

KEY NOTES

KIRKHOPE, ETRICK & YARROW PARISH MAGAZINE



April 2021

First words from Rev Margaret Steele



Dear Friends

God loved the world so much that He gave His Only Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16

I wonder when these words first meant something to you? We come into this Easter time wondering what the future has in store for us as individuals and as churches as we begin the process of un-locking down!

Things change yet God's love remains constant. Karl Barth the great theologian, when asked what the most important message of the Bible was, quoted a hymn we all know from childhood – Jesus loves me this I know for the Bible tells me so. In the midst of all the changes let us remember this truth – true for all people everywhere for all time.

This Easter has seen our church buildings closed, yet our churches are alive with worship and our witness as we work together in our communities to help those in need. God's church without walls is alive and well!

I am very pleased to tell you the results of the vote on whether or not E&Y, Ashkirk and Selkirk should form a new linkage of churches.

Overall votes: FOR linking 314, AGAINST 7, with 2 spoilt votes. (turnout was 97.8% of the voter roll)

Ashkirk: for 27, against 1 (turnout 80%)

Ettrick and Yarrow: for 87, against 3 (turnout 62.5%)

Selkirk: for 200, against 3 with 2 invalid votes. (turn out 64.3%)

The vote for linking Ettrick & Yarrow with Ashkirk and Selkirk was therefore overwhelmingly positive. Presbytery has also now approved the linking so this now goes forward to the committee based in 121 – head office!

My thanks go to all who worked hard, all who were willing to vote and pray. Work will continue to seek God's way of working together for the future. Please continue to pray for that work. With every blessing

Margaret

Did you know? – the origin of familiar sayings

Frog in your throat

An unexpected and brief loss of your voice is jokingly referred to as having “a frog in your throat”. Ever wondered why? I thought it might come from the croaky noise you make instead of normal speech. However apparently it dates from an age before we had clean water coming from taps in our houses and drinking water would be drawn from ponds and burns.



This could, at this time of year, contain frog spawn. According to folk tradition tadpoles could hatch inside the unwitting drinker and in due course produce a fully developed frog. Should such a creature find its way back up the drinker's throat it might well cause a loss of voice!

Here's mud in your eye

This popular toast has a double-edge for, in proposing it, the speaker is actually asking those assembled to drink to his own good fortune, not to

theirs! “Here's mud in your eye” comes from the horse racing field where the ones receiving mud in their eyes would be behind the leading horse. The only rider in the race without mud in their eye would obviously be the winner, the one in front of the rest of the field.



Branxholm Tower – Kay Ross



Branxholm is the fourth of four towers we have looked at in Key Notes. I guess some readers might be thinking 'Where's that?' You may have driven past Branxholm without noticing anything. It's on the A7 not far southwest of Hawick, on the right (heading for England), up behind trees. From memory there are lots of snowdrops along there in early spring.

Sometimes spelt 'Branxholme', it was a large and extensive stronghold, the principal seat of the warlike Scott of Buccleuch family. The lands there were purchased by the family in 1420; their power subsequently increased substantially. In 1570 the Scotts themselves slighted and burnt the castle, to prevent it falling into the hands of the English.

On 20 April 1570, an English army under the Earl of Sussex and Lord Humsden arrived and Branxholm was described as "a very strong house and well set, and very pleasant gardens and orchards about it." They finished the work of demolition with gunpowder! Sir Walter Scott died before he could rebuild Branxholm – his wife Margaret Douglas completed it in 1576.

Branxholm today has two remaining towers still standing, the Nabsie Tower and the Tentifute, the latter mainly ruined. The Nabsie was added in various stages, starting in 1790. Branxholm is still owned by the Buccleuch family.

Nabsie? Probably derived from the phrase 'to cock one's neb', meaning to look haughtily with one's nose in the air. And Tentifute? 'Tent' means 'heed or attention' as in 'tak tent'. 'Fute' or 'fit' can mean 'to meet the requirements of' so maybe Tentifute was 'a good watch tower'.

