

*Parish of Upper Tweeddale*

# KIRK MATTERS



## Christmas 2023

## CHURCH'S VISION STATEMENT

The vision of the Church of Scotland is to be a Church which seeks to inspire the people of Scotland and beyond with the good news of Jesus Christ through enthusiastic worshipping, witnessing, nurturing and serving communities

## UPPER TWEEDDALE WEBSITE

[www.uppertweeddale.org.uk](http://www.uppertweeddale.org.uk) Charity No. SC004728

Part of the West Tweeddale Parishes linkage ([www.westtweeddale.org.uk](http://www.westtweeddale.org.uk))



@parishofuppertweeddale

## SUNDAY SERVICES

Occasionally we hold joint services for instance for a breakfast church. Advanced notice will be given at church services and on the website and Facebook.

In Broughton Church at 11am  
In Tweedsmuir Church at 9.30am  
In Skirling Church at 11.30am

Occasionally Sunday services are posted to the Upper Tweeddale Website and to the Parish of Upper Tweeddale Facebook page



**"Support Broughton ,  
Skirling and Tweedsmuir  
Church of Scotland**



**[www.stewardship.org.uk](http://www.stewardship.org.uk)**  
For the Parish of Upper Tweeddale



## A letter from our Minister

### The Ethics of Christmas

I recently came across a sermon by St. Isaac the Syrian, who lived in the 7th century and was bishop of Nineveh. In his sermon he offers the following reflection on the ethics of Christmas. I offer them to you for your reflection this Christmas.



Christmas night offers Peace to the whole world.

*Let no one threaten.*

Christmas night is the night of the Most Gentle One.

*Let no one be cruel.*

Christmas night is the night of the Humble One.

*Let no one be proud.*

Christmas day is the day of Joy –

*Let no one despair.*

Christmas day is the day of Good Will –

*Let us not be mean spirited.*

Christmas day is a day of Peace.

*Let us not be conquered by the anger of violence.*

On Christmas day the Bountiful impoverished Himself for our sake.

*Let the rich, share their plenty with the poor.*

On Christmas day we received a Gift for which we did not ask.

*Let us give to those who in their need implore us.*

I do sincerely hope and pray that you and yours have a very peaceful, very happy, and in St Issac's sense, ethical Christmas.

Peace, Tony



## Anne Patricia St Clair Shaw 23.01.31 to 20.08.23

Notes taken from the many messages from many friends and family.

Anne Patricia started life in 1931 as a Sandison. Her family on her father's side originating from Shetland were shepherds and crofters.

Anne Patricia maintained the tradition of using natural colours in fleeces to knit beautiful pieces throughout her life and made many friends teaching, spinning weaving and knitting.

Memsahib - we discovered at the funeral this family name for Anne Patricia dated back to a little boy not wanting to call his mummy "mum" and which stuck throughout her life. The funeral was a real celebration of Anne Patricia's community and family life - a long life well lived! Anne Patricia mastered What's App to keep in touch with her grand and great grandchildren, enjoying hearing what they were up to.

A real community member – after falling in love with Tweedsmuir from the moment she set eyes on it she enjoyed many happy years surrounded by caring and supportive friends and neighbours.

We miss her in the Kirk, her car no longer parked at the bottom of the hill, an Elder of Tweedsmuir Kirk as long as I can remember and who lived life to the most right up to her last day. Anne Patricia enjoyed a wee drink after kirk on a Sunday at Oliver – the earlier time of 9.30am just meant earlier Gin – "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness" the motto of the gathering

She was a grand and wonderful woman. She understood the meaning of community and how to contribute to the building of connections and the importance of fellowship, kindness and mutual support – she was very much loved! well respected lady

Trained at Edinburgh college domestic science in Atholl crescent and immensely practical at domestic skills – even stretched back a shrunk jumper on a frame. Shared her skills – spinning at the education tent at Peebles show with small children sitting on her knees

An avid reader – the library man had to carry the heavy book bag to her car



but Anne Patricia didn't waste time reading books she didn't enjoy. She enjoyed the chat at book club and was a great hostess.

She was a contributor and advisor to the Women's Institute (WI or Rural) taking courses and learning new skills, sharing her learning with others

Her crafting skills put to the test when Shakespeare came to Traquair and the WI were asked to produce "Codpieces" which caused the ladies much hilarity as to what size.....

