

Soundings

Portobello & Joppa Parish
Church Magazine
October 2019



Portobello and Joppa Parish Church

**Worship takes place each Sunday at Portobello and Joppa Parish Church
with two services – one at 9.30am and one at 11am
(10.30am in July and August)**

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Hours: Mondays 7.00 am to 2.00pm
Tuesdays to Fridays 7.00am to 12 noon
Contact by phoning Church Office

From the editor



This edition of “Soundings” has an autumnal feel to it. Summer is over, the organisations have started again and we’re not mentioning Christmas... yet.

Our family had a very social August, with lots of visitors. One of them was an American friend whose grandfather was a cousin of the well-known (to those who know about Scottish poetry) poet, Hugh MacDiarmid. We had fun going to the village of Langholm in the Borders where MacDiarmid was born, and finding his birthplace, his childhood home, the memorial to him and – eventually – his gravestone. After all that, we needed a cup of tea and found a café called Truly Scrumptious, which sounded promising. We went in and the lady in charge said to us, “You can have coffee, but no tea. We close in twenty minutes and I’ve switched the urn off.” We did have the coffee. It wasn’t very nice. Fortunately we weren’t hungry as she didn’t offer any food and we didn’t like to ask. Scottish hospitality at its best.

I do hope that we offer a better welcome at PJPC – but as Corinne says in her article about faith, we shouldn’t underestimate how difficult it could be for new people to join a congregation if they have no church background. And in his letter, Stewart asks us to think about our expectations of our congregation in terms of numbers and commitment.

Elsewhere in the magazine you’re invited to a conversation with Imam Hassan Rabbani, to two concerts, to the Guild and the Milton Quilters’ exhibition; and there are the usual features.

Pam

From the minister



Dear Friends and Neighbours,

We all remember the good old days. People queuing round the corner to get into communion services. Sunday School classes full to the brim with children. Quiet Sundays punctuated with a morning worship service and perhaps an evening service. The church as the centre of community life.

Last month I wrote about mission, vision and strategy. Picture a mountain with paths leading up to the top, with a star shining above. The star is the mission of an organisation, the ultimate purpose. The mountain is the vision, that which the group wants to become in order to approach the mission. The path, or paths, are the way to accomplish that vision.

What is our mission as a church? What is God's mission for the Church?

And the vision?

And the strategies?

The old days are gone. They are well and truly gone. Our world has changed enormously: it is said that people aged 25 are closer in outlook to those aged 35 than to those aged 20. Why? The pace of change is that rapid.

I remember reading an article in which the journalist confessed that, even into his 30's, he secretly felt that he might just make it into professional football. This despite the fact that he typically was kicking round the local park.

Do some of us deep down think that with the right worship service, the right initiative, a bit more time and effort, the churches will be full? Or at least *our* church? Deep down, I suppose I thought that might happen because of all the effort so many people have expended and the excellent team we have here at PJPC.

Do some of us deep down simply hope that ‘it will see me out?’ One minister I spoke to actually heard that said by a church leader at the General Assembly: ‘it will see me out.’ Wow.

We no longer live in Christendom. The narrative of our Christian faith cannot be assumed anymore. In 2016, when we gathered some statistics, we discovered that 2% of our parish was at worship. About 60% of the worshipping congregation was over the age of 65 and 75% over the age of 45.

In this context, God’s eternal mission remains: transform the world in love; make disciples of all the nations; draw all people’s into God’s presence.

But our mission in Portobello and Joppa? What if we leave behind any assumption that the church will be bursting and bulging and full of people? Then what?

Frightening? Or, liberating?
Enervating? Or, transformative?

What would that look like?

A group of people bound together in Christian love. A group of people committed to each other, to God and to nurturing relationships based on faith, hope and love. A group of people exuding joy and thus influencing our community far beyond anything humanly imaginable.

These are new and exciting days. What is God calling us to be? What is Christ calling us to do? What direction is the Spirit moving us?

New vistas beckon. ‘Will you come and follow me?’