The castle was too strong for most gangs of reivers and the ground floor could be used as a stable for cattle and horses. It has been said that one might still smell horses on the ground floor of Nabsie tower. I wonder?

It was only a few years later, in 1603 that King James VI of Scotland became also James 1 of England – the union of the crowns. This brought to an end the official hostilities on the Borders, but reiving still continued both within Scotland and across the border into England. King James, with happy optimism described the Borders, both England and Scotland, as the 'Middle Counties of Great Britain'. The towerhouse of Branxholm provided a good defence; it was in fact the 'must have' home for any laird worth his salt. I wonder if there will be a different kind of border in the twenty twenties?

This King James (VI and I) realised that his British Midlands was probably the most lawless area in Europe at the time and, with help from Wardens and Keepers, he set about pacifying the most unruly tribes, such as the Grahams,



Armstrongs and Elliots. Some were hanged and more were exiled, thus starting the diaspora of Borderers to Ireland, the US and Canada. He also destroyed many towerhouses, 700 of which had been built since his grandfather's (James V) decree of 1535. The stones were harvested for other purposes; stones from the Armstrong's Gilnockie Castle Tower (near Canonbie) were used for a bridge (see photo on left). The King also arranged compensation for the loss of 30,000 cattle. Thankfully, things settled down. The Borderer of the time was maybe rough, warlike and a brigand, but not particularly bloodthirsty!

Keep an eye out for Branxholm next time you are driving south on the A7.

(Source: Stag and Thistle, the quarterly newsletter of the Clan Scott Society. Jan/Feb/Mar 2010. Adapted from article written by Douglas Montagu Douglas Scott, OBE)

Ricciarelli - Ann Blundell

Ricciarelli are dense, chewy Italian almond cookies originating from Sienna. They are a distant and much less fussy cousin to the French macaron – perfect with coffee!

Ingredients:

125g **GRANULATED** sugar
100g ground almonds
1 large egg white
A pinch table salt
Icing sugar for rolling

Method

Heat oven to 200 degrees (fan- 180 degrees) gas mark 6.

Line a baking sheet with baking parchment.

Combine the GRANULATED sugar and almonds (no lumps!)

In a clean bowl, whisk the egg whites with the salt until it forms soft peaks then fold in the almonds and sugar mixture.

Use your hands to divide the mixture into 12 even sized balls.

Roll balls in icing sugar and then arrange balls evenly on baking sheet.

Press down gently on each one to flatten slightly.

Bake on the middle shelf of oven for about 10 minutes (tops should be cracked and bottoms golden).

Remove from oven.

Cool completely on a wire rack.

These biscuits are best eaten fresh, but they will keep in an airtight container for up to 1 week.



Community Council Update – Barbara Harrison



State of the Valley Roads

Several people have contacted the Community Council recently complaining about the state of the roads. The Community Council is trying to encourage people to “play their part” and report the potholes and other issues themselves to Scottish Borders Council. When people report problems with the roads to us, we just fill out the online SBC form, and the fact that our information is 2nd hand means that what we are reporting risks being much less accurate.

You are seeing the problems with the roads and have the best first-hand knowledge, so please report directly any problems you see yourselves. You can report by phone on 0300 100 1800 or online at

https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/site/xfp/scripts/xforms_form.php?formID=297&language=en

Timber Transport Lorries

If you are concerned about any aspect of the driving of timber transport lorries can you please in the first instance report this to the Timber Transport Liaison Officer, James England. It is helpful if you can give the date, time and location as well as the company name if possible. If not, please describe the colours of the vehicle. James can be contacted on 07725 065464 or by e-mail at james.england@dumgal.gov.uk

Tourism in the Upper Yarrow

The Community Council carried out 3 phases of consultation with local residents to try and find solutions for managing visitors to the Upper Yarrow better. From these consultations, and in discussions with a number of partner organisations, we developed a Visitor Management Plan which contained suggestions for improving tourism infrastructure using significant funding from the Scottish Government via Visit Scotland. Although many in the valleys supported the proposals, it became clear that there was

insufficient support from those most affected (residents living in the Upper Yarrow) to take these ideas any further.

