

BrassTacks

Spring 2021 Issue 69



David Wood lining up a new ceiling joist at Darvel

Serving those who serve...



Development of community centre, Ely, Wales

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Editorial

Work in the construction industry continues within the confines imposed by Covid rules. This has allowed us to continue our work “Serving those who serve” within the UK, embarking upon projects which are geographically local to the workers.

Over recent months David Wood and I have been helping on the Currie Community Church project, and we have been privileged to work alongside some lovely people who have given themselves to their project. You will read some of their stories later in the magazine.

Paul Dodds and Paul Trotman have been busy in Cardiff working on the Ely Gospel Hall project where Clive Cornish has been making the building fit for purpose in his vision for outreach into the community.

It has also been “all hands to the pumps” at Darvel in Ayrshire to make the newly purchased property for OPALTrust fit for purpose. The local Christians have given themselves with gusto from their respective fellowships in Strathaven and Newmilns.

A verse which has been in my mind recently when we see such a high level of commitment from the many volunteers is in Nehemiah 4:6, “The people had a mind to work.” People from all different backgrounds and abilities have enriched

the lives of the team by just being available and willing to use their time and talents for God. In Edinburgh Ian, a decorator, was unable to take on commercial work for some weeks, and he was then free to use his time to give a much-needed boost and bring along his amazing equipment to smooth out the joints in the plasterboard. Of which there were many!

At the moment it looks unlikely that we shall be involved abroad this year, but we have plenty to keep us busy in this country. Pray for the continued safety by the workers and the ongoing ministries by those who have been blessed by our service with them.

We do sincerely thank you for your faithful prayerful support of this ministry which enables many to be better equipped for their ongoing work for the Lord of the harvest.

Alan Park,
Executive Director, Brass Tacks

Currie Community Church missionary accommodation project

Kenny Galloway, one of the church leaders, explains some of the background to this project:

Tell us about the church fellowship there.

We are a small multi-cultural congregation of about 20 -25 people, with a good mix of ages. The church was established by missionaries from USA in 1978, identifying Currie as a place where there was no evangelical Christian fellowship. We have no paid employees, preferring to encourage each other to serve one another by offering our spiritual gifts to build up the body of Christ in this locality. Missionally, we run a mother and toddler group, community choir, and

support the Bethany care van service, both in person, and financially.

Why is the church doing this project?

Sandro and Gislene Portes joined us in Currie in 2014, having been missionaries in Afghanistan for 7 years previous to that. They felt called by God to come to Scotland and establish a place of rest for (mainly Brazilian) missionaries serving the Lord in Muslim countries.

They had encountered real stress, living in such a hostile environment, then a family they worked alongside were murdered by the Taliban, and they knew of several missionaries who had turned back from their calling.



CCC Church front view



CCC building in field.



Start of the renovations

centre in 2018, and the planning applications etc. led to a long delay. Now, in hindsight, we see that the timing is exactly as the Lord had planned, with His servants in Brass Tacks only becoming available in 2020, due to Covid constraints to stay in UK.

...so blessed by the fellowship we have enjoyed during the redevelopment

Who will benefit?

The centre in Currie will welcome missionaries from any country, and also those preparing to go overseas to share the gospel.

What lessons did you learn during this as part of your spiritual journey?

With difficulty, I have learned that we can't rush God! We planned to build this

We are so grateful to God for the help of the Brass tacks team in establishing living accommodation for up to 12 people, and feel so blessed by the fellowship we have enjoyed during the redevelopment of the facility here. Thank you to all for your support of this project.

See: <https://www.curriecommunitychurch.co.uk> for further information.



Sandro and Gislene

Sandro and Gislene Portes

We are Brazilian nationals who both became followers of Jesus Christ in our early twenties. God called us to work as missionaries in 2000, and after serving in northern Brazil for four years God guided us into work among Muslims.

