



# NEW HORIZONS

*Innerleithen, Traquair and  
Walkerburn Parish Church*

*Autumn Edition  
2025*

Charity No:  
SC001100



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



## SCOT BABY BOX

### APPEAL

Mollie Davis is the local drop off point (Peeblesshire area) for the Scot Baby Box Appeal - a charity that makes up pre-loved baby boxes and delivers them to those in need in Ukraine (as well as supporting refugees in Scotland).

On their last trip, the organisers were met with over 200 orphaned Ukrainian babies under 2 months, so they are doing a real push for more donations to get support to those in need.

The appeal is looking for: used baby boxes & mattresses, plus anything and everything to fill them with (baby/ toddler clothes, blankets, snowsuits, changing mats, nappies, wipes, bottles etc).

If you have anything to donate (all donations welcome, whether big or small), please let Mollie Davis know. She can be contacted via Messenger, or Heather Martin ([martheather@googlemail.com](mailto:martheather@googlemail.com)) can pass a message on to Mollie.

This appeal is ongoing and doesn't have a deadline.

*Heather Martin*



## EDITORS LETTER

Another summer passes, by the time you read this the kids will be back at school, and we will be entering Autumn, hoping for an Indian summer in September. Well rested, that is except the grandparents among us who took on the child care during the holidays. Looking forward to all the church activities starting up again, refreshing our spiritual thirst and renewing all our friendships. This magazine edition is biased to the Malawi activities, as we had the visit of the minister and his daughter out to Thondwe and have lots to tell, I hope you all managed to get to the Malawi evening and heard the stories directly. I am also sure we will hear those words "when I was in Malawi" a few more times.

Please remember to let us know about any news, anniversaries, special birthdays etc, for the next magazine, which will be the Christmas edition!

*Dave Kerr*



## INNERLEITHEN GUILD

With the autumn approaching so quickly we shall begin to look forward to our new session. The first meeting is on Monday October 6th when we shall enjoy a musical afternoon. Following that we have a good mixture of speakers. On October 20th again at 2-30 we have Gary Swiney telling us about the craft of kiltmaking. On November 3rd we have a return visit from Ross McGinn with the history of our local mills. He is followed by Helen McIntyre with Massage demonstrations on November 17th. In December we shall be entertained with Rev Jim Wallace on December 1st before we finish off the year with our Christmas Celebration. We hope this programme will encourage you to come and join us in the Hall of Friendship on those Monday Afternoons at 2-30pm. We look forward to seeing everyone again after the summer break.

*Betty Scott*

## REFRESHMENTS AFTER THE SUNDAY SERVICE

Judging by the number of people who pack into the Hall of friendship after the Sunday Service, it is a popular event.

Unfortunately despite this the tea rota sheet remains less than half full, we desperately need some more people to add their name to the Rota.

The volunteers work as a pair; we will make sure an experienced person shows you the ropes, it is not difficult, once you know where to find the kettles, biscuits etc in the Kitchen, you do not have to supply anything other than your time. Please help each other and keep this loved event alive.

*Editor*





## MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER



Dear Friends

As I write the school summer holidays are coming to an end and I'm reflecting on the weeks that have passed. Summer came pretty quickly after our church trip to Malawi but not before we enjoyed marking the beginning of the Walkerburn Festival. In Walkerburn we thought about the parable of the Sower from Matthew 13. It was a good chance to reflect on how receptive we are to God's word and how we can grow well.



The Festival Lass, Maisie Sealey read the bible reading beautifully and also read out her essay which was really well written and read, she was a credit to her parents, the school and the community.

Not long after that it was Innerleithen Games Week and we had a packed church for the Kirkin' Service with praise led by St Ronan's Silver Band. It's always a special occasion to welcome our

community to church and we thought about the parable of the Lost Sheep from Luke 15. We also took this theme into our Fancy Dress Parade entry! (See pic page 8)



The parable is about how the shepherd isn't only concerned for the 99 sheep safe at home but also for the one that has got lost and gone astray. The shepherd is determined to find every sheep and rescue them. This

speaks of the love that God has for each and every one of us and how Jesus came to rescue us.



Summertime is often a time for holidays too and a chance to

get a break from normal routines. As a family we enjoyed a holiday up north in Lochinver. Our cottage was surrounded by sheep, and we watched with fascination as the shepherd tended to them.