She told amazing stories and her hospitality was second to none – talking about her passion for sailing while partaking in homemade baking, homemade wine. She enjoyed theatrics and teaching children to learn their lines.

She judged the rhubarb Gin at Rhubarbfest but was disappointed as she couldn't enter

Her home brew will leave a legacy of memories of wine tasting and especially the Pea pod wine

The famous trifle on Scots night when everyone wanted to taste a portion of Anne Patricia's SHERRY trifle but she was not impressed when served soup with frozen peas in it!

Anne Patricia always dressed smartly and for the occasion – a bit frustrated that her summer dresses didn't come out very often

During Covid she joined with Anne and Duncan as a family household and enjoyed talking about books while still socialising using Zoom

She kept fit by Tai Chi, but had played Badminton and cycled up to Tweedsmuir village with her dog in a basket to walk on quieter roads. Recently requested a new loft ladder – but was told not advisable for her.

I loved her young at heart approach to life - her sporty "boy racer" cars with spoilers and fancy wheels

her determination not to let her deteriorating health affect her activities – maybe a bit too independent.

such a lovely lady who always greeted you with a smile, she was indeed a cheerful and happy lady to the end – a lesson for us all.

sad but we would all wish a good life well lived and to the end as Anne Patricia such a force of nature and inspiration to us all in the way she was engaged in local life sharing her talents with others.

## **An Interview with Carn Peaston, Head Teacher, Broughton Primary School**

### **How did you get into teaching and how did you end up in Broughton?**

Throughout my teenage years I was a swimming instructor in Midlothian. At the young age of seventeen, I entered primary education studying at Moray House for 4 years. Sheila Russell, Head Teacher at Broughton Primary in 1997, gave me my first teaching post on the year of her retirement. August 1997 marked the uniqueness for Broughton Primary, not only was it the first school to have a joint Head Teacher in Scotland, Alistair Wilson, but it also had me arriving as the P3/4/5 teacher. It was with mixed emotions that I left Broughton Primary after 4 years to undertake my Masters in advance studies in education, specialising in maths. Over the years I have worked at Kingspark Primary in Midlothian, Kingsland Primary in Peebles, Aberlady, East Lothian before returning to Broughton as Head Teacher. It felt like coming home on the first day, walking down the driveway and taking up my first headship where I first started teaching, it was very special to me.



### **What is it that makes Broughton special?**

For me, Broughton is a very special place where children and staff are one. Positive and nurturing relationships are at the heart of everything that takes place at Broughton Primary School. As the cliché goes, "it is like one big extended family". The school values, Broughton CAN – Challenge, Achieve and Nurture is embedded not only in our school environment but in the wider community "It takes a village to raise a child". This is what makes Broughton the village it is. We have a saying that goes - You, Me, Meet Halfway promoting if you put in the effort, the other person puts it in as well – Team Work !

### **Do you get a lot of support from the parents?**

The Parent Council works extremely hard supporting the school. Mr Kaljee, our Principal Teacher, is currently collating offers of help from parents to support children's learning in school. We are always looking for volunteers/community members to come into school and this can be arranged by contacting Barbara Whitten in the school office. The community garden,

Breakfast Club and Netball Club are just a few examples of activities that have enhanced the children's learning experiences here at Broughton Primary. These activities would not be able to take place if it wasn't for the generosity, kindness and support of our parent/community volunteers.

### **The Breakfast Club, as an example of the community helping the school, has been quite successful, why were you keen to start it?**

There has been a need for a wraparound provision for the children of Broughton Primary since I have been Head Teacher. As there is a limited childminding provision and access to after school clubs within our area, I have explored with the Parent Council, after school provision but it has not proved feasible to get anything up and running. The staff at Broughton Primary recognise that children's readiness for learning is helped by being fuelled for the day with a good breakfast. This led to working with Parent Council and auditing our families to identify if there was a need/want for a Breakfast Club to be established. The provision would not only offer breakfast but also the opportunity for the children to socialise and engage with each other in school at the beginning of the day. We carried out a survey and over 90% of parents supported the idea. The club has grown, and the children love it, and it would not happen without volunteers from the community. We are extremely grateful for donations provided by the village store, the windfarm, the Guild, Parishes of Upper Tweeddale and individuals which make club possible. Again evidencing "it takes a village to raise a child"

### **And finally, what is happening in school this Christmas?**

We are all excited because on the last day of term we are all going to the Royal Lyceum Theatre in Edinburgh to see "The Snow Queen". The Parent Council has very kindly offered to pay for the tickets and travel due to fund raising. We cannot thank them enough for their generosity. On Wednesday, 13th December, P1/2/3 and the ELC children are performing a nativity play in Broughton Kirk with the older class, P4/5/6/7, singing. Performing in the church is always special to us.

