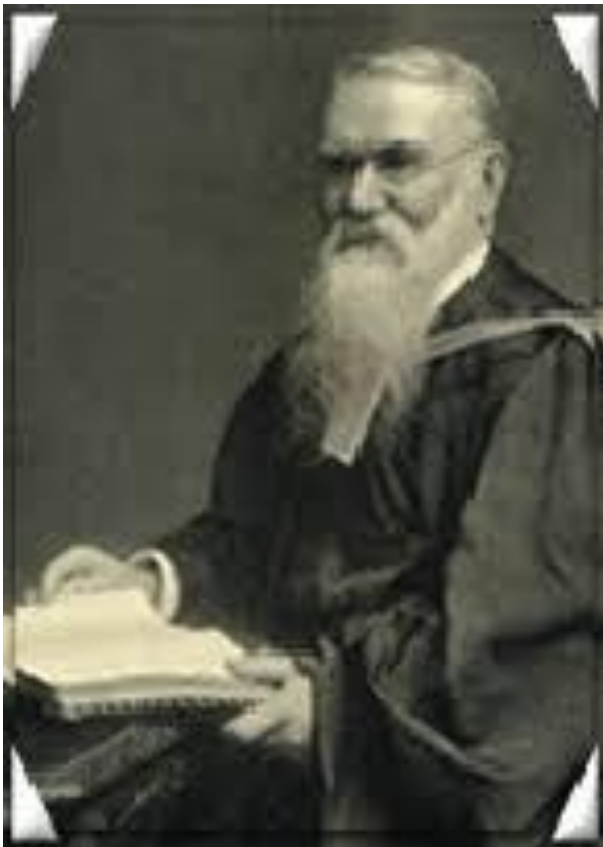
My happiness knows no sin
I'm not just any old thing.

A Brief History of North Merchiston Cemetery by Juliet Wilson

In my last article, I wrote about my work surveying the wildlife in Edinburgh's council managed cemeteries. This time, I want to share some of the history of North Merchiston Cemetery, and the people buried there. (Thanks to Mamie MacDonald from the cemetery friends group for sharing the information in this article).

Back in 1882, Edinburgh was a walled city and what is now Fountainbridge was orchard surrounded by farmland. As the city expanded, new burial grounds were needed and Dalry Cemetery was established. This filled up quickly and Dalry New Cemetery was built and later renamed North Merchiston Cemetery. The first burial in the cemetery was a baby in 1874. There are now 46,337 people buried there.

Both cemeteries were designed by the Victorians as peaceful garden cemeteries, and were run privately. They became neglected when money ran out as people were no longer buried there and families of the deceased died off or moved away. North Merchiston Cemetery was bought by a developer but became even more neglected. Eventually Edinburgh Council bought it under compulsory purchase and it is now one of 43 cemeteries managed by the council. The North Merchiston Cemetery Friends Group was established during the COVID-19 lockdown, as people started discovering their local cemeteries as attractive places for their daily exercise.



Many interesting people are buried in the cemetery. I'll highlight just a few of them.

The first Minister of St Michael's Church, Dr. George Wilson, is buried directly opposite the vestry. (pictured opposite)

Sir Alexander Stevenson, Lord Provost of Edinburgh 1926 – 1929, was a jeweller and watchmaker. He was awarded an honorary LLD (Doctor of Law) at the same ceremony as the German theologian, Albert Schweitzer, and was a lay-preacher with The Grassmarket Mission in Leamington Terrace Church which later became Bruntsfield Church. A number of streets in Gorgie are named after him.

There are several war graves in the cemetery. Victor Bush died 1918, aged 25, in a flying accident while teaching new pilots. Part of the original family memorial was recently discovered some yards away and was reunited with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) headstone in a ceremony conducted by the church minister, Andrea Price.

Two people buried in the cemetery were awarded the Victoria Cross for gallantry in the face of the enemy: Janes Davis and Charles Kennedy. Several former members of the Hearts football team are buried in the cemetery, including James and John Speedie, who were among the players who enlisted in 1914 and became part of the legendary "McCrae's Battalion". James died in 1915, aged 21 and John died in 1917, aged 25.

Some soldiers enlisted under fictitious names because they were too young to fight, as John Connolly was when he first joined the army as J Reid. He specifically asked to be buried in an unmarked grave as he did not want to be remembered purely because of his brother, James Connelly, the Irish rebel, who was executed when he helped lead the Easter Rising of 1916 in Dublin. John remained loyal to the British Army. In 1916, aged 52, he became unwell after being exposed to bad weather while guarding German prisoners at Stobs Camp in the borders. He was buried with full military honours.

The CWGC War Memorial, built a few years ago, lists those who died in the two world wars but who have no private resting place and are buried in one of the mounds containing the graves of poorer families who could not afford a stone.

