

Curiosity Never Killed the Cat: My Story about Bats

Elisabeth Ferrel

In my experience, curiosity never killed the cat. Let me tell you of a time when a little curiosity led to my discovery of the (not now so) secretive lives of bats.

It was a summers evening on a family holiday to Wales. The night had drawn in and my family and I thought we had settled in for the night; only for something to catch the corner of my eye. Small, black silhouettes were flitting speedily past the cottage window – “Bats!” I shouted. Quickly running outside with my parents, there they were. A roost of over 50 bats were flying out from under the roof tiles, one after the other, all taking the same flight path low along the building wall before heading out into the night. They were so close and yet still so inaccessible and mysterious. I wanted to get closer! Using my body to block their path along the cottage wall I didn’t know what to expect.

At first, disappointment as they effortlessly avoided me, dancing past my head and body. I knew their echolocation allowed them to see objects but the speed of their avoidance manoeuvres still amaze me today. One after the other they continued to avoid us. My disappointment soon turned into joy as I could hear the air from their wings as they flew past my ear. It is one of my strongest memories watching the bats do this, with my parents laughing as I got them to stand where I stood and experience the bats up close.

It is strange now to think that 6 years later I am writing this as the new Scottish Officer for the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT). BCT is a charity with a vision of having a world rich in wildlife where bats and people thrive together. As well as funding research so we can better understand bats, we work with the public, bat groups and volunteers to help improve the image of bats and dispel some of the myths surrounding them. For instance, bats will not fly into your hair (see above), they are not blind (they actually have good eyesight) and they will not drink your blood (At least not our native species)! Our bats feed exclusively on insects. Those Scottish Midges – one bat can eat up to 3000 a night. Trust me, they are doing us a favour.

If you would like to do a favour for bats in your area please do get in touch. We have lots of information for gardeners, home owners or churches with bat roosts, schools and other groups, and have plenty of ways for volunteers to get involved. We desperately need more volunteers to help us count bats. In Scotland we are looking to increase the number of people counting bats in their area so that we can build population trends for all of our ten species. We want to make sure bat populations continue to increase and thrive! Please contact me on eferrell@bats.org.uk or by telephone on 01786 822107 for more information.

Cats and Bats

Cats do not eat bats but they like to play with them. Cats will often learn where a bat roost is and catch bats as they leave the roost, putting a whole colony at risk. Bat carers estimate that over 30% of the bats they rescue have been attacked by cats, with over half (56%) not surviving and 30% not being able to be re-released. By following a few simple steps you can help reduce these figures. Bring your cat indoors half an hour before sunset and keep them in all night when bats are most active and have their babies (April – October). If you cannot keep your cat in all night, bring it in half an hour before sunset and keep it in for an hour after sunset. If you find a bat on the ground only handle it if you have to. As with any wild animal use gloves or a tea towel to avoid being bitten. Place the bat in a box with air holes and contact our helpline for advice on 0345 1300 228.



Bat Conservation Trust



Busby Parish Church GUILD Coffee Morning

in Busby Parish Church Hall
Saturday, 16th September
10.00am until 12.00 noon

Tickets
£2.50 for adults
75p for children

Baking, Books,
Gifts and Plant stalls

Our Mission Partners

Jacqui & Doug Marshall based in Malta



Maureen Potter

Jacqui and Doug live in Malta most of the year with their two children Ethan and Chloe. Jacqui's mother, Maureen Macallum is a regular attender in our church. Jacqui and Doug are back in the U.K. just now enjoying a well-earned furlough. They will be visiting some of their partner churches during their furlough and we hope to see them on 3rd September if their commitments allow. There will be a retiring collection after the September Communion in support of their work in Malta.

In their recent newsletter they have drawn our attention to MOAS, which is the Malta-based Migrant Offshore Aid Station founded by Christopher and Regina Catrambone. This is a relief organisation which operates two search and rescue vessels out of Malta. Their work involves the literal fishing of men, women and children out of the sea and they have rescued thousands of people in the Mediterranean and continue to go from strength to strength. MOAS' story is told through a new documentary, called "Fishers of Men". They are helped by numerous other private rescue operations in the Mediterranean such as Save the Children. The mainstream media often suggests that the people carrying out these operations are collaborating with smugglers in North Africa. This is irresponsible, uninformed and opportunistic reporting. MOAS has started to change the narrative about refugees and rescues and have launched a new initiative called MOASXChange. May God continue to provide and bless their work?

