

BrassTacks

Autumn 2020 Issue 68



The team removing the walls at Tilsley College

Serving those who serve...



David, James & Philip after a hard day

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Editorial

A few years ago, the Nissan 4x4 range of twin cabs was advertised with the logo, "Life's a journey ... enjoy the ride." Well, we would certainly agree with the first part at any rate, but with so many people adversely affected in these uncertain times, we may not feel that we are "enjoying the ride". When I wrote my previous editorial to you in the Spring edition, none of us had any idea to what an extent our lives were about to be changed.

When we journey into uncharted territory it's good to have a travelling companion who knows the way. There are some things which we can "Google" to learn from those who have gone before, but that is not possible for our present journey. Wherever the path may lead us, we step forward in faith with a travelling companion who not only knows the way but has also promised to never leave us or forsake us.

Good technology has helped us to adapt to our changing circumstances by internet conferencing. Even here we wonder what life in a post-Covid world will look like. Will we need to re-adjust to sharing services, part face to face for some and remotely for others?

Within our own sphere of service, we have also had to adapt to present restrictions. Several projects had to be cancelled or postponed, as you will see in this magazine. Our work has been focused in the United Kingdom since we recommenced project working at the beginning of July. We started off at Tilsley Bible College with

a kitchen and en-suite shower room renovation. This task grew in size due to historical water damage and it has resulted in almost four months of work for us.

We have been glad of assistance at various times from James Alexander (Newcastle, NI), Jamie McKerlie (Glasgow) and Jonny McKinnon (Glasgow) besides our own Brass Tacks team. We also had much needed help from our friends at Currie Community Church who came and provided lots of muscle power when we were removing debris from the building site.

Change is not always easy whatever our ministry or personal situations are, but we continue expecting that we shall "understand it better by and by". Let's seek to trust the ultimate plan of God in all of this and support one another in prayer that we might continue faithfully to do what our hands find to do, Ecclesiastes 9:10.

Alan Park, CEO, Brass Tacks

Covid-19 impact in Malawi

Ananda Babu, Blantyre



Ananda and Grace with Jack and Annie
The only building completed so far.

Editor: One of our major projects this year was planned for Blantyre, Malawi, where a team would be based during April-June to progress work on the site for housing and a Bible training centre. This has been postponed, due to Covid 19. In June, Malawi made headlines as Lazarus Chakwera was voted in as President, after courts had overturned the 2019 election result. President Chakwera was formerly a leader in a Pentecostal church, and one of his first actions was to call for a national three days of prayer and fasting. We asked Ananda Babu for an update:

The Covid-19 has had a devastating effect in Malawi. According to Government statistics there are presently about 6000 positive cases and about 200 deaths were reported (population 19 million).

The main impacts have been economic, as the value of our currency has fluctuated.

The main impacts have been economic, as the value of our currency has fluctuated. There was no full lockdown, as small business holders strongly opposed this, but many businesses collapsed, and people lost their jobs. Airports closed, affecting tourism, which is a main part of Malawian economy. Educational institutions closed so school children were much affected in the country. Due to congestion in prisons and the number of inmates who were suffering with serious diseases, many prisoners were released and because of this the crime rate has gone higher.

With many restrictions we were able to visit some assemblies. We met some believers who have lost their jobs due to Covid-19 effect. Some assemblies stopped meeting together and some have stopped Lord's communion due to fear of contamination. We also visit some prisons, but we are not allowed inside to have meetings, just deliver the Emmaus Bible courses to the inmates.



Village assembly visited by Ananda

**We also pray the
Lord would provide
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stop this pandemic.**

Because of travel restrictions, the house building project in TITUS TRUST land was stopped -the Brass Tacks team was unable to come and continue the building. They have built foundations of the house, some boundary wall, the septic tank and guard room. Nothing was damaged due to rain, but security is still an issue, a few times robbers were tried to break in, but they failed.

We are looking forward to when BT can plan again to come and continue the construction. We also pray the Lord would provide for the believers and stop this pandemic. Please pray and help us according to the Lord's will.

**May God bless you all.
In the Lord's vineyard,**

Ananda and Grace, Malawi.

