

# KEY NOTES

KIRKHOPE, ETRICK & YARROW PARISH MAGAZINE



*December 2021*

## First words from Rev Margaret Steele

Dear Friends

***The Apostle Paul says, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? No in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us”. Romans 8:35***



Each of us has faced, and may still be facing, many difficulties and much darkness over these last two years. From Covid, to other illnesses, from the challenges of Climate Change, to the individual challenges of living life daily here and now, many are physically, mentally and spiritually drained. For some it seems as if they are at the bottom of a pit with no easy way out.

The Bible is full of stories about people in those sorts of situations. The Psalmist reminds us though, that God promises to be our rock our fortress, ***Psalm 18:2***, the One who will never leave us, even when we find it hard to experience His Presence.

This is the time of year when we remember God’s love story for us and our world. God coming in to the troubles and darkness of our world; coming alongside us to bring comfort, strength and hope. But that is only the beginning, for as Jesus went to the cross, went into the pit of death He showed that there is nowhere that He is not present. Coming back to life again through His Spirit, He offers us His Presence within us as we go through our dark times, then in His Power He will lift us from the pit into His joyful, peace-making, love -filled Presence.

To finish Paul’s quote from **Romans 8**, ***“Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither***

***height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus Our Lord."***

In the early part of next year, the Church of Scotland General Assembly and Presbytery are asking each church and parish to think about how we share God's love with our families, our friends, our communities. Using the 5 Marks of Mission: TELL the Good News of the Kingdom, TEACH believers, TEND to human need by loving service, TRANSFORM unjust behaviours in society, pursuing peace and reconciliation, and TREASURE the world God has given us to live in.

Discussions around these topics will allow us to put in place a Mission Plan for the future. **ALL** voices need to be heard so please let us know your thoughts, come along to meetings that will be arranged.

Change is never easy but is always necessary. As churches in the Reformed tradition, our Church of Scotland strap line is "reformed and always reforming". As Christians, as change occurs, we remember that that ***Jesus is the same, yesterday, today and forever, and we give Him thanks for that.*** ***Hebrews 13:8*** He is the One who brings consistence to our lives.

It is with sadness, yet knowing the time is right, that, at the end of November, I told the Joint Kirk Sessions Meeting that I will retire at the end of February 2022. It has been and remains my privilege to have journeyed with you through the last 10<sup>1/2</sup> years in Ashkirk and Selkirk and for the last 2 in Ettrick and Yarrow. Our last three months together will continue that journey looking to Jesus the Author and Perfecter of our faith to show us His way forward. More details of what will happen next will appear in due course.

May you know and experience God's constant, loving Presence filling your lives bringing you comfort, strength, joy and peace this Christmas and throughout 2022.

With every blessing

Margaret

## Church Services



**Christingle** has had to be cancelled for a second year due to concerns about Omicron/Covid. There is a Christmas Day service in Selkirk Parish Church at 10.30am and worship service in Kirkhope on 26<sup>th</sup> at 10am.

Rev Margaret Steele is to retire at the end of February – see her letter above. Church services WILL continue! (Covid permitting). Different ministers will be coming to lead the services. You can find out about services below and on [www.ettrickandyarrow.church](http://www.ettrickandyarrow.church) or on Facebook: Ettrick and Yarrow Churches. Services are filmed and are available each week on YouTube. Search there for “Ashkirk, Ettrick and Yarrow, Selkirk “.

You can also email us: [ettrickandyarrow@gmail.com](mailto:ettrickandyarrow@gmail.com)

Ettrick and Yarrow Church services 2022				
January	2nd	Kirkhope	10am	
	9th	Yarrow	10am	
	16th	Kirkhope	10am	
	23rd	Kirkhope	10am	
	30th	Kirkhope	11am	Joint
February	6th	Yarrow	10am	
	13th	Kirkhope	10am	
	20th	Kirkhope	10am	
	27th	Selkirk	11am	Joint
March	6th	Yarrow	10am	
	13th	Kirkhope	10am	
	20th	Kirkhope	10am	
	27th	Yarrow	10am	
Joint = Combined service with Ashkirk and Selkirk				



It's what you can  
do that counts



## Ettrickbridge and Dryden RDA

At last, we are able to have all the riders back. The last lot to start were the primary children and they came in August. The last time they rode was March 2020 and it was a pleasure to see their excitement and welcome some new riders.

We have been lucky in getting grants from the Fallargo fund and the George Crawford Trust to buy sanitising gel and some benches so the riders can sit socially distanced. Our fund raising has been non-existent until early October when we were one of the charities at Presents Galore Fair along with the Life Boats and Doddie Weir's charity and the Injured Jockeys fund. We are due to receive a very generous donation. Some of us went to help in the kitchen and on the cake stall.