Stewart



The Guild

The Guild held their dedication service on Sunday 22nd September and their first meeting on Monday 23rd.

The members meet every second Monday in the hall at 7.30pm. We have a very interesting programme this year and would welcome any new ladies or gentlemen who would care to join us.

If you think you might be interested, please just ask for a copy of our syllabus and come and share an exciting journey of fun, fellowship, caring and sharing with us. We should love to meet you.

Our first Fund Raiser is a coffee morning on Saturday 23rd November so come along and have some fun and visit Santa in his Grotto.

Annette, Convenor

Hassan Rabbani in Conversation: Sunday 27 October at 7.30pm

Last June the Portobello Area Christians Together (previously the Council of Churches) were delighted to host Imam Hassan Rabbani for an evening of conversation. He spoke eloquently and movingly about his Islamic faith and answered questions posed by people in the audience.

We have invited him back to continue the conversation. While details are still being sorted out, we are hoping to delve a bit deeper into Islam, its relation to Christianity and how we live and thrive in 21st century Scotland.

Do join us in the Sanctuary if you are able. A fascinating and important event.

Stewart



My faith

Stewart has been asking members of the congregation to share their faith stories; these are the reflections of Corinne.

I was brought up as a Methodist because my dad was, for 40 years, organist and Choir Director at Methodist Central Hall. I attended church throughout my childhood into being a teenager. I just went along with it. It was what you did. I wouldn't say I believed... or that I didn't. I enjoyed choir weekends away, where as kids of parents in the choir my friends and I played, sang, chatted and shopped – Northallerton market was great! I didn't really study the Bible or get into it.

I recall as a teenager a conversation with Mum about wanting to wear jeans to church – it doesn't matter what you wear, she said – it's what's inside.

I had good friends at church that I grew up with and am still friends with now. It gave me a sense of belonging, and security / stability. I knew my church family loved me as much as my own family. So along I went. But I struggled when a teenager with what I perceived as hypocrisy in the church – couldn't always see love in action.

This came to a head when my Dad died suddenly when I was 28. I recall 2 ministers sitting in our living room arguing over what music my Dad should have at his funeral and not listening to my Mum. I walked away from the church after that. Not away from God, though – in fact I think Dad's sudden death was the first time I genuinely realised that I believed in God and wasn't just going through the motions. So at one of the lowest points in my life to date, in the midst of a deep grief, when one of the worst things that could ever happen at that age *had* happened – the death of a parent – God was right there. The world didn't stop like I feared it would: something bigger,

intangible was carrying me through this unimaginable grief. It gave me the strength to speak at Dad's service.

It took me a while after that to come back to a church. Work was a handy excuse – moving down south and working long hours and on Sundays.

It was a new job back in Edinburgh – at CrossReach – 9 years ago now that did it. Yes, I believed; yes, I had a faith; no, I didn't shout about it. But did I want to sit somewhere every Sunday?

I remember coming back from the interview for what was a senior position and calling Mum and telling her I had signed up to lead devotions and then asking her what they were!

Nine years on, and I now relish leading devotions. I enjoy seeking out literature and reflecting on what to share... developing my faith... but for me it has to be real. It has to be about my daily words and actions, what is in my heart but what also comes out my mouth and what I say and do. And it has to be inclusive. I remember feeling very intimidated to start with at CrossReach, feeling so inadequate as others quoted Bible verses off pat and talked about that 'well-known Bible verse'.

But there have been other defining moments when I actually realised how important my faith was to me.

Including – on a happier note – in Walt Disney World, Florida, with my little girl. I know this sounds odd, but let me explain!

Despite the religious background of Walt Disney himself, you won't find any places of religious worship in any of his parks. My 'home', my church home, wasn't there, but I realised that it didn't have to be. I didn't need a building to believe, to know what was in my heart and how to behave and show

Christian love in action... to live my life and show Ava how to live a life with God's love in our hearts.

