

# Soundings

Portobello & Joppa Parish  
Church Magazine

March 2024



# *Portobello and Joppa Parish Church*

## ***From the editor***

When I was a little girl in the 1950s, Easter was a much less commercialised business than it is today. Like most children, my brother and I dyed boiled eggs and rolled them down Arthur's Seat or (if our parents were too busy to take us) the Figgate Park or possibly just a slope in our back garden. We each got one chocolate egg from our parents, which was a great treat. However – even more excitingly – the man across the road worked in a chocolate factory and used to give a *big* chocolate egg to each of the children at our end of the street. His name was Mr Bann-Lavery and he and his wife had no children of their own. It says a lot about my love of chocolate that I've remembered him with gratitude all these years...



However, Easter in church was a low-key affair, with no vigils or beach services or processions. (What I remember most was having to wear a straw hat to church, in which I felt very silly.) Today, its importance is given more weight in our services, as you can see from our Worship list. In this edition of "Soundings" Stewart talks about Lent and the meaning of Easter.

Also, you're invited to the Guild's March meetings and to their Daffodil Tea on Saturday April 6<sup>th</sup> at 10am. Kay tells us more about our recycling efforts, and reports on our contributions to Fresh Start – including items which are always needed for their work. And there's a thank-you from the Food Bank.

You'll also see a poster for the Drama Group's production of "Brigadoon" from Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> to Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> of March – please note that the Saturday performance is a matinée, at 3pm.

Sandy has another tale for us – not one of his own adventures this time – about a very significant spoon. And there are the usual features, for which many thanks to their contributors.

**Pam**

## ***From the minister***

***Dear Friends and Neighbours,***

'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?



These famous words are uttered by Jesus on the cross. They articulate the depth of his suffering, his pain and his despair. They resonate through so much of Lent and Holy Week.

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, when we reflect on our mortality and look at the reality of the length of our days straight in the eye.

The first Sunday of Lent often includes a reading that describes Jesus tempted in the wilderness. How will he use the gifts granted to him? Turn stones into bread and he achieves popular power; bend his knee to the tempter, and the kingdoms of the earth are his and he gains ultimate political power; test God, cast himself from the top of the temple, descend on the wings of angels and grasp for himself religious power.

But he resists. His is a calling to preach and to proclaim and to institute a new kingdom, so beautifully articulated in the beatitudes (blessed are the poor, for they shall inherit the earth...).

From the wilderness of the desert to the wilderness of the cross.

There is thirst, there is hunger, there is the sense of abandonment, there is isolation and desolation in both.

He quotes scripture when tempted in the wilderness. On the cross, he quotes the beginning of Psalm 22.

He is grounded even when light-headed from hunger and thirst in the desert. He is grounded even when he is lifted up on the cross. He is grounded in God.

Give me Lent over Advent any day of the week.

Not to be a Scrooge, not to be too much of a grump (though I am getting much better at that), but the movement, the busyness, the frenzy, the sheer expected accumulation of stuff that surrounds us in Advent is so pertinently reduced in Lent. Yes, there are the chocolate eggs and the bunnies and all the rest of it. But nothing like the maelstrom of Advent.

Lent is preparation and groundedness. In the scriptures, in the stories of old, in the beautiful simplicity of our lives if we simply focus on the day-to-day miracles, in the world around us, which, of course, includes the expansiveness of the desert.

If we strip it all back, all of the activities, all of the distractions, all of the lists, all of the electronic analgesia, what do we have?

Ourselves.

Alone, perhaps in a desert. Alone, perhaps on a metaphorical cross.

If we start there and move outwards, if we start there and need to reconstruct our lives, what would we pursue first? Family. Friends. Community. Purpose. Serving. Healing. Love.

Is this not the church? Is this not the body of Christ? Is this not that very salvation we seek, only to be found when we empty ourselves in and for others, only in order to find, miraculously, the image of God in which we were created.

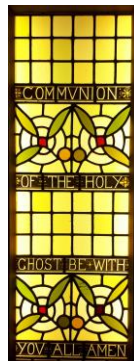
Lent is a journey and Lent is a discovery.

May we all discover the presence of God in our lives this Lenten season. And there, let us rest.