Thanks, Carn, for taking the time for this interview but also going out of your way to provide a wonderfully caring and nurturing community within our school. If you think you might be able to help the school by volunteering to do something in one of the classes, they will be very happy to talk to you about the opportunities available.

*Fiona Burnett*



## Christmas in Australia

Christmas in Australia is a bit different from those in the northern hemisphere. It occurs in the middle of the summer. A lot of the inherited traditions are similar but the temperature is 30C and above. Australians tend to spend Christmas on the beach or around the pool because of the heat. The traditional roast dinner is still available in some families but the locals tend to use the barbecue a lot more because of the heat and seafood is usually a common choice. Salads instead of vegetables and pavlova in preference to Christmas pudding.

Australia has inherited different traditions because of its multiculturalism. The 24 December is a time for present giving following the European Kris Kringle tradition. Equally, there are also additional celebrations on Boxing Day in addition to Christmas Day. If Boxing Day falls before the weekend then the following Monday is a bank holiday. Sydney has a yacht race annually on that day and there are cricket matches throughout Australia. The Aussies are always up for a party.

Pre Christmas there are a lot of local Christmas markets and parades. There is still a strong tradition of a Carols by Candlelight on either Christmas Eve or in the week before Christmas. There will be a lot of external house decoration from lights to gardens full of reindeer or big white boomers, the white kangaroos that pull Santa's sleigh down under. Some streets will use this event to collect money for charity. Native Christmas Bush is used for door wreaths. It has shiny green leaves and cream coloured flowers which become red berries in time for Christmas.

Christmas can be a more communal affair down under. The weather lends itself to street parties after dark. Christmas trees festooned with lights and shared food has become a newer tradition. Each state capital has large Christmas trees in their town centres and lots of Christmas decorations everywhere. It is similar to a British Christmas but a lot warmer and brighter being in the middle of summer.

However you celebrate, have a Merry Christmas.

Alexis Marr



## Harvest Thanksgiving in Upper Tweeddale

This year Harvest Thanksgiving was celebrated in Upper Tweeddale with a variety of events. The first was a joint Upper Tweeddale Harvest thanksgiving service held on 15th October at the Wee Crook in Tweedsmuir, Rev Dr Tony Foley welcomed a full room of regulars and visitors.

He led a thought provoking service, reflecting on our part in harvest, nature and our wonder filled world on earth and beyond... Neil and Isobel had provided the technology and Anne brought along her keyboard to accompany the hymns which included "We Plough the fields with tractors" which had some very relevant updates to the traditional hymn – worth googling if you haven't yet heard it. Children were busy during the service playing farmers with toy tractors, silage bales and farm equipment. The bacon and rolls were supplied from Hamilton's butchers, and we were glad that Ian had brought along extra supplies on the day Thanks to everyone who made this event such a success. The contributions of pumpkin cake, apple pies, plum crumble and chocolate brownie went down a treat.

In connection with Destination Tweed and Connecting Threads, the Wee Crook hosted an afternoon of harvest celebrations which included screening in the mobile Cinema Caravan the recent filming of our garden live music, food and drink, natural dye crafts and display of art created within the project at The Crook garden.

On 21st October in Broughton village hall, the Harvest Supper had a breakfast theme. The team served a supper of bacon and egg rolls, brought along the toasters for breakfast club's famous toast and jam, provided some lovely cakes and poured copious amounts of tea, coffee and juice. For entertainment, there were lots of different activities with some very testing quiz questions on breakfast TV presenters, identifying seeds and breakfast slogans. Peter and John were on standby in the reading corner, the craft corner was amply provided with cutting and sticking your favorite breakfast onto a plate (no-one chose mushrooms!!!) Coriena was busy facepainting pretty butterflies and scary tigers and Murray and Patsy Campbell demonstrated their vintage musical instruments. The Alphorn was mastered by every child and it is no underestimate to say – it was quite noisy! The event raised £262. which was split between Broughton and Muirhouse, Edinburgh Breakfast clubs. Thank you to all who contributed to make this such a successful, fun filled evening.