Rambouillet, France

Allan Kyle



Editor: Our team was ready to head to Rambouillet at the end of March,- some volunteers having sacrificed their holidays to join us. This trip also had to be cancelled, and we asked Allan how the church is progressing the work of renovating their new premises:

On the last day of September 2020, the assembly terminated the lease of premises underneath a block of council flats that had been the church's meeting place for the past 30 years. We had not met in them since the lockdown in March. Although meetings were permitted at the end of lockdown our rented premises were neither spacious enough nor suitable to comply with governmental restrictions.

After obtaining the new premises in January of this year conversion work was inevitably delayed by COVID. No conversion work was possible during lockdown and only progressed slowly afterwards due to difficulties in obtaining supplies.

The situation in mid-October is that the building company has finished most of what it can do until the delivery of a staircase and an outside door that had to be returned to the factory as it has not the right size. The staircase should have been delivered ten days ago but has been delayed until the end of the month. The outside door is not due to be delivered until the end of November. Two brothers in the fellowship have done a great work

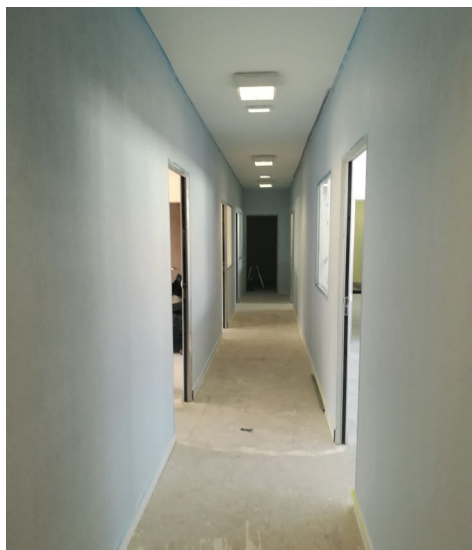
painting, decorating, laying floor coverings, etc. A considerable number of assembly members have also been involved too in this work as and when possible.

We considered applying for a partial opening of the premises but decided for financial and practical reasons that we should wait until all the work has finished before having our first meetings. We need to get the necessary permission to open before the end of the year however, in order to avoid paying local taxes in 2021.

So, we continue to meet as a church on Zoom. By the grace of God connections have held up very well on Sundays. Other meetings on Zoom include weekly prayer groups, an outreach Bible study, youth studies, a young sisters group, a future leaders group, and an applied theology group.



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A Cracking Job. Motherwell

David Wood, Brass Tacks full-time worker.



A little surprise waiting for us under the shower tray: no silicone sealant in those days!



When I heard that GLO had requested Brass Tacks to do some work at their centre in Motherwell, I thought “that will be a cracking job to be involved in” - for a number of reasons.

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First, Maureen and I have had a long association with the work of GLO, from helping with the crew fitting out their first bookshop in Hamilton in the mid 70's, to joining local and foreign teams. Both of our parents helped at the centre in Motherwell in the early days in the coffee shop, bookshop and grounds work.

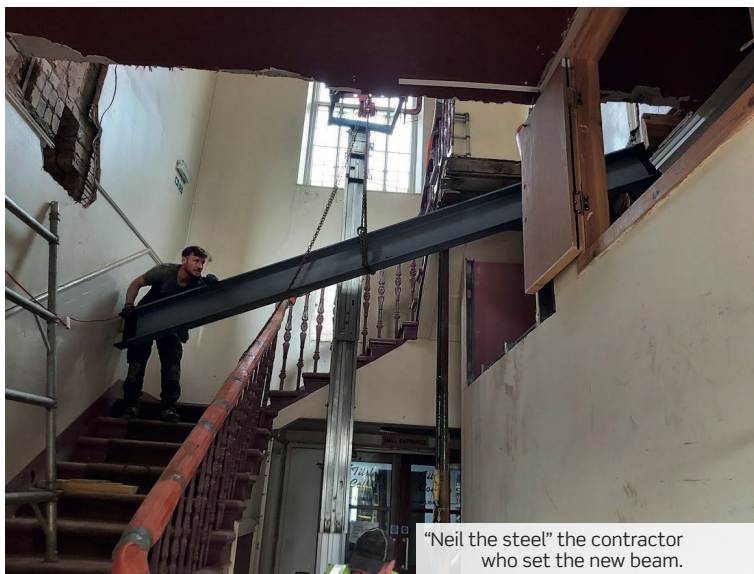
Secondly it was going to mean I could stay at home and commute to the work every day, which is only about a mile from our home.

