

# **GOOD NEWS!**



**The magazine of**  
**ALE & TEVIOT**  
**UNITED CHURCH**  
**Christmas 2014**



*Glory to God  
in the highest*



As I sit at my desk, shortly after 9 on a Monday morning, accompanied by my third pint-sized mug of coffee of the day, to write this message, I can see out of my office window – er, not very much! The wonderfully warm sunny summer and gloriously mild early autumn have finally yielded, producing a classic November day, damp and misty, visibility barely stretching to the end of The Glebe.

However, though my eyes – yes, even my *Specsavers*-assisted referee eyes! – cannot presently see the field beyond our street, I know it's still there. The encircling gloom may, for the moment, affect my *perception*, but it does not change the *reality*. That's a distinction that will, I believe, help us to get things into proper perspective.

Our *perception*, fed by the *bad news* poured out by the media, is that we might be better not to bother getting out of bed in the morning ... haul up the drawbridge and hope that Ebola, Islamic State etc won't notice we even exist and won't bother coming after us.

The *reality*, fed by the *Good News* of God's Word, is that, as a follower of Jesus, you are a child of God, an heir of the Kingdom of God, called and empowered to be a *victor*, not a *victim*. And don't let anyone talk you out of your inheritance, an inheritance Jesus came to give you!

The *perception* in the *world* may be that Ebola, or terrorist attacks, will decimate the human race. No, thanks! The *reality* in the *Word* is that :

*God will keep you safe from all hidden dangers and from all deadly diseases. He will cover you with his wings ; you will be safe in his care. His faithfulness will protect and defend you. You need not fear any dangers at night or sudden attacks during the day, or the plagues that strike in the dark or the evils that kill in daylight. [Psalm 91].*

The *perception* in the *world* may be that we're nothing but cogs in a big corporate wheel, numbers in a multi-national computer. No way, Jose! The *reality* in the *Word* is that *God loved YOU so much that He sent His only Son, Jesus, so that everyone – including YOU – who believes in him may not die but have eternal life ... that YOU might have and enjoy life, in abundance, to the full, till it overflows [John 3.16, 10.10].*

Forget all these silly caricatures of God as a grumpy old man with a long white beard sitting up beyond the clouds, watching over you with a "sin camera" [a bit like those nasty yellow things beside the A68, only more vigilant!] ready to catch you and punish you next time you say a naughty word, think a naughty thought, or park on a double-yellow line.

The *reality* is that God is the perfect Dad who is passionate about His kids, wants nothing but the best for us, and will settle for nothing but the best for us. It is God's will that **YOU**, as a Christ-follower, *prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers. [3 John 2].*

As we approach Christmas, we get ready to celebrate the moment when Dad's love came into perfect focus – the day when He became like us, a baby born into the rough-and-tumble of everyday human life. There was a *reason* for Jesus coming into the world as He did, and it's not just so we could decorate trees, have parties, send cards, have a visit from Santa, and eat as if food was going out of fashion. Not that there's anything wrong with any of that, believe me, I'm up for it all!!

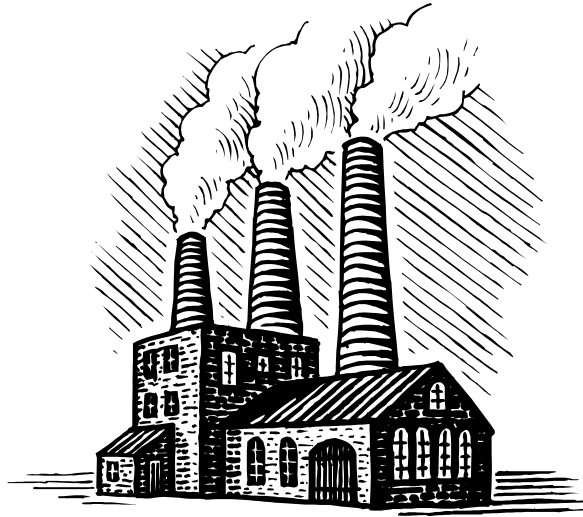
But here's the deal. The birth of Jesus was Dad's vote of confidence in His kids. It was Dad saying : *Look, I know you've got your problems, but I still love you, I am with you always, I will never let you go. Ever! You want to know what I'm really like? Just look at my Son, Jesus. See how Jesus treats people. See how Jesus forgives the unforgivable, heals the incurable, comforts the inconsolable, loves the unlovable.*

*And be sure of this, my precious, precious, child. Whatever Jesus did just because He loved those people long ago and far away, He will do for YOU right here and now, just because He loves YOU too. Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever. Simply believe, and receive.*

Have a truly happy, healthy, Christmas and a prosperous 2015.

Frank & Lexy

# *The Old Mill Kitchen*



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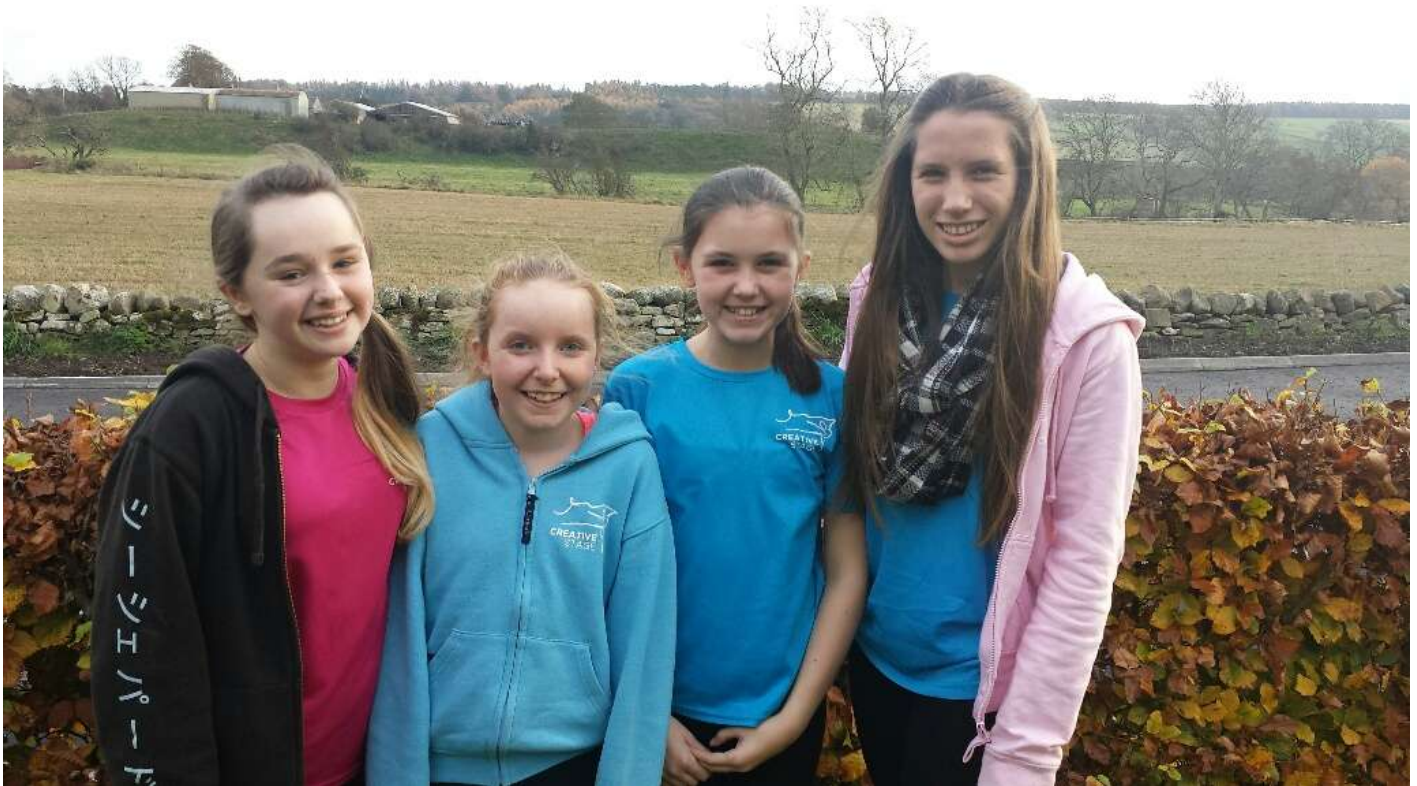
## West End Debut!