Many of these refugees settle in Malta alongside friends from the same ethnic community but attempt to integrate into mainstream Maltese society. They work and contribute to the benefit of Maltese society and they marry and have children but these children are known as stateless despite their parents' contributions to the state. These families are eager to do everything in their power including working with people from various sectors to aid the process of integration. Some are positive of a better future but many who have been there for years are fast losing hope. Doug asks, "As Christians trying to help others to integrate into local society in Malta how do we balance "try harder" with "here's a helping hand?" Consider this thought: "We are not to simply bandage the wounds of victims beneath the wheels of injustice; we are to drive a spoke into the wheel itself." Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

This article only reflects a very small part of the latest newsletter from Jacqui and Doug but please pray:-

- That they have the opportunity for rest and reflection during their furlough.
- For the continuously changing environment of asylum in Malta and Europe. Malta is making some positive steps. Pray that the European political leaders begin to show leadership, wisdom and moral strength in these hostile times.

A link to the full newsletter can be found on the Church Mission website or by email from me, Maureen Potter

Clarkston Churches Together

[Creating a Dementia Friendly Community](#)

[Saturday 7 October 2017, 10am – 3pm](#)

[St Aidan's Episcopal Church, Mearns Road G76 7ER](#)

In conjunction with Crossreach, 'Clarkston Churches Together' are holding a mini-conference on Saturday 7 October in St Aidan's Episcopal Church from 10am till 3pm. Titled *Creating a Dementia Friendly Community*, we're asking what local Churches might do to help those with dementia, and their carers.

A number of congregations (such as nearby Stamperland, Netheliee and Mearns Kirk Churches) are already doing some excellent work, and we're hoping representatives of all these initiatives will be able to join us on the day.

As well as an address by Andy Lowndes, co-founder (with Sally Magnusson) of *Playlist for Life*, and the opportunity to take part in two workshops (one on 'Aiding Communication' and the other on 'Creativity & the Arts'), there'll be Exhibition space as well as a panel-led discussion titled 'Ask the Experts'.

All are most welcome to attend for either part of, or the whole event; tea, coffee and home baking will be on offer throughout the day; and if you require further information then do please feel free to contact myself at any time.

Rev Jerry Eve (07504 691 668 / j-eve@sky.com)

Eastwoodhill Care Home (now Pacific Care)

Angela Marshall

Many people have been aware of the Care Home at Eastwood Toll, which was managed by Crossreach, the Social and Care section of the Church of Scotland. Being a Charity the cost of upkeep of the premises has become prohibitive, since the regulations and standards in the Care sectors of today's society are constantly (and rightly) being reviewed and improved.

The building maintenance costs at the home are now outwith the scope of today's Crossreach budget, and so a buyer has been found by Crossreach to take this forward. Pacific Care already provides for the frail and elderly in Homes in the Glasgow area, and the company has taken over the management of the facility as of the beginning of August.

The Friends Group will be having discussions with the management in August to ascertain their role in future. There will be no formal association with any religious denomination, but there will be a Chaplain, and input from various local Ministers and other religious leaders as required.

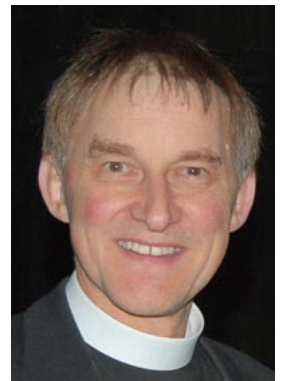
The transition has so far been smoothly managed, but as with all 'changes' there have no doubt been a few minor teething issues. We know that inconvenience to the residents has been kept to the minimum. We will update in the next edition as to developments.

Rev. Dr Laurence Whitley Retires

Myrtle McGregor

Laurence was our Minister during the years 1975-1985 and yes, Laurence has reached retirement age. After 10 years at Glasgow Cathedral he has said farewell.

The Cathedral was full with people from all walks of life and all parts of the country. The City was represented by the Lord Provost and Councillors as well as the Lord Dean of Guild and also Trades and Merchants Houses. A bus load of his former parishioners had come from Laurence's previous charge in Montrose



On a grey, drizzly day, this was a service full of joy and thanksgiving. There was an Ecumenical aspect to it all with representatives from the Catholic, Episcopalian Churches along with Archbishop Emeritus Mario Conti and Bishop Gregor Duncan participating in the service.

The organ music, the wonderful choir and the singing of the congregation were inspiring with traditional hymns such as "Glorious things of Thee are spoken". "Lord of all being throned afar" and "Glory be to God the Father". Laurence's sermon was all about adjusting to change and began, as many will remember he always did, with one or two anecdotes that made us laugh.

The Cathedral now awaits the selection of a new Minister and from what was said, Laurence will be difficult to replace. After the service the Deputy Provost spoke about the work that had been done for the City and several others paid tribute to ten years of devotion to good works in the City. When shown to our seats by an Elder I had said "We are friends of Laurence", to which he replied "Everyone is Lawrence's friend!". That summed it all up.

(More information and photos at glasgowchurches.org.uk/dr-laurence-whitley-retires)

Clarkston
TAXIS
24 Hour Service

644 5588
644 4999