As our national poet said, “the best laid schemes o’ mice an’ men gang aft a-gley” and the job developed in a way which was unexpected. Buildings, if they are not given careful TLC over an extended period of time, eventually cry out for help - and as we started the work, we discovered the building had some surprises in store for us. Some unvented chimneys revealed dead birds in skeletal form and some storage areas were growing black mould.

There was a fair bit of cracking on some of the walls in the college stairwell where we were going to be working, which had



The team who helped demolish the walls



"Neil the steel" the contractor who set the new beam.

been there for a few years, but no one knew why or if they were getting any worse.

The biggest surprise came when we removed an old shower tray to discover that some wet rot had attacked the flooring, floor joists, but worst of all the 100-plus year old main wooden beam supporting the stone staircase and stairwell wall. Engineering help was needed to make sure these were replaced to proper specification, which thankfully was readily available from Wham Architects who are also providing details for future development of the site.

All the brick-built stairwell walls which extended to the roof area had to be removed. Phil Kennedy, who made a couple of trips over from Ireland to lend

Buildings, if they are not given careful TLC over an extended period of time, eventually cry out for help...

his expertise, capably coordinated the help given by three volunteers from Currie Community church.

The replacement walls were rebuilt as stud partitions to meet fire regulations and just when we thought we were ready to start the finishing's - we discovered a section of dry rot a few feet away. This had to be removed with lath and plaster wall coatings being removed along with some floor joists being cut back and

trimmer joists fitted before a new ceiling and floor were added. Thankfully all of this is behind us and Paul Dodds came for a week to help with plastering, so that we could move on to the finishing stage.

Some extra trades were hired to help as the status of a listed public building meant we were not insured for certain parts of the work. A few other issues were identified as requiring urgent attention and local tradesmen were engaged to remove a chimney, make good on slate roof repair and a large section of a roughcast wall was removed and replaced. A couple of days a week we were ably assisted by Jamie McKerlie who we enjoyed getting to know and work alongside.

Having worked on a large wet rot job many years ago, I was reminded of some of the spiritual lessons learnt at that time. If we allow things in our lives to go unchecked and problems unresolved, eventually we face a huge problem. Problems need to be identified quickly and dealt with at the source and not just covered up or put off till a more convenient time.

Dealing with problems, like dry rot, requires major upheaval, treatment and reinstatement which can involve several specialists to help and can be costly. Furthermore, we can't always deal with problems ourselves and as a body of Christ, there are others there to help us with their gifts.



Paul Dodds "hiding a multitude" with plaster.



David working on the trimmer beam.

When the problem is dealt with properly and treated, we can move on with confidence that we are now building on a firm basis backed by the manufacturer's guarantee. Our Lord also guarantees to be with us for the problems we encounter in life, so we move ahead with that promise.

Unfortunately, the condition of many buildings used in Christian mission worldwide is slipping into a state of dilapidation. Lack of finance and a shortage of people are major contributory factors.

Recently we have seen the need for seasonal workers to harvest the U.K crops, and in a spiritual sense we see the great need for workers in world mission. When Nehemiah was rebuilding the walls

of Jerusalem, many different people were involved. There was no mention of professional builders but of priests, perfumers, goldsmiths and fathers with their daughters.

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Brass Tacks welcome help from professional builders but we also need others with a mind to work. No matter your profession it doesn't exclude you from volunteering to join a Brass Tacks team.



The new units in place.



James working on the trapdoor.

Tilsley College “Manse” kitchen renovation.

The listed building known as the Manse was badly in need of some TLC. The fireplaces in two of the rooms had been covered over with no ventilation and the kitchen was showing signs of age.