Four local girls have recently returned home after making their West End debut at Her Majesty's Theatre in London, home of the world famous "*Phantom of the Opera*"!

Claire Mitchell, Ellie George, Emily Balderston and Erin Russell, all members of Creative Stage's Scholar Class, took part in the Children's Variety Performance along with theatre schools from all over the UK.

The girls performed two numbers, *The Rhythm of Life* from the musical "*Sweet Charity*" and a medley of *When I Grow Up* and *Revolting Children* from "*Matilda*". Their hard work and commitment definitely paid off, performing with so much energy, expression and talent.

While in London the girls also enjoyed plenty of sightseeing and shopping, and a trip to the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane to see "*Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*". As well as having an amazing time, the experience the girls gained from their appearance on a West End stage will be invaluable to them all.



*Left to right : Ellie, Erin, Emily, Claire.*

*Article and photograph courtesy of Claire Balderston*



## A Thai Diary

*Chris Tracey from Lilliesleaf very kindly sent back regular reports from her outing with Tear Fund to Thailand. This brings it to a conclusion.*



*Team Members: clockwise : Amy, Cheryl, Sarah, Chris, Matt*

12 February : The formal part of my time here is now drawing to a close. We spent the weekend up near the Burmese border at Mae Sae. We crossed into Burma on Sunday and visited another dormitory this time for the Aika children from the hills to be able to go to school.

It was a similar set up to the one we had visited in Nan province but even more basic. The wash area was a well with a screen around it. We were not allowed to play with, or teach, the children. It would be a risk for the dormitory if the authorities thought foreigners were doing work with them. It was a bit of a shock for us to realise that.

The children were all very keen to have their photo taken with us and we began to feel a bit like a show at Blackpool promenade!

Then they all stood in a long line so we could shake 60 hands! It was very special to be able to greet each one of them just for a moment. Some gave us a shy smile, some were too shy to look at us, whilst others were able to give us a response.

We crossed back and later went to a Burmese church and enjoyed the evening service although the amplification was so loud I had to move to the back of the church - along with Amy who is 19! They did not know we were coming but manage to find a couple of songs that they had the English words for too so we were able to sing together - most in Burmese and us in English - that is very special.

We returned the following morning to teach English at the primary school. The children are all Burmese and their parents are working in Mae Sae. The school is part of the church set up but teaches the Burmese curriculum as many of the children will return to Burma for their secondary education.

A bit of sightseeing at the Golden triangle en route home. This is the area where Thailand - Burma - Laos meet and to be honest a bit of a tourist trap. Its name derives from the opium trade in the past not some Thai tourist authority promotion! The opium hall explained the trade.

We took a long boat on the Mekong river and crossed over to Laos. An experience, and not one I wish to repeat. The tribal village garden was a depressing place - a market to sell to the tourists, with "snake in a bottle of whisky" one of the attractions.

Behind, an area of trees with red flowers which women and children were picking up to sell for a Thai dish. The "idyllic" scene was somewhat marred by the amount of litter and some vague attempts at attractions which make Blackpool look very upmarket. Worse of all there was a real air of oppression and depression.

Somewhere after this point the computer decided to shut down - at least I have not lost everything. Try again - different computer - this one has a bad flicker so see how I cope with it. Our time here has now finished and we did a final debrief yesterday - and the evaluation form, or "happy sheet" as it is sometimes known.

The highlights among the group ranged from Thai food to finding a pizza restaurant, riding an elephant to staying on the farm, meeting some amazing people to working with the children. Today we took the other girls to the airport and said goodbye. Matt was left in a Scandinavian style bakery looking very happy at the prospect of some Danish pastry and coffee while waiting for his friend to arrive by bus.

I spent the morning at a park dedicated to the Lanna culture and teak - so I was in my element. I am now back at the MMF office where I am staying tonight and then I am going on a 3 day trek - something MMF organise - to the "jungle" and hill villages. I return to Chaing Rai on Saturday night and take the bus to Chiang Mai on Sunday morning.

I will stay in Chiang Mai (Riverside House) until Tuesday evening when I take the overnight train to Bangkok. I will have the day in Bangkok before heading for the airport in the evening to catch the flight home. It has been a good time and we have been looked after so well. I am looking forward to a bit of sightseeing - Chiang Mai is supposed to be a beautiful city - it is certainly busy and took a bit to find a guest house!

It will not be the same as being able to meet people and see how ordinary people live in Thailand which has been the highlight for me. All too soon now I'll be back in Scotland and searching for the thermals!!

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*Contractors for Ale & Teviot United Church*

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**Have you looked at our church website lately?**

**Keep in touch with what's going on :**

**[www.aleandteviot.org.uk](http://www.aleandteviot.org.uk)**

**AND ... you can follow us on Twitter : @AleTeviotChurch**



## Dedication of Plaque to Major John Sprot MBE TD

On 10 August 2014, a memorial plaque in Lilliesleaf Kirk was dedicated to the memory of Jock Sprot. It is a rare event for a man to reach his 100<sup>th</sup> year, but on the last full day of his life, Jock Sprot reached this milestone. Born in the old Riddell House on 26 May 1911, the year before the first primitive electricity generator arrived there, Jock was educated at Stowe College, Buckinghamshire, and St Aidan's College, Kent, before joining the British Linen Bank in Edinburgh, and thereafter the International Paint & Compositions Company in London.

