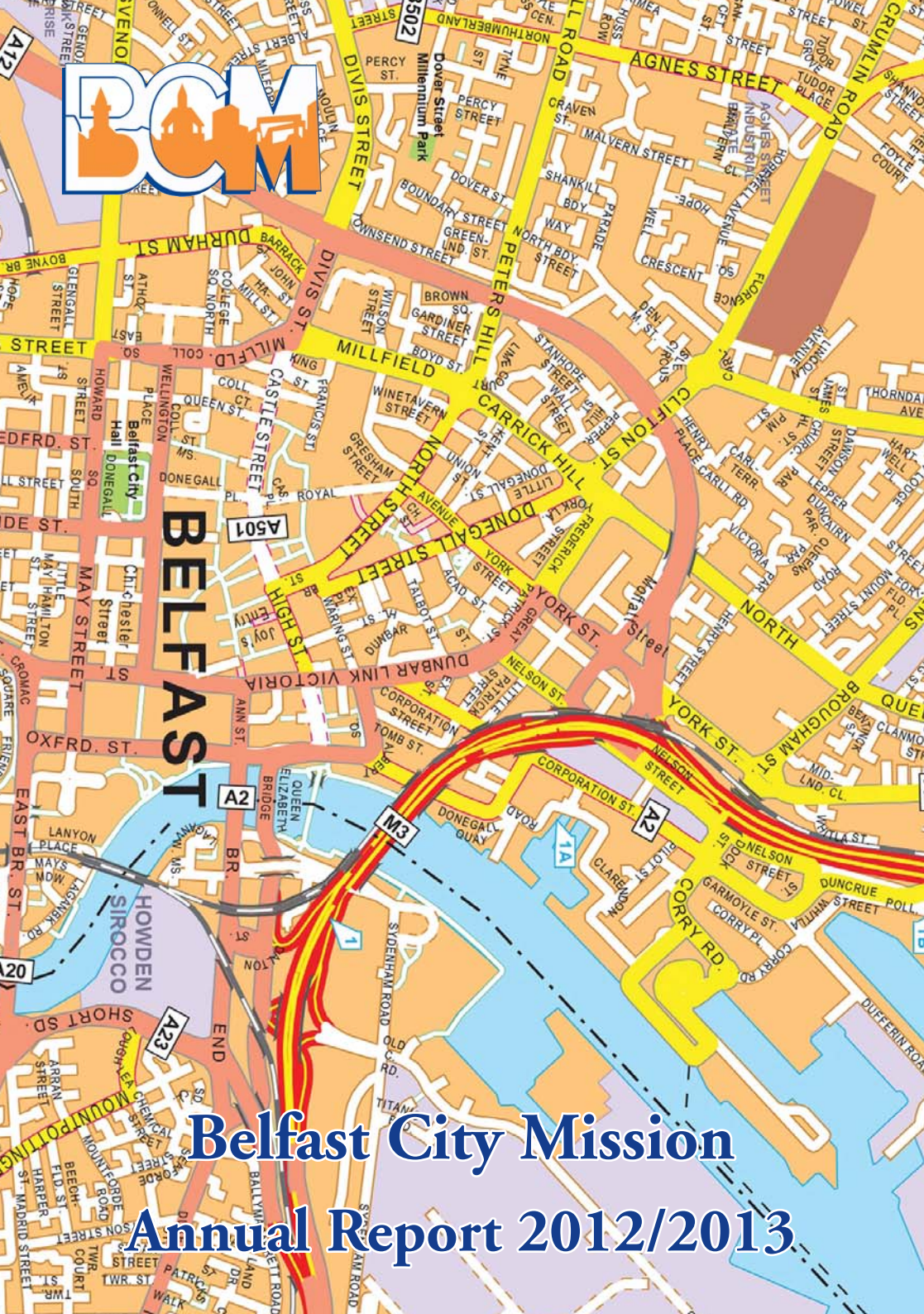




**BELFAST**

# Belfast City Mission Annual Report 2012/2013



## Greetings from the President

One must begin this letter by acknowledging, once again, God's faithfulness to The Mission in what has been a difficult year. We have been amazed on many occasions at His provision for the work carried on in His Name. As we have remained faithful to our calling He has rewarded us abundantly and we give Him all the praise for He alone is worthy.



