

The Hird

Church News for Selkirk and Ashkirk

June 2014

www.selkirkparishchurch.org



Thinking Green, Acting Green, see page 11

Minister:

Rev. Margaret Steele, Tel: 01750 23308

Charity no: Selkirk SC 014883 Ashkirk SC 010768

FLOWER MINISTRY

June Liz Thompson

1st Sybil Miller
8th Janette Green
15th Jim Nimmo
22nd Fiona Peden
29th Margaret Rathie

Aug. Irene Marshall in charge

3rd C. Johnston/I. Marshall
10th H. Bell//F. Nixon
17th Isobel Sharp
24th Cathie Donaldson
31st -----

July Mary Mallin in charge

6th M. Mallin
13th Janice Renton
20th P. Christie/M. Paton
27th Margaret Milne

The Flower Calendar is available on the notice board in the Meeting House. Donations would be appreciated for any blank Sundays.



Selkirk Church Friends

The Ladies Fellowship and the United Reformed Church Guild have now agreed to unite. Meetings will be held in the Parish Church hall, fortnightly, beginning on Tuesday, 7th October, 2014 at 2 pm.

Everyone is welcome to come along. We look forward to seeing all those who came to previous meetings and to encouraging new friends to join us.

More information will be available nearer the start of the new session.

World Mission Stamp Appeal

The Appeal, which started in April 2014, is raising money to help the work of the Greek Evangelical Church in Milotopos, north Greece, which recently opened Dorcas, a Refuge House for women victims of violence and their children.

In 2013, we met our target and raised just over the £4,000. Many thanks to the people who saved the stamps. Can you help us to make that figure over £4,500 in 2014?

Christian Aid Week



A very big "Thank you" to all the people who have donated to Christian Aid during Christian Aid Week and special thanks to those members of the congregation who willingly agreed to assist with the house to house collections. **£1,092.23** was

raised through Selkirk Parish Church this year. The total for the town has still to be announced.

Bruce B. Lawrie

Christian Aid Convener



1 Loanside
Selkirk
TD7 4DJ
May 2014

Dear Friends,

*Be persistent in prayer and keep alert as you pray, giving thanks to God.
(Colossians 4:2)*

Try Praying – I'm sure you've seen the signs in the town and many of you will have been given the book to use then "lose" so that someone else might benefit from it. People who have never thought about praying before have become interested in finding out more, which is Good News. Prayer is not always easy though.

The Bible tells us that the risen Jesus sits at God's right hand praying for us (*Romans 8:34*). That is great to know, but Jesus also encourages **us** to pray. Conversations with God are great fun! We get to know His love for us as we take time to be with Him. That love changes us and helps us to know how to pray.

There are times that He seems to answer our prayer even before we've said it. He does like to surprise us! There are times, though, when our prayers seem to fall on deaf ears. Perhaps we've prayed for years for something in particular and nothing has happened. Billy Graham tells us, "Never stop praying, no matter how dark and hopeless your case may seem. Your responsibility isn't to tell God *when* He must act or even *how* He must act. Your responsibility is simply to pray without ceasing, trusting Him to act according to His perfect will." There are times when we don't know what to pray but the Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit is there to help us. *"If we don't know how or what to pray it doesn't matter. The Spirit does our praying in and for us making prayer out of our wordless sighs, our aching groans. (Romans 8:26 The Message)*

Prayer is our vital lifeline to our Father. He longs for us to experience his fatherly love, His fatherly provision and then to share that with others. Let us take heart from the knowledge that Jesus is praying for us, as is the Holy Spirit and let us be encouraged to know that as God asks us to pray for our world, our prayers matter to Him. He will answer them in his own time.

*With every blessing
Margaret*

Holiday Club 2014, 11th - 15th August

Just as the Queen's Baton gets ever closer to its destination, so our Holiday Club draws near. We are still debating whether to hold it in the Parish Church or in Connections but the daily programme of games, crafts, stories, songs, dvds is being finalised.



What we need now is people!

Would YOU be able to help during Registration – making sure we have the details needed on all the youngsters who will come? That job will take 1 hour a day – 9.30 -10.30 on the days that you are available.

Would YOU be able to help prepare the craft materials needed? This would be done prior to the Club probably in your own home.