We understand that Wemyss and March (the landowner) plans to recruit a Warden to assist in managing visitor numbers on their land in 2021, so the Community Council will not be contributing funding this year. We would like to express our sincere thanks to Chris Amy who did an excellent job in delivering the Warden Service in area in the last 3 years.

If you see any visitors breaking the law (including in relation to Covid regulations), you should report this immediately to Police Scotland using 101. We know that valley residents can be cynical about the lack of an immediate Police response, but the more incidents that are reported, the better the future Police Scotland response will be.



Langhope Rig Wind Farm Community Benefit Fund

Upcoming Fund Deadline

4th June 2021 for a decision in August



£120,000 awarded since 2017



to 20 projects



including community buildings, playgroups, and youth theatres

What We Fund

Charitable activities that benefit residents of the communities of Ettrick & Yarrow, Lilliesleaf, Ashkirk & Midlem and Borthwick Water and Upper Teviotdale

Grants of £1,000 to £20,000 available to support a wide range of costs and activities including equipment costs, running costs for local groups, staff or sessional worker costs, feasibility studies, and maintenance or refurbishment of community facilities

How To Apply

We welcome pre-application queries. If you need advice or information, or to discuss your project informally, please contact Sam Bramwell, Foundation Scotland sam@foundationscotland.org.uk or 077 18 769 060 <https://www.foundationscotland.org.uk/apply-for-funding/funding-available/langhope-rig>

Kiltwalk – Jane and Jack Peers



Kiltwalk is an umbrella for a range of fundraising events. Do you know that you don't have to walk on the Kiltwalk?

More good news is that Hunter Foundation will add 50% onto all donations to the Kiltwalk. This year there is not a specific location or event, just do something and raise money for your chosen charity on the weekend 23rd – 24th April. So we hatched a plan. To celebrate the linkage of E&Y with Ashkirk and Selkirk - so clearly endorsed in the recent vote, Jack and I will cycle past Ashkirk, Kirkhope, Ettrick, Yarrow and Selkirk churches on Saturday 24th April and ask you all to sponsor us for Christian Aid.

If any of you are wondering how a pair of geriatrics will cycle 50 miles in a day over some hills, we have electric bikes!

The easiest way to celebrate with us and support Christian Aid is by using the link below.

<https://virtual.thekiltwalk.co.uk/fundraising/ScotlandsVirtualKiltwalk2021-JaneandJackPeers>

If you would rather give us paper money, get in touch to arrange that via the E&Y email address (ettrickandyarrow@gmail.com).

Because Christian Aid's partners around the world say that the main cause of poverty and emergency in their areas is climate change, Christian Aid is sending a petition to the prime minister:

As the UK Government strives to build back better from the pandemic and also prepares to host the G7 and the COP26 climate talks in November, we call on you to lead the world with ambitious climate action that will also address inequality.

The UK must:

- Increase financial support to the world's poorest countries and push for their debts to be cancelled so they can better confront the climate crisis and other urgent priorities.*
- Invest in a green recovery that leaves no-one behind – either in the UK or in the world's poorest countries.*
- Stop the expansion of fossil fuel energy and step-up support to clean energy.*

You can sign the petition online at <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/climate-justice-2021> or we will happily share a paper copy with you. Adding your name does make a difference.

Look out for Christian Aid Week, May 10th to 16th.



Ettrickbridge and Dryden RDA – Caryl Thompson

The Ettrickbridge and Dryden RDA group haven't been allowed to operate since lockdown but we haven't been idle! We managed to get funding from Fallagio to buy hand sanitizer and two benches for outside the riding school so when the children come back they can sit socially distanced till they can get on their ponies. Harbro were very generous when we purchased the benches. We also got a donation from the George Crawford trust to purchase a grooming kit for each rider so they can do some things dismounted.