Each year in my report I have referred to changes which have occurred and 2012-2013 was no exception. It was with a deep sense of sadness that we heard of the death of Mr. Jim Davidson, a missionary for many years and a true Prayer Warrior. Jim will be sadly missed, but our loss is Heaven's gain and he is forever in the presence of his Lord whom he served so diligently. To Jim's family circle we extend our deepest sympathy.

Whilst I have mentioned change it is interesting to note that some things have not altered over the years. In a News Letter article on Monday 22nd March 2010, taken from the Archives, Darryl Armitage reported, "On this day in 1935 the News Letter reported that the Assembly Hall had been crowded the previous night when the Belfast City Mission held its annual reunion." The annual rally is still held but how we would love to see those crowds gracing our event. One might be forgiven for thinking that there is no longer the same need. But such is not the case.

The News Letter continued "The opening sentence of the annual report of the mission, which was presented by the Very Reverend Dr. Montgomery, the Honorary Secretary, stated: "The Belfast City Mission carried on a ceaseless holy war against the forces of evil in the city." The report continued: "Our missionaries enter the darkest corners of the city, they go to the worst, confident that they have a message suited to their need."

That message of God's saving Grace has not changed over the years and is still as relevant to-day as it ever was but our men are finding it more and more difficult to communicate the Good News of Jesus' love. However, although we may be dismayed at times we must always remember that the war has been won and the victory is ours because of Christ's sacrifice on Calvary's tree.

In Acts 18 verses 9-10 Paul is in Corinth and has faced some opposition from the Jews when one night the Lord spoke to him in a vision: "Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. For I am with you, and no-one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city".

May I encourage you to engage in prayer for the work. At present a number of our missionaries who are not in the best of health require our support. We are all in this task together, a partnership, so please play your part so that we shall see Christ's Kingdom truly advanced in the lives of men, women, boys and girls.

**D F Kennedy, President**

## MISSION HALL SUPERINTENDENTS

- Ronnie Armour Fairview Road
- Vacant Mountcollyer
- Bert Crooks Sandy Row
- John Douglas Kilburn Street
- George Dunbar Island Street
- William Halliday Canton Street
- Tommy Irwin Jersey Street
- Norman Jackson Ballybeen
- David Kennedy Bloomfield Drive
- Vacant Kimberley Street
- Evan Rice Glencairn
- Ronnie Ross Rathcoole
- Roger Thompson Great Northern Street
- Bobby Woods Shore Road
- Vacant Mayo Street
- Vacant Ballysillan



*President D Kennedy*



*Vice President R. Ross*



*Honorary Secretary  
Rev D Bannerman*



*Treasurer R Thompson*

## OFFICE BEARERS

President:

Mr D F Kennedy, M.B.E.

Vice-President:

Mr R Ross

Honorary Treasurer:

Mr H R Thompson,  
B.Sc, C.Eng, M.I.C.E.

Honorary Secretary:

Rev D. Bannerman,  
B.D., MTh., M.Sc.

Executive Secretary:

Mr Bobi Brown.

### GOVERNING BODY

The President, Vice President,  
Hon. Treasurer, Hon. Secretary,  
with the following:

Rev W M Gray, B.A.

Rev D Johnston, B.A.

Rev J M Maddock, B.A.

Rev R J McCullough, B.Sc., B.D.

Rev G F McKeown, B.A., Dip. Th.

Rev H D McMorran, B.A., B.D.

Rev A S Smyth, B.A., B.D.

Rev W M Smyth, B.A., B.D.

Mr R Armour

Mr W H Crooks, M.Sc., C.Eng.,  
M.I.C.E.

Mr J Douglas

Mr W Halliday, B.Ed.

Mr C Holley

Mr T Irwin

Mr R Woods

Mr E Rice

## Honorary Secretary's Report

### *Rev D Bannerman*

As ever, it is both a challenge and a joy to read the reports submitted by the Mission Staff with regard to their experiences over the year that was 2012. The reports speak of both joys and sorrows, successes and failures; and these are surely common to all Christian work and witness. It would, of course, be impossible to summarise these reports and experiences in a few paragraphs – indeed to do justice to them would necessitate a much longer treatment that I am able to give to them on an occasion such as this.

