

CROSSWIND

The Journal of
St Michael's Parish Church

February 2023
Vol 25:4



*For behold, the winter is past; the rain is over and gone.
The flowers appear on the earth, the time of singing has come,
and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land.*

SONG OF SOLOMON 2:11-12

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SUNDAY SERVICES

Communion

Sunday, 26th February

10am in the Kirk*

and

3pm in the Kirk Hall

***livestreamed on St Michael's web-site and Facebook
Available to view later on YouTube**

Weekly Services

10am in the Kirk*

and

**9.45am (during term time)
in Springfield Primary School**

***livestreamed on St Michael's website and Facebook
Available to view later on YouTube**

Cover: Courtesy of Stephen Blake

EDITORIAL TEAM

Editor

Myra Lawson
myralawson144@btinternet.com
Tel: (01506) 842634

Advertising

Vicki Carlin
vickicarlin6@googlemail.com
Tel: 0791 348 5776

Maureen Blake
sandmblake@btinternet.com
Tel: (01506) 822603

Anita France
anitafrance2@hotmail.com
Tel: (01506) 847195

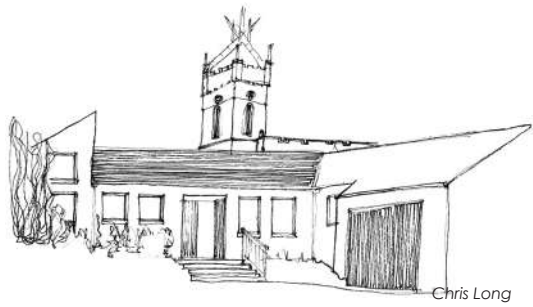
Iain Harrison
iain_alan@hotmail.co.uk
Tel: (01506) 847001

Gordon Wardall
gordon.debbie@outlook.com
(01506) 840862

Gordon Young
gordon.young538@gmail.com
Tel: (01506) 844347

The deadline for the May 2023 issue is 1st April 2023.

VIEW FROM THE MANSE



by Rev Dr Liam J Fraser

We are in the midst of a cost of living crisis. Inflation and energy price rises have left millions of people poorer, with pensions and wages not keeping pace with the changes. Many of us assumed that, with the progress of time, things were going to get better and better. Yet they didn't, and we now face an uncertain future.

While we have limited control over the situation, and while it is for government to solve these macro-economic problems, we *do* have some control over how we *feel* about them, how much we let them 'get into our heads' and affect our day to day lives.

While meter readings and energy tariffs may seem a far cry from the Christian faith, this issue of *scarcity*, of allowing a lack of money or goods to affect our mental well-being, is something that God is very concerned about, and which he offers help to overcome.

The writer Walter Bruggeman identifies differing attitudes towards scarcity as being one of the great contrasts between Christianity and a secular mindset. Because the contemporary world increasingly ignores its Creator, we believe that all we have is what we have in front of us: the money in our bank accounts, the food in our fridge, the love and support we can get from the folk we know. Yet the Church knows of another source of support, a limitless supply of grace that is available to anyone anytime they need it. It is this grace – the grace of our infinite and all-powerful God – that provides an *alternative* to the secular mindset that fills us with anxiety over what we do not have, and fear for a future we cannot control.

We see the difference God wants to make to our lives in two passages from Scripture. In the story of the Feeding of the Five Thousand, Jesus famously takes five loaves and two fish, and feeds a great multitude of people. While most readers focus on the miracle itself, the *meaning* of the miracle is what matters. We read in John's account of the event:

Then Jesus took the loaves, and *when he had given thanks*, he distributed them to those who were seated (John 6: 11)



When the disciples saw the great crowd of people, all they could think of was how little they had to provide them with, and how expensive it would be to feed them. Yet Jesus saw things differently. For at the heart of this story of the Feeding of the Five Thousand is the power of *thankfulness*. That when Jesus gave thanks to God for what he *did* have, he soon found he had more than he needed. It is the same with us. When we are grateful for what we have – rather than what we don't have – we may be surprised by just how much there is. That is because gratitude is the gateway, or key, that allows us to move from a scarcity mindset, one focussed on lack, to an abundance mindset, one focussed on what we do have, and what God can provide for us.

The second part of that is crucial. Because even when we are grateful, and even when we try to look at what we have rather than what we don't have, we may still feel that we don't have enough: not enough strength, not enough love, not enough hope.

Yet in the prophecy of Isaiah we find these remarkable words:

Let everyone who thirsts
come to the waters;
and you that have no money,
come, buy and eat!
Come, buy wine and milk
without money and without price.
Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread,
and your labour for that which does not satisfy?
Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good,
and delight yourselves in rich food.
Incline your ear, and come to me;
listen, so that you may live. (Isaiah 55: 1-3)

In Isaiah's prophecy, we find the promise that God will provide us with the strength, love and hope we need even when we do not find it within ourselves or the people around us. The promise that God will turn our fatalism about life, and our sense of lack, into overflowing joy.

Yet this begins – as we read in verse 3 – with listening to God, and coming to him. For without God, we *really are* on our own, and *really are* limited in what we have. Yet with God, we are not limited by a lack of strength or love or hope but only by the nature of God, which – being limitless – is not lack, but everlasting abundance.

May you, in the weeks and months ahead, not only look at what you have, but all that God is, that by coming to him in prayer, and listening to him, you might build a new relationship of love, and grace, and strength, and discover a source of support that no inflation, energy crisis, or anything else can take from you.

LENT STUDIES FOR 2023

*by Paul Davidson
on behalf of the Discipleship Team*

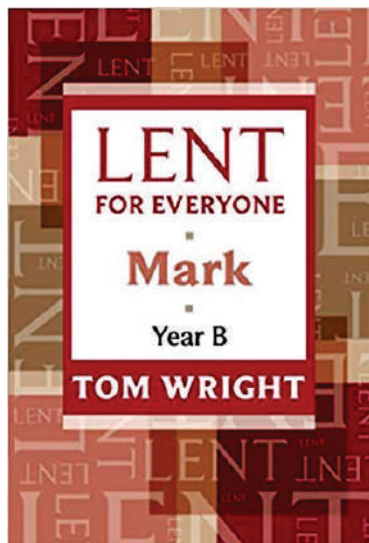
Lent is the period of 40 days which leads up to Easter. It begins on Ash Wednesday and is a time of reflection and preparation before the celebrations of Easter. By observing the 40 days of Lent, Christians replicate Jesus Christ's sacrifice and withdrawal into the desert for 40 days. It is marked by fasting, both from food and festivities. Whereas Easter celebrates the resurrection of Jesus after his death on the cross, Lent recalls the events leading up to and including Jesus' crucifixion.