One day he was rounding them up with his dog and the next day it was time for shearing. Later in the week we watched as Luke 15 was acted out in front of us. An injured sheep had been called in to the Shepherd, he arrived and with both great strength and care he lifted the sheep into the back of his truck and drove home. It was a good visual reminder of our themes from earlier in the summer.

Summer gives us a change of rhythm, sometimes busy and active like Festival and Games Week, sometimes quiet and peaceful when a holiday breaks the normal routine. However, in all that we do and wherever we go, God is with us. Jesus spoke in parables to use the everyday things of life as illustrations of spiritual truth and to show that God is always present.

Maybe we can all learn to look for God more in the everyday things of life. Both in the busy moments and the quiet times or in the hard work and in holiday times. Begin your day with God and ask him to speak to show Himself to you in each part of the day.



I look forward to catching up with you all after the summer and seeking God together in the months ahead.

Fraser



# THONDWE NEWS APRIL 2025

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

Charity No: SC001100

EMAIL [itwparishmag@outlook.com](mailto:itwparishmag@outlook.com) for any comments or questions



Rev Fraser Edwards of Innerleithen, Traquair and Walkerburn Parish Church in the Scottish Borders described it as an "inspiring" trip to the warm heart of Africa.

In his own words, he provides an insight into what is a mutually beneficial twinning partnership rooted in faith and friendship, which demonstrated to him that Christians, regardless of where they live in the world, are all one in Christ.



Elwin Kachere,  
Thondwe Session Clerk, Rev Fraser  
Edwards, Rev James Chigoli and Trevor  
Ndisale, Partnership Committee chairman.

"In 2021, I was ordained and inducted as the minister of Innerleithen, Traquair and Walkerburn Parish Church.

Since then, I have been learning about our congregation's 19-year-old partnership with [Thondwe CCAP in Malawi](#) and exchanging WhatsApp messages with the minister in Thondwe.

Former Moderator of the General Assembly, Very Rev Dr Shaw Paterson, had visited Thondwe in 2024 and then came to our church to share about his visit earlier this year.

This visit inspired the Moderator's ['Let your Little Light Shine' challenge](#) to fund solar-powered lights that children can borrow from their school and so far more than £52,000 has been raised.

I was delighted to have the long-awaited opportunity to visit for myself and travelled to Thondwe in June as part of a small group.

Everyone that we met extended such a warm welcome to us and seemed so pleased that we had made the journey to visit.

Nothing was too much trouble in terms of looking after us.

Luke 3:11 says: "Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same."

In Malawi. I could really see this in action and people who have relatively little were much more willing to share than we might be in the UK.

The ministers I spoke to all shared that regularly the people of their parish could turn up to their door needing food and would go away with whatever the minister had, even if the minister and family would go hungry to do this.

I was inspired by faith that goes deep and real trust in God.

Our first day was in the community and everywhere I went there were signs of the partnership at work.

A banner made by Walkerburn craft club in the parish hangs with pride of place in Thondwe, the finishing stones of the new bridge linking parts of the community have 'ITW Parish' etched into the concrete. (See pic page 4). The bookcases in the school library have small plaques with the names of ITW Church members who sponsored them and in partnership with our local rotary club, the classrooms have been getting equipped with desks and lifting learners off the floor.





The finishing stones of the new bridge linking parts of the community have 'ITW Parish' etched into the concrete.

Cryton Mbanira, School Headteacher, Rev James Chigoli, Rev Fraser Edwards and his daughter Anna Edwards and David Kerr, ITW elder and Partnership Treasurer, with pupils

The long-term benefits of the partnership are seen throughout the community and there is a close relationship.

This is not just about sending donations but working together for the benefit of the whole community and learning from each other.

Being there for Sunday was a real joy. Our partnership minister, Rev James Chigoli, looks after four churches and Thondwe is just one of them.

Early on Sunday morning he took me to share in a wedding service in Mpita CCAP – I have never seen such joy, singing and dancing in church.

Following this service, we returned to Thondwe to share in the Pentecost service, and it was a privilege to be invited to preach.

It was a special time to reflect on the different nations gathered at Pentecost and now for Scots and Malawians to join in worship together – all one in Christ Jesus.

One key pillar of our partnership is education and St Ronan's Primary School in Innerleithen has a strong link with the primary school in Thondwe.

Primary education is free in Malawi but there are fees to pay for secondary school, so we have also begun to support girls through secondary school.

