



Since the last Focus, the Raven Trust have been gradually winding up their operation. Two more containers have been sent to Northern Malawi carrying a huge variety of stuff. Unfortunately one of the lorries carrying a container went off the road causing major problems. Fortunately most of the goods were recovered safely but at a cost for the people of Ekwendeni who had to pay for police supervision and the transportation of goods on the final part of the journey. We do not know yet if any other organisation in Scotland will take over this transport task which was a real lifeline for the people of Ekwendeni. We have been pricing possible postage rates but they work in at £13 for 2 kg. so it might be more cost effective and better for their local economy if we send money to the community there rather than goods.

I am glad to say that the new bank account at Ekwendeni has been set up and the signatories are now in place. However there is still documentation to be finalised with the Church of Scotland in Edinburgh before we can start using this account. It should enable us to track the money we send much easier. The children didn't get their porridge at either Christmas or Easter so we are asking the Kirk Session at Ekwendeni to use that £200 as a starter for the new account.

The Scotland/Malawi Faith Partnership Conference in Giffnock South on Saturday 18th March was very well attended and was very successful. Morag Steven, Bill Steven and May Robertson worked extremely hard to ensure the success of the day and provided a lovely lunch as well. Fiona Gunning compiled an excellent photographic display of 10 years of Kwenderana which was on display in Giffnock South for a few weeks and is now on display in Williamwood Church. I have asked if we can have it on display in Busby over the summer months.



On Saturday 8th July we are planning a Strawberry Afternoon Tea in Busby Church with a few stalls as well. The tickets are £5 and are available from me. This should be a lovely afternoon so please support our efforts as this will be the first time Busby has hosted this event. Donations of baking and unwanted gifts would be most welcome for the stalls as well.

Kwenderana started initially in 2005/2006 but it has been pointed out to us by Rev. Jan Mathieson that it should have greater governance than it has just now. Bearing that in mind we are reviewing the whole twinning to find the best way forward for all the churches here and also for the people at Ekwendeni.

Over the next few weeks please pray:-

- That a solution can be found to the "container" problem.
- That the review of the school sponsorship programme goes well.
- That our review of the partnership can be resolved in an amicable way which is beneficial to all the churches here and our partners at Ekwendeni who work so hard for their community.



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Litter Pick

Irene Morrison

Our annual Litter Pick around Busby village as part of the "Keep Scotland Beautiful Spring Clean 2017" campaign took place on Saturday, 22nd April.

On a beautiful sunny morning, 43 volunteers filled 76 black bags with litter. We then enjoyed a soup and sandwich lunch in the Church Hall, along with millionaire's shortcake which had been kindly donated by Greggs' Bakers in appreciation of our efforts.

One of our volunteers reported that an old iron bedstead had been fly-tipped in Busby Station's car park and East Renfrewshire Cleansing Department have arranged to have it removed as soon as possible.

Thank you once again to everyone who took part. It was time very well spent!



Busby Brownies

Pamela Mill (District Commissioner)

We were sad to hear that Alison Kay our Brown Owl has decided to leave Brownies. Alison has been involved with Guiding in Busby for over thirty years and planned to give up about five years ago. She was persuaded then to stay on, but has found that her work commitments have made it difficult for her to attend every week.



She has spent time working in South Africa and the USA as well as frequently working in Hungerford in England. Alison has also regularly supported Busby Guides when they have had camps, weekends away and sleepovers. Our most recent event was a sleepover at the Sealife Centre at Loch Lomond which involved both Brownies and Guides. We would also like to mention Margaret Hopkins who has been Alison's assistant for the last few years.

Thank you Alison and Margaret for all your hard work with Busby Brownies!



From Dubno to Dundee

How my Dad survived World War II and came to Scotland

Ostap Melnick

My dad, Ostap Melnyczuk, was born in 1913 in the village of Peratyn near Dubno in what is now the country called Ukraine. Ukraine translates as borderland and that, along with its desirable black fertile soil, meant that it had been fought over for centuries. By the time dad left in 1944, a period of only 31 years, he had been ruled by five different nations!

Grandfather Lukas was a peasant farmer who rented his land. Dad was the youngest of eight siblings and as such had little status with the oldest brother expected to inherit everything. Children worked as soon as they could walk and dad grew up looking after the horses. He slept in the stable to guard against horse thieves. Until 1939 his was the typical peasant life - hard work interspersed with leisure such as village dances, weddings, visits to Dubno on market day and to the annual fair where among his favourites were the wrestling competitions.

At that time dad's part of the world belonged to Poland. Just before WW2, Germany and Russia made a secret pact agreeing to split up Poland and on 17 September 1939 Peratyn became part of communist Russia. Grandfather's farm was nationalised. Dad applied for an apprenticeship as a signalman on the railways and left the farm but still lived locally. On 2 June 1941, Hitler double crossed Stalin and invaded Russia. Dubno was bombed and dad became a German colonial subject of 'Reichskommissariat Ukraine'. He kept his job on the railways. Life became dangerous. The Jews had been slaughtered and the locals wondered when it would be their turn. Competing partisan bands grew up and murderously fought among each other as well as against the Germans.



Ostap Melnyczuk 1947



In early 1944, war returned to Dubno with the advance of the Russian army. The front passed back and forth where dad was working. A gun battle commenced and dad took a bullet in his back. He was left for dead but picked up by an old couple in a wagon and taken to a partisan hospital in the woods. He was nursed back to health and released for convalescence to his mum's cottage in Peratyn.

Hitler's original plan was once Germany had won the war he would kill off all the Ukrainians and resettle their rich land with ethnic Germans. Hitler had expected a short war in Russia but had underestimated that country's forbearance. As the war dragged on all the German men had gone to replenish their slain forces. To alleviate the resultant shortage of labour in German factories and farms the Nazis instigated a system of slave labour where they conscripted men and women from all over Europe, including Ukraine, to work in Germany.

While convalescing the police came to dad's cottage and loaded him into the back of a motor truck packed with similar deportees. Dad arrived by rail in a cattle truck in Augsburg near Munich. He lived in camps surrounded by barbed wire and worked on the railways. His predominant memories were of hunger and

*A peasant village (above)
and a village dance*