Nowadays, not many people would think of fasting for the whole of Lent. It is much more common to give up something we enjoy, the sacrifice then being a reflection of Jesus' time in the wilderness, and a test of our self-discipline. When we then think about whatever it is we are abstaining from, we can think about Jesus and His much greater sacrifice for us.

For the past three years in St Michael's, we have been reading through one of the Gospels during Lent and this year we will be looking at the Gospel of Mark. We will be using the book *Lent for Everyone*, by Tom Wright. The intention is that every year we will use one of Tom Wright's books during Lent. Having done Matthew and Luke in previous years, many people in the congregation will have copies for these Gospels, and this year will be able to add Mark to their collection. Additional copies will also be available in future years for anyone who would like to take part but doesn't have a copy of the guide.

The format is simple – every day from Ash Wednesday (22nd February) to the Saturday after Easter there is a short reading from the Gospel of Mark, followed by some thoughts on the meaning of the passage. So once again this year, instead of giving up something for Lent, why not give up 10 minutes of your time every day to read a passage from the Gospel of Mark? What better way to spend the run up to Easter, than by reading systematically through the Gospel story?

If you would like to receive a copy of *Lent for Everyone* (Gospel of Mark), please contact Paul Davidson by email at paul.n.davidson@blueyonder.co.uk and I will make sure you receive one.



SPRINGFIELD'S RUBY ANNIVERSARY

by Lorna Paterson

In order to give as much detail as possible, I am using the time-honoured journalists' Q/A method!

WHEN?

The school in the new Springfield estate in east Linlithgow opened in late 1982. In early 1983, churches and community groups were invited to say what use they might make of the only public building on the estate.

WHY?

Springfield was part of St Michael's parish and therefore mission and outreach to the growing new community was vital. Already, Elders Jack Lawrie and Jim Herd had been keeping an eye on the new development and the arrival of residents, visiting and welcoming them to Linlithgow, telling them about the Kirk, what it offered and their importance in its life and work.

Many of the new people were young families and Elder Jim Michie had learned of a new type of worship called a Pram Service, aimed at young parents with babies and toddlers, which had worked well in another congregation. Might something like that appeal to Springfield families?

WHERE?

Kirk Session supported the new ideas, undertaking to pay for the school hall and the Janitor's time in opening it, checking heating and putting out chairs for a different kind of service, in a more relaxed setting than the old medieval church, which could sometimes appear intimidating for young children and their parents. Two elders attended to welcome the congregation, George Shiels and Jim Walker eventually becoming the regular team.

HOW?

Publicity via the church magazine, intimation sheet and the Gazette made known plans for an informal service assuring people that small children, in prams or not, would be very welcome, even if they were noisy and active or occasionally running around! Launch date was set for Sunday 6th March 1983 with Ian leading the service at 10.45am. (He knew his mother was dying after visiting her in hospital the previous day, but wise, Christian woman that she was, she urged him to carry on with the important new beginning and so he did. Before he could see her again, she had arrived 'on another shore and in a greater light' as one prayer puts it.)



I played the hymns that memorable day when Ian's talk was accompanied by a small boy lying under the front table and drumming his feet on its underside! Perhaps a fanfare for the new venture?!

WHAT?

While the format of the service continued to be traditional, content varied in choice of hymns and music superbly led by gifted pianist and Elder Andrew MacDonald and in other ways. The atmosphere was relaxed and comfortable. Ian made a point of leading at least once a month or sending his Assistant to do so. Other helpers included Methodist Lay Preacher Frank Cooper, Elders Douglas Short, Bob Peters – also a Reader in the Church of Scotland – and me, as a volunteer worker with Scripture Union whose worship material became the main resource for the teaching.

AND SPECIAL OCCASIONS AND A FEW CHANGES IN THESE LAST 40 YEARS TOO!

Some special occasions at Springfield are fondly remembered: the Sundays when Elder June Adam, Head Teacher of Windyknowe School, Bathgate brought her P7 pupils to worship during their 'away' week-ends (extra chairs were needed then!); the regular annual celebrations of the birth of the services when Margaret Shiels always produced a delicious cake; perhaps most significantly, the first Sacraments led by Ian for the baptisms of Rachael Duff and Ruth and Jenny Young; and the all-age Communion Services when the entire congregation, children included, stood in a circle round the Table to receive the bread, wine or juice or a special blessing – years before such services became more common in the Church of Scotland!

On Ian's retiral in 2003, the Session Clerk, now the Rev Derek Henderson, trained a wider group to lead services during the vacancy and that gifted team continues to assist the ministers with this special form of outreach. An uncertain experiment in 1983 has become in 2023 an integral and important part of congregational life in school term time!

Of course, children of the early years have now grown up, married with children of their own. Sonia Shiels, born the day the services started, writes:

'I have many memories of Sunday services at Springfield. I recall various ingenious methods Tony McLean-Foreman used to deliver his sermon; also, Frank Cooper talking about his corn dollies always held everyone's interest. At the annual barbecue I learned to put Cadbury's Caramel in a banana, wrap it in tinfoil and cook on the barbecue – yummy!

'Growing up at Springfield helped me find my faith in a relaxed and very comfortable environment; I began by taking the offering and then went on to make teas and coffees after the service. Springfield will always be special to me.'

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

FRIDAY 3RD MARCH 2023

‘I have heard about your faith’

by Jaqueline Coyle



World Day of Prayer is an international, inter-church organisation which enables us to hear the thoughts of women from all parts of the world. This year's World Day of Prayer theme has been prepared by the women of Taiwan. The theme of the worship service 'I Have Heard About Your Faith,' based on the letter to the Ephesians, is an invitation to active listening, which is the ground of our prayers. Following the example of the letter (1:15-19), where the author praises the church for their faith in

Jesus and love toward all the saints, the worship service contextualises the witness of the saints with the stories from Taiwan.

Taiwan is an island rich in natural resources and culturally diverse. The women of Taiwan share the issues faced geographically, politically and socially and also their hopes for the future.