The first cohort of five sponsored girls completed secondary school this year and we were able to hold a graduation ceremony for them.

To hear these confident girls' share of their hopes of continuing into further education as doctors, accountants and lawyers was a real encouragement.

We visited many other projects which are in progress including a new water borehole for the school and the church garden where food is grown collectively to support the community in what is known as the hunger months.

The fruits of a long-term partnership were seen at every turn and the bonds of faith and friendship are a gift to both sides of the partnership.

Perhaps other Church of Scotland churches would be interested in partnership with a church in Malawi?

I know there are other ministers in Zomba Presbytery who would be delighted to share learning with congregations here.

One practical request which came from Zomba Presbytery was for donations of clerical wear to support their ministers.

If anyone reading has clerical shirts, collars or robes that they would be willing to donate then please get in touch.

Donations could be posted to Innerleithen, Traquair and Walkerburn Parish Church and then we can arrange for them to be shipped out to Malawi by The Bananabox Trust.

Please contact [fedwards@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:fedwards@churchofscotland.org.uk) for more details if you are able to help.

Our travel costs were supported by a [Faith Share Grant](#) and we are very grateful for this support.

Carol Finlay, who until recently was the Church's congregational engagement officer, was also a great source of advice before I travelled.

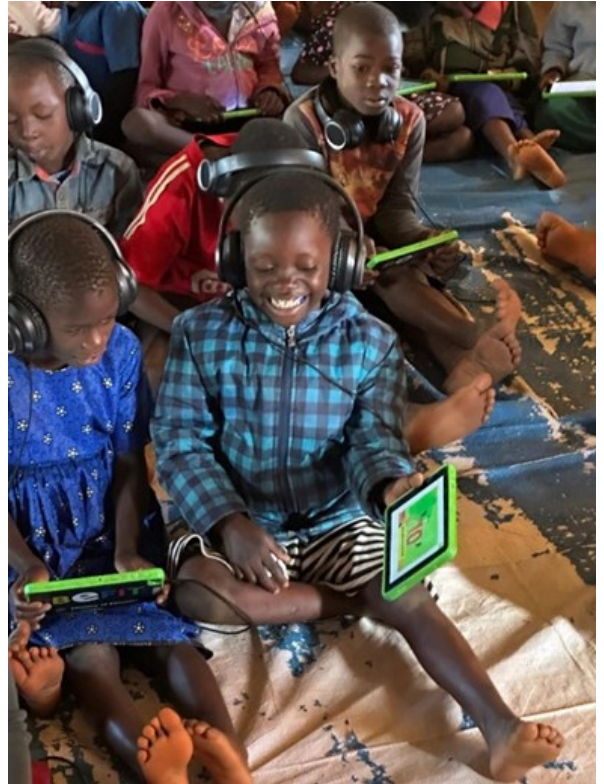
Thondwe is a rural village without electricity and so there are real limits to electronic communication.

Being able to show up in person, to shake hands, to pray together and to learn from each other about how to follow Jesus is such a fundamental part of our partnership."



## **BEFIT (Building Education Foundations through Innovation and Technology)**

Thondwe Primary school like others in Malawi faces many challenges such as overcrowded classrooms, limited teaching materials and a shortage of trained teachers. To overcome these difficulties the Ministry of Education has provided electronic tablets (like Ipads) to improve poor literacy and numeracy standards. The tablets come pre-loaded with educational software, allowing the children to learn at their own pace and in their own language. This 10-panel solar power battery system that recharges their tablets overnight, ready for classes in the morning, provides younger children with a personalised learning programme to realise their potential. The teachers are delighted that Thondwe has been selected as a pilot school and reckon it's improving school attendance, so they claim it's been very successful. A learner said *"I like the tablet because when I make a mistake it does not move on to the next learner, it tells me to try again and when I try I get the right answer"*



## **Ettrick and Yarrow Gift to Thondwe**

We were pleasantly surprised and delighted to have discussions with members of their kirk session on a possible donation to the GET-IT girls education in Thondwe Fund. They heard good news of the girls completion of secondary school and wanted to invest over £800 that had been set aside for a similar programme in Kenya that had lapsed due to a loss of communication. We agreed on assigning their donation to the "Ready to Learn " materials which are an important aspect of the programme.

## **Wrinkly Roofs**

In 2023 the partnership hatched a 3-year plan to replace thatched roofing with metal material on 25 homes by end 2025.