## Doctors without Borders

The Upper Tweed churches have chosen the charity Doctors without Borders or Médecins sans Frontières (MSF) to benefit from collections in church services and activities over the Christmas season.

MSF staff work in nearly 70 countries to provide emergency medical care and relief supplies directly to people who need it most. They provide medical assistance to people struggling to survive violence, war, epidemics, hunger, denial of healthcare, population displacements and natural disasters.

MSF provides impartial help without discrimination and independently of any political powers. They treat each patient based on medical need, not on any other criteria. Ninety per cent of their budget comes from private donors all over the world. MSF can be independent in thought and action, doing what needs to be done quickly and efficiently.

### **The principles of independence and impartiality are their strongest security measures.**

Behind everything done on the frontline is an efficient logistics system. It is based on the principle that MSF staff should always have exactly the right materials for the job at hand. This is the same in urgent emergencies, when material might need to be on a plane within 24 hours, as for a long-running programme where a steady supply of equipment and drugs is vital.

While some organisations rely on third parties to supply and distribute aid, MSF maintains an independent and integrated supply chain which enables them to deliver medical assistance and better respond to the needs of people — whoever and wherever they may be.

MSF's work in emergencies often leads to speaking out publicly to highlight forgotten crises, to mobilize other aid organizations, to draw attention to weaknesses in the aid system, to demand access to people trapped in conflict zones, or to campaign for fair access to essential medicines for all.

MSF has a team of 300 in Gaza, mostly Palestinians. At the time of writing foreign aid workers have crossed into Egypt but a new team of international staff, including a specialised medical team, has been identified and is ready to enter Gaza as soon as the situation allows. On Sunday 29 October 26 tonnes of medical supplies were sent to Egypt, enough to cover the needs for 800 surgical interventions and 20,000 outpatient consultations. The supplies are destined for healthcare facilities in Gaza and are urgently needed.

Around the world, 365 days a year, MSF are there even when the cameras are not. MSF never launches an emergency appeal unless certain they can spend the money on that specific crisis; there are no asterisks or hidden disclaimers diverting money to other parts of the organisation. They've even offered money back when public generosity has outstripped the response or else made sure supporters were happy for their money to be spent elsewhere.

Except for rare emergency appeals, donations go to general funds, contributing to an emergency reserve that is ready to use wherever and whenever disaster strikes.

*Isobel Hunter*

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# What's happening in Upper Tweeddale this Christmas Season

*Look out for updates on noticeboards and websites for the events listed below*

## **Advent Studies – Illuminating Christmas**

**Skirling Village Hall.** Friday 1st December and every Friday until 22nd December. 10:30 -12. Join us for a cup of coffee and some home baking whilst we pause for thought in a busy December. For more information see Upper Tweeddale website.

## **Decorating the Christmas Tree and other crafts**

**Skirling Village Hall** Sunday 3rd December 1:30-3pm.

## **Bite and Blether**

**Broughton Village Hall** Wednesday 6th December 10-12pm. Christmas Special  
Bacon rolls, traybakes, Tea/Coffee. £3 All welcome

## **Stobo Community Coffee Morning**

**Stobo Village Hall.** Saturday December 9th at Stobo Village Hall 10.30- 12, Entry is by donation and all funds raised will be given to the Peeblesshire Food Bank.

## **Christmas Fayre**

**Broughton Village Hall** Saturday 9th December 5:30-7:30. An opportunity for some Christmas shopping and to enter into a draw or two for hampers and other prizes. The Christmas lights at the school and garage are also to be switched on. The school choir will sing from 5pm at the school then onto the garage for 5:20, ending up in the hall at 5:30.