The preparation for the day is vast. An international committee is based in New York and there are national committees in each participating country. Regional conferences meet to consider the service and then local groups make their plans.

The World Day of Prayer is celebrated in over 120 countries. It begins in Samoa and prayer in native languages travels throughout the world — through Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Europe and the Americas before finishing in American Samoa some 38 hours later.

Let us join with them in Linlithgow as we give thanks for their beautiful island and people of Taiwan and encourage one another in our faith. The evening of fellowship and prayer will be held on Friday 3rd March in St Peter's Church. Further details will be available soon.

The artist, Hui-Wen HSAIO, has used several motifs that highlight Taiwan's best-known features to express how the Christian faith brings peace and a new vision to Taiwan. The women in the painting are sitting by a stream, praying silently and looking up into the dark. Despite the uncertainty of the path ahead, they know that the salvation of Christ has come.

Two endangered species are featured: the Mikado pheasant and the Black-faced Spoonbill, which are both of unique significance to the Taiwanese people. The Mikado pheasant is endemic to mountainous regions of Taiwan and is usually regarded as one of Taiwan's national birds.

The Black-faced Spoonbill migrates thousands of miles every year to spend the winter in Taiwan.



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 SOLICITORS & NOTARIES

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Their distinctiveness symbolizes a characteristic of the Taiwanese people – confidence and perseverance in times of difficulty.

The green grass and Phalaenopsis (Butterfly) orchids stand out against the dark background. They are the pride of Taiwan, which has a worldwide reputation as the 'Kingdom of Orchids.' In recent decades, Taiwanese orchid exports have increased, and Butterfly orchids have frequently been featured in international competitions.



CROSS REACH

Care you can put your faith in

by Rev Thom Riddell

The theme of reaching out to the most vulnerable in society runs like a golden thread throughout the teaching of Jesus. Those who seek to follow Him have the same priority to care for those needing help. The Church of Scotland offers such care through its Social Care Council, trading as CrossReach. The name CrossReach was chosen to convey the desire to reach out to people who need support across Scotland while making clear that faith is our motivation. As you probably know, I serve as Convener of the Council and chair the CrossReach Board.



At CrossReach we offer loving care to people of all ages who need a helping hand, supporting them to live life to the full whatever their circumstances. We have been at the forefront of high-quality social care for over 150 years. During that time we have worked hard to understand the needs of the people who turn to us for help, and have been at the forefront of pioneering services which have literally changed thousands of lives for the better. CrossReach is unique in the voluntary sector, because of its geographical spread and the diversity of its services. It employs over 1700 staff members and mobilises over 400 volunteers. It is an outworking of faith, and a vital part of the mission of the Church of Scotland.

Our Adult Services provide support for those recovering from addiction or seeking to return to normal life after release from prison. We have residential and day support services for those with learning disabilities, and befriending support for those who have been homeless as they move on to their own homes in the community.



Our Older People Services operate a number of Care Homes and Day Centres, many of them specialising in dementia care. We also run a number of Heart for Art groups which enable those suffering from dementia to express themselves and provide support for those caring for them.

Our Children and Families Services offer residential care and education for children and young people who are unable to live within their family setting for a period. We offer support to children and families affected by drug and alcohol use, and those visiting family members in prison.

Our faith, love, care and compassion are vast, but it takes an equally huge amount of time, money and resources to support those in need across Scotland. Each week, CrossReach spends almost £1million to provide its services. Most of the funding comes from Local Authorities, but unfortunately it does not fully cover the cost of the services we provide. The Church of Scotland provides around 2% of our funding, and the remainder comes from grants and donations. To be able to continue providing its services, CrossReach needs the financial support of individual donors, as well as prayers and the volunteer support many churches give. We are grateful to all those who have supported us over many years, and who have helped us to achieve so much.



There have been a number of reports in the media about the challenges being faced by the NHS and Social Care systems in Scotland. In 2020, the Scottish Government commissioned an Independent Review of Adult Care in Scotland. The Review was chaired by Derek Feeley, a former Scottish Government Director General for Health and Social Care, and Chief Executive of NHS Scotland. Mr Feeley was supported by an Advisory Panel of Scottish and international experts.

The principal aim of the review was to recommend improvements to adult social care in Scotland, primarily in terms of the outcomes achieved by and with people who use services, their carers and families, and the experience of people who work in adult social care. The review took a human-rights based approach. The Independent Review concluded at the end of January 2021, and its report was published on 3 February 2021. The report makes more than 50 recommendations for radical changes to adult social care, which include national improvement programmes to raise standards in care homes, the appointment of a Minister for Social Care to oversee improvements and the establishment of a National Care System. The Scottish Government has agreed to implement several of the recommendations, although the timetable has not been announced and it is not clear how they will be funded. The delay, and the lack of commitment to funding in the recent Scottish Budget for 2023-24, has disappointed care providers in the charitable 'third' sector, like CrossReach. The Board of the Coalition of Care and Support Providers in Scotland (CCPS), which represents the sector, has written to the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care to express its concerns. We hope and pray that support will be forthcoming to sustain the vital care services provided by CrossReach, and its partner organisations.



WRITE A LETTER, CHANGE A LIFE

by Ruth Rogerson

21 years ago, on 10th December, a group of Polish Activists decided to have a 24-hour letter writing event to mark Human Rights Day. This was the start of what was to become the annual letter writing event, now called **Write for Rights**, which Amnesty International, an organisation which supports Human Rights internationally, holds each year. Every November and December, supporters across the globe write millions of letters, cards and tweets, and sign petitions for those whose basic human rights are being attacked. A letter from one of us could help free a prisoner, stop an execution, or help a bereaved family receive justice. In last year's campaign, 4.6 million messages were sent, making it the biggest Human Rights event in the World!

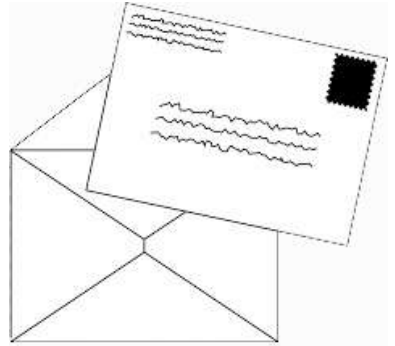
And in 2022 St Michael's Church was part of it! On Sunday 11th December Steve Chaffee led us in contemplative prayers, music, bible readings and a Reflection on Brokenness, Hope and Justice followed by a short time of letter writing.