IN 2023 we managed to complete 6 houses, in 2024 we managed a further 5 at the start of 2025 we completed 3 houses and now with the support of funding for 8 roofs by the Rotary Club of Carlisle Castle whose President is Paul Faris we are well on the way to achieving that goal at 22 houses.

Thondwe families are on the front line of climate change, and we want to help them prepare against future climate shocks which will occur for sure. The recent church team visit included meeting many of the new roof owners who were thrilled with this home Improvement scheme. Not only does it provide improved health outcomes and the practical benefit of metal roofing but also dignity, security and supports the local community. Victoria Kerekesa and her son are really pleased with their roof, and the visiting team thought it looked good. Special thanks to Paul and Carlisle Castle Rotary club for

their generous support of the Wrinkly Roof programme

## **Bananabox Trust**

Our shipment of 15 boxes containing Good News Bibles from Earlston Church, cycling kit from Peebles CC, spectacles for Mzuzu hospital and phones for Ekwendeni youth with hearing impairment is due to arrive in Beira, Mozambique on 19<sup>th</sup> August with an anticipated arrival time in Malawi of mid September.



## Solaraid School Light Library

Thondwe's school Light Library has proven to be a success for improving educational outcomes and providing family support. The library which provides solar lights for learners to borrow and use at home, addresses issues of no electricity or poor candlelight. The head teacher reports that end of term results have improved because of increased study time and has appealed for more study lights, approximately 25 to reach 100.

Elizabeth Parker and her sister plan to walk the 60 miles of St Cuthberts Way from Melrose to the Holy Island of Lindesfarne in Northumberland at the end of August to raise money for the study lights. If you would like to give her some encouragement and sponsorship, please contact her.



## Church Garden

The Garden committee reported a modest harvest of 20 bags of maize. This is considered a poor crop caused by dry spells and weather disruptions with lower rainfall than last year. Nationwide there is concern that production of maize is falling at a time when the population is increasing, creating a high demand for food.

The trial introduction of pigeon peas and ground-nuts had mixed fortunes. Although the nuts were reported as a failure the peas were considered a success, and we await a report on the final value of the peas crop grown for 3 reasons: income generation, soil fertility and climate change adaption.



## Empowering 500

Another milestone was achieved when 40 more desks were delivered making it a final total of 260 desks and 520 children lifted off the floor in our L.E.N.D (Learners Need Desks) programme, started in 2018. As customary parents come together to paint the classroom in readiness to receive the desks. This programme will now be paused as other priorities are considered. Head teacher Cryton reported "that standard 6 learners will be writing exams in a very conducive environment, helping improve results"



End of Thondwe News



I just want to take a moment to say a heartfelt thank you to all of you for your incredible generosity and support.

Last week, I ran the Edinburgh Marathon in a time of 5 hours and 30 minutes. It was one of the toughest challenges I've ever faced — we had hail, sunshine, and 45mph headwinds for the last 8 miles. It really felt like every season in one race!

Thanks to your donations, I've raised £1306 for *Beat*, the UK's eating disorder charity — a cause that's very close to my heart. To make it even more special, I have now raised more money than the 200 mile cycle I did for beat 10 years ago! I honestly can't thank you all enough!

But what kept me going was knowing how many of you were behind me. Your kind words, prayers, and encouragement meant so much, and truly helped carry me over the finish line.

And lastly, as you can see I have a great picture of me finishing, including the time.

Thank you again, and God bless you all.

*Rebecca Irvine*

## GOLDEN WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES—CONGRATULATIONS

Heather & Chris Martin, celebrating their Golden Wedding Anniversary on 6th September 2025

And

Libby & Sandy Burnett's who celebrated their Golden anniversary  
on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2025





## ROLLING HILLS CHORUS COMES TO INNERLEITHEN ON 12<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER



IWT Rotary are hosting The Rolling Hills Chorus in the Church on **Friday 12<sup>th</sup> September** direct from their sellout performances at the Edinburgh Fringe! Renowned as one of the UK's top barbershop choruses, Rolling Hills will be performing a jewel of a show, a brilliant musical, "I can't believe its Barbershop" to delight and thrill their audience. The show will also serve as a memorial to our friend Bill Harvey, one of the Founders of the Rolling Hills Chorus. Thondwe children and their families was particularly close to Bill's heart, and it was the nominated beneficiary of Bill's retiral collection. Proceeds from the evening will be shared with Macmillan Cancer Care charity and ITW Thondwe partnership.