**Stewart**

## WORSHIP

<b>Sunday 3 March</b> (Third Sunday of Lent)	<b>9.30am</b>	Quiet and reflective
	<b>10.30am</b>	Informal and interactive
	<b>11.15am</b>	Traditional
<b>Sunday 10 March</b> (Fourth Sunday of Lent)	<b>9.30am</b>	Quiet and reflective
	<b>10.30am</b>	Informal and interactive with Sacrament of Baptism
	<b>11.15am</b>	Traditional
<b>Sunday 17 March</b> (Fifth Sunday of Lent)	<b>9.30am</b>	Quiet and reflective
	<b>10.30am</b>	Informal and interactive
	<b>11.15am</b>	Traditional
<b>Sunday 24 March</b> (Palm/Passion Sunday)	<b>9.30am</b>	Quiet and reflective
	<b>10.30am</b>	Informal and interactive
	<b>11.15am</b>	Traditional
<b>Thursday 28 March</b> (Maundy Thurs.)	<b>8.00am</b>	Communion in the Sanctuary
<b>Friday 29 March</b>	<b>10.00am</b>	Ecumenical Good Friday Service, followed by Procession of the Cross to St. John's for service at ca. 11.00am
<b>Saturday 30 March</b>	<b>3.30pm</b>	Messy Church
<b>Sunday 31 March</b> (Easter)	<b>7.00am</b>	Ecumenical Easter worship (beach at the bottom of Brunstane Rd. North.
	<b>9.30am</b>	Quiet and reflective
	<b>10.30am</b>	Informal and interactive with Sacrament of Baptism
	<b>11.15am</b>	Traditional



<b>Sunday 7 April</b>	<b>9.30am</b>	Quiet and reflective
	<b>10.30am</b>	Informal and interactive
	<b>11.15am</b>	Traditional
<b>Sunday 14 April</b>	<b>9.30am</b>	Quiet and reflective
	<b>10.30am</b>	Informal and interactive
	<b>11.15am</b>	Traditional

## ***Word for today***

*“Stand... in the presence of the Lord”*  
*1 Kings 19, 11*



When Elijah reached his lowest point, God told him, “Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord.” He helped Elijah to stop thinking about himself and his problems and start thinking about God.

When God has our ears, He can speak into them. When God has our hearts, He can minister to them.

*© 2016: This devotional is produced by United Christian Broadcaster, free of charge through the generosity of our supporters. As a gift to the body of Christ, permission is given to Churches and Christian organisations to copy up to a maximum of 52 daily excerpts per year. Excerpts must acknowledge The Word for Today as the source, give the UCB address (see below) and inform that free issues of the daily devotional are available for the UK and Republic of Ireland - Westport Road, Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent ST6 4JF*

# **GUILD NEWS**

**There will be two Guild meetings in March.  
The first in on MONDAY March 11th at 7pm  
presenting**

## **MY LIFE IN HORTICULTURE**

**starring our very own George Anderson.  
This meeting will take place in the Church.**

**The second meeting is on MONDAY March 25th at  
7pm when Michaela Foster Marsh, from the Guild  
Project STARCHILD, will give us an insight into the  
work the group undertakes helping disadvantaged  
children in Uganda.**

**ALL ARE WELCOME AT THESE MEETINGS**

**PLEASE LOOK OUT FOR  
THE GUILD DAFFODIL COFFEE MORNING  
ON SATURDAY APRIL 6<sup>TH</sup> AT 10 am  
when there will be home baking and a Tombola  
stall!**





## ***Destination landfill... or?***



BLISTER PACKS. OK, so you have probably caught up with the fact that Terracycle's (an international company which promotes and facilitates recycling of some items which are difficult to recycle locally, usually because they are composed of two or more separate elements like foil and plastic) programme for collecting and recycling blister packs has come to a standstill.



A while ago I contacted (by email and by snail mail) nine different manufacturers of blister packs, asking very politely about their future production plans for sustainable packs. I did not receive even one reply!!

Therefore, the foil and plastic blister packs now have one destination – the black 'Destination Landfill' bin.

Personally speaking, I have never received my prescribed medication in anything other than those difficult foil and plastic blister packs. However, packs with just foil ARE available (see image of blister packs ready for the recycling bin (in London)).

Please let me know if you are familiar with these.

Watch this space!



And now we have just learned that Terracycle is no longer collecting toothpaste tubes.