Joining the Territorial Army in 1937 meant an early call-up for war, successively as lieutenant at Drem Airfield, at St Boswells as an intelligence officer, and as captain at Galashiels, in charge of Italian prisoners-of-war. A few days before Christmas 1943 came the shocking news that the family home, Riddell, was on fire, and sadly burnt to a shell.



Jock was sent with the special forces to India, by Sunderland flying boat, via Egypt, arriving in Delhi just in time for the Viceroy's Garden Party, the overwhelming opulence and free-flowing champagne taking away for a time the grimmer thoughts of war. After taking ill in Calcutta, Jock was sent to more temperate climes to recover, via the Darjeeling Mountain Railway.

He later visited Dr Graham's Home at Kalimpong, the famous doctor being the brother-in-law of the then Selkirk GP. Jock returned to the UK in June 1945, via Basra and Rabat, Morocco, finally touching down on British soil at Bournemouth, thence by train via London to St Boswells, 4 days to the hour after leaving Delhi!

Following his father's death, Jock set about restoring the war-damaged fortunes of Riddell Estate. An adept and visionary administrator, Jock began restocking the farms, and changing over from horse machinery to mechanical, though his main innovation was woodland development.

He also took his community responsibilities seriously, taking charge of the local army cadets and serving on Roxburgh County Council with a particular interest in education. He was elected to the Royal Company of Archers and served Lilliesleaf Kirk as an elder and as Session Clerk.

At various times, Jock chaired the National Farmers Union Selkirkshire branch and the Co-operative Forestry Society & Scottish Woodland Owners' Association. He was also elected vice-chairman of the Electricity Consultative Council for the South of Scotland, for which he was awarded the MBE.

One of Jock's great passions was local and family history. On moving to Clerklands in 1987 he started to put together the history of Riddell from when the Sprots purchased the Estate in 1823, archiving many of the Estate historical records. As a result, we now have detailed and informative documentation of country estate life through the ages, and if that were not enough, we also have Jock's autobiography, composed whilst blind and published in 2009 on his 98<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Jock Sprot was a true old-fashioned gentleman, one of a dying breed, always charming, always courteous, with a gift for making everyone feel valued. The handsome plaque in the transept at Lilliesleaf Kirk is a worthy memorial, for which we are grateful to Jock and his family.



## **A message from Canada**

*We recently had the pleasant surprise of an e-mail from John Maxwell, and there follow a few of John's personal recollections of auld Ancrum.*

Having just discovered your Website, I felt that I had to get in touch after seeing the picture of the church. I was born in Ancrum and attended the village church as a boy. My father for some years rang the bell on Sunday mornings. At that time there was ivy growing on the wall, and the rope / chain was hidden in the ivy. I should explain that I am now in my 92<sup>nd</sup> year, and my home is in British Columbia, Canada.

I left Ancrum to live in Glasgow when I was 12 years old. One of my jobs as a boy, was to go to the Copland farm to pick up the milk and deliver it to the Manse, up and across the road from the Church. I did this every morning before school, until we moved to Glasgow in 1936.

I have read up on the history of the Manse, and the well-known Covenanter John Livingstone. I have seen the inscription on the lintel of the garden door. I take pleasure in telling Americans I meet, that a boy born in the manse in Ancrum, was the Father of one of the men who helped Thomas Jefferson draft the Declaration of Independence. There were five signatures on the Draft and one of them is Livingstone.

I remember Lizzie Oliver singing in the choir way back in the thirties, before I left the village. The last time I saw and spoke to her was in 1977 when I was on a visit with my wife and daughter. I took a walk round to the school with my daughter who was then in her late teens, and Lizzie was there. I remember she recognised me as one of the Maxwell Laddies. When she told me her name I said I remembered her singing in the Choir, and her response was that she still did!

If I remember correctly, she lived next door to the house where I was born, which now has the name *Allerton* and is at the top of the green. We moved when I was about 6 to the *Long Cottage*, two houses past the Cross Keys. We were there until we left for Glasgow in 1936.

I had two brothers, David and Purves. My dad, Archie, was a postman. He was born in Ancrum and was well-known in the area. My Grannie and Aunt Barbara lived across the road with my cousin Angus. Grannie had a little shop in the house next to the Village Hall, until they moved down to a new house in Sunnybrae in the early thirties.

One of their neighbours there was the Patersons. They only had one child, who was Betty Paterson. When on a visit to Ancrum some years ago, I spoke to Betty who had, after a career in nursing, returned to Ancrum and bought the house where she had lived as a child. I was informed quite recently that Betty had passed away in 2007.

My grandmother and Aunt Barbara are buried in the Cemetery. There is a headstone, and the grave is located just to the left of the pathway from the gate and walking towards the wall. I remember being at the funeral for Grannie a few days after D-day in 1944. Aunt Barbara died in 1963 a few months after I emigrated to Canada. Both my brothers passed away at the age of 70, David in Glasgow and Purves in Newcastle. My parents died in Glasgow.

When I was in Ancrum, Scott was a common name, and there were also quite a few Kennedys. Miss Mary Kennedy was the Headmistress at the school. I remember when I was leaving for Glasgow, Miss Kennedy told me she expected to see my name in *The Scotsman* one day. With that in mind, I have requested that my obituary be placed in *The Scotsman* when the time comes. My Family understand this.

All the Glebe and the Myerscroft areas were fields when I lived in Ancrum. They were places we went for a "Harvest Finishing" to catch a few rabbits, to take home and augment the food supply. What I remember of the Landene area was that it was all known as The Plantations, and belonged to Ancrum House or Monteviot Estate. That didn't stop us using it as a play area when necessary!

I actually have used Google Earth to have a look at Ancrum, but usually just the old part of the village. I have followed the road from the school along the bottom of the green, and imagined that I was running home to The Longhouse for my dinner at Noon from the school.

**ED'S NOTE :** *John continues : I doubt if anyone in Ancrum will remember my family now, but I'd certainly appreciate hearing from anyone interested. My address is : 305-1447 Best St, White Rock, B.C. V4B 4E5, Canada, and my e-mail address is : jedmax305@telus.net*

*A further selection of John's memories in our next GOOD NEWS.*

## **Ale & Teviot United Church – here to help you**

A **Devotional Diary** is produced monthly, available at the church door, with a prayer point for every day, accompanied by three suggested Bible readings. You can also download this on-line ... as you can with **Sunday sermons**. Go to the “news” page of our website and browse “sermons”. **CD recordings** of our morning services can be supplied on request. Please contact Frank or any member of the Kirk Session.