As we pay a retainer for the ponies, we are having a fund raiser. This is a virtual Balloon Race taking place on May 1st and we hope some of you may give it a try. See the notice below for details.

Hopefully we can start again riding next term but are dependent on the region letting the school children come by bus. We have only been able to take riders who are brought by carers or parents. It is a shame for the riders who benefit so much from RDA activities.



enter our virtual
Balloon Race
supporting Ettrickbridge & Dryden RDA
to win amazing prizes:

- £500
- iPad
- Book Token
- plus RDA prizes

Entry costs only £3!

The race starts on 1st May 2021
Enter at bit.ly/3bQnRyq

RDA

Birds in our Gardens – Swallows

Nora Hunter

Swallows and House Martins are roughly similar in size and shape, hence the difficulty some people have telling them apart. There are other superficially similar birds – Sand Martins (nest in banks of sand by rivers) and Swifts (a bird of towns and cities) but these are not usually found in or around our gardens.



Though both Swallows and Martins feed on flying insects, the former are low-level feeders and the latter fly much higher, so they don't compete with each other. It is impossible to provide food in your garden for either species but avoiding insecticides and keeping wild sections in your garden will increase insect numbers and they will like that!

Next issue will be about House Martins but this time, **Swallows!** The most obvious thing that distinguishes Swallows is their deeply forked tails. These are not just for show, but help the birds manoeuvre in the air. The tail streamers are shorter in younger birds though, and not always easy to see in the glare of the sun. So, what else can we look out for? Well, they have pale whitish undersides and are uniformly dark blue-black above, with reddish chin and throat.

They are also very graceful in flight. They hunt for flying insects low over meadows, rivers and lakes, often swooping to scoop up a beak-full of water. They will readily munch bluebottles, horse flies, aphids and midges as well as the more attractive insects such as butterflies and moths. Their song is a joyful chirruping gurgle, or sharper cheep if alarmed.

They make cup-shaped nests out of mud, frequently in barns or outbuildings. And contrary to what many think, they will come to land when they are gathering nest material. The Swallow was originally a cave nester and likely

made the switch to man-made outhouses in the Tigris-Euphrates valleys right after the last ice age over 11,000 years ago. They are very faithful to successful nest sites. My coal shed has 4 nests and has been used regularly by one pair and their descendants for well over 25 years. They use one nest for the first brood of 4-5 chicks and move to another one for the next brood, changing from year to year. It is a delight to welcome them back despite the mess but back issues of newspapers cover all the surfaces!



Swallows arrive with us in March-April have at least two broods of chicks, and then leave again in September-October. They often form mixed flocks with Martins and migrate together. In Autumn you will see huge gatherings of these birds and their youngsters,

typically on phone/electric wires chattering excitedly as if they are discussing which route to take as they leave us for the winter.

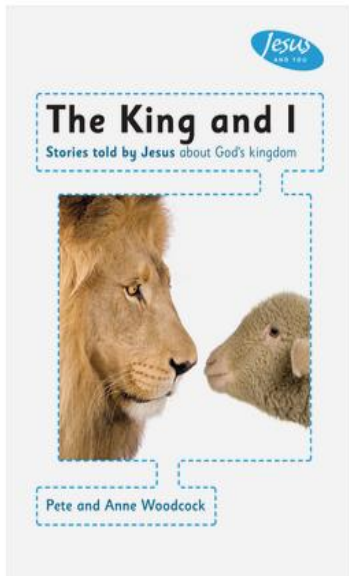
British Swallows spend their winter in South Africa – most travel through western France across the Pyrenees, down eastern Spain into Morocco and across the Sahara. They put on little weight before migrating as they travel by day at low altitudes and find their insect food on the way. They are however vulnerable to starvation crossing large areas like the Sahara Desert. It is a hazardous time and many birds die from starvation, exhaustion and in storms.