The Write for Rights 2022 brochure highlighted 10 individuals targeted simply for peacefully protesting for their rights. Some were protesting for protection of their natural environment, some voicing concerns about their governments. Some were marching, others detained simply for voicing their opinions on social media. The cases this year came from Bangladesh, Cameroon, Cuba, France, Hong Kong, Zimbabwe, Russia, Paraguay, Morocco, and Iran.

We were a small group but during our short time of writing we wrote 37 letters! Write for Rights works closely with the people involved (or their lawyers and families if that isn't possible) and make suggestions to ensure that our letters have the greatest possible impact. Letters are sent firstly to the individuals themselves. Messages bring comfort and support and let people know that they are not forgotten: we are thinking of them and know about their plight. Whenever someone writes, they share a bit of themselves including simple details of where they are writing from: we all know that words have the power to inspire and comfort others, and I am convinced that the words which we wrote, with faith and humility, in Cross House on 11th December last year will have done just that.

Secondly, we are invited to write letters to the Authorities (Presidents, members of the Judiciary, Government officials) to raise the profile of an individual and fight for justice on their behalf. Amnesty provides lots of helpful suggestions on salutations and possible phrases to use in the correspondence and these letters aim to be clear, polite and specific to the case.

Finally, can I tell you about Bernardo Caal Xol who was featured in the 2021 Write for Rights campaign? A teacher and trade union leader he empowered his people, the Indigenous Maya Q'eqchi', and peacefully protected their land and natural resources. After protesting against a hydroelectric dam project, he was convicted, without evidence, in 2018 and sentenced to more than 7 years in prison. On 24th March 2022 he was released early for good behaviour. He was overjoyed to be reunited with his family. However, he remains convicted of a crime and thus the Guatemalan authorities continue to criminalise him for his work in defence of Human Rights and the environment. Bernardo tells us that the half million letters sent by Amnesty supporters and his support from Amnesty International gave him hope of freedom! I pray that our own letters this time gave hope and joy to all the brave individuals we read about in Write for Rights 2022. Please join us this December for Write for Rights 2023!



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9 YEARS AND COUNTING...

by Lisa Callaghan

February 2023 will mark my 9th year as a Lieutenant in the Boys' Brigade. What can I tell you about my time in this wonderful Christian Youth Organisation...

Not every moment is plain sailing, and at times can be a lot of work. The boys that I worked with when I first started as a Leader have now started to work towards their Queen's Badge, the Boys' Brigade's highest award. What can be more rewarding than that?!

In our Town, we are extremely blessed to have so many different organisations that are open to our boys and young men, and we are very humbled that we have so many choosing to walk through our doors every Thursday evening.



Boys can join our organisation from P1 and it's an absolute pleasure to work with each and every one of them. Working with so many different personalities can be interesting, and at times can certainly keep us on our toes!

Boys Brigade as a whole has 11,500 volunteers, and without them, our work could not continue. We enjoy lots of crafts, games and different activities to offer the boys, and we just need the extra hands to make this possible.

On a Thursday evening, we run 2 sessions, P1-P6 6.30pm to 7.45pm, and P7-S6 8pm to 9.30pm. We are always in need of helpers to allow us to carry on doing what we enjoy the most. No experience is required. We are just looking for kind-hearted individuals with a patient manner.

If you can spare a minimum of one hour per month, we would love to hear from you. Please contact us on Facebook or email us at:
2linlithgow@boys-brigade.org.uk





**ST.
MICHAEL'S**
Parish church

Parish Register

WEDDINGS

They are no longer two, but one



November 2022

Louise Daly to Luke Morrice

BAPTISMS

Let the children come to me

November 2022

Alfie Loggie, Larbert

Callan Oliver, Whitburn



NEW MEMBERS

For we are all members of one body

November 2022

The Very Rev Alan McDonald, Linlithgow

Dr Judith McDonald, Linlithgow



FUNERALS

I am the resurrection and the life

October 2022

Catherine Inch, Linlithgow Bridge
Dr Peter Anderson, Linlithgow

November 2022

Robert (Roy) Dewar, Whitburn
Barbara Braithwaite, MBE, Linlithgow

December 2022

Dermont (Derry) Morrice, Linlithgow
John Packman, Linlithgow



January 2023

Sarah (Sadie) Cockburn , Linlithgow
Mary (Maureen) Ryce, Linlithgow Bridge
Moira Cockburn, Linlithgow
Jean Lennox, Linlithgow



Church in the Community

by Lorraine Orr

Outdoor Church Linlithgow



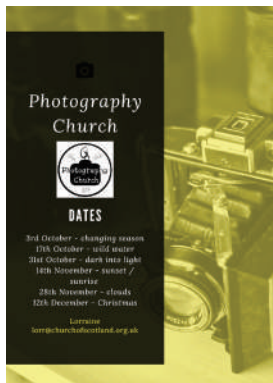
Outdoor Church

Outdoor church has now been going for about 18 months. We meet the first Sunday of each month at 1.30pm at various locations in and around Linlithgow. We meet, we pray, we connect with nature and each other and then we do tea!



Make and Bake

Our craft group meets on a Monday at 1.30-3.30pm in Room 1 at Cross House. Once a month we have a visiting craft expert (which is not me!!!). We have done everything from chocolate making to resin jewellery to card making. We love a cuppa together and a chat. No crafting experience necessary – just come along and join in.



Photography Church

I launched Photography Church on Facebook during lockdown.

There are 83 members in the group. We post fortnightly thoughts, challenges and ideas. You are then free to go and take photos and post them. We are also getting dates arranged for Photography Church walking groups. Watch this space for more info!

ACORN

Ask
Call
Obey
Report
Notice God



'ACORN' – a growing movement across Scotland's congregations and church groups that enables us to gently share our faith amongst friends and family members.

We have started 2 new groups recently which are in the early stages of formation. If you'd like to know more, please contact Lorraine.

Wednesday Evening Drop in Cafe – Bridgend

In conjunction with LYPP we have a drop-in cafe for parents in the Mission Hall Bridgend at 6.30-8.30pm. This gives the parents and adults in Bridgend a chance to sit, have a cuppa and raise any issues they'd like to talk about. I have local council members, a debt coach and gambling coach that visit regularly to help support people with any ongoing concerns they feel they'd like to address.