Sadly, our Christmas Party has to be cancelled again as the Covid restrictions won't allow it.

We are delighted to welcome 2 new helpers with Valley connections, Susan White and Holly Kirkwood.

We have also tried a new venture which has proved popular; Tea with the Ponies. We have welcomed guests and their friend or carer to have tea, nicely served beside the riding school, and watch the lesson. The riders are only too pleased to go over and chat to the guests and show them the ponies. Our guests include people from the Bield and our retired helpers, and they have presented Long Service Medals to some of the ponies. We hope to do this again after Easter and if anyone knows someone who would enjoy this, please let me know.

Caryl Thompson

## Christmas Pudding Truffles – Ann Blundell

### Ingredients:

- 550g Christmas Pudding
- 125g Dark Chocolate
- 45g White Chocolate
- Sugar Sprinkles (for decoration)



### Method:

Crumble the Christmas pudding into a bowl.

Melt the dark chocolate.

Add the chocolate to the pudding and mix.

Roll the mixture into walnut-sized balls. (approx 30)

Chill on a lined tray for 20 minutes.

Melt the white chocolate and cool slightly.

Drizzle the chocolate over the truffles so it looks like cream spilling over the pudding.

Decorate with the sprinkles.

Other decorations can be added too!

These can be made ahead and kept in the fridge.

## Community Development Company News

### *Kirkhope Steading*

Those of you who've ventured up the Ettrick Valley recently will probably have noticed all the building work going on at Kirkhope Steading, opposite the Swire road end, and possibly wondered what's going on.

This is the Community Development Company's first major project, which will provide places to work and live in the valleys. After buying the disused and run-down Steading last year, we appointed Swintons of Hawick to start transforming it into workplaces and housing for affordable rent. As you'll see from the photographs, work has been going well and the workplaces should be ready for letting early in the New Year. There are seven workplaces, of varying sizes, which will be suitable to be used as workshops, craft units, studios or offices. Some office-type spaces will also be available for people who want to just rent out a desk space rather than a whole unit.

There will also be five two- and three-bedroom houses. Three will be within the old Steading buildings and two will be completely new built. These will all be available for rent by next summer.

If you're interested in renting a workspace please contact Vicky Davidson at 01750 62210 (the Community Development Company's office) or email [info@ettrickandarrow.org.uk](mailto:info@ettrickandarrow.org.uk). Applications for the houses will be advertised next spring.

View of what the completed redevelopment will look like, from the north. The workspaces are nearest; the housing conversions on the other side of the Steading yard, and the new build houses furthest away.



## **Building Work is progressing well**



## ***Ettrick Marshes***

The Community Development Company acquired some 57 hectares of the Ettrick Marshes earlier in the year and, since then, the Company's two Rangers have been doing a huge amount of work to clear the paths, rebuild the boardwalks, reinstate the bird hides and re-surface the Honey Cottage car park. The Ranger-led walks through the Marshes proved to be very successful and may well be repeated next year. In the meantime work continues to restore this precious wetland habitat which is open for anyone to walk through whenever they want.



## Did you know? The Origin of Familiar Sayings

### *Going for a Song*

The “song” that gave rise to this was actually a long poem called “The Faery Queene” presented to Queen Elizabeth I by Edmund Spenser. In spite of the fact that this proved to be Spenser’s most celebrated work, it failed to impress Lord Burleigh, the Lord High Treasurer. When he heard that the Queen proposed paying Spenser £100 for his work (over £40,000 in today’s money), his reply was reputedly, “What! All this for a song?” The money was eventually handed over at Queen Elizabeth’s insistence, but the implication that it was paid for a mere trifle has lived on ever since.



### *Quiz*



“Quiz” is a prime example of an invented word. According to the story surrounding it, “quiz” was devised in 1780 by a Dublin theatre manager named Daly. He wagered that he could introduce a new word with no meaning into the English language in just 24 hours. Daly’s wager was accepted and all around the city the four letters *q*, *u*, *i* and *z* were chalked up on walls and doors. Daly won his bet as “quiz” became the centre of attention and everyone tried to find out what it meant. “Quiz” has carried this sense of enquiry

ever since and today it is the name given to many sorts of competitive tests, frequently comprising general knowledge questions.

Taken from Lock, Stock and Barrel (1998), Past Times, Oxford, England

## A Visualisation for Difficult Times

I have a friend who has been in hospital for several weeks and I am not allowed to visit. I sent the visualisation to her husband and he read it to her as she closed her eyes and pictured the garden and relaxed there.

### *My Special Place*

This is best if read aloud and very slowly.