Tickets are available from Denis Robson (07775821793) priced £10



### SAMARA'S AID APPEAL

There isn't a recent update I can share for this magazine but, no doubt, you will have seen from the media reports that the situation is still very volatile in Syria. Syria is made up of different peoples with differing cultures and religion. The former Assad government often favoured one culture over another and this has led to violent retributions now another government is in power. Unfortunately, the present government has patchy control over the different militias still armed and roaming around. This has meant a restriction on what the charity can safely continue to do. The government and their small police force are aware that the volunteers and farmers are being targeted or being stolen from but they are not present in the area constantly to protect as they should. The general population must be so frightened, confused and uncertain of the future.

*Please pray:-*

*-that stability will come to Syria soon and the government will offer protection for all sectors of their society.*

*- for the protection of the charity's volunteers, the outreach centres and the staff in the new medical centre.*

*Thank you for your continued prayer support and financial contributions (<https://www.samarasaidappeal.org/>)*

*Heather Martin*



### KIRKIN WEEK


As always the Kirkin week was varied, exciting and great fun. It was not dry for the whole week, but I am told it was dry for the important bits!




The Kirkin service was a huge success and the theme was the LOST SHEEP, in keeping with that the ITW Church entry in the Fancy-dress parade followed the same theme as you can see. Special thanks goes to Julie Knox for all her months of work and preparation, and especially her ART! fabulous! Thanks must also go to the 18 or so people who took part, and represented the church at a vital community event.

OH and we must mention they won 1<sup>st</sup> Prize in their category





## TGP (Thondwe Girls Project)



Girls in Malawi are still missing days at school because of lack of provision of adequate menstrual hygiene products. Thondwe Girls Project (TGP) continues to provide the solution to 150 girls in Thondwe each year. To do this we need to raise awareness of the need and raise the funds to produce the sustainable menstrual hygiene kits.

TGP plan to have another Charity Table sale on **27th November 2025** at Borders General Hospital (BGH) similar to the one we had in 2019 which was a great fundraising success. Please come and support this event if you are passing through the BGH. We hope to have some baking too so do get in touch if you are able to help provide some produce. I'll send out a reminder nearer the time.

On the morning of the **20th September** we plan to have a sewing workshop in the Hall of Friendship to create some simple craftwork to sell in November. If you are interested in sewing please put the date in your diary. Do let your sewing friends know and get in touch with Lois Hindley if you would like to attend, to give an idea of numbers. [lois.hindley@gmail.com](mailto:lois.hindley@gmail.com)

Lois Hindley



## NOW IS THE TIME

(A poem for today by Palestinian Israeli Pastor Yohanna Kat-anacho)

More sleepless nights  
More scary wake-ups by loud sirens and cries  
More restrictions and ties  
More bad news and destruction of supplies  
More loss of lives, more media lies  
More hatred and missiles in the skies

Now is the time for the sermon on the Mount  
Now is the time to pray the psalms  
Now is the time to repent  
Now is the time to surrender to Jesus  
Now is the time to love.  
love Iran and Israel,  
love Palestinians and Jews,  
love everyone and exclude none  
Now is the time to speak wisdom and show kindness

The tragedy is not helplessness  
but hardness of hearts

The change that God desires does not start  
outside but deep inside our hearts

The time is ripe to choose godly lives  
The time is ripe to expose and challenge the lies  
Hatred and revenge are not from God, be wise

Let us pray for justice, for righteousness, for love

Our spirits are frozen by hate  
but warm prayers can melt the chains  
and deliver heaven's surprise

Jack Kellet

## DEATHS

### (date of death)

Sheilagh Sommerville  
02/06/2025

Chrissie Thomson  
13/06/2025

## ADVANCE WARNING

Articles for the next magazine our Winter Edition!.... need to be submitted by **FRIDAY 7TH NOVEMBER 2025**. These can be sent to Karen or David at any time before this date.

Email is great if it is possible.

## WEDDINGS

Julia Leng & David Johnston  
21/06/25  
Traquair Kirk

Sarah Tucker & Daniel do Rosario  
12/07/25  
Traquair Kirk

# Who's Who?

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The Editor reserves the right to edit or omit letters, but only if it's really necessary! If appropriate (and there's enough room), any submissions omitted may appear in a following edition.