## **Gift Services in each of our Churches** Sunday 10th December

A chance to gift something to those who have little at Christmas. Gifts for all ages welcome, unwrapped please, separate wrapping paper is a bonus. The parish of Upper Tweeddale supports two charities with gifts. Warm clothing and gifts for older children will go to **Edinburgh Old Kirk and Muirhouse** for distribution to those in need in the parish. Gift vouchers are particularly appreciated by young people supported by the Borders Young Carers Trust and enables young carers to choose their own gifts

## **Broughton Primary School Nativity Play**

**Broughton Church** Wednesday 13th December 6pm

An open invitation to the community to join the school in this Christmas Nativity celebration, 'The Big Little Nativity.'

## **Skirling Community Lunch – Christmas Lunch**

**Skirling Village Hall** Thurs 14th December from 12:00

Turkey and cranberry rolls followed by Christmas pudding or trifle. Donations from £3 (children under 11, £2). All money raised to go to Doctors Without Borders ( see pg 10)

## **Broughton Choral Society Christmas Concert**

**Broughton Village Hall** Saturday 16th December 7:30pm

A beautiful programme of seasonal choral music, including much-loved favourites and one or two surprises, Tickets £15, to include mulled wine and mince pies. from Broughton Village Store or email secretary@broughtonchoralsociety.co.uk

## **Guild Christmas Party**

**Broughton Village Hall.** Wed 20st December 2:30pm. Come join us for carol singing and Christmas themed entertainment. Mince pies, home baking and drinks to keep everyone going.

## **Christmas Eve Candlelit Service of Carols and Readings**

**Tweedsmuir Church** Sunday 24th December 6:30pm

The Christmas story read by the young people of Tweedsmuir, A mix of traditional and modern carols, all whilst bathed in candlelight. Don't forget your torch to guide you from the car park to the church.

## **Christmas Morning Family Service**

**Skirling Church** Monday 25th December 11am

With coffee and mince pies before the service and carols aplenty to sing, come and celebrate the happy morn, the birth of the Christ child with your church family. Please note that there will be the usual services in each of the churches on Christmas eve at the usual times.



## Intergenerational Skills Share

The Intergenerational Skills Share group aims to provide a place for people to share skills, to socialise and to eat together on a weekly basis. Everyone is welcome and at present, those attending come from Peebles, Innerleithen, Galashiels and the surrounding area. The group has been running since April 2023. Activities we have taken part in include, Boccia (a type of indoor bowls), making fruit kebabs, Beetle Drive, a talk given by a representative from Guide Dogs for the Blind, crafts and a session giving information to help you stay safe online. The group are currently making salt dough decorations to decorate a Christmas Tree for the Peebles Old Christmas Tree Festival.



A light lunch – soup and sandwiches - is provided. Tea and coffee are also served. Participants are invited to give a donation of £2.00 per person for lunch. This will help the project to become self-sustaining.


The group meets every Friday from 12pm until 2 pm in the MacFarlane Hall, Peebles.

The Skills Share project is being developed and funded by Stobo and Drumelzier Parish, in partnership with Scottish Borders Council Social Work Department.

If you, or someone you know, is interested in coming along or if you wish to know more about the group, please contact Jane Gillham (details below).

Volunteer helpers are also welcome. Volunteers may be involved in a variety of activities including helping with setting out, clearing up, playing games, supporting those taking part or sharing skills. Volunteers are welcome on a regular or occasional basis.

If you are interested in becoming involved or just want to know more about the project, please contact Jane Gillham email [jane\\_gillham@hotmail.com](mailto:jane_gillham@hotmail.com) or 07933 148285.