BUT ... something good has happened here. Most, if not all, COLGATE and ORAL-B toothpaste now comes in recyclable tubes; Colgate had set themselves a target deadline of 2025. Please, if or when you are buying toothpaste, look on the packaging for the recycling symbol shown here. That is the one you need to see. If it is there the tubes can go in your green bin. I went through a collection that had built up here at home as I was having difficulty finding a drop-off point for and sadly those shown (and there were a lot of them) all ended up in the black 'Destination Landfill' bin. Perhaps these other brands are already in the process of changing.



**HDPE**



Edinburgh Direct Aid

International earned £6500 last year from the sale of copper stripped from cable of various thicknesses. Thank you. Keep it coming.



Milk bottle tops – still being collected, but remember we need to 'up the numbers' as the white tops have less value than the coloured ones. Maybe your neighbours might want to help??

Pens of all kinds, used stamps and old postcards – keep them coming.

On behalf of the Recycling Team, thank you.

**Kay**

## ***Fresh Start***

It is a little while since I took the opportunity through Soundings to say 'thank you' for donations which continue to be given to Fresh Start. It is always good to see items in the box in the Flower Room at the front of the church building. I deliver them to Fresh Start when I am in Granton on Wednesdays. Their volunteers work hard and the distribution of items donated is well organised.



Fresh Start is an Edinburgh-based charity helping people who have been homeless get established in their new homes. The Charity was established in 1999 when a group of church members decided that they wanted to do something to help and support their local community.

With the knowledge that homelessness, deprivation and poverty were real issues for many Edinburgh residents, they went out and spoke to people who were having real, lived experience of these issues at the time. Those Church members set out to learn what would be useful and how people could be helped at this difficult point in their lives.

They quickly learned that homelessness is lonely, isolating and challenging, but there was an assumption that once people were given a tenancy, all would be well. The sad reality is that that is only the beginning of the journey. When given a tenancy, a person is only given the shell of the property, but not the basic essentials to make that house a home.

Starting operations from one of the group's garage, they began putting together packs of essential household items from donations they had received locally, which would later become known as Starter Packs.

Twenty years on and there are still the important

- starter packs of essential household items, like bedding, pots and pans, cutlery, crockery, etc but there are also
- 'Hit Squads' (I think that is being renamed) which give practical help and the materials required to paint up to two rooms when moving into a new Council or Housing Association tenancy.
- 'white goods' - the provision of cookers, washing machines and fridge freezers to those in need
- Cooking Classes - these are volunteer-led classes where participants are taught to cook healthy, nutritious meals on a budget. One of our own PJPC members has recently started volunteering in this area of Fresh Start's mission.
- Growing Spaces' where people get involved in growing fresh, organic produce, gain confidence and learn new skills
- the 'Pantry' which provides a supplement or a dignified alternative to food bank usage to those living in Pilton, Muirhouse, Granton or Drylaw and
- the provision of advice, information and one to one support on a range of housing and financial issues

Thank you for your donations of practical items. There is a current need for small household electrical items. Please keep your family, friends and neighbours advised of the need; there are always people trying to downsize!



**Kay**

## ***A story told by Major Albert S B Arkwright M C.***

### ***Sandy says:***

*Major Arkwright with two colleagues escaped from a POW camp in Germany, Offlag VIB. His two colleagues Rupert and Henry all managed to reach Spain with the wonderful help of local people, and his companions took holy orders after the war finished.*

*Major Arkwright wrote a book – "Return Journey" – in 1945, relating his experiences. However the attached story was omitted because of War Department restrictions.*

*Major Arkwright was a great friend who I ferried back and forth to Church for many years and we often visited the Usher Hall in Edinburgh to see the Scottish National Orchestra, although his tolerance of some music was other than positive!! He ALWAYS wore plus fours and an old wax jacket and his rather stooped figure was a regular sight in the village of Stow. Because of our friendship he gave me a copy of this wonderful story and it is related here in its original prose because it is so evocative of the time. Sadly a time which has gone.*

*He married Jean Thorburn-Brown and they lived in the local stately home. His book was dedicated to his wife, Jean.*

*Being an Arkwright, he was of the famous "spinning Jenny" family from Yorkshire.*

*I was very proud to know him, and to call him my friend.*

## ***The Spoon***



In September 1942 I was travelling on foot through Germany with two companions, Rupert and Henry; we were making our way from a POW camp, from which we had escaped, to the Dutch frontier, a distance of about 180 miles.