In obedience to that call, and in preparation for what lay ahead, we came to Scotland with our family to learn English, to be a part of a multicultural missionary team in Asia. From 2005, we spent 7 years in an Asian country, serving the church and working in the community as an accountant/pizza producer and a teacher.

During this time, we recognised that Christians serving overseas are often supported financially but neglected pastorally. Other workers would often contact us for counselling / listening / and prayer support, and to cry together.

Through these experiences, God birthed a desire in us to meet this unmet need, in supporting expat Christian workers, particularly those working in predominantly Muslim countries: to provide initial training, and ongoing pastoral care, both in 'the field', and at a base centre, which is now in Scotland. In 2012, God directed our family to return to Europe, to establish this ministry.

Over the past 9 years we have visited several countries in the Middle East and Asia, supporting missionary brothers and sisters spiritually, and in total are now providing ongoing support for more than 30 families.

"God put a dream in our hearts... to serve our brothers and sisters who are working in transcultural fields. Serving them, listening to their stories, praying, and crying together. A dream that seemed impossible to us, but since we left Asia in June 2012, we have seen this dream become reality. We have visited missionaries and their families in North Africa and the Middle East. When we go there, we pray and cry together, and when we come back home, we keep in touch via Internet. Furthermore, we have connected the missionaries with the Brazilian church.

God is awakening the church to serve the missionaries as well, each one with their own gifts and possibilities, each one being part of the body of Christ, blessing one another, all working together, building the body, as it should be!"

As we sought the Lord regarding establishing such a place of rest, various options were considered and other Christian organisations in Scotland who have residential accommodation were contacted, but no doors opened.

In response to the need, the church in Currie formally approached the local council in December 2017, to seek clarification as to whether planning permission would be granted for an additional floor to be added to the building, to provide accommodation for missionary visitors to live temporarily on site. To our surprise, permission was granted on 6th June 2018, subject to appropriate building control requirements.

The site in Currie is located 7 miles from Edinburgh city centre, 3 miles from Edinburgh airport, and is adjacent to open fields, the foothills of the Pentlands range, on the south western edge of Scotland's capital city.



Gislane serving a special lunch

Due to limitation of land space, it was proposed to renovate the wooden section at the rear of the church building to accommodate 10-12 visitors, and extend this structure upwards to provide a flat, and dormitory/ family accommodation as required.



Sandro, Yasser and some of the local team.

The church had sufficient funds available to modify the lower part of the building, then in 2019 donations came through and funds were £95K. It was estimated that the whole work could be completed for around £150,000.

It was hoped that the site redevelopment could begin in October 2018, but it was a year later till we had a demolition team on the ground, preparing the place to lay the foundation. The construction began in 2019 and continued in 2020, despite all COVID set-backs. God surprised us again providing Brass Tacks volunteers to work tirelessly during this difficult time. The house is almost completed and hopefully soon, it is going host many missionaries who will call it "my home in Scotland".



Yasser and Claudia at Lily's birthday party

Claudia and Yasser

My name is Claudia Rodrigues, I am Brazilian and have lived in the UK for 17 years, where I became a follower of Jesus.

In 2010, shortly after being baptized, I had a dream that occurred twice. In the dream, I was speaking in Arabic to a large group of people in the desert; there was a man on my left-hand side and another on the right.

Five years after having the dream, while visiting Egypt, the Lord spoke to me, saying that I was not going to live there alone. After a few months, I returned to Egypt and met Yasser through a church friend. Yasser is from south Egypt and met the Lord in 2004. From that encounter, he


became a faithful servant of the Lord in his homeland.

In 2007, he gave up his secular job, to serve the Lord full time and went several times to assist the church in both South and North Sudan and Libya.

He finished his 4 years seminary with the Assembly of God in Assiut in 2016. Then in March 2017 we got married in Assiut-Egypt.

Ministry in Egypt

We lived in Southern Egypt from 2015-2018, in a village near the city of Assiut. There we supported the local church in our village and beyond. Occasionally, Yasser was invited to speak, however most of



our time was spent going from house-to-house meeting with brothers and sisters to pray, to encourage one another, to worship, and to share the love of God. During this time, we also started English classes at home for children and young adults. This was a great way to make new friends with Christians and Muslims.