Come with me. I will take you to my special place. Just close your eyes and walk with me. It is early morning and it feels good to step outside and breathe in the early cool freshness. It is summertime and there is a promise of a bright and warm day ahead. Just follow me and I will describe it all as we go.

There are trees all around reaching high into the sky and the sound of a river nearby. A small path of coloured gravel crunches beneath our feet as we walk. The birds are already awake and greeting the new day with songs - a blackbird perches on the rooftop and sings out loudly. In the distance wood pigeons call and a brightly coloured pheasant is startled by our presence and it rages at us as it leaves in a hurry.



There has been overnight rain and there is that early morning smell of peat and dampness and I sense a feeling of gratitude from the plants. A light breeze touches my face and moves my hair. I walk slowly and mindfully and full of awareness. I run my fingers as I gently touch green bushes and flowers as I pass by. I walk under an archway and it is covered in a canopy of clematis and it touches my head and whispers to me.

I reach a clearing and a fence and see the river below. The water is clear and it races and dances over rocks full of life and energy and excitement. It too is

singing and calling out joyfully as it hurries onward on its journey. There is an island of rock in the river close to the grey stone bridge. When the river is in flood it will disappear for a time but I always know that it will return.

Today we have startled a heron and it takes off noisily and flies upstream on its huge grey wings. There is a stone guinea pig bought for me by my sister on her last visit. The eyes seem to wink at me and I smile.



There are little messages on stones and on a piece of driftwood hanging from a tree are the words imagine and dream. I look around and find some stones with words - harmony -trust- patience - peace. They reach out to me and lift my spirits. There is a gazebo too with chairs inside to rest on and give some shelter

on wet days should you want to meditate or simply be in this beautiful corner of my garden.

Just then we are joined by a very large grey cat called Leo. He jumps up and his tail catches the wind chimes and they tinkle quietly- so many sounds here in the quiet morning light. Take a few minutes to be still beside me.....

Carol Beveridge

## Birds in our Gardens - House Martins

In the last issue of Key Notes, I wrote about Swallows and promised a follow-up article on their cousins the House Martins. I fully expected to share with you some tales of “my” House Martins that have nested for decades under the eaves of my house. However, like many small migrating birds, they were delayed and even prevented from arriving here by strong contrary winds and weather in April and did not arrive at all at my house. Some folk locally were luckier and I did see flocks of the birds in various valley locations.



House Martins are smaller than Swallows. They have only a shallow forked tail and lack tail streamers. Their body is all white beneath with bright white chin and throat. The white patch on the rump on their otherwise blue-black back and head is a great way to single them out in a mixed flock with Swallows. Their wings are short and pointed and wider than a Swallow's, and their bodies less slender – they are more torpedo than arrow! Their calls are soft ‘chirp chirps’, without the burbling of a Swallow. Their behaviour in general is a bit of a contrast to their elegant cousins the Swallows and can be much like a bunch of rowdy teenagers, with excited chattering and whirling around the sky.

Like Swallows, House Martins make cup-shaped nests from mud, most often under the eaves of houses but unlike Swallows, they nest in colonies. Their original nest sites would have been inland and coastal cliffs but now almost entirely they build on the underside of our roof eaves. They were even mentioned in Macbeth by Shakespeare as nesting around Cawdor Castle.

They are faithful to nest sites and many regard them as a lucky mascot, looking out for their return in spring each year to re-occupy and/or rebuild the nests they used last time. Their offspring will continue the tradition. To build a nest can take 10 days of effort and over 1000 beaks-full of mud glued together painstakingly. Old House Martin nests are readily occupied by a range of other birds but their most notorious rival is the House Sparrow. Sparrows will dominate the Martins and often wait till the nest is complete

before turving out the Martins and taking over the nest. There is a feeling often that this is unjust and we should be able to do something to help but the poor Martins just have to try again on another wall. There is an old story that House Martins would wait till the Sparrows were sitting on eggs before filling in the entrance hole so the intruder was walled up in its stolen sepulchre!

Like Swallows, House Martins usually arrive in March-April have at least two broods of chicks, and then leave again in September-October.



They often form mixed flocks and migrate together. In Autumn you will see huge gatherings of Swallows and Martins 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.

The House Martin is a mystery bird as far as migration goes. Every autumn the entire Eurasian population of 90 million birds heads south into Africa. Where they go after that remains a puzzle, for they then seem to disappear. Birdwatchers in eastern and southern Africa do see a few but they are heavily outnumbered by Swallows. Current opinion suggests that they may be widespread throughout southern Africa but simply stay too high in the sky to be seen from the ground even with binoculars.