Would YOU be able to help prepare and serve the juice and healthy snacks? You'd be required to be at the Club from 10.20 till 11.20.

Would YOU be able to help with the games which happen at the Club? You'd be required to be at the Club from 9.30 to noon each day you were available.

Would YOU be able to help by being a leader in a group? You'd be there from 9.30 to just after noon each day you were able to come. We need folk who enjoy being with youngsters, talking to them, listening to them, helping them to understand the story of the day.

Would YOU be able to help by praying? We need folk willing to pray for the Club as it happens, either in your own home or down at the Club.

If the answer to any of those questions is YES (and I'm praying for yes answers) then please fill in a form which you will find in the Meeting House or contact me directly on 23308 or mdjsteele@gmail.com

Thank you,
Margaret Steele

PS please read this little story and take it to heart!

It's a story about four people named **Everyone**, **Someone**, **Anyone** and **No-one**. There was an important job to be done and **Everyone** was sure that **Someone** would do it. **Anyone** could have done it, but **No-one** did it. **Someone** got angry about that because he thought that it was **Everyone's** job. **Everyone** thought that **Anyone** could do it, but **No-one** realised that **Everyone** wouldn't do it. It ended up that **Everyone** was angry with **Someone** because **No-one** did what **Anyone** could have done!

Dear all,

Hello from an increasingly wet Guatemala! Yes, the rainy season is upon us, which made for a rather more exciting journey home on Monday of this week. Afternoon classes were cancelled as we found ourselves right in the thick of a fabulous storm, with rays of lightning bolting down into the jungle shrub that surrounds Los Gorriones. Shots of thunder were so near all the car alarms kept going off, as did the prison's power. So I hopped into the 4x4 with the prison driver, as he headed into town, to avoid lots of hanging about in rain for buses. The prison is out of the city, and higher up, and as we descended, the drainage ditches on either side of the road were soon overflowing as water poured down them. Further down the hill, cars were wheel-deep in water. The levels rise very quickly as the rain is heavy and unremitting, and there are few places for it to go, with so much concrete in the city. I worry as I look at the concrete block and corrugated iron homes that have been constructed on steep muddy hillsides. Hopefully they will survive the season, which is five months long; my umbrella will be a trusty companion now until October!



Latin Link
COMMUNITY WITH A CALLING

Apart from feeling slightly damp, all is well here. Easter disrupted what small semblance of routine there was, so classes are gradually creaking back into rhythm. With my beginners' classes I've discovered that 'conducting' them through things like days of the week and numbers, with a bit of arm waving and body moving makes no end of difference! I feel I'm continuing to get to know colleagues more personally, as well as the girls. That's lovely, although nearly everyone has had struggles, or is struggling now, and it can be difficult hearing the different stories. Thank goodness we have prayer to turn to. At least that way I feel I can respond a little to what they share with me.

I'm also praying more intentionally while I'm in the prison, for the well-being of all who live and work there, and for particular protection from malignant spiritual influences. That's very different from our experience of day to day life in Selkirk! It feels strange at times, but I feel confident that it's a good and valuable thing to be doing.

Work aside, life trots along. I enjoy sharing the apartment with two other Latin Link colleagues, and it's really nice having other team members within walking distance. We meet fairly often to socialise, eat, or pray together and encourage one another. Among those of us that live close together is a mix of theologians, student workers, English teachers, engineers and then me, so comparing notes is really interesting as we're all seeing very different sides of Guatemalan life. It's good to get a more complete picture by sharing our experiences together.

Continued over

Continued

On Sundays, I go to a Methodist Church and am now playing the piano. That's always fun: I'll be sitting in the pew and whoever is leading will say, "and now, if our sister Amy would oblige and lead us in hymn ...". My sight-reading is improving no end! Contributing musically has helped open up conversation with congregation members and I'm getting to know them bit by bit. We had a first music group rehearsal last week too and it would be nice to leave them more self-sufficient in music by the end of the year. I reckon there's about 30-40 in the congregation, though it fluctuates - not just from week to week, but hour to hour!

I hope this finds all of you well and looking forward to a warm and sunny summer. Thank you as always for your emails, prayers and encouragement.

Lots of love from over here!