Future

Occasionally, we were asked to accommodate ex-Muslims who needed a place to hide. Leaving Islam makes them criminals and puts their lives at risk, even at the hands of their own families. They lose everything they know, family, friends, work, school. Following Jesus means to them literally starting from zero. It is incredibly sad that they must endure such a cost, but to the glory of God, numbers are increasing day by day. There is, therefore, a great need for these brave and blessed followers of Jesus to find support, love, a Christian family and a place to stay, where they can pray and worship with others.

...after much prayer, we sensed this was indeed what the Lord wanted us to do.

In 2018, God opened a door for us to purchase a piece of land in the desert near our village, where a new city is being built. Our first reaction was not to take on

such a commitment, as we did not have support or savings. However, after much prayer, we sensed this was indeed what the Lord wanted us to do. We felt His peace and excitement!

This will be a house for his children to come, from any background or country. A place where brothers and sisters can meet and share the love of Christ. A base for servers and a house for many. It is a step of faith that we took, and we believe it to be the Lord's will, and that He will supply the resources and manpower in due time.

In UK

In 2018, we came to the UK to do a course and to have our first child, baby Lily. Shortly after, we learned about the project at Currie, and felt led by God to stay and assist with the construction of 6 rooms to accommodate missionaries serving abroad. We thought we would be staying just a few months until the work was completed but Corona virus came and to our surprise, we are still here!

As the project here at Kirkgate is coming to an end and we will be getting our vaccine soon, we look forward to return to Egypt later this year to do what God has prepared in advance for us to do.

Please remember us in your prayers,

*With love,
Claudia, Yasser and Lilian (Lily)*

All things work together for good.....David Wood

In recent years there has been a growth in the use of social media accompanied by stories of its misuse and problems it creates. There are however good stories associated with its use and we were beneficiaries of this in recent months.



New kitchen installation

Each of us will have a story around the Covid 19 pandemic and Brass Tacks is no different; we have been encouraged that although we have not been able to travel abroad to help mission partners with their building needs, we have been able to help mission partners here in this country.

A friend from schooldays many moons ago, approached me in July about helping him and a couple of friends with the construction of a mission house to provide accommodation for missionaries from closed countries to come and have short term counselling and encouragement in Scotland. We had attended the same school and our wives were great friends and we were all regular attendees at the Hamilton Missionary Fellowship. Having spent over

30 years working abroad we had lost touch with folks but through the power of social media the initial contact was made and as they say "the rest is history".

We have been involved with this project for the last few months and along with Alan Park and Phil Kennedy we have seen it move from the demolition of an old single storey, temporary, school classroom structure to a two storey timber framed building which is nearing completion in the following weeks.

The accommodation comprises 6 double bed en-suite rooms with a communal kitchen and lounge area. As time permits, we have been assisting the three main volunteers from the church in Currie who have been working on the project for about 18 months. Kenny (Scottish) Yasser (Egyptian) and Sandro (Brazilian). They have been assisted also by Ian, John, Jose and many others and it has been wonderful to have fellowship in God's work with such a great bunch of guys and also to have enjoyed the great hospitality and food provided by the wives Claudia, Gislene, and Linda.

There has been some opposition from a couple of neighbours to the project and we would value prayer for a positive witness into the local community and that those who are opposed to the work at this point would be won for Christ in the days ahead.