### SKIRLING'S ADVENT WINDOWS

*MAKING CHRISTMAS A LITTLE MAGICAL*

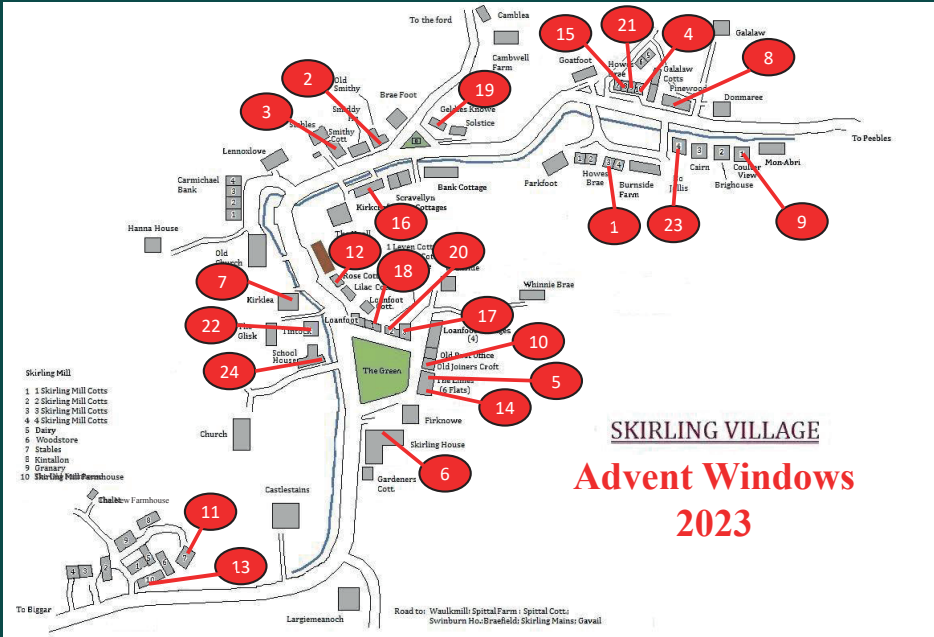
For Advent 2023 24 volunteers will again be "opening" windows day by day for the enjoyment of passers by.

See the map to follow our Advent trail

Every day from the 1<sup>st</sup> of December to 24<sup>th</sup> December a new window will "open" in Skirling. By Christmas Eve 24 windows will be shining out into the darkness.

The windows will be lit from 3:00 pm till at least 8:00 pm and will remain "open" until the 27<sup>th</sup> December

We hope you will enjoy our efforts to again bring a little magic to the Christmas Season



**SKIRLING VILLAGE**

**Advent Windows**

**2023**



## Ten Years of the John Buchan Story in Peebles

This year, the **John Buchan Story Museum** in Peebles celebrates its tenth year. As you may remember the John Buchan Centre was, for about 30 years, based in the former Free Kirk in Broughton but moved to Peebles in 2012 ready for fully opening in April 2013. The move was a challenge – in Broughton we had lots of space whereas in Peebles only about one-third of that space, yet our clever designers were able to display the same artefacts (if not more!).



The purpose of the museum is to explore John Buchan's life and legacy, showing the variety and scale of his personal experience and literary output, beyond *The Thirty-Nine Steps*. Of course, his final role as Governor General of Canada, and the popularity of film adaptations of his novel *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, also helped to give him an international reputation which continues to this day. As a novelist, historian, journalist, politician, soldier and public servant his influence can be seen in numerous areas of the first half of the twentieth century.

Our museum also portrays his family's broader associations with the Borders and illustrates some of their achievements. His holidays were spent with family in Broughton and Peebles, so Buchan developed a passion for the Borders countryside and its people.



At the museum, we aim to cater for all ages: traditional displays intermingled with iPads that show video clips of John Buchan in Canada as well as trailers for the various film productions of *The Thirty-nine Steps*. If the visitors have time, they can relax and enjoy watching one (or more!) of the videos on the "big screen" produced by family members and members of

the committee. These videos can also be seen on YouTube by searching for **johnbuchanstory**,

Come along and discover more about this extraordinary man and his sister, Anna Buchan – a famous authoress in her own right who wrote under the pseudonym O. Douglas. The museum is open from the 1st April until the end of October, Monday to Saturday from 10.00am to 1.00pm. Admission is free and donations are welcome!

Peter Worthington

## Tweedsmuir Kirk News

Rev Pamela Strachan baptised Lily Hoy on 23rd September using water collected from The River Tweed poured from the 18th century Drumelzier pewter laver into the family silver bowl.

Rev Dr Tony Foley led the celebration of Anne Patricia's life on 30th September with a eulogy gathered from comments from the large community of friends she had made in her 45 years in Tweedsmuir. The comments are reproduced on pg 4.

Rev Pamela Strachan was back in Tweedsmuir on Friday 7th October when Kirsten Orr married Lewis Harrold. The couple had visited Tweedsmuir Kirk on a foggy day a few years ago and had made contact with Pamela who was our then interim minister. The Kirk was beautifully decorated with white flowers and peony scented candles burning on the window sills and lovely memories created.