Each of us carried about 18 lbs of food, most of it in a condensed form, cheese, chocolate, milk tablets, marmite, tea, sugar, and quaker oats, for our plan was to be self-sufficient. To move only at night along unfrequented paths, and to avoid all contact with our enemies.

Each of us had a water-bottle and a mug and spoon; we had also a small cooking pot, for we hoped that now and then, when it seemed safe to do so, we would light a fire and cook some porridge or some potatoes gathered on the previous night, and for this our spoons were necessary because you cannot eat such food in your fingers.

It was not long before Henry lost his spoon, overlooked when we were packing up for the next move, and gone for ever. It was not a disaster or even a very serious matter, but it meant that, thereafter, whenever we cooked a hot meal one of us would have to wait until one of the others had finished his meal before he could begin to eat, and our hot meals were anything but leisurely; we ate as quickly as possible and then moved a short distance from the fire in case it had been spotted by a forest warden, and it was an irritation to burn one's tongue and throat and then sit anxiously waiting while the other ate.

A few days later I was subjected to a stomach attack, a not infrequent experience, caused by some chronic internal disorder. I was vomiting blood and feeling very weak and it was evident that I should have to rest for a while. We had to lie up in the first suitable place that offered itself, and this we did in a thick fir plantation near the crest of a narrow ridge. The soil was sandy and the only vegetation, apart from conifers, seemed to be of the heath variety. There was no sign of any water, but we had two full bottles, and I, for my part was thinking only of rest and warmth.

We pulled down some branches to lie upon and I soon fell into a deep sleep which continued almost unbroken for about 36 hours. I remember little of what happened during that period: once or twice I was conscious of the presence of my companions, and once I was vividly aware of a badger which blundered over my sleeping form and disappeared hastily with a grunt of dismay.

It was not till later that I learned of the anxieties that had beset my companions during those two critical days. They were, of course, seriously concerned about my condition because it seemed that I might have reached the point of no return. This they had neither the knowledge nor skill to determine, and the simple solution would have been to stay where we were until things took a turn, either for the better or worse and then it would become clear what had to be done. But it seemed that such a course was going to prove impossible because there was no sign of water in the vicinity and without it our stay there could only be very limited.

On the first morning Rupert and Henry went out separately to search the immediate neighbourhood, hoping that daylight would reveal where water could be found, but after searching all day they were unsuccessful, and when darkness fell they returned to our lair, tired and thirsty, and by now their spirits were indeed at a low ebb for the position seemed almost hopeless. Had it not been for me they could have pressed on their way and sooner or later found all the water they needed; but they could not contemplate leaving me to my fate and it was impossible to hand me over to the Germans without at the same time giving up their own freedom.

That night they took counsel and decided that on the following morning they would together scour the vicinity and then, if they were still unsuccessful and there was no improvement in my condition, there would be no alternative to swallowing the bitter pill and giving up our cherished and hard-won liberty.

When I awoke to full consciousness it was broad daylight and I was alone; Rupert and Henry were out on that last desperate search.

This I did not know; I only knew that nature had once again prevailed and that my strength and vitality were restored. I lay quietly and waited for the return of my companions and was thankfully aware of the pangs of hunger. After a time I heard them coming and sat up to greet them; there was an excitement in their faces I did not understand, and they too must have seen the change that had come over me.

It transpired that on that second morning, as soon as it was daylight, Rupert and Henry set out together as they had planned. Emboldened by dire necessity, and by the fact that the whole area seemed to be deserted, they hunted far and wide but still without success until at last, sick at heart and worn out with the search, they were on the point of giving up. Then, as they turned reluctantly to make their way back, Rupert's eye was suddenly caught by the footprint of a small animal which seemed to hold in it a vestige of moisture. Eagerly they followed where the track led, and as they went the imprints became deeper and the moisture more pronounced. Hardly daring to believe it they followed yet further until at last they saw a place where water came up from the ground in a small spring, and below the spring, partially concealed by vegetation, there was a man-made pool to catch the trickle as it came. As they stared in wonderment, scarcely able to believe their eyes, their feelings of relief can only be imagined; but these feelings quickly gave way to utter astonishment, and even a deep sense of awe; for lying close beside the pool, rusty but still serviceable, there was a spoon.