In all our churches, there is a **Prayer Box** near the door, and Prayer Cards are provided for prayer requests, anonymously if you prefer.

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**Midweek Meetings** : There are midweek evening meetings in the Manse almost every week from September to May. The **Prayer & Bible Study** is on alternate Mondays at 7.pm, as John Marshall leads us through Paul’s 2<sup>nd</sup> letter to the Corinthians. On alternate Tuesdays at 7.pm, the **Tuesday Girls**, led by Lexy, are studying *Spirit, Soul and Body* ... and to reinforce the theme of health and wholeness in every area of life, there is an [optional!] opportunity to *Weigh & Pray*!

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**Healing** : Lexy and Frank will gladly make ourselves available to offer healing ministry in Jesus’ Name – please e-mail or phone.

Warm and sincere thanks to so many of our readers, church members or otherwise, who continue to pray for the healing of people of our congregation and community who are unwell. As well as praying for “oor ain folk”, could you please bear in mind two friends of our church, Rev Tom McDonald, minister of Kelso North & Ednam, and Mrs Helen Longmuir, former Guild Presbyterial Council President. Thank you.

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**Transport Co-ordinators** : Transport Co-ordinators have now been appointed for each of the three places of worship, and so, if you need a lift to church, contact your local Co-ordinator, ideally giving a day or two’s notice if possible : Ancrum – Margaret Smith, 864378 ; Crailing – Joe Hannaford, 850779 ; Lilliesleaf – Mary Jones, 870306.

*Check the weekly Church News, the church Notice Boards, or the website **[www.alandteviot.org.uk](http://www.alandteviot.org.uk)** for more information.*

## *Our Historical Heritage*

*Roger Owen has been researching the Ancrum War Memorial*

The War Memorial on the village green was designed by Alexander Nisbet Paterson (1862-1947), a Glasgow architect who belonged to a family with a strong artistic tradition.

Paterson himself was an accomplished watercolour painter and from 1916 a member of the Royal Society of Watercolourists. He designed a number of war memorials, of which the one at Ancrum was the first. Designed in 1919, it was constructed in red sandstone the following year by a Hawick firm. The total cost, including architect's fees and the inscribed lead tablet, was approximately £300.

When deciding whose names should be included on a war memorial, each local community adopted different criteria. There were no definitive rules or regulations and no official body from which names could be obtained. Some war memorials only include those who fought and died, others also include those who fought and survived and yet others include civilians who died as well.

Ancrum's First World War memorial names only those who died fighting or sustained fatal injuries on the battlefield. Some memorials only include those living within a specific parish or stated area whilst others are more flexible. Ancrum's memorial appears to be in the latter category.

A committee appointed by the local community to be responsible for planning the construction of a war memorial was chaired by Bertram Chetwynd Talbot (1865-1936) of Monteviot. He was the convenor of Roxburgh County Council for many years and the second husband of the Marchioness of Lothian since 1903.

Early in October 1919, at a public meeting held in Ancrum's Parish Hall, he brought strong recommendations from the committee as to which of several proposed designs to implement, whom to entrust with the work and at what cost. All recommendations were endorsed unanimously. Talbot intimated that two amounts of £50 each had already been promised and it therefore remained for the parish to raise the remaining £200 required.



He warmly commended the scheme to the sympathy and generosity of the Ancrum people in memory of Ancrum lads who had so nobly gone forth to the Great War and sacrificed their lives (Southern Reporter, 9th October 1919, page 5).

At a meeting of the committee held immediately after the public meeting, it was resolved that an opportunity to subscribe be given to everyone in the parish by means of a house-to-house collection. Collectors were then appointed and an area allocated to each one.

At a further committee meeting in November, Rev William Gracie – Ancrum minister from 1907 until 1949 - was tasked with drawing up a list of the Ancrum men whose names should be inscribed on the war memorial. The list was to be submitted to a future meeting of the committee and be available for inspection by parishioners before being finalised.

The committee's secretary and treasurer, James Easson, who lived in Ancrum Schoolhouse, was also asked to write to natives and friends of Ancrum, now resident outside the parish who might be interested to support the project (Southern Reporter, 20th November 1919, page 5).

Four men born and brought up in Ancrum who lost their lives in action – Andrew Daniels, James Law, William Law and Charles Wilson – are not named on the memorial. Three of those named on the Ancrum War Memorial – Robert Jeffrey, Adam Weatherstone and James Young – are also similarly honoured on another memorial in the area – Hawick, St. Boswells and Jedburgh respectively.

This perhaps reflects the independence of individual memorial committees and lack of co-ordination between even those in close proximity. The facts behind the names of Ancrum men who lost their lives in the First World War can be baldly stated but the grief caused by their loss cannot be measured. Each was precious to their loved ones and friends. One mother lost two sons; another, within four months, lost two sons and her husband.

*[Brief biographies those named on the memorial and of the four men who were omitted can be found in The War Memorial on the Village Green at Ancrum by Roger J. Owen, printed privately, 2014, from which this excerpt is reproduced with permission from the author.]*

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## News Round-up

**Guild :** The Ancrum Church Guild would like to thank everyone who played any part in making our recent coffee evening, once again, a great success. The total raised was over £500 ; thanks again!

Already this session, the ladies have enjoyed a wide variety of talks, starting in September with Jennifer Smith, who gave us a fascinating account of her year out in Uganda. In October, Professor M. McLeod gave a very interesting talk on his numerous visits to many parts of Africa, and showed us some very interesting artefacts, which he has gathered together over the years. Our November meeting included a talk by Mrs. Sue Rutherford on her climb to the top of Kilimanjaro,

An additional “get-together and bring-a-friend” afternoon was held on 17 November to celebrate Guild Week. On Monday 1 December, at the usual time of 2.pm, it’s the annual Christmas Party, in the church. This is always a happy event, at which we welcome members of other Guilds throughout the area. Everyone welcome, ladies *and* gentlemen!

The Presbyterial Council Carol Service will be held in Kelso North Church on Sunday 14 December at 2.30.pm, and we trust that the new afternoon slot will help to attract further support. Into the New Year, a DVD of the 2014 National Guild Rally will be shown on Monday 12 January, Mrs Susie Elliot will speak on *Riding for the Disabled* on Monday 2 February, then it’s the AGM on Monday 2 March, all at 2.pm.