If you like singing, quiet meditation, reflecting on life and a cup of coffee with a Tunnocks caramel wafer – you will be made most welcome at our services – doors open at 9am for a 9.30am start. We don't just talk about God – Football, Monty Python and Taylor Swift were recent conversations..... The Kirk doors are open daily for visitors – why not pop in pick up a hymn book and read some of the words in the hymn choices on the wall – or google and listen.....

### Coming up in Tweedsmuir this December

**Friday 1st December – Christmas Crafting**  
Cards & gift tags. £5 incl. materials, drink & a minced pie. 7:30pm. Tweedsmuir Village Hall.

**Saturday 9th December – Sherry & Chocolate**  
tasting (over 18's only) Tickets £7:50 – in advance from enquiries@tweedsmuir.scot 7:30pm. Wee Crook.

**Wednesday 20th December: Seasonal Singing**  
7:00pm at Crossroads. 8:00pm at Wee Crook.



## Memories

As I write this article my Facebook feed is bringing me daily memories of the visit I made to Israel/Palestine in November 2019. Our church group could not avoid the tensions in the Holy Land. Our trip was called a study pilgrimage as we visited the Holy Sites in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Galilee but we also met with people who were working for peace and reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians. How much more difficult must their work have become.



We met with several groups that the Church of Scotland partners; Arab Christian groups helping ex-prisoners, marketing Arab products, helping Arab women find independence through crafts, running a mixed vocational school for Jewish, Muslim and Christian youngsters. They all talked about the difficulty of keeping the legacy of Arab Israelis alive as they are now just 20% of the population, Christian Arabs now only 5%. One insisted his family was the 4th family to be converted at Pentecost. Arabic is no longer an official language, too many emigrate, and they fear being erased.

We visited an Israeli settlement in the West Bank. It was cheek by jowl with 2 large Arab towns and had tight security. Our host was a man from Glasgow, he and his Israeli wife, were relatively open to contact with Arabs but most of their neighbours wanted a purely Jewish state. An attempt to bring schoolchildren from both sides together was halted by opposition from Israeli and Arab authorities. Our hosts were learning Arabic, but in secret for fear of reprisals. And now we hear that the very right-wing head of Israeli security is passing out automatic weapons to settler communities!

The Tent of Nations farm in the West Bank has been in the same Arab Christian family's ownership since 1916, verified by papers from Turks, British and Jordanians. They have been in the Israeli courts for 27 years battling to have their ownership confirmed. Their access road has been blocked...we had to climb over rubble then walk for over a mile to visit,



their water and electricity has been cut off and they are not allowed to build. Their olive trees have been destroyed more than once and they have been attacked by settlers and by young Muslim Arabs. Their international profile gives some protection and the Nassar family want to stay to break the cycle of

violence, to act for peace not to react. The latest news in mid-October was that they are safe but finding life ever more difficult as travel in the West Bank for Palestinians is very restricted.

A visit to a Bedouin village between Jericho and Jerusalem was equally disturbing, again we had to make our way there on foot. A highway which they cannot use, is being built close to them cutting off access to grazing land and markets. These Bedouin were from the Negev in the South, forced to flee as they refused to fight the British in 1948, they lost men and flocks, they were forced to move again in 1981 when their tents were burned. The settlements are moving closer taking water for their gardens and even for a water park in the desert. The Bedouin fear that they face cultural extinction as the possibility of a two state solution fades.

We did not visit Gaza as our time was short, but we did visit Jerusalem's Shu'fat Refugee camp which is similar, not a tented camp, but like a very overcrowded city, houses even built over roadways, children always around as families have to take turns to use the limited bedspace available. Walled in and overlooked by guard towers, with access through fenced off corridors, turnstiles, and security checks there are frequent clashes with Israeli soldiers. Any movement in or out is currently tightly restricted.



Our experiences of 4 years ago, the awe of walking where Jesus had walked, the grimness of the Holocaust Centre, the shock of experiencing a sonic bomb thrown at us by Israeli soldiers at the entrance to Aida Camp, the sadness of Arab youngsters in Hebron throwing stones at our bus has all been brought back by the horror of the daily news headlines.

The savagery of the attack on Israel cannot be excused. The terrible toll on civilian life in Gaza is also inexcusable. The complexity of the situation makes it hard to understand, impossible even. The two sides have totally different historical narratives, both sides are victims and perpetrators. I find this prayer from Christian Aid helpful.