What a day for rejoicing! What a memorable day that saw a change in our outlook from one of near despair to renewed hope and optimism! What a lucky break that Rupert spotted that little footprint in the sand! What a stroke of luck that Henry found that spoon just when he needed it so badly! And how lucky for me that I was once again on my feet.

So was it all just a matter of pure chance and the vagaries of fortune? Or was it due to some higher authority intervening on our behalf and that these events were the work of a hidden hand?

This is the sort of question that crops up quite often during the course of life and the answer to it can neither be proved nor disproved: it can only be pure speculation and we are free to think of it as we will.



The late Field Marshall Lord Alexander once gave an interview on television and one of the questions put to him was how much of his success as a soldier was attributable to good luck or the fortunes of war. His reply was to the effect that his plans never embraced the possibility of good or bad luck and he had never been influenced in any way by such ideas. "I prefer to rely entirely," he said, "on a really efficient guardian angel."

**Major Albert Arkwright**

PORTOBELLO & JOPPA PARISH CHURCH DRAMA GROUP PRESENTS

Lerner & Loewe's  
*Brigadoon*

**WED 13th - SAT 16th MARCH**  
**PORTOBELLO & JOPPA PARISH CHURCH**

WED - FRI at 7.30pm • SAT at 3pm • TICKETS £16.00 / £8.00

**FOR TICKET ENQUIRIES, PLEASE CALL 07974 684353**  
**OR EMAIL [PJPCDRAMATICKETS@GMAIL.COM](mailto:PJPCDRAMATICKETS@GMAIL.COM)**  
**OR SCAN THE QR CODE**

THIS AMATEUR PRODUCTION IS PRESENTED BY ARRANGEMENT WITH WARNER CHAPPELL MUSIC LTD  
ADMINISTERED BY FABER MUSIC LTD



## **PJPC Book Club – January 2024**



***“Small Things Like These” by Claire Keegan. A short novel but one that was very thought provoking.***

*Written in 1985, it describes a small, closed community in Southern Ireland where the central character Bill Furlong, a coal merchant, lives with his wife and five daughters.*

*It’s an easy read, and the use of language is often exquisite, drawing the reader into the heart of the story. In one such instance there is a description of the view from Bill Furlong’s window on a cold bleak morning where “on the street a dog was licking something from a tin can, pushing it noisily across the frozen pavement with his nose. Already the crows were out...”.*

*Bill Furlong’s life is portrayed as drudgery, where one day merges seamlessly into the next and the same tasks are repeated day and daily, loading coal and logs into sacks, managing his business, meeting customers and at the same time fretting about whether or not he had sufficient cash to do all that he wished for his business, wife and family.*

*Behind these everyday scenes however lurked a darker topic, the treatment of illegitimacy. On a visit to deliver coal to the local Convent he comes across a young Irish girl locked in the coal shed.*

*Our conversations and discussions were far ranging, covering views of Irish nationalism and history, the power and secrecy of the Catholic Church at that time in history, the treatment of young unmarried mothers and their*

*illegitimate children, small town hospitality, the conspiracy of secrecy and views on the Irish economy past and present.*

*While some thought the book ended abruptly leaving a number of loose ends, others thought this was wholly appropriate as it created imaginative thinking in the reader. Bill Furlong was, after all, a child born out of wedlock who never knew his father. Would he and his wife absorb the unmarried mother into his family? What would the neighbours say...?*

*Our book for early April is “The Painted Veil” by Somerset Maugham and then for the end of May we will read “All the Broken Places” by John Boyne.*

**George**

*Spring shows what God can do with a drab and dirty world.*

**Victor Kraft**

*Our Lord has written the promise of resurrection, not in books alone but in every leaf in springtime.*

**Martin Luther**

*Easter is never deserved.*

**Jan Kanron**

## Brain-teaser



I've been thinking about Good Friday and have made up some clues with the letters of that phrase.