The cemetery also includes the burial mound of girls and young women from the Magdalene Asylum, which was founded in what is now Springwell House in the 1840s. The Cemetery Friends Group is currently researching an information board which will be installed near this burial mound so that people can learn more about this little known aspect of local history. I hope to include an update on this in a future newsletter.

Answers to the riddles on page

1. Hebrews a pot of tea
2. No, just an Apple
3. Ruth - less
4. Aunt Artica
5. She fell for the Big Apple

Who am I? on page 19: I'm a lovely tambourin! (Sent in by Ruth Andrews)

Church House Chatter

Ministry in the New Testament is always pictured as team work. When Jesus began his ministry, he gathered together a group of disciples whom he sent out in teams, they, in turn, then encouraged teamwork among the believers in the new churches which began to spring up.

So it is in our churches today; to be effective in our communities, and for our churches to function properly, teamwork is essential.

I am acutely aware that I would have been unable to carry out the tasks assigned to me as St Michael's part-time administrator if it were not for the support, encouragement and patience of so many of you. Thank you to those of you who have given me help in so many varied ways: those of you who so ready provided the practical skills I lacked for a particular task, or gave the support I needed to see something completed, those of you who would pop in to say hello when you thought things were quieter and I might be encouraged to see a friendly face, and the very many of you who have faithfully upheld me in your prayers. I will particularly treasure your support of Iain, and indeed all my family, during his year volunteering with Enable the Children in Sierra Leone. It was truly precious being able to share that amazing experience with you all.

During the service on 24th April I was asked what has been the most memorable experience during my time at St Michael's. There have been so many memorable occasions, weddings, baptisms, funerals, recitals, competitions, coffee mornings, break-ins, but what sprang to mind was my first attendance at a Christmas Fair. I had been aware of all the preparations being done beforehand, indeed had been involved in them, but on the day itself, to walk up the driveway to the babble of chatter resounding from within the hall, to experience the warmth of the welcome as I stepped through the door and to see the number of people of all ages working together behind the stalls, serving refreshments or feverishly working in the kitchen was indeed seeing and experiencing team ministry in action.

Thank you for putting your trust and faith in me to be part of the body of Christ in St Michael's. It has been a huge privilege working for, and with you all, and to have been invited to share in the highs and lows of your lives and the life of the church.

God has promised to never leave us or forsake us, giving us strength and encouragement through the people around us. As I move on to a new chapter in my life, Fiona Lunn steps into St Michael's ministry team. Working

together I know that you will continue to shine God's light and love both within the building and out in to the local community.

“The Lord bless you and keep you.
the Lord make His face to shine upon you
and be gracious unto you.
The Lord lift up his countenance upon you
and give you peace. Amen”

Fiona MacMillan

Jubilee Picnic Lunch

You are warmly invited to join us on Sunday 5th June for a Jubilee Celebration in the Garden following the morning service.

Bring a Picnic Lunch for yourself, with a little extra for any visitors who may join on us. Tea, coffee and juice will be provided.

We look forward to seeing you.

Lent Appeal

The sum of £712.00 was raised for this year's Lent Appeal. The money is being donated to EMMS International for their work in Malawi.

Thank you for so generously supporting the appeal.

Changes to the Church Family

Baptism: Charlie Andrew Pearson on Sunday 1st May 2022

Wedding: Kyle and Maja MacKenzie on 14th May 2022

Death: Ina Whelan on 2nd April 2022



Bible Pathway Adventures

WORD SEARCH

ANIMALS IN THE BIBLE

P O M F S L J I W K G P F B G O J W O I
I T W B F P G P K V C B X N H D P G Z I
C B U U L C P V R L I E Y P M R I V G J
Y Q X F F O X K Q A I P B H Z R H C R M
W T G F V P L R O M E E E C X F F Z A O
D U N A L S S T W B S L N R Z Q C Y S U
X R V L L S S S R N N E K D S E M E S S
O T V O O E P M G G G J B D M P V V H E
P L W E H I V X C C G N R V P Y E V O K
E E M O Y Y C I H E L F H O R S E I P I
A D U M L H Q K A Q A H L A F N Q Q P W
C O B O L F H R O T G P T I O U B K E H
O V M T S X E I J X H X Y E A P D C R J
C E Z C D J B B L G W A S F M F R O G Q
K E J A O J J F O R O A N L K J I L D V
K E Q L Q Z Q L R T A T J N X O G N P S
E L I F Q G M W I R N M T D O N K E Y C
Q U A I L Z T Y D O V Y K N N A O X V L
Y W K P L E D M U K N N A J V D K H X T
F E R R E T C Q H E I F E R W X O R R X

LION
MOUSE
GRASSHOPPER
PEACOCK
VIPER
HEIFER

FROG
RAM
WOLF
TURTLE-DOVE
LAMB
HORSE

FERRET
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