It was watching Ava give a Mickey balloon to a wee girl that didn't have one. It was saying thank you and taking time to give a glass of water to a custodian cleaning up in 90 degree heat.

It hasn't been plain sailing. My marriage broke up when I was 36 and Ava was only 9 months old – believe me, that was never in my plan and I faced prejudice as a single parent . My Dad died way too soon. Ava at 9 months old was very very sick in hospital .And I've struggled with anxiety. But through it all, God has been by my side (and my Mum – always my Mum!).

I worried about Ava chatting away and giving her dolly to “feed” to Reta and the other ladies at the back of the church. But I'd need not have worried. You welcomed us with open arms and we feel we belong...

So, for what it's worth, that's some of my story.

BUT if it was hard for *me* - a 40-something with a strong church background – how must it feel for those who maybe don't have that background? Or who don't have a Mum like mine? – though no one has a Mum like mine – she is one in a million. Or the person with a hidden disability, with autism, the single parent tentatively coming in to see what it's all about, the lady with dementia for whom for years the church has been home but who now maybe shouts out during the service. Or the person sitting beside you that appears so together, so confident, but inside isn't quite so. The child who won't sit still and shouts out, the parent with the baby crying, the man that has lost his wife and is putting on a brave face.

To end, I'd like to ask us all to reflect. Be still and ask yourself – truly – am I inclusive? Do I make everyone feel welcome? Do I truly try to show God's love in my daily thoughts, words and actions?

Corinne



Drama Group News

Saturday 19th and Sunday 20th October, 7pm

We hope you will join us for the last 'hurrah' for our 50th Anniversary celebrations!

We will be singing some of our favourite songs from the many shows that we have performed over the years. The two concerts are for everyone, as we will be inviting you to sing along with us in many of the songs! There is a poster opposite with all the details.

Some of the proceeds will go towards the dry cleaning and reinstatement of the stage curtains, much needed after all these years!

We look forward to seeing you on Saturday 19th and/or Sunday 20th of October **at 7pm.**

Sheila

PORTOBELLO & JOPPA PARISH CHURCH
DRAMA GROUP PRESENTS

The Melodies Linger On!

CELEBRATING
50 GOLDEN YEARS



JOIN US AS WE
CELEBRATE, AND
SING ALONG WITH
SONGS FROM OUR
BEST-LOVED
PRODUCTIONS!

SATURDAY 19TH & SUNDAY 20TH OCTOBER, 7PM
PORTOBELLO & JOPPA PARISH CHURCH
TICKETS £8/£4 - CALL 07780 687 174 OR BUY ON THE DOOR

FLYER DESIGNED BY TOMMIE TAYLORS

Strathclyde Harmonia concert – Saturday October 26, 7.30pm

I belong to The Seven Hills Chorus*, led by William More. He's also Artistic Director of the truly excellent Strathclyde Harmonia, a semi-professional choir which is based in the Glasgow area (hence the name) but which also puts on yearly concerts in Edinburgh. One of these occasions is Saturday, October 26 at 7.30 in St Anne's Church, Kaimes Road, Corstorphine.

The concert will last for about an hour and will consist of music by MacMillan, Whitacre, Vaughan Williams, Esenvalds and from Scotland, England, Ireland, America and more. The theme for this year's concert is 'The Journey' and all profits from the concert will go to the choir's chosen charity. Tickets are £10 and are available from the website (www.strathclydeharmonia.org) or at the door.

Last year they had rather a thin Edinburgh audience and it would be great if a few more people could attend this year. I can guarantee a wonderful concert with outstanding singing.

Pam

*The Seven Hills Chorus also rehearses in St Anne's, on a Wednesday at 7.30pm. I realise that this isn't exactly handy for Portobello, but if you do know anyone over in that direction who would like to join a pretty decent choir singing a variety of music of the non-pop variety, do suggest The Seven Hills. All are welcome - as with most choirs, tenors especially so. They should contact me or secretary@sevenhillschorus.org



A Call to Prayer

“I thought about my ways, and turned my feet to Your testimonies” – Psalm 119, 51.