Lego Builders / Lego Church

Lego builders was a new initiative last year where I got the Lego builders team in, and the kirk hall was buzzing with children and adults all in their element building and chatting. This will be continuing this year with the view to adding in Lego Church on another day of the week. Watch this space!



BRICKS BUILD YOUR IMAGINATION

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- ♦ Open to all primary school aged children

Web: bricksclub.class4kids.co.uk

Find us on Facebook: @bricksclubuk

Cinema For All

Working alongside Cinema For All and Generation Arts, we are looking at ways of bringing the cinema experience into local venues. We have had 3 cinema showings between Linlithgow and Bridgend. We've secured a further 3 funded film screenings between now and the end of May. I am looking at ways of raising funds for our own equipment so this can be a permanent feature in our hall.

Phone: 07712 251810

Email: bricksclubuk@gmail.com

Dates for your Diary

COFFEE MORNINGS 10am to 12 Noon in the KIRK HALL

Saturday, 13th May Linlithgow Reed Band

EVENTS IN THE CHURCH

Sunday, 26th March	7.00pm	Linlithgow Reed Band Spring Concert
Monday, 27th March	9.00am	Cracking Easter
Sunday, 7th May	2.00pm	Hilary Crichton Pupils Concert
Saturday, 13th May	7.30pm	Cadenza Choir Concert
Saturday, 20th May	7.30pm	Linlithgow RFC Male Voice Choir
Sunday, 28th May	7.30pm	Edinburgh Bach Society Concert
Sunday, 4th June	3.30pm	NYCoS Summer concert
	& 7pm	
Saturday, 10th June	7pm	Linlithgow Ladies Choir concert

OTHER EVENTS

Saturday, 1st April	3pm–5pm	Messy Church (Kirk Hall)
Saturday, 20th May	3pm–5pm	Messy Church (Kirk Hall)

All events are conditional upon what Scottish Government / Church of Scotland COVID guidelines and regulations are currently in place.

WEBSITES

www.stmichaelsparish.org.uk – See Crosswind in full colour! Also find recordings of services, current intimations, details of upcoming events and all other church activities.

www.helpcentre.org.uk – For information on support available for most situations.



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MECHANICAL REPAIRS, DIAGNOSTICS AND SERVICE

ALFRED WEBSTER

STAINED GLASS ARTIST

by Bruce Jamieson



On Sunday, August 29th, 1915, the Rev Robert Coupar announced from the St Michael's pulpit that Alfred Webster, the creator of the 'Ferguson Window' in the south-east corner of the church, had died of wounds sustained while on patrol in the Ypres Salient – a notoriously dangerous area of the Western Front. Alfred had only enlisted in the Gordon Highlanders in the February of that year, and now, at the age of 31, one of Scotland's greatest stained-glass artists was dead.

The Ferguson Window pays tribute to the Rev John Ferguson, minister from 1878 – 1913 and a noted historian of St Michael's. It depicts St Ninian, St Michael, St Bridget and St Andrew while below are depictions of King James IV, King David (Twice) and Queen Victoria.



Harry Lauder seeing his son off to the front. John Lauder was killed on the Somme in December 1916.



One of the last people to see and speak to Webster was the son of the famous Scottish entertainer Harry Lauder. In a letter to his father, Captain John Lauder wrote, *'I had a sad experience yesterday. It was the first day I was able to be out of bed, and I went over to a piano in a corner and began playing*

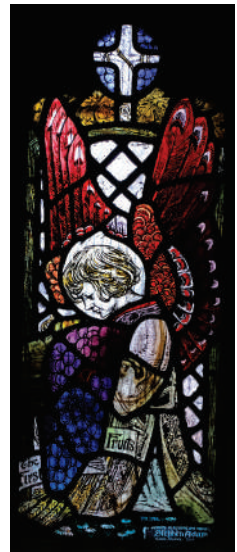
very softly. One of the nurses came to me and said a Captain Webster of the Gordon Highlanders, who lay on a bed in the same ward, wanted to speak to me. I thought perhaps my playing had disturbed him, but when I went to his bedside, he grasped my hand, pressed it with what little strength he had left, and thanked me. He asked me if I could play a hymn. He said he would like to hear 'Lead, Kindly Light.' So I went back to the piano and played it as softly and as gently as I could. It was his last request. He died an hour later.'

And so passed Alfred Webster, at the height of his talent, a great artist whose work lives on, not only in Linlithgow but in in Orkney, St Andrews and in many churches in and around Glasgow. I particularly like the window which is installed in New Kilpatrick Church in Bearsden where my daughter lives.

'The First Fruits' window in New Kilpatrick Church

The model for the angel was his son, Gordon, who in due course would inherit his father's studio and become a leading Scottish stained-glass artist in his own right. The window is dedicated to Webster's tutor and mentor, Stephen Adam.

Until Gordon was old enough to take over his father's studio, Alfred's wife, Maude, ran the business while bringing up her three sons. Another legacy is the Webster Theatre in Great Western Road, Glasgow. The theatre was originally Lansdowne Parish Church and still boasts some of Webster's creations.



The World War One cemetery at Etaples which was created next to the military hospital.

Alfred lies buried today in the huge Etaples Military Cemetery. On his headstone the family requested a line from the hymn 'O love that wilt not let me go'. Carved into the Portland stone are the words:

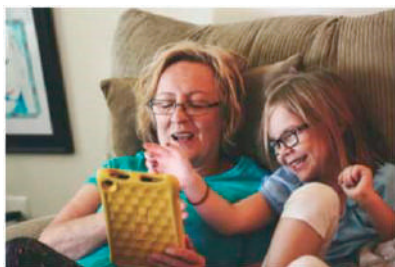
'AND FROM THE GROUND THERE BLOSSOMS RED LIFE THAT SHALL ENDLESS BE'

WEE SEEDS, BIG TREES

by Maureen Blake



This theme for the Guild session 2022-23 encourages us to see how small beginnings can lead to greater things. The aims of the six national projects being supported by St Michael's Guild are certainly ambitious and each is hoping that funding raised over the three-year partnership with the Guild will help them to grow and achieve a lasting legacy. Here are two examples.