Sadly to report, House Martins have been recently added to the UK list of species of highest conservation concern (Red List) – which means we are in danger of losing the birds altogether in the UK. Swallows are on the Green list of least concern although their numbers are dropping too.

I hate to finish on a sad note! Let's hope these lively and entertaining wee birds do return to us next spring.

Nora Hunter, with help from Birds Britannica and BTO

## News from ETRICK & YARROW COMMUNITY COUNCIL

### *Flooding in the Upper Ettrick and Tima*

The planned drainage works at Thirlestane Gardens, designed to improve the management of the run-off coming into the Ettrick, were delayed this year, but we will keep pressure on SBC for these to happen a.s.a.p. in 2022.

Over the last year, the Council have been developing the Ettrick and Tima Flood Study. The study has so far produced detailed flood mapping and a list of potential flood risk mitigation options for the area. Their next step is to consult with the public on these options.

SBC are hosting a **drop-in Public Consultation event** at the Boston Hall on **Tuesday 14 December 2021** between **10am and 2.30pm** to discuss their work on the Ettrick and Tima flood study. This event will allow the Council to provide information on the flood study, gather the community's views and feedback on potential flood protection options to help shape future solutions for the area and also provide information on property flood protection products. It is open for all members of the public to attend.

Members of Scottish Borders Council's Flood and Coastal Management Team will be at the Hall to discuss the options and to answer and discuss any questions from residents. If you have any queries or questions before the event, please feel free to contact the Team at [flooding@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:flooding@scotborders.gov.uk) or on 01835 825035.

Hand sanitiser will be available and the Team will be wearing face coverings. They kindly ask that, other than those that are medically exempt, all attendees also wear face coverings. We also suggest taking a lateral flow test before going to the event.



### ***Traffic issues on A708 (Yarrow Valley Road)***

EYCC has consulted with the community to identify all the concerns that people have about road safety on A708. The next stage is to meet with Police Scotland, the Road Traffic Police and Scottish Borders Council. We are waiting for a meeting date which has been delayed due to COP 26 and Storm Arwen.

### ***Next Community Council Meeting***

Our next meeting will be on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> February at 7 pm. It will either be held in Kirkhope Hall, Ettrickbridge, or on Zoom if the weather is inclement.

The AGM will be held in June when the new Community Council will also be elected. We will be looking for some new people to join the Community Council, so please consider putting yourself forward.

If you have any issues that you would like the Community Council to consider, please contact our Secretary, Barbara Harrison at Sunnybrae, Ettrickbridge TD7 5JN, [bckharrison@btinternet.com](mailto:bckharrison@btinternet.com) or phone 01750 52260



## Poetry Corner

We present two poems by William Addison who was minister of Ettrick and Buccleuch (1929-1953). Both poems bring to mind recent weather in the valleys. And before anyone complains about the punctuation, that is how it is printed in his books “Napier Verse” and “Ettrick Verse” (1949)!

### After the Snow

The burn is set in all the sudden brightness  
Of glistening banks and snow-shaped arching trees  
With towering tracery, wizard-wrought in whiteness,  
The quiet night-frost with skilly touch will freeze.

A flourish wondrous on the winter-blasted thorn  
Holds snowy points and lines athwart the flood,  
Screening the waters, from smooth channels torn,  
Breaking on boulders, driving down the mud.

There is more here than Ettrick’s high Hope Head: -  
Along curving, morning summits sunlight gleams;  
In snowy valleys, sunset’s blushes spread;  
Even storms can leave strange loveliness by streams.





## The Horrid Beech Tree

They all set out for the Church one day,  
Martin, Patsy, Dorothy, Michael,  
Dressed in their Sunday best and gay,  
Martin, Patsy, Dorothy, Michael,  
When, across the road, what did they see?  
Martin, Patsy, Dorothy, Michael,  
The horrid, uprooted huge beech tree.  
Martin, Patsy, Dorothy, Michael,  
On Michael's birthday and very first church  
Martin, Patsy, Dorothy, Michael,  
They were all very sad to be left in the lurch,  
Martin, Patsy, Dorothy, Michael,  
So they turned about and went away,  
Martin, Patsy, Dorothy, Michael,  
They will come to the Church another day,  
Martin, Patsy, Dorothy, Michael.



Have a very happy Christmas and stay safe!




This will be the last issue of Key Notes for a while as it is time this editor retired after 5 years! Might be a relief to some of you, but anyone who would like this valleys newsletter to continue, I am happy to advise.  
Email: [keynotes\\_editorial@btinternet.com](mailto:keynotes_editorial@btinternet.com)

---

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

[www.ettrickandyarrow.church](http://www.ettrickandyarrow.church)

 Ettrick and Yarrow Churches