Thinkers like to know – everything. They’re the investigators, scientists and inventors among us and this is good. On the minus side, thinkers can be introverted and this can lead to insensitivity to others. Sometimes we all love being right more than we love the people around us. We don’t like to lose arguments or be interrupted. And we’re not always comfortable expressing emotion or affection, preferring to express our feelings indirectly or through gestures.

The problem is that we weren’t created to fly solo. We can only grow spiritually as we give to others and are willing to receive from them. Jesus said, “By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” (John 13, 35.)

Thinkers often struggle with faith. That doesn’t make them bad people, just honest doubters. But faith and reason aren’t necessarily opposed, and when reason won’t take you another step, faith in God enables you to keep going.

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Dates for your diary- Milton Quilters exhibition

From the late 1990s until 2014, the year of the union of our churches, the Milton Quilters met in the Old Parish Church Hall.

Their biennial exhibition is in the Fisherrow Centre, South Street, Musselburgh on Friday 18th and Saturday 19th October from 10am – 4pm. Admission is £5, which includes refreshments. The proceeds from this show will go to “New Beginnings”, a small, local charity which helps people with learning difficulties to reach their potential.

Over the years, we have distributed hundreds of quilts to the community, small quilts to Simpson’s Premature Baby Unit and tiny ones – “Blankets of Love” to parents who have lost their babies. Donations have been given to many charities and organisations.

The group has participated in various projects including “Scotland’s War”, a display of 15 wall hangers and a communion cloth which was exhibited around Scotland and in the Scottish Parliament.

A number of ladies from the congregation are also members of the group.

Hope to see you at the exhibition.

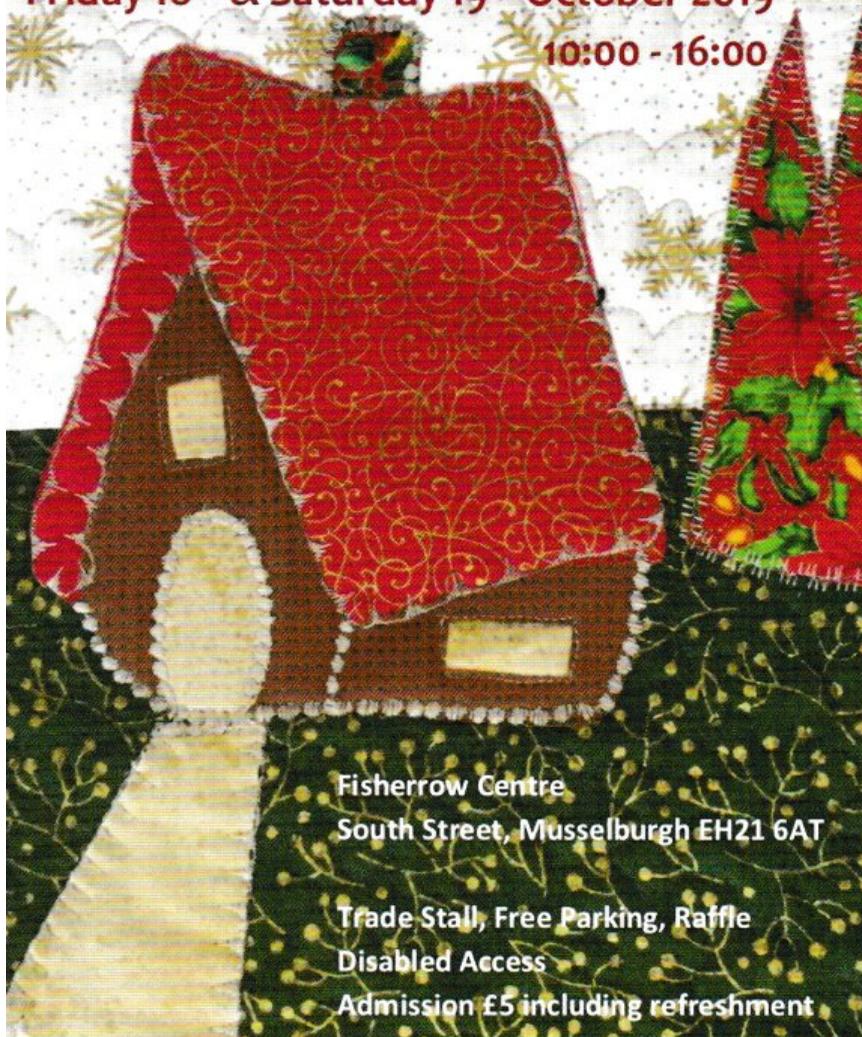
Irene, Milton Quilters.