- G**                    What's the first book of the Bible?  
**O**                    What's the only book of the Old Testament beginning with O?  
**O**                    "From the - - - things to the new..."  
**D**                    He was King of Israel and Judah.
- F**                    "O Come All Ye - - - - - - - -"  
**R**                    A book of the Bible named after a woman  
**I**                    "Shine - - - - Your church, gathered today"  
**D**                    "All who - - - - - in dark and sin / My hand will save"  
**A**                    In the New Testament: The - - - - of the Apostles  
**Y**                    "Will - - - come and follow me if I but call your name?"

**Alison**

**Q. Why are Easter bunnies more tired when Easter's in April?**

*A. Because they've just finished a long March.*

**Q. Why do people paint eggs for Easter?**

*A. Because it's easier than wallpapering them.*

**Q. Who's the Easter Bunny's favourite actor?**

*A. Rabbit de Niro.*

*Answers: Genesis, Obadiah, old, David, faithful, Ruth, in, dwell, Acts, you*

## ***News from CrossReach –***

### ***Rosie's 16 years of service***

For 16 years, a small four-legged friend walked the halls of the dementia specialist care home, St Margaret's House in Polmont. Rosie first came to St Margaret's House at 12 weeks old, along with her twin sister Amber. The pair were loved by many and known as "professional beggars" with a passion for pink wafers. Rosie was left to carry out her care dog duties alone when Amber passed away from cancer in 2021, aged 15. Over the years, she brought joy to the residents. On the days she was not there, her absence was noticeable with residents expressing they missed her.



"All the residents seem to remember her name, even though they wouldn't know mine," says Elspeth, Service Manager and "mother" to Rosie and Amber.

Rosie's skilled begging tactics never deteriorated with age as she welcomed all visitors cheerfully whilst leading them to the office where her treats were kept. Sadly, Rosie passed away peacefully in August 2023, aged 16. However, her years of dedicated service will not be forgotten nor will her impact on the atmosphere of the home and the joy she brought to those that met her.

**The Food Bank** would like to thank the congregation for their contributions of food and also cash. These have been put to good use but there is still need, so donations are always welcome.





## ***Getting to know you – Ross***



Ross says: *I've been a member of the congregation for nearly 60 years, during which time I've been a board member (when such things existed), an elder, Treasurer and Session Clerk. Since retiring I've become part of the AV team and of a Rolling Café team. And I do all the technical bits of producing this magazine.*

### **Q. What's your earliest memory?**

A. *Some things seem like memories from childhood but they're just things I was told about by my parents and grandparents. I do remember moving house from Galashiels to Biggar when I was three. I remember being annoyed that I wasn't allowed to ride in the furniture van which is what I wanted to do. Around about the same time I remember going to my late uncle's wedding in England and his wife (now about to be 100) still tells of my dislike of wearing a kilt and sporran – something I still dislike doing!*

### **Q. What is/was your job, and in an alternative life, what job might you have chosen?**

A. *I was an accountant for The Distillers Company/Guinness/Diageo and then for the Church of Scotland. In an alternative life I should probably have done something which involved working with my hands – say woodworking.*

### **Q. What are you reading at the moment?**

A. *"The Word is Murder" by Anthony Horowitz. I really enjoy 'whodunits' but also read a lot of railway histories. I recently checked my library of railway books and found I have over 300 (oops!)*



**Q. What book do you feel you should have read, but never have?**

A. *I've never read any Charles Dickens. I have watched TV and cinema dramatisations but feel I've missed out by not reading any of the books.*

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

A. *I once drove a steam locomotive called "Blanche."*

**Q. What do you do to relax?**

A. *Somebody might say that it's watching TV (I've been an addict since watching the late Queen's coronation in 1953) but maybe I'd say looking at YouTube. Whatever it is, it involves a screen.*

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

A. *Back to a time before the Beeching Report, which got rid of many railway lines and the steam-hauled trains that ran on them. As a child I rarely went anywhere by train and I'd like to make up for it now.*

**Q. What kind of music do you listen to?**

A. *Classical music of all sorts but from no later than early 20<sup>th</sup> century.*

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

A. *Retirement means no alarm clock – apart from the odd time when we need to catch a train. So, although I do get up around 7:30 I then take a long time to get ready to tackle the day.*

**Q. Where would you like to be right now?**

A. *On a train!*







## ***Gardening with George – More advice from our horticultural guru***



I have spent some time recently rebuilding the three compost bays at the house. The originals were built back in 2003/4, when we first moved into our current house, but like all things created from natural materials they had deteriorated over time and were starting to crumble. The newly built version will last for another 20 years I suspect. When I posted a picture of my handiwork on social media, your magazine editor suggested that it was good to be optimistic! I have lined the new compost bays with some old polythene bags which I split open and stapled onto the boards. Doing this will prevent the various fungi and bacteria essential to the process of decomposition from weakening the whole structure. It may therefore last *more* than 20 years.