Be assured of a warm welcome, interesting speakers, good company, and of course a cuppa ... gentlemen welcome too! The Guild meets on the first Monday of the month in Ancrum Kirk Meeting Room at 2.pm.

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**Food Bank :** Local churches, led by the Salvation Army in Hawick, have responded to the ever-increasing challenge of families in poverty by setting up a network of Food Banks. At our all-age service at Ancrum on Sunday 14 December, you are invited to support this work by bringing donations of non-perishable foods to help those in need to enjoy a rather happier Christmas than might otherwise be possible.

## A Few Words from the Treasurer

Many thanks to all who supported the Harvest collections, which raised a very creditable sum of almost £600 for *Open Doors*, supporting our fellow Christians presently enduring persecution in Iraq.

I would also like to thank our members for your generosity week by week. Can I ask everyone who gives regularly to our Church, and pays Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax, but have not yet filled in a Gift Aid Declaration ... would you please consider doing so? It costs nothing (except perhaps a stamp and envelope) but boosts your giving by 25%.



Also, keep collecting the loose change that you would not miss and put it in the weekly envelopes that are available from Carmen at Ancrum, David at Crailing and John at Lilliesleaf. This counts towards the Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme when the giver is not a tax payer.

Thanks too for the Smarties tubes and coffee jars of coins. If possible, these should be handed in with the Sunday offerings, and – if you are a Gift-Aider – labelled with your full name. Your help, as ever, is most welcome, and makes it easier for me to help the church in its mission.

*Tony Rae*

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**After Church Coffee :** Many thanks to Joan Hodges, who pioneered the after-church refreshments at Ancrum, and to Heather Miller, who has now taken over the organisation. We are most grateful to everyone who currently helps with teas and if anyone else would like to go on the rota, please contact Heather [862124]. We are very pleased to report that we've been able to donate from the "after church tea & coffee" fund £200 to MSF's Ebola Crisis Appeal and £50 to the Friday Club.

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**Shoe Box Appeal :** Our Shoe Box collection this year resulted in the filling of 54 boxes, plus cash donations of £180 toward transport. Our grateful thanks to Catherine Rogerson and her team of willing helpers,

## Connor's Journey

On 13 September 2014, in his first rugby game of the season, a young man from Kelso, **Connor Hughes**, sustained an injury to his C5 and C6 vertebrae which damaged his spinal cord. This was a life changing event, leaving Connor – at the time of going to press – quadriplegic, with no sensation from his shoulders down.



Connor is a relative of Ian Dagg, a member of our Kirk Session, and a close friend of ALE Group graduate Jock Galbraith. Connor's family and friends are now actively fundraising to allow him to lead his life like he always has ; full of challenges, hard work, fun and adventure.

His objectives are :

- Obtain access to the best rehabilitation programme possible for his condition
- To enable him to have the equipment needed to be as independent and active as possible
- To raise awareness of the impact of spinal cord injuries

It is hoped to raise an initial £25,000 in order to help meet Connor's objectives. For more details see : <http://connorsjourney.com>

What can we do to help? First, stand firm on the healing purposes and promises of God, fulfilled in Jesus, for a 100% recovery. Second, give generously to help this young man in practical ways, now. Thank you.

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Many thanks to all who have kept Frank up-to-date with local residents admitted to **Borders General Hospital**. Because of infection control issues, it hasn't always been possible to make these visits. However, please do keep letting me know, as there is no mechanism in place now for ministers to find our admission details from the hospital.

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## Auntie Lavinia's Evil Cat

*From a sermon on Hebrews 9:15-28, preached on 14 September 2014*

They say : *where there's a will, there's a way*. I prefer another version : *where there's a will, there's a lot of relatives no-one's seen for years!*



There's nothing quite like that electric atmosphere in a room where a bunch of people who haven't even sent one another a Christmas card since Neil Armstrong set foot on the moon, who barely acknowledged each other at the funeral, all now shuffling in their seats in oppressive sullen silence impatiently waiting for the lawyer to slit open the envelope and read the magic words of the deceased's last will and testament.

My brief and undistinguished career in the legal profession was in company law, involved in setting up shelf companies with the longest and obscurest possible chain between the company name and the actual individual human beings taking the decisions for that company ... avoidance, not evasion, being the name of the game, naturally.

It was an experience not without its own fascinating moments. But I loved the tales told over Friday night pints of real ale by the guys in the executries section, of how such post-mortem gatherings could explode in horror and recrimination as the lawyer, with a straight face, delivered the verdict of dear old Auntie Lavinia who gave all the feuding families one final slap on the jaw by leaving her entire fortune to the cat.

Yes, that infernal flea-bitten three-legged borderline-psychotic moggy with the evil eyes, the unspeakably disgusting habits, the breath like a septic tank in the hottest dungeons of hell, and the unnerving habit of creeping up silently on Auntie Lavinia's very few house guests and swiping them across the face with claws unfurled. The cat that Stephen King wouldn't even dare to write a novel about!



Needless to say, custody battles for the wretched feline were the next dripping roast for the lawyers! I don't know if the writer of Hebrews had experienced similar moments of melodrama, but one thing's for sure, the reading of God's Will and Testament leaves no-one disappointed. There's always more than enough to satisfy anyone and everyone in our promised eternal inheritance, the legacy of grace and blessing that is ours following the death of Jesus Our Lord.

Hebrews 9 gives insight into the religious practices Jesus grew up with, week by week, as a boy in the synagogue at Nazareth, and how these ancient Jewish traditions would find fulfilment as His earthly ministry was brought to a traumatic end at the cross. From the very beginning, the seriousness of the problem of human rebellion and disobedience was reflected in the need for blood sacrifice to account for it.

Galatians 3.13-14 states : *Christ has rescued us from the curse pronounced by the law. When he was hung on the cross, he took upon himself the curse for our wrongdoing. For it is written in the Scriptures, "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." Through Christ Jesus, God has blessed the Gentiles with the same blessing he promised to Abraham, so that we who are believers might receive the promised Holy Spirit through faith.* But what **is** the same blessing God promised to Abraham? That we find in Genesis 12 and 13 where God promises :



*I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you. Abraham became very wealthy in livestock and in silver and gold.* God's attitude to wealth and prosperity, and what our attitude should be to it, is this – blessed to be a blessing.



Then, in Genesis 15, we find God signing and sealing that promise, in the Bible it's called a **covenant**, not with **ink** but with **blood**. Lots of blood. This isn't a primary school blood-brother thing about pricking your finger with the blade of a pair of scissors and your pal doing the same to do the BFF thing [You know BFF – Best Friends Forever? Oh do keep up!!]

We're talking about a bull, a goat, a ram, and a bunch of birds, all cut in half, and left to bleed out ... in the heat of the desert, you can imagine how pleasant a scenario that was ... what are you having for lunch today anyway? And Abraham being told, effectively, to walk through that pond of blood as a sign and a seal of God's favour to him.