Milton Quilters

QUILT EXHIBITION

Friday 18th & Saturday 19th October 2019

10:00 - 16:00



Fisherrow Centre
South Street, Musselburgh EH21 6AT

Trade Stall, Free Parking, Raffle
Disabled Access
Admission £5 including refreshment

Excursions and alarms



The PJPC flat-walking and hillwalking groups are busy scraping the mud off their boots once more after a long weekend near Keswick in beautiful weather. For the second year running we stayed in The Old Homestead, a large house with amazing views over mountains.

Our walks were, as ever, both enjoyable and exhausting. The first one tackled by the theoretically-flat-walkers was a circular walk *uphill* - yes, really - from Rosthwaite. This was considerably more taxing on the descent than the ascent, but we all made it down more or less unscathed. Meanwhile the hillwalkers climbed Catbells. (The flat-walkers did this last year but it must be admitted that the hillwalkers achieved a faster time.) On our second trip, we all went on a joint stroll (comparatively speaking) round Buttermere and for the third outing some of us went from Cockermouth up the river Cocker and back, which was easy(ish) but muddy.

The indoor part of the weekend was more eventful than we – and the owners of the house – expected. Our first problem was that there was no hot water. We tried to be very forgiving about this and adopt a wartime spirit, but there was some muttering from those who like to start the day with a shower – which was most of the party. Fortunately a plumber came to our aid and all was restored in time for the Rosthwaite/Catbells mud to be washed off. However, one of the shower cubicle drains then turned out to be blocked (not by us) which caused water to cascade... well, all right, trickle... downstairs through a light fitting. We had to summon the owners again. And then someone managed to set off the alarm in the house by having too steamy a shower. Back came the owners to switch off the alarm. By the next morning, when the toaster was a bit over-enthusiastic and the alarm went off *again*, we were beginning to feel it was time for us to leave...

(The owners say we're welcome to come back again but they may have been being polite.)

The age range of the group was from *well* over retirement age down to eight months, though the children and their parents didn't do the more strenuous walks. We were so delighted to have little Freya and Carson with us in the house and they provided great entertainment and many cuddles. Freya (3) is just at that "Why?" age.

Freya: What's that?

One of us: Sticky toffee pudding.

Freya: Why?

(Etc.)

Many thanks to the McKerchars, the Simpsons, Sheena and all who provided splendid food, led us on the walks, provided helping hands down steep rocks, told us lots of things about the flowers and plants we passed along the way (that was George) and joined in the general hilarity.

Pam

Outing to Brunton Theatre – Friday 8 November, 7.30 pm

The Social team are planning another outing to the Brunton Theatre - to see 'Christmas with Steptoe and Son' in some classic, festive misadventures adapted for stage by John Hewer.

Because we are buying in bulk, the concession ticket will be £11.50 and these can be obtained from Ian. We will try to arrange transport where needed.

Ella

Brain teaser



The clocks go back on October 27 so I thought that I'd remind you of this with an anagram puzzle.