Amy

Congregational Board Notes

- Jacqui Lee has volunteered as Clerk to the Board for a year.
- Reports received from Treasurer and Property Convener (page 7).
- Alan Gibson, Stewardship Promoter for the Church of Scotland, will be visiting us on 2nd November.
- Andrew Laing was welcomed as Property Convener. Jack Peers will take responsibility for the Glebe Manse.

ReachOut



Our Latin Link Fundraiser was a lovely occasion with a mix of friends from the town and other churches coming along. Thanks to all who played their part in the outcome. We sent £280 to Guatemala and the same to Coatbridge. We've had thanks from both. Mariane the Latin Link worker in Coatbridge has told us that the money will help to replace a stolen laptop for the Job Club the church runs. In Guatemala, it will be used to help with funding education or training for someone who has chosen to leave the gang culture behind them, at great personal risk and cost.

By the time you read this our "Painting with Pastels" evening led by Iona McNeill will have taken place and been thoroughly enjoyed, but we will be concluding our meeting this year with a relaxing walk and picnic, including a visit to Jane Peers' carbon neutral house in Clerklands. All ladies welcome!

ReachOut has been meeting for nine years now and we are going to take time to think about our future. Should we have a break? Should we stop? or should we continue but change our aims and format? We'd be glad of your opinions and prayers as we decide. Thank you.

Anne Bethune, Fran Selkirk, Myra Ward

Property Update

Renovation Project

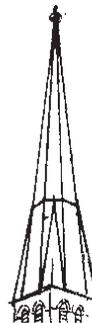


Now that the renovation work is complete and the hall is back in use again, a number of small issues have been identified such as marks on the toilet floors, fans not working, leaking radiators, etc. These have been made into a 'Snagging List' and handed over to the architect, who is arranging to get them fixed.

A 'Builds List' has also been made for items which hall users have asked for, but are additional to the renovation project and would have to be paid for separately. The list will be considered at the next property group meeting.

Spire

The fundraising efforts will have to continue for a while longer as we are now faced with expensive repairs to the church spire. The steeplejack firm K2 inspected the spire in January and identified a major problem with the steelwork that holds down the top of the spire. Water has seeped in and rusted the metal to the extent that it has expanded and split the stonework. The answer is to dismantle the top ten to fifteen feet of the spire, replace all the metalwork, and reconstruct the spire (with new stone to replace that which has split). This, together with other repair work such as repointing the spire, repairing and painting the wooden louvres in the bell tower, installing a new floor above the bell to allow access inside the spire, and upgrading the lightning protection system, will come to a total of £21,000. The Congregational Board has approved these repairs, which are planned to take place this summer.



Maintenance

A small crack has appeared in the plaster above one of the balcony windows which may indicate a leak in the roof or gutter. Paul Hermiston has been asked to carry out the necessary repairs. There is also some flaking plaster around some other upstairs windows, which is being monitored. A number of maintenance tasks have been identified for the church and Loanside manse, and volunteers from the Church property group are taking these forward. The church notice board has already been enhanced, and new entrance signs put up thanks to Colin Macintosh. Minor roof repairs are being carried out periodically to the Glebe manse. The boundary wall facing the Glebe is being monitored.

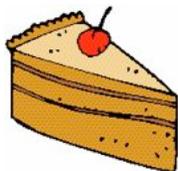
Andrew Laing,
Property Convener

Ashkirk Dates

There will be a Communion service in Ashkirk Church on 17th August at 12 noon. Watch out for other dates which are being planned.

The Alternative Ladies Night

As part of our fund-raising towards the Church Steeple Repair Fund, we will be holding an Alternative Ladies Night in the Church Hall on Wednesday 11th June from 8pm 'til 10pm, although anyone who usually attends the Colonial Bussin' is welcome to come over afterwards.



The event is open to ladies of any age who would like to enjoy some good company, share tea, coffee and lots of cake and have

a good old fashioned Common Riding sing-along.



Our musical entertainment will be provided by local group Derestreet: a mix of traditional and self-penned Celtic folk songs, as well as Common Riding favourites.

Tickets are £5 from the Church Office or The Selkirk Deli.

Deb Smith

Advance Notice! Blythswood Shoebox Appeal

As we no longer have a shoe-shop in Selkirk, now would be a good time to look further afield for an empty shoebox, with a view to filling it for Blythswood. If you have one at home that you no longer need, please hand it into the Church Office.