Among the many comments that caused me to pause and think, as I read the reports, were these words written by one member of Staff: “the people of Belfast, in general, are hard in their hearts.” That is a comment which is not only honest and undoubtedly accurate; but it is a comment which is probably a commentary upon life in general in the Province in these days, and probably farther afield as well. When the Berlin Wall fell in 1989 and with it the whole communist system throughout Eastern Europe, it would be no exaggeration to say that it seemed that revival had broken out across the whole region. In a number of countries there were prayer and bible study meetings which lasted for hours at a time and were attended by large numbers of people. There were services of worship of over three hours duration attended by people who may have walked for hours to be there and who hung on every word uttered by preachers. However, after 24 years of freedom of worship having been secured and some degree of comfortable existence free from bloodshed and fear being experienced by most nations in Europe – the crowds attending services are much smaller, and the priority of prayer and the study of the scriptures do not enjoy anything like the priority they once had. I wonder are the freed

peoples of Europe now becoming like those in Belfast, defined by our Missionary as hard in their hearts?

So then, let me summarise these reports by posing three questions:

### **IS THERE EVIDENCE (IN BELFAST) OF HARDNESS OF HEART?**

Some of the men speak of the increasing difficulty of trying to make contact with people. Door to door visiting, never easy at any time in the past, is becoming harder as time passes. Many people are unwilling to take time to engage with the missionary in conversation about spiritual and eternal matters. Another states: The work on the doorstep remains a challenge. Sometimes you have very little encouragement, with apathy still very much the order of the day.”

There has probably never been a time in history when more people were willing to declare themselves as unbelievers. Many have never seen a bible let alone read it or heard it read! Falling numbers at Sunday School – a trend of many years (and common to many churches as well) – is evidence of a populace that, so far as spiritual matters are concerned, have become hardened in heart. Where children and teenagers do attend organised activities in some halls, it is often difficult to make any headway with them – one missionary says: “I despair at the lack of respect and co-operation we receive from the young people.” Another missionary makes a similar comment, confessing to difficulty in working with young folk who have serious behavioural problems that even their parents don't seem to be able to handle.

Other members of staff speak of the difficulty of reaching men with the gospel and there



are examples in the reports of initiatives that have been tried and effort that has been expended in order to try to make meaningful contact – some initiatives proving to be more successful than others. One writes: “there is a lack of men in the meetings; most meetings are like ladies meetings and I have only one man who could lead or speak if the need arose.”

A number of others speak of the difficulty of finding young Christians to accept leadership responsibility in order to reach out to children and teenagers in particular. A missionary records “many of my helpers are up in years, but it is great to see them with the children – trying to reach them with the message of Salvation” – evidence maybe of a degree of hardness of heart even among younger Christians?

### **ARE THERE CONSEQUENCES OF HARDNESS OF HEART?**

There are numerous references in the reports of attempted, and in some cases successful, suicide bids – a worryingly growing feature of our entire society today and not just in Belfast. There are the familiar features that often accompany dissatisfaction with life – alcohol and drug abuse, domestic violence and the fragmentation of the family. One missionary mentions that within his District there are a number of young people who are hooked on drugs and that there had been at least one fatal drug overdose in his District in the past year. Lack of good, positive role models for young people is highlighted in some reports.

Some areas still face the spectre of violence in the community from time to time. One missionary states: “some of our meetings had to be cancelled due to an upsurge in violence. Deep fear and tension seem to have gripped the whole area.” Another speaks of riots that took place in the District towards the end of the year and of the joint efforts of local

Christian leaders to exert some influence in the situation with the hope of bringing it to an end.

### **IS THERE A SOLUTION TO HARDNESS OF HEART?**

A comment from a missionary makes a challenging point, which underscores the timeless purpose of the Belfast City Mission: “many are not going to church, so we must go to them.” Another reference makes a similar point: “we must constantly be aware that the task remains to go out and spread the seed of the Word, praying as we go that it will find good ground.”