C	The Bible is divided into ?	PATCHERS
L	Jesus said we should ? one another	VOLE
O	A book in the Old Testament.	AHAD DO I
C	Abel's brother	ANIC
K	First and second book of ?	SKING
S	"? to the Lord a new song."	SNIG
G	David and ?	AIL GOTH
O	Alpha and ?	AGO ME
B	He was one of the twelve apostles	ALBERTO WHOM
A	Brother of Moses	ROANA
C	A Bible book of genealogy and history	CECIL SHORN
K	"I am not my brother's ?"	EKE REP

Alison



Getting to know you – Annette. She says, “I was a Leither and was the youngest member of the Church of Scotland once, aged 16. I married Graham in 1970 and we were members of the Methodist Central Hall for nearly 40 years before his early death in 2007. We were blessed with two children, Christopher and Corinne. I started teaching in 1967 and finished my career teaching kids with learning, behaviour and physical difficulties at Towerbank Primary. I married Boyd 5 years ago and between us we have 11 grandchildren, spread all over the world. I joined St Philip’s (as it was then) about 10 years ago and found a spiritual home.”

Q. What is a favourite hymn, and why?

A. ‘Abba Father’. The whole school at Towerbank sang it for me when I retired and there was not a dry eye in the house.

Q. What is an early church memory?

A. An early embarrassing memory for me is when I was a teenager singing ‘And the Glory’ from the Messiah in the church choir and coming in a bar too early with great enthusiasm.

Q. What’s your earliest *childhood* memory?

A. I had breathing problems as a child and so slept in a cot for a long time so that my parents could hold a steaming kettle under a large blanket to help me breathe more easily. I remember that cot well!

Q. In an alternative life, what job would you have chosen?

A. This is such an easy question. I would have been a paediatrician. I read medical books and watch 24 Hours in A and E.

Q. What are you reading at the moment?

A. *'Drive your plow over the bones of the dead' by Olga Tokarczuk.*

I hope to get it finished and join in the Book Club discussion.

Q. What would be your ideal holiday?

A. *I am not too keen on holidays but if I had to choose it would probably be Germany to try to keep up my poor language skills.*

Q. Your fairy godmother has granted you one wish. What would it be?

A. *I would wish for equality in the world.*

Q. What is your most prized possession?

A. *My health and friends and family.*

Q. Tell us something that not many people know about you.

A. *I used to be able to ice skate quite well.*

Q. What luxury would you take to a desert island?

A. *Dark chocolate.*

Q. What do you do to relax?

A. *I love walking, reading, swimming and playing games with my youngest granddaughter.*

Q. Where would you go in a time machine and why?

A. *Nowhere – quite happy with the present – Brexit excepted!*

Q. What is a favourite quotation?

- A. *“Do all the good you can.
By all the means you can.
In all the ways you can.
In all the places you can.
At all the times you can.
To all the people you can.
As long as ever you can.”*
John Wesley

Q. What kind of music do you listen to?

- A. *All kinds – classical. Scottish, folk, opera, musicals etc.
Favourite musical – Les Misérables.*

Q. How would you like to be remembered?

- A. *‘She made mistakes, sometimes got it wrong but always did her best.’*

Q. What gets you up in the morning (apart from your alarm clock)?

- A. *I have no difficulty getting up as I do not sleep well, but do not need a lot of sleep so am very happy when the morning comes and I look forward to another day on planet earth.*

Q. What makes your heart sing?

- A. *I love to hear the voice of my grandchildren on the phone and be told all their news.*

LIFE AND WORK – October 2019



Do Not Be Afraid Reflections on partnerships with overseas churches

Man With a Mission Pioneer Minister and Author, the Rev Dr Liam Fraser

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CrossReach Rescued Me Continuing the celebration of 150 years of social care in the Church, we hear from some of those who have been helped by CrossReach counselling services

Friendships and Memories Will Remain Hannah Dunlop reports from the final National Youth Assembly

Every Place of Worship a Place of Hope Celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Church-backed conciliation charity, Place for Hope

Free at Last The Rev Richard Baxter concludes his series themed on slavery by looking at how former slaves react to freedom

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MAGAZINE/DIARY DEADLINES

November 2019
December/January
February 2020

Sunday 20th October 2019
Sunday 17th November 2019
Sunday 19th January 2020

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