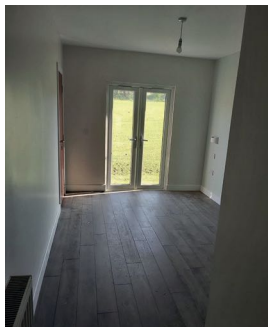
There have also been a few issues with the external cladding for the building where the planning department say one thing and the building control department say the opposite. We had been praying for a resolution of this issue and due to people working from home there seemed to be no progress between the departments. One day totally unannounced the fellow from the planning department appeared on site. And after a look around the job and a long chat with Kenny, he agreed in principle to allow artificial wood cladding to be fitted rather than the real wood cladding they were insisting on - which could not be treated to meet fire regulations required by building control. A new application for this is being submitted and we hope and pray that this will be approved and we can eventually take delivery of the cladding to complete the outside skin of the building. As we move on to other jobs we will continue to offer help as time permits to see this project completed to allow missionaries to come and benefit from this new facility, and already interest has been expressed.

Yasser and his wife Claudia and 2-yearold daughter Lily hope to return to Egypt around September to carry on their church work and also to get another exciting project underway. They have land and approval to build a three storey building in their village which they want to use to provide accommodation to new believers who have been rejected and are being persecuted by their families because of

their new found faith. They are keen that a team from Brass Tacks go across to Egypt at some time in the future to help them with some of the finishing work on this project. As always, we receive more of a blessing from working on these projects than we can bring to the project. We praise God for His people who in various ways are progressing the spread of the Gospel, and for allowing us a small insight into this work and for the opportunity to give some practical help.

Volunteers with building skills are welcome to join us on these projects...

There are a number of UK based projects in the pipeline till foreign travel is back to pre-pandemic conditions and often specialist trades are needed. Volunteers with building skills are welcome to join us on these projects and details of projects and skills needed can be obtained by contacting the Brass Tacks office.



One of the en-suite bedrooms



Shower room

OPAL Trust relocation project

Dr Ian Shaw, (CEO Opal Trust)



Cutting through the concrete for the drainage ditch

The call of Jesus to Peter and the disciples to 'Feed my sheep' (John 21:17) inspires the work of OPAL (Overseas Publishing and Literature). This is reflected in our mission statement - 'To serve churches and Christian leaders in the majority world by equipping them with the Bibles and quality evangelical literature for their ministry and mission.'

...**'Feed my sheep' (John 21:17)**
inspires the work of OPAL

The global church is growing fast and urgently needs resources to promote growth in depth and maturity. Over 60% of Christian believers live in the majority world - Africa, Asia, Latin America - but this is where there are the least resources. Here millions desperately need Bibles, and are hungry for evangelical Christian literature written at an accessible level, in their own languages, and at affordable prices. OPAL works in close partnership with Christian leaders, local ministries and missionaries in these regions to support their work as they lead and train others.



First bookshelves being put together



The main stock of books arriving

OPAL was founded in 2003 by Geoff Ruston and John Lewis. Since its beginning, the work has steadily grown. OPAL has been able to send Bibles and literature to over 80 countries worldwide. In 2005 a distribution hub was established in Chingola, Zambia, from which books are accessed across central and southern Africa. We also work closely with leaders in Asia, Latin America,

and other parts of East and West Africa, regularly shipping materials to all these locations in response to their requests for Bibles and Christian literature.

OPAL is tremendously grateful for the support of the Brass Tacks ministry

Owing to the retirement of Geoff Ruston, a decision was made in 2020 to relocate the OPAL warehouse from Lockerbie, where Geoff lives, to a location nearer the central belt of Scotland where there is a greater pool of volunteers. In April 2021 a warehouse with attached offices in Darvel, east Ayrshire, was purchased to become OPAL's new base. In order to prepare the warehouse for OPAL's work, a significant amount of repair and renovation work has been required. In doing this OPAL is tremendously grateful for the support of the Brass Tacks ministry, together with teams of volunteers from Strathaven Evangelical Church and Townhead Church in Newmilns.

On 12 May the first delivery of shelving and books was received at the Darvel warehouse, and safely stored. Further work is required in the warehouse before the final deliveries of Bibles and books can be received.