Indeed, in many places the seed has found good ground over the past year. There are numerous reports of conversions of people of different genders, ages and ethnicity during the year. In one of our halls a man from a Roman Catholic background came to faith, now helps in the hall and engages in door-to-door visitation on occasions.

The gospel and the grace of God remain a potent force against hardness of heart; and many of those who have come to faith in Jesus have a history of being hard in heart toward the gospel and all that it speaks of. In the natural world there is rarely fruitfulness without labour; and in spiritual matters the same holds true. All the work with children and young people; all the meetings for ladies or men; all the bible studies and gospel services; all the doors knocked and tracts proffered; all the tears shed and burdens borne; all the special efforts planned and enthusiastically delivered; all the hospitals and nursing homes visited; all the open-air witness carried through – and many other initiatives – have been part of the divine purpose in bringing people into vital touch with Jesus – and **HE, AS MANY HAVE FOUND, IS THE ULTIMATE SOLUTION TO HARDNESS OF HEART!**

## Tribute to James Davidson

(by Mr George Ferguson)

I must begin by saying that I consider it a great honour to be asked to pay tribute to Mr James Davidson; a man who I can honestly say was one of the godliest men I have even met. A man who radiated the loveliness of Christ and when I was in his presence I knew I was in the very presence of his Saviour and Lord. However, if he was able to do it just now, I am certain he would say to me “Mr Ferguson (as he always called me) don't talk about me, talk about my Saviour, lift Christ up before the people”.

When we turn to the Scriptures I find the help I need because in John chapter 1 v 6 we read “There was a man sent by God whose name was John” and surely I can use that verse by saying “There was a man sent by God whose name was James Davidson”. James Davidson was a man sent by God at God's appointed time to do a work for Him and I want to speak briefly about the service he gave to the Belfast City Mission.

Appointed to the staff on 1st May 1945 following more than six years faithful service in the work of the Faith Mission, he then served in four districts; Cuba Street, Earl Street, Shore Road and Canton Street, retiring on 25th April 1985 completing forty years.

Many things could be said about James Davidson – he was a gentleman, upright and honest, an encourager, dedicated under whose leadership the work in these halls grew quickly. He led by example, was a man of the people, loved and respected by all sectors of the community. He spent countless hours doing door-to-door visitation inviting people into the Mission Hall and sharing God's

plan of salvation. Many demands were made upon him to help people in all kinds of circumstances.

He was a man of prayer and to listen to him pray was to be lifted into the very presence of God. His work for the Lord was saturated in prayer and God answered in the most remarkable ways and many souls were saved.

James Davidson never talked about himself, only about his Saviour. Having lived so close to him I would often have visited him and he told me many stories about his time with the Belfast City Mission. Unfortunately time would not allow me to share many of these stories but I will share some of them which I feel just describes his gentle nature.

In his own words:- “I found that the Missionary, even while just walking through the district can have an influence for good. One afternoon, walking along one of the little narrow streets I saw two women arguing over the children. The language they were using was, to say the least, far from the Queen's English. I just smiled and passed on, not wanting to be drawn into their disputes. The following day when I was visiting in the same street, the woman who had been most aggressive approached me and apologised for her behaviour the day before. I was able to talk to her about the love of God and present the Gospel. When I was visiting the street afterwards I was always invited into that house”.

Another story he told me:- “Some people can be very hostile when it comes to the claims of Jesus Christ. I can remember one occasion when a man was so antagonistic that he took

off his jacket saying he wanted to fight with me. Not being a fighting man, I declined his offer”.

I never grew tired of him telling this story: - “There were many lighter moments over the years. As I visited in the home of a well-known dockland character nicknamed Buck Alec, he insisted I go out to the back yard with him to see his pet cat. You can imagine my surprise when I was confronted by a fully grown lion restrained only by a piece of wire mesh. For a moment I think I knew how Daniel felt. Buck Alec was not interested in the things of God but I continued to visit him to see the lion and soon I was able



to read the Scriptures to him. He began to attend the Mission Hall and by the grace of God was saved”.

James Davidson had a quite sense of humour. On one occasion he went with me to visit an old friend, the late Rev. Jackson Buick who was residing in Corkey House Residential Home. They had served together in the ranks of the Mission. When we went into the room, Jackson looked up and said, “Jim Davidson, I thought you would be in Glory by now,” and the reply was; “Jackson, I think the Lord has forgotten about me”.