Pray not for Arab or Jew,  
For Palestinian or Israeli,  
But pray rather for ourselves,  
That we might not divide them in our prayers  
But keep both together in our hearts.

*Isobel Hunter November 23*



## **Santa Claus, aka St Nicholas, took some time out from his busy schedule to give an interview for Kirk Matters**

### **Can I be cheeky and ask how old you are?**

Well I was born 1,743 years ago in AD 280 in Turkey.

### **How did you get into the present business.**

I've always been known for my generosity and kindness and there were lots of legends attributed to me for helping the poor and unhappy. I first got involved in the present giving in the 1700s when the Dutch linked my feast day (6th December) with the practice of giving presents. That suited me just fine. In 1823 Clement Clark Moore wrote a poem about me called "A Visit from St. Nicholas" and he called me a "right jolly old elf" which wasn't quite right but my elves found it very amusing.

### **Why the red suit?**

I used to wear a tan coloured suit but Mrs Claus thought I should try something jollier and when my portrait was painted in a red outfit for the Coca-Cola advert I was sure it was the right decision.

### **Does Mrs Claus get upset at your long working hours?**

I only really work for one month a year. I have lots of helpers making the toys, and by now they're very good at it. I also have lots of friends who stand in for me at lots of shops around the world. Come January we have a well earned rest in the Tropics where nobody recognises me.

### **What's the best way to get my letter to you?**

It used to be that you could write to the North Pole, but these days I'm very organised and have my own address and a post code in each country. In Britain it is

Santa/Father Christmas  
Santa's Grotto  
Reindeerland  
XM4 5HQ

### **The Naughty List, is real and can you appeal?**

Yes, it's real, but it's not all about being Naughty or Nice because most of us can be both on the same day. As long as you're sorry, then you'll end up on the Nice List

### **Just how do you get round the world in one night.**

If you've seen the film about me when I visited New York, then you'll know that if you stretch every second to last an hour and every day to last a year

then there's plenty of time.

### **Cookies or mince pies? Which do you prefer to have left out by the tree?**

I love mince pies and cookies but Mrs Claus thinks I should be eating more of the carrots instead. Rudolf doesn't agree.

### **How do you train the reindeer to fly?**

Well they only fly on Christmas Eve anyway. The elves are in charge of the training but I provide the aviation dust. Without both we wouldn't get anywhere.

### **Why do some people have difficulty believing in you?**

As people get older, there are more opportunities to get disappointed. That can make it harder to believe in something that's main purpose is to bring joy to the world. Christmas can be a time when we get a glimpse of these feelings, maybe start to believe again and work together for a better world.

*Happy Christmas to you all and may all your hopes and dreams come true.*



Darcy Short P7



Finn Butlin P2



Rosie Milne P2



Sophie Brown P2

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## Pastoral Update

### Marriage

We congratulate the happy couple as they start a new life together

In Tweedsmuir Church  
7th October 2023

Kirsten Orr and Lewis Harper of Glenfarg, Perthshire  
Married by Rev Pamela Strachan in front of family and friends

### Baptisms

We are delighted to welcome into the Church family of Upper Tweeddale

In Tweedsmuir Church  
23rd September 2023

Lily Penelope Hoy  
Daughter of Lucy and Ed Hoy, Patervan,  
Tweedsmuir and sister of Digby.



Our sympathy to the family of Brian Gibson 'the Icecream van man' from Innerleithen on his sudden death. His friendly personality will be missed and his helpfulness especially during the pandemic."

## PARISH OF UPPER TWEEDDALE

### Minister

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### Session Clerk

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Mrs Isobel Hunter

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Sunday 9am – 2pm  
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<http://broughtonvillagestore.co.uk/>



## BROUGHTON SHOP NEWS

A reminder that Broughton Village Store's Welfare Fund is still active, and exists to help those in the community who are struggling with grocery bills. With a tough winter ahead, if you could do with a helping hand please contact our manager Jen in confidence, either in person or by email [manager@broughtonvillagestore.co.uk](mailto:manager@broughtonvillagestore.co.uk) . There are no forms or means tests: those who ask will be given a pre-loaded store account card which can be used with complete discretion.