See OPAL Trust at: <https://opal-trust.org>

Ely, Cardiff, Wales

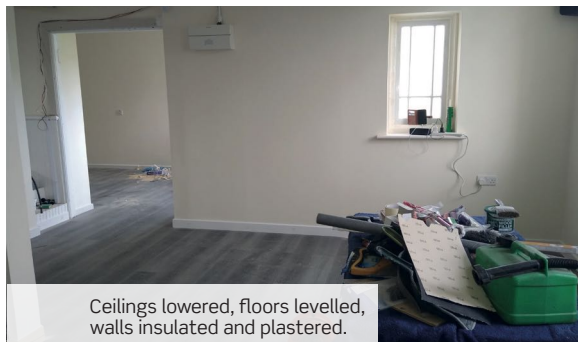
Clive Cornish



Before. Wall removed and built extension into main hall.

The local Gospel Hall at Ely, in a deprived area of Cardiff, has received a new lease of life with a project spearheaded by Clive Cornish. The hall is located in a highly visible site near to a large school and it is hoped that with the provision of a coffee shop and other community activities this centre of outreach will be used by the Lord to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to this needy area.

...it is hoped that with the provision of a coffee shop and other community activities this centre of outreach



Ceilings lowered, floors levelled, walls insulated and plastered.



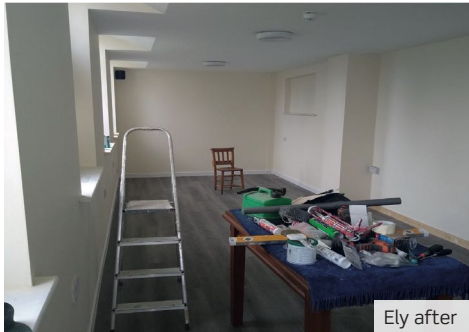
Damp walls, ceiling condensation, uneven floor

Clive is a Counties evangelist with a heart for helping ex-offenders stay on the right path and develop in their faith. He works alongside long term unemployed and those with broken backgrounds to help them restructure their lives. He is famous locally for having walked round Wales twice carrying a cross and also doing the same in Israel. A long-term vision to have a building suitable for outreach into his home area of Ely is now being fulfilled.

He writes:

Brass Tacks has been involved in the ongoing renovation of Ely Gospel Hall at Ely, Cardiff. A lot of work has been undertaken by local volunteers, but some tasks were out of their experience and knowledge. I am humbled and so grateful for the input of Brass Tacks, I struggle finding words to say what you have achieved, bringing what was basically a steel container to what is now the three prominent rooms in the Church.

The expertise, commitment and advice given by those working on your behalf has been invaluable.



...I am humbled and so grateful for the input of Brass Tacks, I struggle finding words to say what you have achieved...

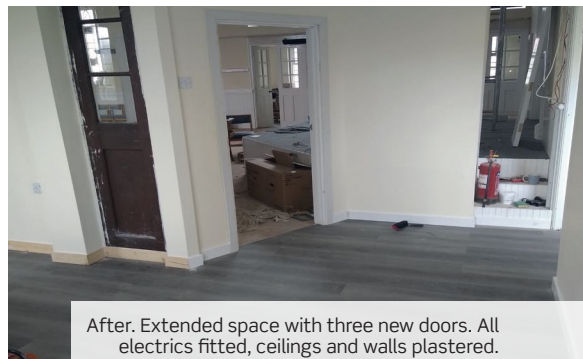
The Church coffee shop, now looking as if it had just been purpose-built with all walls, floors, ceilings, electrics and decor...fabulous!

Editors note: Gospel services are due to commence at the end of this month, with the coffee shop still waiting for some work before it can be opened to the public.

On behalf of the Church, and all those that come in and are thrilled by the change - including those who were once members but have moved to other areas of Cardiff - thank you. God bless you, and may the work of Brass Tacks long continue.

Yours in Christ, Clive Cornish

See: <https://www.facebook.com/REFLECTCOMMUNITYCHURCH>





Alistair and Drew enjoy a cuppa as they take a well earned break from painting at the Opal Trust project.



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