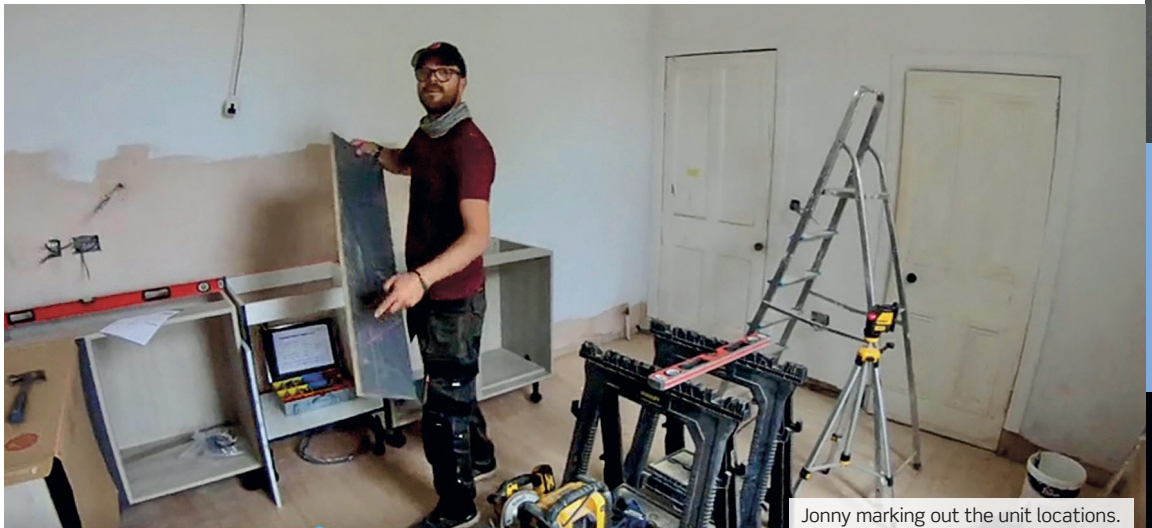


David measuring social distance to James.


We were glad of the help of James Alexander who travelled from Newcastle in County Down to do the preparatory work with the electrics. James had all the fancy gear for extracting the dust while he cut the channels in the walls (chasing).

While pulling the kitchen apart we found an old recess in the walls where there had been an open range stove. Lots of debate was had as to whether to make it into a cupboard or blank it off again. Well it is now waiting for a future generation to discover.

Jonny McKinnon added his expertise with lowering the kitchen ceiling and fitting the kitchen units. The pressure was on us to complete in time for the new family to move in, and it was vacated with only an hour to spare.



Jonny marking out the unit locations.



The pressure was on us to complete in time for the new family to move in, and it was vacated with only an hour to spare.

The finished project

Goodbye and Hello

We have greatly appreciated having the services of Roger Sheldon over the last 27 years as accountant and company secretary. He has continued to serve beyond the normal timespan as we waited to find a suitable replacement for him.



To this end it is with great pleasure that we welcome Colina McCulloch to the team and she is already settling into the roles previously carried out by Roger. Colina hails from Perth and fellowships at Tayside Christian Fellowship. As you can see from the photograph, she has a keen interest in Clydesdale horses.

We wish Roger and his wife Marion a very well deserved retirement from his duties with MMN as well as Brass Tacks.

Building for the future



For the past 30 years, Brass Tacks has focused on building for the future – in bricks and mortar, yes, but purposely in structures which are used for sharing the Good News about Jesus Christ. While buildings may over time fall out of use, or change ownership, or deteriorate, we trust that the legacy will be souls added to God's kingdom.

Like other charities, Brass Tacks has benefitted from legacies gifted to us by interested Christians. Making a will is something which many of us put off, and neglect. But there are serious implications:

- Without a will, your estate does not automatically go to your spouse.
- You can reduce your Inheritance Tax Bill by leaving a charitable legacy in your will.
- You should review your will periodically – and especially if your circumstances change.

During this time of Covid-19, our society has been faced as never before with uncertainty, with illness, and unexpected death. As Christians, we know that our eternal future is secure – but this is perhaps a wake-up call to prepare our personal affairs. After providing for family and friends, you may wish to leave a gift to a Christian mission or charity.

To write or update a will, you should contact a solicitor specialising in wills and probate. You can find a Christian lawyer in your area by searching the website of the Lawyers' Christian Fellowship at: <https://lawcf.org/lawyer>

Prayer points

- Give thanks that our team was able to safely undertake the project at Tilsley in Motherwell
- Give thanks for local believers progressing work at Rambouillet in France
- Pray for necessary permissions to open and for completion of the church building in Rambouillet
- Pray for the population of Malawi, and for Grace and Ananda Babu
- Pray that God will open the way for our teams to continue work begun at Blantyre, Malawi and also Kavungu in Angola
- Pray for God's guidance as we consider other projects within UK
- Pray for Jonny and Lindsay McKinnon as they continue to seek God's will for serving God at Moshi in Tanzania (see past 2 magazines)



Room with a view!



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