'Home for Good' is a Christian organisation which seeks to find a home for every child who needs one. Each year around 35,000 children enter the care system in the UK. There are currently around 10,900 in care in Scotland. This charity provides support networks for foster carers, kinship carers and adoptive parents and by engaging with churches across the country, endeavours to recruit new families to further this work and to

promote welcoming fellowships where they can feel accepted.

The numbers of children in need are numbing but each one is precious and loved by God. This is especially so of the 'difficult to place' ones – sibling groups, older children and those with special needs. The rising number of teenagers entering the care system present particular challenges but by going forward in faith even these can be met.

Across the globe on an island in South-East Asia a very different project is being supported. Partnered by Pioneers, an evangelical organisation which exists to share the Gospel with unreached people, is **'Chocolate Heaven'**. Two Christian families are working to improve the lives of a poor community by setting up a chocolate processing factory. They buy the cacao beans from local farmers at a fair price, encourage better farming methods and provide employment in the factory. The business is expanding with outlets in larger towns buying the finished products and they now have an export licence to ship supplies to Scotland. The factory is being enlarged to cope with the increased demand. As well as improving the economic situation of the community, opportunities arise for the two families to share their faith with their workers, neighbours and wider contacts.



Both of these projects are grateful for the financial support that they are receiving from the Guild but they both also ask for prayer. Both are working in very challenging situations and rely on the goodwill of all church denominations to remember them in regular prayer.

FROM ASPIRATION TO REALITY

by Alan Miller

'To rise high or tower' is one dictionary definition of 'aspire'. Back in 2021, calling our fundraising programme for St Michael's Crown of Thorns spire 'Aspire Linlithgow' seemed quite a step of faith. But one year into the programme, the way our donated funds have risen higher and higher demonstrates just how aspirational our church and community are.

At the start of 2022, we had less than £20K banked. We are promised a £40K grant by the Church of Scotland; once that is received, our total net funding will be close to £200,000. We are very grateful for this generous grant from the national Church, but towering over it is the fantastic figure of nearly £160,000 raised locally!

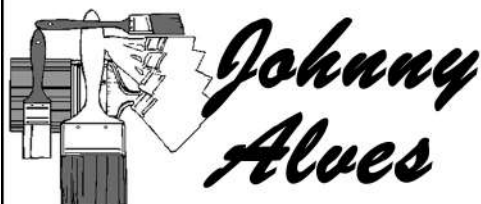
Events such as the silent auction in June, the quiz night in November and the Christmas hampers raffle have certainly helped. Primarily, though, this amazing sum has come from you. People in the church and community have given more than generously to ensure that our unique Crown will continue to shine, in Bruce Jamieson's memorable phrase, as 'A beacon standing guard over the ancient burgh'.

And shine it will: this funding means the work will start in the Spring and be finished by September 2023. First, a lot of scaffolding will go up around the church tower, with a large platform around the top of the tower and a support scaffold to hold the Crown secure during repairs. The existing aluminium cladding will be removed, and rotten sections of the timber underneath will be cut out and replaced. Finally, new weatherproof gold-coloured bronze alloy cladding will be fitted to restore the Crown to its original colour.

The total cost is now estimated at £300k + VAT. We're pursuing further grant funding, and expect to be able to reclaim the VAT. And the community campaign continues: keep the date for 'An Evening with Graham Spiers and Friends' on 16th June as the acclaimed journalist brings some big sporting names to Linlithgow. More details to follow.

Beyond the spire, we've started the process of seeking major grant funding to transform Cross House into a community hub for wellbeing – a House for the Town – and to secure the fabric of the church as a special space for all. But for now, let's celebrate that the aspiration to safeguard Linlithgow's iconic spire atop the church tower will be fulfilled in 2023.





Johnny Alves

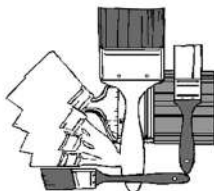
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THURSDAY FOR COFFEE

by Jill Allatt

How wonderful to be able to welcome people back to Thursday for Coffee! We were last able to meet in March 2020, and our regular get togethers have been missed by many.

We meet each Thursday morning at 10am in Room 1 of Cross House, and anyone is welcome to attend. Tea, coffee and baking are served by a rota of volunteers. At just £1 it's much better value than our local cafes and you can always



be sure of friendly faces and chat! This money is then donated, at the end of each year, to a charity chosen by attendees. Previous recipients have included West Lothian Foodbank and Singalong for Memory. As well as various church projects, attendees have been keen to support young people in our community and both LYPP and Youth Fellowship have received donations.

Since we began meeting again in November, numbers attending have varied, peaking at 13 and averaging 8 or 9.

For many people, it has felt challenging to return to socialising when, for so long, we were advised to stay at home as much as possible. A large body of research, however, points to the importance of social networks in maintaining good mental health. The fairly small group at Thursday for Coffee might be a gentle way to boost confidence about getting out and about more freely again.

Anyone moving to the town in the last few years may also have found it difficult to meet and get to know a new social circle. The group is very welcoming and it's always encouraging to have new faces joining. No link with St Michael's is needed – everyone will find a warm reception.

Perhaps you have latent Bake-Off dreams; maybe you have recently retired; possibly children or grandchildren are growing up and you have fewer child care responsibilities. If you find you have a couple of hours to spare you might like to consider volunteering at Thursday for Coffee from time to time. Once every month or so would be all that's asked. You really don't need reality TV standard baking skills, and the recent installation of a dishwasher in Cross House has even eliminated the washing up!

If you fancy a cuppa and some good company, just come to Cross House any Thursday at 10am – the building is accessible. If volunteering appeals, give me a call on 01506 840680.



FINANCIAL UPDATE

by Linda Jamieson

As I write this finance update at the start of the new year, I am very conscious of the economic climate and challenges ahead. At St Michael's we rely on the ongoing regular financial giving of members and are very grateful for their ongoing support. We currently have a dependency on a small number of generous donors and would like to see that number increase.

We are still finalising our 2022 figures but it looks like our general income for 2022 is in line with 2021 income. Considering the economic challenges many of us are facing, this is a good result. However, early indications of our general expenditure for 2022 show a 15% increase compared to 2021, resulting in an overall deficit of approx. £10,000 in our general funds. During 2022, repairs and maintenance to the Church, Cross House and the Manse cost over £37,000. It should be noted that some of these repairs were carried from 2021 as we returned to some normality following covid. These figures exclude restricted income and expenditure, mainly associated with the Aspire fundraising. I will provide a summary of 2022 finances in the next issue of Crosswind when our year-end figures are finalised.