Lots of blood. More than enough blood. And when 400 or so years later God gave the Law to Moses and the Hebrews as they traipsed through the desert for 40 years, as you will recall, a complete waste of time that they didn't need to have put themselves through, a similar system of chopping up livestock was put in place as a symbol of sacrifice.

This was to allow the people some way of saying sorry to God for acting like twits all week, and to have a visual picture of God saying to them : *children, my heart is always to forgive you, and set you free, and I look forward to the day when you'll let me.*



The key is v.22 : *the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.* The weekly rituals in the Old Testament involved butchering animals every week, and the animals had to be perfect specimens, the best of the breed, not the runt of the litter.

That was because the people weren't perfect, so the sacrifice had to be. And it was messy, and it was yucky, but it was a foreshadowing of the day when One perfect sacrifice would be made, more than enough blood to wipe out all sin, for all people, for all time.

We are New Testament people, and we live by the power of that One perfect sacrifice, Jesus, the One who [Hebrews 4.15] *was tempted in every way that we are, but did not sin.* That means that when Jesus went to the cross and died, He did so in your place and in my place, to set us free.

No longer are we under the curse of the Law – the Old Testament idea that when you behave well, things will go well for you, but when you slip up, expect the wheels to come spectacularly off.





Sadly, the church still hasn't cottoned on to what that freedom from the curse actually means. Still, far too many church people expect God to treat them based on their performance. Do something bad, and God will dish out punishment. Please watch my lips. That's **wrong**! Christ has redeemed you from the curse of the Law!

Now God does **not** look at your performance, your behaviour, what you have done, and treat you accordingly. If you have made Jesus the Lord of your life, then He has become the perfect sacrifice offered once to wipe out all your botch-ups, past, present and future. Now God looks at you according to what **Jesus** has done, not what **you** have done.

If you have made Jesus the Lord of your life, sin is no longer an issue between you and God! Some of you might struggle with that, thinking : *OK, I know Jesus paid for all my sins up to the point when I became a Christian, but the ones I've made since, when I should have known better, surely I have to account for those?* No, that is a lie of the devil. There is now NO condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus!



Think about it. If you believe Jesus only paid for your sins while you were still a bank-robbing, pot-smoking, hell-raising philanderer ; but as from the minute you were saved, you're on your own, how would that square with v.26 : *now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.*

We don't get saved by grace but then have to scuttle back under the Law, now to pay our own way, which we couldn't even if we wanted to! Andrew Wommack, a tough-talking Texan, puts it like this. *If that's how it worked, the only way you'd ever get to heaven is for me to kill you the minute I got you born again!*

A more popular misunderstanding is that, every time we slip up, we have to grovel to God in sackcloth and ashes to beg for forgiveness. Make sure we mention our boo-boo to God before He mentions it to us. No. vs.27-28 : *Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people ; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.*

When do you think Jesus forgave you for the mess you made 20 years ago? At Easter, on the cross! OK, when do you think Jesus forgave you for the mess you made last week? At Easter, on the cross! Now, when do you think Jesus will forgive you for the mess you'll make next week? Is He going to have to trot back down from Heaven and get nailed to a cross again to sort out next week's troubles?

No! That was dealt with at the cross as well! At the point when Jesus' blood was shed for you, everything you would ever do was all in the future, and that was when He forgave you, long long before you needed or asked for that forgiveness.

So, let's finish off on a down-to-earth practical note. How exactly do we deal with the stupidity and the selfishness that each of us will come up with this week, and we will! You know it, I know it, and most importantly, Jesus knows it ... and still loves us.

OK, the minute the penny drops that you've said or done something that's not in line with God's Word, firstly, stop doing it! You're busy gossiping about someone and the Lord goes – *ahem, that's my child whose reputation you're ripping to bits* – stop! That's Part 1.



Then get yourself off somewhere private, the loo, if necessary, but not to put on an Oscar-nominated tear-jerking rehearsal of what a miserable sinner you are! You're not! You're still God's kid, so thank Him for loving you, thank Him that the blood of Jesus has washed you clean, forgiven you and set you free, thank Him for pointing out your mistake, and thank Him for the blessing on and in your life that empowers you to do better.

Then, if it's possible to correct what you've done with someone else, do so. By all means, apologise to the person you've behaved like a jerk toward. But if for any reason that's not practical, then learn from it, get over it, move on, and grow in the grace that is God's gift to you through the one-off sacrifice of Jesus. And get on with your heavenly calling from Him, blessed to be a blessing. Is all that clear? Good! You're free, enjoy your freedom!



**Photography for every occasion**

**Chris Morrison**

**10 Muirhouselaw, Maxton,  
Melrose TD6 0RH**

**01835-823561**

**LILLIESLEAF GOLF COURSE**

**[2½ miles west of Lilliesleaf]**

Lilliesleaf Golf Course is a fun course for the less discerning golfer. Dress is informal, and dogs and children are welcome at all times.

The course is made up of 11 challenging holes, one par 5, seven par 4's, and three par 3's. In total the course measures 2563 yards.

Hazards include trees, water and bunkers. Occasionally additional hazards may appear from time to time.

Membership fee : £175 per year

Visitors : £10.00 per person per round ; £15 each per person per day

Visitors (evenings after 5pm) : £5.00 per person

Guests of members : £5 per person per round

Juniors (under 16 on 1st May): half the above prices



# A wee story for the children

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Down in the garage, as Hector the Inspector hung up the company Advent Calendar, the buses were getting excited! Soon there would be all the fun of the festive season : Christmas shoppers, school trips to the pantomime, families getting together to celebrate Jesus' birthday.



At least, almost all the buses were excited. Les Lodekka wasn't joining in the spirit of things *at all*. As Hector put on his usual CD of Christmas carols to play gently in the garage, Les revved his engine in irritation.

*Christmas? Bah humbug!* muttered Les, and every time the subject was mentioned he trundled off into the yard in a huff.

The other buses were a bit worried about Les. He'd arrived from The Big City just a few months before, and had always seemed so cheery. This grumpiness was SO unlike him! That afternoon, when all the other buses were out on the road, Big Alex was alone in the garage with Les.

*Tell me, Les,* Big Alex asked : *why do you hate Christmas so much?*

Les flashed his headlights angrily. *Don't go there, Alex. It still brings back bad memories for me, and it hurts to talk about them.*

*But Les,* Big Alex beamed, *you're among friends here. We're all on your side. We hate to see you so miserable at a time of year when we're all meant to be jolly and having fun.*

Les's headlights dipped sadly. *All right, Alex. I'll tell you. When I was a new bus in The Big City, many years ago, my first Christmas there came as quite a shock.*





Most days, I was on the route from the city centre to the Green Gables estate, a lovely place with nice big houses, tall trees, and kind-hearted people with well-mannered children doing Christmas shopping. Les stopped, deep in thought. His windscreen wipers flashed once, as if to wipe away a tear.