As we said last year it's a good idea to spread the cost by buying bits and pieces (or knitting) during the summer. Items most needed are: hats, scarves gloves, toothpaste/brush, soap, face-cloth, shampoo, small toy, sweets (dated beyond March 2015) but no chocolate.

If you feel unable to fill a shoebox, a donation towards the cost of transport would be most welcome.



It's really helpful if boxes are ready for the October van (6th Oct.) to be checked and ready for dispatch by the beginning of December.

Blythswood is a Christian Charity based on the Cromarty Firth. It does wonderful work throughout the year, both at home and abroad.

For more information, please speak to either Maisie McKenzie or Beth Bell.

Selkirk Food Bank



A big thank you for all your donations of food and money for the Food Bank. These were gratefully received. We have been very busy lately and as a result the shelves were getting very low on provisions. We are very grateful for all your help and support.

Look in to the Pop-up Shop on Thursday 29th May at 1 Tower Street from 10 - 4 pm. Donations of baking can be handed into the shop before 10 am.

We are excited about

Question : “ Future Focus? Oh, I think that rings a vague bell but I can’t remember why and who exactly are “we”?..... can you fill me in, please?”

Answer: “Glad you asked! Future Focus will be a getting together of **everyone** who comes along to Selkirk Parish Church, members and non-members alike and “we “ are the organisers, the Future Focus Steering Group.”

Question: “Why are you getting folk together? Who exactly do you have in mind and what does it have to do with me? I’m guessing from the name it’s about the future?”

Answer: “Well yes, the future is a big part of it. In the sessions, which *will* be relaxed and enjoyable, we look back to our roots and history too. We think about “now” and we make some plans for the future. We’re looking for practical answers to some important questions. What should our church be doing with the message of God’s love? How can we offer our skills and resources to show God’s care? How can we work with others to be of service in our community?”

Question: “It sounds quite a challenge but very relevant. I can see that it’s good to have a focus and not just to drift along. So how can I help or get involved?”

Answer: “Well, we need folk of **all** ages to come along and contribute to make our Future Focus events meaningful. The more the merrier and everyone’s views are needed. Future Focus is a programme written by a group within the Church of Scotland and where others have used it, it has led to good things happening, so it has a good track record.”

Question: “So, to get down to the nitty gritty, what would you be expecting me to do?”

Answer: Great! Please note these dates and come along to the church hall.
Sunday 14th September 6.30pm - 8.30pm (coffee/tea from 6.00pm); **Sunday 21st September 6.30pm-8.30pm** (coffee/tea from 6.00pm) **and Saturday 4th October 10.00am - 3.30pm** with coffee and lunch breaks.

Question: Is that all?

Answer: No, there is one other request: please pray for Future Focus between now and then. We want to be doing things God’s way and ask for Him to guide us in all our plans and discussions. And thank you very much - who knows where this will lead us.... that’s why **we are excited about** Future Focus!

Post Script!!

For all who would like to know more about Future Focus and how it will be planned, please join us at a Pot Luck Supper on Sunday 22nd June between 6.00pm and 8.00pm in the church hall. **All Welcome!** If you are able to come, please let Myra Ward know. Tel. 01750 22867

Future Focus Steering Group: Marion McIntosh, Shirley Pearson, Louise Raffier, Margaret Steele and Myra Ward.

Fundraising Update

The Coffee Morning on 10th May was a great success, raising £711 (including some belated donations and sales). Thank you to all who contributed in any way.

The total cost of the second phase of our renovation work, including unexpected/unscheduled costs, professional fees and furnishings, is £141,826. We have paid £136,066 from the Facilities Upgrade Fund, and £2,474 from the Reserve Fund. This is a tremendous achievement, and we are so grateful to all who have made this possible.

We have just completed 2 out of the 3 years of 'friends' of Selkirk Parish Church, and we thank those who have supported us in this way so far. However, we still have to pay the Retention costs of £3,286, (2.5% of the contractor's gross valuation), due to be settled in February 2015. We hope and trust that your pledges will continue throughout the 3rd year, as your donations will more or less cover this outstanding amount.