James Davidson was a giant in God’s service who did a work that has lasted and he is still fondly remembered by many from Earl Street, Shore Road and Canton Street. Today many are grateful to him for being the instrument God used to lead them to Christ. His interest in the work of the Belfast City Mission didn’t stop when he retired because he continued to attend the staff meetings week by week, encouraged new members of staff and always upheld the work in prayer. God didn’t forget him, and at his appointed time has called him home to be with Him and in heaven he is now enjoying the rewards of his labour and has received the “Well done thou good and faithful servant”. “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints”.

James Davidson was one of God’s saints. On behalf of the Belfast City Mission I would extend the sympathy of all who knew and loved James Davidson, to his two sons Robin and Denis, his daughters-in-law Patricia and Sadie, to all the grandchildren and great grandchildren and to all the wider family circle.



Back Row (left to right) David Bisset, Stanley Kyle, David Murphy, John Martin

Centre Row: George Lunn, Ivan Patterson, Tom Marshall, Walter Simms, Willie Logan, David Bell, Alan Martin, Willie Cowan, Paul Hamill, Billy McCullagh

Front Row: Lloyd Watson, Ernie Shooter (retired), Raymond Hume (retired), George Ferguson (retired), Bobi Brown (Executive Secretary), Eddie Kelso (retired), Errol McCrory (retired), Harry Creighton (retired), Arthur McClelland.



to 2013



Michael Waddell



Tom Gamble



Gary Bingham



Roy Graham  
(Retired)



Sam Morrow  
(Retired)



Jim Lawther  
(Retired)

## Annual Rally 2013

The Belfast City Mission Annual Rally was held on Thursday 25th April 2013 at 7.30pm in Ravenhill Presbyterian Church (kindly lent).

Our Mission President, Mr David Kennedy, chaired the meeting and welcomed all to the Rally, especially our guest speaker for the evening, Rev. Richard Murray (Connor Presbyterian Church) and our singers 'Simple Faith'. The body of the church was full with the 450 strong audience and as they were finding their seats, Simple Faith sang a medley of songs.

Our Honorary Secretary, Rev Denis Bannerman read the Scriptures (Psalm 24) and opened the Rally in prayer. Two members of staff were presented with gifts by the President, Mr Kennedy, to mark 25 years of sterling service with the

Mission – Mrs Angela Magill (Office) and Mr Tom Gamble (Jersey Street). We also had two Missionaries reporting, the first being Mr Willie Logan (Sandy Row) who told us of his work around that particular district and, secondly, Mr David Bisset (Bloomfield Drive) who shared about his activities inside and outside the hall in the Bloomfield area.

Simple Faith had a fifteen minute slot and the friends enjoyed their ministry as they sang some pieces from their new C.D. 'Go Tell The World'.

The Rev. Richard Murray then expounded Psalm 24 which was both inspiring and inquiring at the one and the same time and after our final praise Richard pronounced the benediction.

### *You will be warmly welcomed to our 2014 Annual Rally*

*When..... Thursday 24th April 2014 @ 7.30pm DV*

*Where..... Mountpottinger Presbyterian Church (Castlereagh Street)*

*Who.....*

- Interview with one of our missionaries about his district and work*
- Singers – Called of God*
- Speaker – Rev Brian Boyd (Kells)*

*Why.....*

- To worship God*
- To enjoy fellowship together*
- To thank God for his hand upon us for another year.*



## BCM NEWS



Mr John Martin who commenced service for the Mission in September 2004 has been accepted by the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to take up studies at Union Theological College, Belfast. We wish John God's richest blessing for the future and trust that he will be used mightily by the Lord as he ministers God's word. John served in three halls during his nine years with the Mission; Bloomfield Drive, Ballybeen and Ballyduff.

Two members of staff, Mrs Angela Magill (Office) and Mr Tom Gamble (Jersey Street) have completed twenty five years of faithful service with the Mission and this was marked at our Annual Rally on Thursday 25th April 2013 by gifts being presented to them by Mr David Kennedy, President of the Mission.