*I enjoyed that run. But then, on Christmas Eve, I was put on a different route, very different. Have you ever heard of the Greystone estate?*



Big Alex shuddered. He used to work in the Big City too. Yes, he'd heard of Greystone – a grey place, grey houses, grey people with grey faces, grey dogs, grey cats. Even the grass seemed to be grey.

Les continued : *I couldn't believe how poor and sad the people were in Greystone. It was so different from Green Gables, yet only a few miles away. The Greystone children looked so miserable – and they didn't go Christmas shopping. I don't think their mums and dads could afford to buy food, never mind presents.*



*Alex, it was awful, and I've never like Christmas since. Every year at this time, I think of those children. It breaks my heart.*



The two friends sat quietly and thoughtfully for a few minutes. Big Alex broke the silence. *I think we should do something to help, Les. Let's share this with the other buses and then tell Hector the Inspector.*

And so a plot was hatched to help the children of Greystone.

Sundays were a quiet day for the double-deckers, so on the Sunday before Christmas, Les and Big Alex headed off to the Big City. A few miles short of the city centre, they turned left. To Greystone!



It was just as Les and Big Alex remembered, a grey miserable place, grey curtains in the windows, grey upturned shopping trolleys in grey overgrown gardens, and at the grey bus shelter there stood a bunch of grey-faced children, shoulders hunched under grey jackets, as the rain trickled down from the grey sky making puddles on grey pavements.

The children of Greystone trooped on to the buses without a sound and without a smile. But suddenly – party time! Downstairs on the buses it was like a humungous café : loads of juice and crisps, sweets and cakes, puddings and goodies. Once the children had all the food they wanted, they went upstairs, which was all decorated and lit up, for a journey to the Great Big Christmas Fair in the city centre.



The Greystone children had never had a Christmas like it! All afternoon they had great fun at the fair – dodgems, roller-coaster, the Big Wheel, the lot. When evening came, tired but happy, they all piled on the bus for a song-song on the journey home.



But there was one more moment of magic to come. An extra passenger ... quite how he managed to be on both buses at once is one of those miracles that only Santa can explain, but he made sure that every boy and girl in the whole of Greystone went home with a bagful of Christmas presents!

It was late when Big Alex and Les got back to the garage, and all the other buses tooted their horns and flashed their lights to say *well done*. The buses had made Christmas dreams come true for the children of Greystone ... and Les was never grumpy at Christmas again!!



**Friday Club** : The Friday Club goes from strength to strength, with members of various ages, from P.1 to S.2! The Club took a stall at the Guild Coffee Evening on 24 October, selling home-made Christmas decorations and gifts, and raised well over £100 for *Compassion UK*, through whom we sponsor our pen-pal Kauany in Brazil.

The Club then hosted a “Light Party” on 31 October as an alternative to the traditional Hallowe’en ... and we were even visited by a group of “guisers”! Now we’re into rehearsals for our Nativity play, *A Star In The East*, which we’ll all have the opportunity to enjoy at the all-age service in Ancrum on Sunday 14 December.

Whilst it’s been wonderful to welcome along some new friends to the Friday Club, it also creates a challenge. We would be most grateful for offers of help from parents. Keeping a dozen or more children safely occupied for an hour on a Friday evening needs a few pairs of eyes, as you can imagine. If you could help, please contact Elaine or John, or Fiona Lackenby, so that we can get the necessary PVG check in place.

Finally, many thanks for the kind donation of financial help from the After-Church Refreshments Fund ... much appreciated!

\*\*\*

## **The Adventures of Big Alex & Friends : by CA Graham**

*Children’s picture book by ... ahem, a local author, who may just have something to do with producing this magazine!*



*Order your personally autographed copy for a donation to the Kirk ... £5 or more for de luxe bound version, or any amount for a revised version with 3 new stories. Contact Frank if you’re interested.*

## Ancrum Primary School

Sheena Chapple and her *Pets as Therapy* dog Jon visited the school in October to teach the children about **Road Safety**. Our next **Rag Bag** collection is on Friday 28 November. Thanks to all who contribute toward this. The money raised helps to boost school funds and allows us to buy things for the children which we could otherwise not afford.

There is a **Christmas Fayre** in school on the afternoon on Wednesday 10 December, and it's hoped that this will help to fund a trip to Edinburgh in the near future. The children are also going to see 'Nativity 3' at The Pavilion Cinema in Galashiels on Tuesday 16 December as an end of term treat.

We also look forward to the Parent Council **Coffee Evening** taking place after the children's **Christmas Concert 'Prickly Hay'** which will be performed in Ancrum Church on Wednesday 17 December at 6.30pm. It's the **Christmas Lunch** on Thursday 18 December, followed by the **end-of-term service** in the church at 2pm.

## Lilliesleaf Primary School

As part of our commemoration of **World War 1**, there was a special assembly on Tuesday 11 November in the village hall, attended by a good number of parents, friends and family, when the children gave a fascinating presentation on the War and the Village War Memorial.

**Road Safety** : A number of Road Safety issues are presently being addressed, involving the Safer Communities Team of Scottish Borders Council. In the meantime we respectfully ask that parents park safely for the benefit of pupils walking, cycling and getting on and off buses. In particular, could we ask that there be no parking at drop off and pick up times directly opposite school gates. Many thanks!

**Christmas Events** : Our **concert** will be on Tuesday 9 December, with morning and evening performances in the Village Hall. This year, our event will include Christmas singing, and the drumming work our P3-7 pupils have been involved in. The **Christmas Fair** is on Saturday 6 December, from 2.-4pm, and the end-of-term service on the morning of the last day of term, Friday 19 December, in church.