Our future fundraising is expected to be for repairs to the steeple, (a potential estimated cost of around £20,000 excluding VAT). By the time most of you receive this Hird, we will have had an Open Afternoon at the ecohouse of Jane and Jack Peers (24th May), our first event for this fund. The idea of an Alternative Ladies Night (see page 8) came from being prompted to use our talents. The next fundraisers organised by the Fundraising Committee are a Quiz Night on 6th September, where we will be looking for teams of 4 (£10 per team), and a Harvest Tea on 20th September. Please watch out for further information for both these events. In the meantime, we would encourage you to create and hold your own events over the summer months, (eg. meals for friends, house coffee mornings, open garden). Every sum raised will be greatly appreciated.

Lynda McCraw, Treasurer

Fresh Start Borders

The Annual General Meeting of local charity Fresh Start Borders will be held on Tuesday 27th May at 7pm in The Rectory, Viewfield Park, Selkirk. Everyone is welcome to come along and hear how we are progressing.

Our volunteers are continually busy, providing on average 6 starter packs each week to help individuals and families settle in to new tenancies following homelessness.



2013 was our busiest year so far providing 286 packs, for 311 adults and 89 children.

Donations of household goods and cleaning materials are always appreciated. Details of all items we regularly require are on our website www.freshstartborders.org and we have volunteers who are happy to collect donations.

Irene McFadzen



Thinking Green, Acting Green Food Waste



As a teenager strolling the early morning streets on my paper round, I found myself tripping over loaves of soft Hovis bread from an overflowing supermarket skip. It seemed such a waste, so I stashed one of the many loaves in my paper bag and that was my passion for waste prevention ignited. I enjoy food too much to see it wasted! Waste disappoints me, so I make it my task to minimize my personal waste. I believe if everyone embraced this ethos, society could eradicate unnecessary food waste.

Few people like to waste, but nationally we are part of a wasteful society, binning perfectly good food. Many factors contribute to a society who don't have waste prevention at the forefront of our minds: we are detached from the production of our food, leaving us without a sense of responsibility to use it carefully. When you bin food, you are binning a farmer's produce.

Food has become more and more about pleasure rather than sustenance, this makes it easier to throw out slightly less palatable food, such as dry bread or sprouting potatoes. I urge you, eat up any left-overs, get creative in the way you use them.

The 'always available' nature of supermarket foods means that the food we throw out is easy and cheap to replace. I urge you, only buy what you need.

Our suing culture forces supermarkets to place very cautious "sell-by" and "use-by" dates on products through fear of being sued. All a use-by date means is that after that date you cannot sue the selling company if you are dissatisfied or harmed by the product. It is not true that after that date the food goes toxic and must be thrown away. The Freeganism movement live almost entirely off the food waste, created from binning out of date products. They source free food waste from supermarkets or bins and live off it. They are testament to our unnecessary food waste. I urge you not to be fearful of use-by dates.

It is easy to throw out a carrot with a soft section, or a yogurt that has lurked in the fridge past its use-by date. However, we must consider personally how we deal with food, it is not just the supermarkets' responsibility.

"Almost 50% of the total amount of food thrown away in the UK comes from our homes. We throw away 7 million tonnes of food and drink from our homes every year in the UK, and more than half of this is food and drink we could have eaten." These statistics from the Love Food, Hate Waste campaign show that as individuals we can help eradicate 50% of national food waste.

So next time the carrot has a soft section, chop it out and eat the carrot. Have a look at the yoghurt - is there anything wrong with it? Food is a blessing and a
Continued on next page

Continued

privilege. More than 80% of the world lives on less than £6 a day, yet in Britain the average household bins £60 worth of food every month. Don't Waste Food: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.

Philip Anderson, Age 18, Selkirk Baptist Church

Check the Green Noticeboard in the hall for more ideas of how to Eat Greener and for leaflets and recipe cards to take away.

Peace and Justice

In January, I wrote about the Peace and Justice group writing letters to fashion manufacturers to seek information on their company policy on selling products which had been produced in Bangladesh under the sub-standard, often dangerous, work conditions.

At our follow-up meeting, we were able to share the responses we had received from about half of the companies.

Many have signed up to the Ethical Trading Initiative, while several larger companies have their own organisations working within Bangladesh to try and ensure an improvement to working conditions. We noted that, generally, the larger, 'stack-them-high, sell-them-cheap' stores are not the worst offenders.

We wrote again to the companies that had not responded, and to date none of them has replied. It is disappointing to note that amongst them is the Border-based Edinburgh Woollen Mill!