Not surprisingly there are many myths and legends about swallows mostly to do with luck – or the lack of it if they do not return in spring or if their nests are disturbed. If nests are destroyed or birds deliberately driven away or killed, cows' milk will turn sour and dry up and hens will cease to lay!

Those of you who hate the mess these beautiful birds produce should bear that in mind and just enjoy the stunning flying acrobatics and joyous singing instead – oh..... and remember they eat midges!

The King and I! - Rev Margaret Steele

Do you wonder what the Christian Faith is all about?
Why do Christians think Jesus is so important?
What does Jesus say about living life God's way?



“The King and I” is a short course from made up of 4 sessions. Each session looks at different stories Jesus told about God’s kingdom from Matthew 13. The studies will unpack why being part of God’s kingdom is so important, and what Jesus is like as God’s king. It has been designed to allow everyone to meet Jesus and discover how living life with Him is so life-changing and revitalising. With a mixture of video clips, discussion questions, stories from the Bible together we will explore on Zoom some of the

answers to the questions above. Everyone is welcome. No prior knowledge of the Bible is needed. There will be no pressure to be involved in the discussions – you can feel free to join in or not as you wish.

WHEN: Mondays 10th, 17th, 24th and 31st May at 7pm

WHERE: – on Zoom probably

Please contact Margaret Steele (23308) for more details and to let her know of your interest.

Introducing the Sustainable Transport Project
Karen O'Brien-Barrett
EYCDC Sustainable Transport Co-ordinator



I was born and bred approximately one mile from the centre of Leicester. We first visited the Ettrick Valley following the unexpected find of my husband's fantasy home and fell in love with the tranquil beauty of the landscape. We moved here in March 2019 and have enjoyed becoming part of the community. In August 2020 I started work as the EYCDC (Ettrick and Yarrow

Community Development Company) Sustainable Transport Co-ordinator.

The Sustainable Transport Project is funded by Paths for All and the Smarter Choices, Smarter Places Open Fund. The aim of the project is to encourage people to develop more positive attitudes towards sustainable transport choices and so we are looking for volunteers to try out our electric vehicles.

If you're 25 years or over, you can take our Nissan e-NV200 people carrier for your personal use on a trial basis for a period of between 4 days and week. All we'd need in return is a copy of your driving licence and a commitment to complete our end of project questionnaire. You might also be willing to provide a case study and photo for our final report.

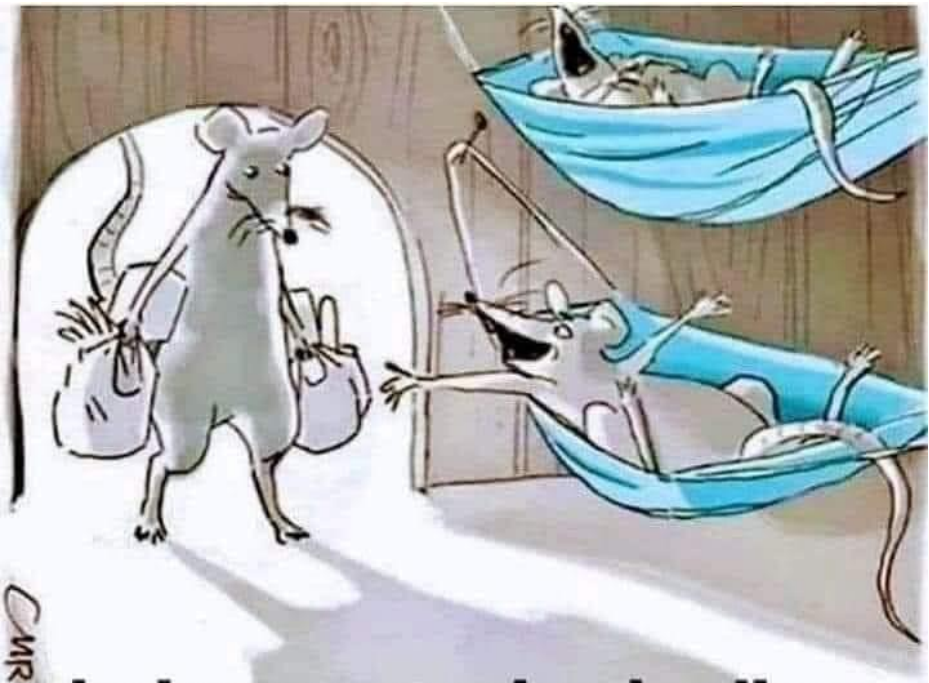
In addition to our people carrier, we have four "Cube" all-terrain electric bikes which are available for hire either half day/3 hours (£15) or full day/6 hours (£30) and are a lovely way to explore the area whilst having battery power to help with the hard work.