I also hope to provide further information on the new calculation for our contribution to the national church, Giving to Grow, and how this will impact our finances. We expect our contribution for 2023 to be £149,200.

We not only encourage everyone to review their giving, but we also monitor costs closely, seeking opportunities to reduce expenditure. A fixed rate tariff for energy and a great team of volunteers supporting the general maintenance work on our buildings all help.

A huge thank you to all who supported fundraising activity in 2022. Raising £134,500 for the Aspire Linlithgow appeal is remarkable, a result of much hard work from Alan Miller and his fundraising team in securing generous donations. Total funds raised to date now exceed £151,000.

If you are looking for a fresh challenge in 2023 and have financial or management skills, why not consider volunteering with us. You could get involved in ensuring the church looks after everyone's money properly. To arrange a chat over a coffee and find out how you can help, please contact Linda at LJamieson58@aol.com

Thank you to all our volunteers, members, and the wider congregation for their support, it is appreciated and makes a huge difference.

May God richly bless you, your family and friends.

OPEN CHURCH

by Vicki Carlin

'Welcome to St Michael's Church!' That's how it starts. As a volunteer with Open Church, our task is to welcome visitors from home and abroad to our beautiful church. It is important that the church is open to the public and we need new volunteers following the pandemic. In winter, we are open in the mornings from 10.30am to 1pm and in summer the hours are 10.30am to 4pm, split into two shifts.

Volunteers bring life to the church during the week. Some have a great knowledge of the history of the church and some just want to give visitors the opportunity to experience the beauty and atmosphere of the church. All are welcome to volunteer be it once a month or once a week – no regular commitment is required.

Why become a volunteer? If you like meeting new people and like history, stained glass or tapestries, then this is could be for you. Initially, you will be with an experienced volunteer who will show you what is expected and help you with some background knowledge. A welcoming smile is just as important. There is a folder with lots of information if you are asked a question that you don't know the answer to. We do not expect anyone to know everything. Indeed, after 12 years, I am still learning either from other volunteers, visitors themselves, or from the OCV information folder.

Visitors come because they are interested in history, some visit because they used to have a connection to St Michael's, some visit because they were passing through Linlithgow and some have very specific reasons.

For example, one visitor I met a few years ago said he had come to see 'the plaque'. His English wasn't too good, but certainly much better than my Flemish! Eventually, I worked out that he was referring to a plaque in St Katherine's Aisle which commemorates the life of Anselm Adornes, a 15th-century merchant from Bruges who was buried near the church.

Visitors may be from Linlithgow, elsewhere in Scotland or virtually anywhere in the world – Spanish, Italian, German and American visitors are common, but we also get visitors from South America, Central Europe and Scandinavia. Some visitors have lots of questions, but most are happy to use our guide which has been translated into several languages.

Local visitors may be coming to show friends around or simply to recall a wedding they attended. One couple I met were visiting with their family to have their photograph taken on the steps, just as they had 60 years earlier after their wedding ceremony.

If you are interested in more information about volunteering for Open Church, please contact either Vicki Carlin at vickicarlin6@gmail.com or David Timperley at d.timperley@blueyonder.co.uk



YESTERDAY ONCE MORE

by Iain Harrison

As it turned out, 1923 was a fairly quiet year across the world except for those living in Japan. In the UK Stanley Baldwin succeeded Bonar Law as Prime Minister. Also in the UK, The Matrimonial Causes Act gave women equal rights in divorce cases and The Liquor Act made it illegal to sell alcoholic beverages to those under the age of 18. Across the pond in the USA, Warner Brothers Film Studios were established in Hollywood, California. Sadly in Japan the Great Kanto earthquake that hit Tokyo and Yokohama and the tsunami it created killed well over 100,000 people.



Aftermath of the Great Kanto Earthquake

In Sicily, Mount Etna, Europe's most active volcano, erupted again destroying many homes but thankfully not claiming lives due to the slow flow of the lava.

Electricity

At the Kirk Session meeting held on 16th January 1923 it was suggested that the convenor communicate with the Scottish Central Electric Power Company to look into the introduction of an electric current 'into the district' with the view of having the church organ driven by electricity. An organ committee was set up to look at various schemes and appropriate costs. It was thought that a small building might be required to contain an engine for the purpose of blowing the church organ.

Marches Day

The meeting of the Kirk Session due to be held on 15th June was moved back to 26th June to avoid a clash with Marches Day, a wise decision I suspect.

The Woodworm Strike Back

Following expenses incurred in 1922 with choir stalls having to be upgraded because of woodworm, seven more choir stalls had to be upgraded in 1923 at a total cost of £16. The original estimate was £5 to £10 suggesting that the damage done by the woodworm was worse than first thought.



Church Lighting

Discussion on church lighting took place during the September meeting and it was felt that the lighting was insufficient in places especially for older people. A small committee was appointed to investigate and perhaps shed light on this problem!

Condition of the Church, Manse and Offices

Following on from the Haldane Committee Recommendations relating to churches and manses, the condition of church buildings was asked for along with a note of expenditure incurred in their upkeep over the last 50 years! This would no doubt be a thankless and somewhat onerous task for those involved at the time digging through 50 years worth of records. The condition of the church did not make positive reading in that 'the roof needs replaced' and 'repointing of stonework' was deemed necessary. It was stated that 'drainage of roof water currently goes to ground and is left to seep away', but this also required attention particularly on the south side of the church.

It was estimated that the average cost over the last 50 years for the upkeep of the church, manse and offices was £50 a year. However, costs for 1923 were estimated at £225 no doubt due to the work referred to above.

Bank Balances

To end on a positive note, the church had £38/10/5 in the bank, £38.52 to those of you born after decimalisation. Although this may not seem much it is the equivalent of £2,752.90 today.



FERGUSON FAMILY UPDATE

by Lorna Ferguson



Happy New Year! In Japan we have just entered the Year of the Rabbit, or Year 5 of the reign of the current Emperor. I am currently back in Scotland for two months to visit family and some of my supporting churches. Unfortunately I don't have time to visit every church, but hope to do that when I'm back for longer from the end of 2024.