*(We'll report on its longevity in the March 2050 edition of Soundings – editor.)*

I make my compost from all the veg peelings, hedge clippings and grass clippings, paper shreddings and the occasional addition of seaweed or fresh horse manure. To speed up the decomposition process I turn the compost occasionally and make sure that it is kept moist. In two to three years I have a wonderful nutrient-rich dark brown earthy-smelling material that is used in the garden and at the allotment. Recycling at its best.



The garden is coming alive now that the milder weather is here (although we must still be aware that there can still be a lot of winter to come) - snowdrops, crocus, dwarf iris are all in bloom and (here in the middle of February) the first of the early daffodils and tulips are showing colour. I have lifted my pots of specialist show daffodils and hyacinths which I am growing for the Caley Spring Show at the end of March. They have been moved into the cold glasshouse.

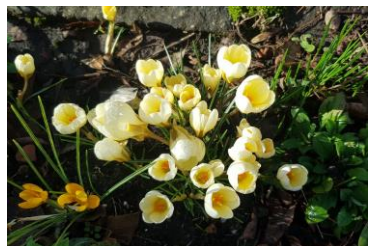
I have sown my tomatoes, aubergines, peppers, lettuce, cauliflower and sweet peas and have planted the first potatoes in the glasshouse. The tomatoes, peppers and aubergine seed have been brought inside to a warm windowsill to help them germinate while the cauliflower and potatoes have to take their chance in the cold glasshouse.

There is a great temptation to start seed sowing too early. Outside at the allotment I wait until I see weed seedlings starting to grow. Then I know that the soil is warm enough to encourage quick germination and support sustained growth. Often I delay sowing at the allotment until mid-March. But every year is different; it is always a challenge and that is what I enjoy. To everything there is a season under heaven.

I love springtime when new life starts. For me it starts white with snowdrops, turns yellow with forsythia, daffodils and crocus and then goes blue with scilla, chionodoxa and bluebells before all the colours of the rainbow erupt and summer appears.

Start buying your seeds, plan your pots and containers and wherever you garden,  
Enjoy your space.  
Happy gardening

**George**



## ***LIFE AND WORK March 2024***



### **'Our Ultimate Freedom'**

Easter reflection from the Moderator

### **Being Mum**

The gifts – and challenges – of motherhood

### **Lifesavers at Sea**

The 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the RNLI

### **Cathedral Celebrations**

Milestone anniversaries for two of Scotland's historic cathedrals

### **Presbytery Focus**

The Presbytery of Glasgow

### **View from the Pulpit**

The Very Rev Dr Russell Barr describes the shoots of hope found at parish churches in Fife.

### **'My Life Has Been Changed'**

An overseas student describes how he embraced faith while studying in Glasgow.

### **Regulars**

The Very Rev Dr Martin Fair on ministry recruitment

The Rev Roddy Hamilton on worship

Reflection by the Rev Dr Richard Frazer

The Rev Ruth Kennedy on digital church

Bible Study by the Very Rev Dr Colin Sinclair

My Church: Kirsty Thomson of Edinburgh: Holy Trinity Church.

**Plus:** official updates from the Assembly Trustees and Faith Action Programme, readers' pictures, news, letters, reviews and puzzles – all for £3.50. Visit [www.lifeandwork.org/subscribe](http://www.lifeandwork.org/subscribe) or speak to your church's Life and Work co-ordinator.

## ***Remembering***



**26 January 2024**

**28 January 2024**

**12 February 2024**

Margaret Lawson, formerly of Portobello

Rona Porteous of Craigentenny

Bill Williamson, formerly of Portobello

## ***Magazine/Diary Deadlines***

***April 2024***

***Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2024***

***May 2024***

***Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2024***

***June/July/August 2024***

***Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2024***

***Scottish Charity Number : SCO11728***

[www.portyjoppachurch.org](http://www.portyjoppachurch.org)

Photography by Kim Kjaerside