## Re-opening of Great Northern Street Hall

St Patrick's Day 2013 was a significant date in the calendar this year for the Great Northern Street Hall. Sunday 17th March was the official re-opening of the Hall after being swamped with water from the infamous Belfast flash floods. The hall was re-opened by Mrs Elizabeth Thompson, wife of the Hall Superintendent, Roger.



*Re Opening of Great Northern St Hall*

## Special Award Service

The Bridge (Kimberley Street) held a Special Awards Service on Sunday 30th June 2013 when six of the congregation were presented with certificates by the Executive Secretary, Bobi Brown. The certificates were for completing a pastoral care workshop which was taken by Mr David Surgenor (The Vine Centre).



*Award Service at the Bridge*

## BELFAST CITY MISSION RATHCOOLE BOYS BRIGADE COMPANY

On Saturday 13 April 2013, members of the 16th Newtownabbey BB Company belonging to the Belfast City Mission's Rathcoole Hall travelled to Kilmarnock in Scotland, to compete in the UK Final of the Brigade's Masterteam quiz competition. The team of four, Mark Hetherington, James Loney, Kyle McAuley and Jack McMahon, had previously won the Irish Region Final to qualify for this Final. This was the fifth occasion in the last six years that the Company had competed in this Final, Jack McMahon having taken part in all five finals. Previous to this year the Company's highest finish had been third. So it was a thrill that, after a close run and competitive 10 round quiz, the 16th BB Company came out as clear winners. Congratulations must go to the four boys, Jim and Linda Holmes for the work they put in with the boys and the parents who have supported the boys throughout the year and even travelled to Kilmarnock to be at the Final.

This was just the start of a very busy three weeks for the boys of the 16th as they also reached the UK Finals in badminton, which took place at Jordanstown. The following weekend the Company was in Derby to compete in the UK Finals in 5 a side football. I understand that the Company is the first in Northern Ireland to qualify for 3 National Finals in the same year.



*David Hunter*  
*Captain*  
*16th Newtownabbey*  
*BB Company*



## NEW B.C.M WEBSITE

Have a browse on our brand new website! Keep up to date with the latest news, Staff, Mission Halls, Outreach, Prayer Requests and thought for the week etc!

We now accept donations online through Paypal or download our bankers order form and support us through regular payments.

[www.belfastcitymission.com](http://www.belfastcitymission.com)



### 'At home with the Lord'

The Mission lost many friends this year who are now with Christ which is better by far.

Mr James Davidson (Retired Missionary – see special tribute to James by Mr George Ferguson on pages 6-7), Mrs Anna Luke and Mrs Anne Watson – widows of former Missionaries, died on 16/11/12 and 22/12/12 respectively. Belfast City Mission Auxiliary Secretaries Mrs Lily Bell, (Glasker and Donaghmore) Mrs Sally Michael and Mrs Mary McGookin (Both Ballyfore Hall) We trust that all of their families and loved ones might know God's comfort and grace in these days of sadness.

## American Visitors to Island Street Hall

On 13th March I received an unexpected email, through our website, from a Mr Joe Whiteside from California. Joe grew up in Island Street as a small boy and would have attended the Island Street Mission Hall. He later emigrated from Belfast to America where he met his wife Thelma. They were planning a holiday to Belfast/Ireland in May/June 2013 and wanted to incorporate a visit to the Island Street Hall to meet the children, parents and members of the hall. On Saturday 25th May Joe and Thelma, son Stephen and daughter Dianne (and partners) arrived at Island Street. Ronnie Whiteside and his wife Ann (who is a third cousin of Joes and lives in Belfast) were also there. We had a very informal BBQ and a great afternoon was had by all. Joe and his family had a tour of East Belfast and thoroughly enjoyed seeing where he once lived and worked and how it had changed over many years.

After a time inside the Mission Hall where we sang the old choruses that Joe perhaps remembered as a boy. Joe made a very emotional speech to us all about how he used to come to the hall with his mother and family (I think we all shed a few tears)! A couple of the children in the hall performed Irish Dancing and modern dance which was very enjoyable. We gave Joe and Thelma the history book of the Mission 'Who Cares' and he told



us later in a letter of how he enjoyed reading it. Joe and Thelma presented us with a gift towards the work of the hall and the community. He said that he wanted to give something back to the Mission Hall as the Hall had helped his mother and family when he was young. We would like to thank Joe, Thelma and their family very much for all their support. We thoroughly enjoyed meeting with them, and will continue to keep in touch through email, letters etc. in the future.