It was lovely to be joined for Christmas and New Year by three of my sons and their girlfriends. Daniel now works in Bangkok and arrived back in Scotland on Christmas Eve. Matthew works in Edinburgh so it was a short journey for him to my parents' house near Kinross.

Calum came over for the winter holidays from his University in New Jersey in the US. Alistair only gets a short break from his University in Japan, so he decided to stay there this year. With four sons living in four different countries and time zones, and three non-British girlfriends, we have certainly become an international family and it is a rare occasion when we can all get together.

It has been interesting to come from Japan to Scotland at this time. In Japan, people are still very conscious of Covid-19. Numbers of infections, hospitalisations and deaths are still reported in the news every day. Although there are no mandates, masks are ubiquitous indoors and most people wear them outside as well. In fact more than half of Japanese people say they want to continue to wear masks. Social distancing is also still practised in many places, often with plastic screens in place between people, and there is no sign that any of these precautions will end any time soon.

One of the main reasons that Japanese people wear masks is because everyone else does! In Japan, social conformity is highly valued and people are often afraid to be different. This is one of the principal reasons it is hard for Japanese people to become Christians. When the vast majority of people follow Shinto and/or Buddhist practices (even though they might not believe in them), it can be very difficult for a Japanese person to consider becoming a Christian, even if they like the teaching of the Bible.

As has been the case with many churches in Scotland, the pandemic has made things difficult for churches in Japan. Although they were never told by the government to close, many churches have gone online or offer hybrid services. Even now, most services are socially distanced and with masks, with people going home immediately afterwards. Many churches still don't do anything other than a Sunday service, with midweek and outreach meetings having stopped in spring 2020. Recently I went back to Otaru church where David and I served from 2000-2009. The church has a new minister, but the weekly congregation has halved and now numbers fewer than 20 people.



As missionaries in Japan we would love to see a vibrant church impacting every community – this is the vision of OMF Japan. The work of church planting and leading churches has always been difficult there, and seems even more so since the pandemic. At times there seems so little to see, and it can be discouraging, also for Japanese Christians. Yet we are told in Hebrews 11 that 'faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see' (verse 1). And so we trust that God is continuing to work in Japan and that one day, in answer to folks' prayers and the witness of missionaries and Japanese Christians alike, we will indeed see many Japanese people coming to faith in Jesus.

Thank you for all your support. Please keep praying for the people of Japan.

Lorna, Calum and Alistair

FAITH IN POETRY

by Steve Chaffee

Those who speak with me for very long will soon find a few topics quickly emerge in my orbit: science fiction (and the faith), fantasy (and the faith), or R S Thomas (and the faith). The Welsh poet is one about whom I have become more and more familiar in the past few months and years. A collection of his poetry is regularly in my backpack, to crack open in a quiet moment between appointments in the day or on the train platform when heading toward or from Linlithgow. It is to one of his poems I would like to turn today.



R S Thomas

In *A Species*, we find a story about the human race in the near future. Admittedly, the depiction is... somewhat sour. God, left unnamed, 'sowed intelligence in them [humans] like a virus'. More than half of the poem depicts humanity as 'multiplying without joy', then finding Earth a bit too small before setting out among the stars 'waiting to be colonised not by the imagination but in fact.' Humans went 'hurrying from one direction to another with their infection'. (Notice the reappearance of 'illness' language about intelligence – as I said – sour!)

All of this is to set up the final turn of the poem: *'There came a day when the one // without name and whose signature // is in cypher willed them to go back // to their first home, destitute, but wiser.'* How beautiful a moment! This poem, with eloquence and brevity I can hardly believe, tells the story of an overpopulating humanity spreading out to the stars before a humbled return home to Earth. Even more strikingly, the final lines of the poem include a reference to the famous picture *Pale Blue Dot*, taken in 1990 by the space probe Voyager I about 6 billion miles away from Earth.

There is a tendency to relegate religion and spirituality to the private sphere of life. Yet, when I read R S Thomas' poetry, I keep finding that private sphere pulled to the fore. His poetry, like good science fiction, demands that you be present to the text, and allow the text to shape you. And this is, fundamentally, the same skill we need when reading and hearing the Bible. It takes a poetical approach, to think in terms of themes, characters, and echoes of the past emerging in the text – and I find this intellectual exercise nothing but stimulating, exciting, and spiritually enriching.

USEFUL CONTACTS

The Ministry

Minister

Rev Dr Liam Fraser
tel: (01506) 842195

Auxiliary Minister

Rev Thom Riddell
tel: (01506) 843251

Pioneer & Outreach Worker

Lorraine Orr
email: lorr@churchofscotland.org.uk

Youth & Family Outreach Worker

Steve Chaffee
email: steve@stmichaels-parish.org.uk

Church Office

Val Wood
Office closed at present so contact by
e-mail: info@stmichaels-parish.org.uk
or leave a message on
tel: (01506) 842188

Office Bearers

Session Clerk

John Reid
tel: (01506) 842030

Gift Aid Convener

Andrew Jones
tel: (01506) 840914

Coordinator of Music

Bill Jones
email: billjonesjazz@gmail.com

Organisations

The Guild

Margaret Henderson
tel: (01506) 844787

Parent and Toddlers

Fiona McCracken
email: fiona@stmichaels-parish.org.uk

Sunday Club Leadership Team

Steve Chaffee
email: steve@stmichaels-parish.org.uk
Sunday Club (3-11 yrs)
Bible Class (12-14 yrs)

Boys' Brigade

Lisa Callaghan
tel : 07894106425

Safeguarding

Alison Murray
tel: (01506) 840407
Andy Tunncliffe
tel: 07961521919

Bereavement Support Group

Sheila Rae
tel: (01506) 847538

Events Co-ordinator

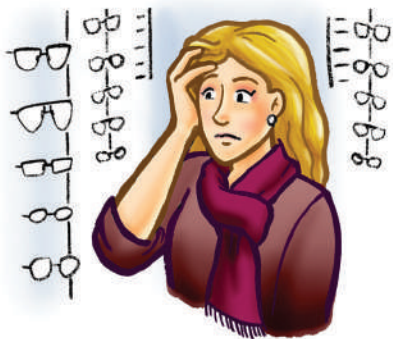
Stephen Blake
tel: (01506) 822603

Roll Keeper

Alan Bennie
tel: (01506) 848166

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