# Parish Registers

1 August – 15 November 2014

## Baptism and Admission by Profession of Faith

31 August, *at Ancrum* Miss Mhairi Jane Thomson

21 September, *at Ancrum* Mr Keith Douglas Wilson

## Admission by Profession of Faith

31 August, *at Ancrum* Miss Rosie Bancroft  
Mr Callum Mitchell  
Miss Claire Mitchell  
Miss Abigail Stephenson

## Baptisms

10 August, *at Ancrum* Miss Hannah Jennifer Munro,  
Mr Bryce Caleb Munro,  
Miss Emma Jade Munro,

7 September, *at Ancrum* Master Aaron Gordon Brian Learmonth,  
Master Aidan Gary Learmonth,

## Weddings

19 September,  
*at Lilliesleaf* Mr Gavin Lindsay  
& Miss Vanessa Morgan

27 September  
*at Ancrum* Mr Keith Chapman  
& Miss Beth Scott

25 October  
*at Hawick* Mr Greg Maxwell  
& Miss Christie Irvine

## Ordination of Elder

10 August, *at Lilliesleaf* Mr David Walmsley



## Funerals

4 August, <i>at Crailing</i>	Mrs Anne Turnbull
7 August, <i>at Lilliesleaf</i>	Mr George Munro
7 August, <i>at Crematorium</i>	Mrs Marjorie Martin
11 August, <i>at Jedburgh</i>	Mrs Lorna Armstrong
19 August, <i>at Jedburgh</i>	Mr William Ferguson
22 August, <i>at Denholm</i>	Mr Bob Black
30 August, <i>at Jedburgh</i>	Mr Gavin Hall
8 September, <i>at Ancrum</i>	Mr Andy Anderson
23 September, <i>at Crailing</i>	Miss Jemima Grieve
13 October, <i>at Jedburgh</i>	Mr Ronald Stewart

## Roxburghshire Landward Benevolent Trust & Miss Frances Sprot Trust

Through local Trust Funds, it may be possible to offer some modest help toward winter heating bills – more than ever, a major item in the household budget, especially for those living on low or fixed incomes. If you would like to apply for help, or to recommend someone for help, contact Frank Campbell *in writing* – either by e-mail or by “snail-mail”.

## Armistice Events

Grateful thanks to all involved in the recent Armistice commemorations. At Ancrum, Paul Wood laid the colours in church, Tony Rae conducted the War Memorial service, and Jamie Orr laid the wreath. At Lilliesleaf, Dave Macdonell conducted the service at the War Memorial, where Eoghan Morecroft laid the wreath, and Bill Anderson laid the wreath in church. Bruce McNicol led worship at Crailing Kirk and War Memorial, with Jeremy Moon laying the wreath. Many thanks, everyone.

# *Ale & Teviot United Church*

## *Special Events over Christmas*

***All dependent on weather!! If in doubt, check the Website : [www.aleandteviot.org.uk](http://www.aleandteviot.org.uk)***



### **Monday 1 December : Guild Christmas Party : Ancrum : 2.pm**

Come and enjoy a warm welcome, some entertainment, and a lovely afternoon tea. Bring a party piece if you have one!

### **Sunday 7 December : Morning Services**

Ancrum : 10.am ; Lilliesleaf : 11.30.am. NO SERVICE at Crailing.

### **Sunday 14 December : United Service : Ancrum : 10.am**

ALL-AGE SERVICE, featuring a Nativity by the Friday Club. Donations of non-perishable food items for the local churches' Food Bank would be very welcome. NO SERVICES at Crailing or Lilliesleaf that morning.

### **Sunday 14 December : Guild Carol Service**

Kelso North : 2.30.pm.

### **Sunday 14 December : Riddell Fiddles : Lilliesleaf : 6.30.pm**

A happy celebration for the holiday season, led by this locally based, and internationally renowned, group of musicians.

### **Wednesday 17 December : Ancrum School Concert : 6.30.pm**

In Ancrum Church, followed by mince pies in the Village Hall.

### **Thursday 18 December : Ancrum School End-of-term Service**

In church – all welcome : 2.pm.

### **Friday 19 December : Lilliesleaf School End-of-term Service**

In church – all welcome : in the morning, time to be confirmed

**Friday 19 December : Carol Service : Eckford : 6.30.pm**

Fun event in Eckford Village Hall, followed by coffee, mulled wine and mince pies. For more details, please contact Annette Fraser [850213].

**Sunday 21 December : Lessons & Carols : Lilliesleaf : 11.30.am**

Listen to the Christmas story, and sing along with well-loved carols, old and new. There will be NO SERVICES that day at Ancrum or Crailing.

**Christmas Eve : Family Service : Ancrum : 6.30.pm**

A happy celebration, shared with children from Ancrum Primary School ... in time to get them safely tucked up in bed before Santa comes!

**Christmas Eve : Carol Singing : Lilliesleaf : 6.30.pm**

Meeting at the Village Hall, singing around the village and collecting for the War Blinded ... then coffee and mince pies in The Plough!

**Christmas Eve : Carols round the Tree : Crailing : 9.pm**

For the first time, a new mid-evening service, suitable for all ages, as we eagerly anticipate the birth of the Saviour.

**Christmas Eve : Watchnight Service : Lilliesleaf : 11.30.pm**

Come and greet the new-born King as the Christmas bells ring out!

**Christmas Day : Family Service : Ancrum : 10.am**

A happy half-hour to give thanks for the Saviour's birth. Kids of all ages are welcome to bring along a new toy that Santa has brought.

***All offerings in church on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day will be "sown" into the Stroke Unit, Borders General Hospital***

**Sunday 28 December : Communion : Crailing : 10.30.am**

We end 2014 together around the Lord's table. All welcome, of all ages or denominations. NO SERVICES that day at Ancrum or Lilliesleaf.

**Sunday 4 January : United Service led by Elders : Ancrum, 10.am**



## ALE & TEVIOT UNITED CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

Scottish Charity No : SC 016457

Website : [www.aleandteviot.org.uk](http://www.aleandteviot.org.uk)

Twitter : @AleTeviotChurch

- Minister : Rev Frank Campbell  
22 The Glebe ; Ancrum ; Jedburgh ; TD8 6UX  
Voicemail : 01835-830318  
e-mail : [info@aleandteviot.org.uk](mailto:info@aleandteviot.org.uk)
- Session Clerk : Mr John Rogerson  
164 Halliburton Place, Galashiels, TD1 2JH  
Phone : 07813-367533  
e-mail : [B16ESS@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:B16ESS@yahoo.co.uk)
- Treasurer : Mr Tony Rae  
Wildcatcleuch, Lanton Road, Jedburgh TD8 6SD  
Phone : 01835-863372  
e-mail : [tonygrae@sky.com](mailto:tonygrae@sky.com)

### **TIMES OF SERVICES : January to March 2015**

- ANCRUM** Every Sunday at 10.am **EXCEPT** 29 March
- LILLIESLEAF** Every Sunday at 11.30.am **EXCEPT** 4 January  
29 March : Annual Meeting
- CRAILING** 11 & 25 Jan ; 8 & 22 Feb ; 8 & 22 Mar ; all 10.30.am  
NO Songs of Praise evenings during this period

*Any changes will be notified in the weekly Church News*

**A Very Merry Christmas and a  
Happy, Healthy, and Prosperous New Year!**