Our electric vehicles are a great opportunity to "try before you buy" so we're pleased to be able to offer short free trials of both the EV (to over 25s) and the e-bikes to anyone resident in the valleys.

We're also interested in hearing your views on anything we can do that might help reduce transport emissions. I can be contacted directly by telephone; 01750 62210 (Ettrick School), 07483 404663 (mobile) or email, karen@ettrickandyarrow.org.uk

A little reminder (from Key Notes editor) to be careful where you leave those masks!



CMR

**The humans are leaving these
free hammocks EVERYWHERE!**



The Church of Scotland

Ashkirk | Ettrick & Yarrow | Selkirk



Pastoral Assistant required.

We are looking for a part-time Pastoral Assistant (10 hours per week) to assist the Minister of the linked parishes of Ashkirk, Ettrick and Yarrow and Selkirk.

Title of Post: Pastoral Assistant

Organisation: Ashkirk, Ettrick and Yarrow and Selkirk Parish Churches

Salary: £25,624 – £28,968, pro-rata

Post: Part-time, 10 hours per week, flexible

Location: home-based

Closing Date: 16th April 2021

The successful applicants will need to observe strict confidentiality, and be a Committed Christian with a live Church connection which is a Genuine Occupational Requirement in terms of the Equality Act 2010.

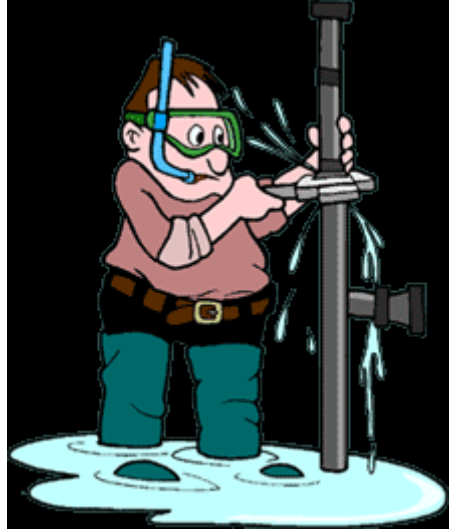
Full job description available at: <http://selkirkiparish.church/> and follow the links to Pastoral Assistant Required

To apply, e-mail your CV to sessionclerk@selkirkiparish.church by 16th April 2021

Poetry Corner

Heroes of the Frost by Will H. Ogilvie....Bits of Fun.

The plumbers who met
The householder's plea
And dried up the wet
Should certainly get
I should say, a V.C.
While a few D.S.O.'s
Should be given to those
Who acted as mates
And supported their blows
When by act of the Father
All our water-pipes froze;
And the lads who'd to pedal
Back home for a spanner
Should get a bronze medal
In similar manner.



Key Notes seeks to serve as a platform for sharing information and views of individuals, groups and communities so please use it and write to us.
Email: keynotes_editorial@btinternet.com

Opinions expressed in contributed material within KEY NOTES do not necessarily reflect the views of the Interim Moderator and Kirk Session of Ettrick and Yarrow Parish Church.

www.ettrickandyarrow.church

 **Ettrick and Yarrow Churches**