We are pleased to hear that 'Fashion Revolution Day' encourages us to wear our clothes inside-out to show where they had been produced and to help start an industry-wide transformation to move towards a more sustainable future. We will continue to keep an eye on issues

around the production of our clothes.

At our recent meeting, we learned more about the Tearfund action against corruption in developing economies, and we are all encouraged to sign the petition on its website prior to the G20 meeting in November. If you would like to join us in signing the petition, go to the Tearfund website and follow link to Unearth the Truth.

www.tearfund.org/en/about_you/campaign/unearth/

We also spent time finding out more about the World Development Movement's (WDM) opposition to the G8 New Alliance. Our government makes donations to multinational companies working in African agriculture. The concern is that this will limit the ability of African countries to achieve sovereignty over their own agricultural development, whilst increasing the profits made by the large companies. A fairer approach might be to give money and training to local farmers.

Interested in finding out more? Next meeting is 23rd June – more details from Jane Peers. Tel: 01835 870751 or email jane@orchardbrow.co.uk.

Elissa Jones

Kirk Session Notes from April and May meetings

- Justine Lawton has decided to retire from being a serving elder. Her hard work over almost 30 years as an elder and Session Clerk were noted and appreciated.
 - Jim and Katrina Smith will take over one vacant elder's district and a visitor will be found for other members.
 - Colin McIntosh gave reports from recent Presbytery meetings and agreed to continue in the role of Presbytery elder.
 - The lunchtime club JAM (Jesus and me), continues weekly in Knowepark school and is very popular.
 - A stewardship day is planned for 2nd November with a speaker at the morning service followed by lunch and an afternoon meeting for Trustees.
 - 5 new volunteers have come forward to help at the bi-monthly BGH services, bringing patients to the Chaplaincy Centre.
 - The Kirk Session decided to sign the Climate Change Pledge and register as an Eco-congregation (see page 14).
 - A policy concerning alcohol on church premises was discussed and agreed.
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Start!

Have you ever thought what God and Jesus means to you? We are enjoying attending the six week course in the Manse on a Monday evening. This is proving to be quite thought-provoking and educational. It is an informal gathering of mixed views and experiences of discovering Christianity.

We've all got a life. but what is it really all about? If Jesus was sitting here with you now, what would you want to say to him? We started out thinking about life as a journey. You might be thinking you would like to continue that journey with Jesus.

Margaret will be holding more of these courses soon. Why not come and chat to us about it, then go along and enjoy too?

Mark and Fiona Corbett

Blessing

Bless to us, O Lord,
the earth that is beneath us,
the sky that is above us,
the friends who are around us
and the day that lies before us.
Amen

The Climate Change Pledge and Eco-Congregation Scotland

Groups and communities across the country have been invited to sign up to Scotland's Climate Change Pledge for Communities to express their support and commitment to taking local action on climate change. The Kirk Session has decided to sign up in order to take forward the work already begun in our Thinking Green, Acting Green campaign.

One practical way of expressing our pledge to commit to tackling the causes and effects of Climate Change is to register as an Eco-Congregation. This is an ecumenical movement, which helps congregations link environmental issues to their faith and take action in their church and local community.

The Kirk Session is looking for two more people to explore how we can go forward as an Eco-Congregation. If you are interested, please have a look at the website (www.ecocongregationscotland.org) and get in touch with me.

Thank you,
Anne Bethune



Selkirk

May

Thursday 29 10 - 4 pm Food Bank fundraiser, 1 Tower Street

June

Sunday 1 2 pm Churches Together meeting, Kirkhope Church

Sunday 8 10.15 am Pentecost Communion

Wednesday 11 11 am Communion

8 pm The Alternative Ladies Night

Saturday 21 10 am ReachOut walk, picnic and visit at Orchard Brow

Sunday 22 10.15 am Taste and See

6 pm Future Focus Pot Luck Supper

Thursday 26 3.30 pm Service at Mungo Park Court

July

Friday 11 2.30 pm Service at Riverside Nursing Home

Sunday 20 11 am B.G.H. volunteers

August

Sunday 3 2.30 pm Service at Thornfield House

Mon-Fri 11 - 15 10 - 12 Holiday Club: Fit for a King

AHEAD!
LOOKING

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Items for the **September** issue of *The Hird* should be in the office by **18th August**.