*Billy McCullagh*

## FINANCIAL REPORT

With reference to the Financial Report of the B.C.M. for the year ending on 28th February, it is pleasing to report that I have some rather good and satisfying news to give you; with regard to the past year's finances we have something for which to give thanks. We remember that, one of God's many names is Jehovah Jireh which is God our provider. Surely, we have again witnessed His activity in this capacity during the past year. In my report last year I went into some detail about the prevailing economic and financial climate at that time and I went on to explain how many of our supporters, on whose contributions we depend so much for our income, were being hard pressed in their personal finances. I do not intend to go into any further explanation of this situation as all of us know about and are familiar with it. What I will say is that there are still no apparent signs of change for the better, either in the short or medium term. However, in spite of all these challenging circumstances we have received sufficient resources to enable us to meet our on-going requirements. David, in Psalm 121, was able to say, 'My help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth' and in the BCM we too can say that with regard to many aspects of our work, including our finances. After 2 years with significant end of year deficits, the results for this past year are very pleasing and most encouraging. Legacies have been a big help in swinging the balance to the positive side but other factors have helped also including contributions from our Mission halls. We can also be satisfied that our expenses have remained similar to last year and we have still been able to undertake necessary works to some of our halls. We can see once again that our God is not only interested in what we do for Him but He is also actively involved in facilitating and providing the necessary resources for the work of the BCM. Some words of an old hymn, 'Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father' come to mind and in particular, its chorus – "Great is thy faithfulness, Great is thy faithfulness, Morning by morning new mercies I see, All I have needed thy hand hath provided, Great is thy faithfulness Lord onto me".

Our hope and confidence remain in Him and He will surely sustain His works and our finances through these on-going difficult times. And unto His name be thanksgiving and praise!

**Roger Thompson (Hon Treasurer)**

## Income and expenditure account

### Year ended 28 February 2013

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Year ended 28/02/13 £	Year ended 29/02/12 £
<b>Incoming Resources</b>					
Incoming resources from generated funds					
Voluntary income	2	290,929	-	290,929	223,063
Activities for generating funds	3	8,706	-	8,706	10,304
Investment income	4	43,815	-	43,815	26,242
Incoming resources from charitable activities	5	<u>363,459</u>	-	<u>363,459</u>	<u>305,224</u>
<b>Total incoming resources</b>		<u>706,909</u>	-	<u>706,909</u>	<u>564,833</u>
<b>Resources expended</b>					
Cost of generating funds	6	557,547	-	557,547	576,711
Charitable activities	6	118,103	-	118,103	93,904
Governance costs	6	<u>9,752</u>	-	<u>9,752</u>	<u>13,163</u>
<b>Total resources expended</b>		<u>682,132</u>	-	<u>682,132</u>	<u>680,367</u>
Net resources (expended)/generated		24,777	-	24,777	-115,534
Gains/ (losses) on investment assets		<u>39,440</u>	-	<u>39,440</u>	<u>12,129</u>
<b>Surplus/(Deficit)for year</b>		<u>64,217</u>	-	<u>64,217</u>	<u>-103,405</u>
Allocated as follows:					
Retired Missionaries Fund		650	-	650	-350
Benevolent Fund		-244	-	-244	3,143
Missionaries Widows Fund		147	-	147	3,098
General Fund - Surplus		64,268	-	64,268	-
- Deficit		-	-	-	-109,337
- (Deficit)/surplus re charity shop		<u>-604</u>	-	<u>-604</u>	<u>44</u>
<b>Net movement in funds</b>		64,217	-	64,217	-103,403

**Roger Thompson, Treasurer**



**Belfast City Mission**

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**Twitter A/C: Belfast City Mission @glengalinfo**

**Charity No. XN 45 106**

**Ormeau  
Park**

**Pirrie Park  
Playing Fields**

**Botanic  
Gardens Park**

**A24**