

Hobkirk and Southdean with Ruberslaw

Parish News



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The Parish Newsletter of the linked charges of Hobkirk and Southdean with Ruberslaw
Hobkirk & Southdean Parish Church of Scotland: Charity No. SC012830

No: 48

Winter 2017

Ruberslaw Parish Church of Scotland: Charity No. SC034629

Really No Room At The Inn?

We all know that Jesus Christ was born in a stable because there was no room for him at the inn. But put aside all the romantic notion of the first Christmas like the one we are used to in our crib scenes and this presents a pretty bleak and uncomfortable situation for our Saviour and his family! But was this really the case? Evidence in recent years suggests that perhaps it was not, largely due to a mis-translation of text over time. In Luke 2:4 we are told that Mary and Joseph “went up” to Bethlehem. The verse assumes their arrival. In verse six, however, we are told, “And while they were there, the days were fulfilled for her to be delivered.” Thus the text affirms a time lapse between the arrival in Bethlehem and the birth of Jesus.

We can easily assume a few weeks passed, and that the birth took place in shelter found by Joseph during those weeks. Was Joseph so totally incompetent that he could provide nothing by way of adequate housing after a significant number of days of searching? Was Bethlehem so hardhearted that, after days and days of intense negotiation, a man with a pregnant wife was turned out by everyone? Surely not!

In the translation from Greek of Luke 2:7, “For there was no place for them in the *kataluma*”, the key word, *kataluma*, which in the West is traditionally translated as “inn,” has at least five meanings, one of which is “guest room”, possibly in a private home - maybe a relative of Joseph’s in Bethlehem itself. Wouldn’t this make for a far more pleasant situation for the birth of Mary’s child with family on hand with help and support? Just a thought!

To present all the evidence behind this theory in such a small space as this Newsletter is impossible! To read just one of the texts supporting it in great detail by Associates for Bible Research, go to:

<http://www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2008/11/08/The-Manger-and-the-Inn.aspx#Article>.

Have a very Happy Christmas, wherever you believe it all began!



ANNOUNCEMENTS

HOBKIRK AND SOUTHDEAN

Wedding:

2 September 2017 at Southdean House: Rosa Tennant and Daniel Callen

Re-Affirmation of Wedding Vows:

23 September 2017 at Southdean: Holly (Dowler-Smith) and Kris Koniczek (previously married in Victoria BC, Canada)

Dedication of Headstone arranged by Commonwealth War Graves Commission:

28 September 2017 at Hobkirk: Alexander Ponton

RUBERSLAW

Funeral:

28 August 2017 at Borders Crematorium: Elliot Scott

Visit our web page at www.hobkirkwithruberslaw.org and like us at www.facebook.com/ruberslawchurch

A Message from your Minister.....

'Christmas' or 'Xmas'?

Recently I came across this reading that gives us food for thought as we approach our Festive Season of 2017:

"Many people think that it's wrong to call Christmas 'Xmas'. 'It's like taking Christ away from Christmas!', they say. It's a reflection of the way Christmas has become separated from the birthday of Jesus Christ. But let's think about it another way. When I receive a letter with a row of X's at the bottom, it tells me that the sender loves me very much. When we see Christmas written 'Xmas' it can remind us that God loves us so much that he sent his own son to tell us. So Xmas starts with a

big kiss to remind us of God's great love. And of course an X is also a cross and Jesus' love took him all the way from the stable to the cross." (Judith Merrell)

May the meaning of the Festive Season be a blessing to you and yours,

Your minister and friend,



Douglas

Christmas Services:

There are lots of special services over the Christmas and New Year period, and all are welcome at each and every one of them:

Sunday 17 December:.....Services of Lessons and Carols at 11am at Minto and 6pm at Hobkirk

Thursday 21 December:.....Christmas Service for Denholm Primary School at 2.15pm in Denholm Church

Sunday 24 December: Family Christmas Eve Services at 4pm at Denholm and at 6pm at Southdean, and Watchnight Service at 11.30pm at Denholm

Christmas Day:Family Christmas Day Services at 10am at Hobkirk and 11.15am at Bedrule

Sunday 31 December:United Service on Last Day of 2017: 10am at Denholm

Vacancy News

In the autumn, Douglas announced that he will be retiring from the charge of Hobkirk and Southdean with Ruberslaw on the 5th April 2018, and that his last Sunday with us will be Easter Sunday, 1st April 2018.

To keep everyone in touch with what is happening during the vacancy there will be an item 'Vacancy News' in future editions of 'Parish News' until we can announce the name of Douglas's successor.

Because we have been given early notice of the vacancy, we are likely to be able to begin vacancy procedure before Douglas actually leaves, and it is likely that the Presbytery of Jedburgh will appoint our Interim Moderator at the December meeting of Presbytery with a view to beginning the business early next year.

Watch out for intimations at church services ... and for the Easter issue of 'Parish News'!

Time for outdoor Carol Singing!

As Christmas approaches there are a number of opportunities to sing carols outdoors. Here are a few to which all are welcome:

Sunday 10 December at 6pm: Official Lighting of Denholm Christmas Tree

Friday 15 December at 11.30am: 'Carols around the Christmas Tree' with Denholm Primary School gathering at the tree to sing our favourite carols

Thursday 21 December: 6pm Carol Singing around Minto starting from Minto Church

With Thanks!

Warm thanks are offered to all who contributed to the following efforts:

- Collection at Ruberslaw Harvest Service for 'Farm Africa': £192 raised
- Pop-Up Bookshop for Ruberslaw Church funds on Saturday 11 November: £104.70 raised
- Retiring collection for Erskine on Remembrance Sunday: £491 donated
- Shoeboxes for Blythswood Charity: 75 donated
- 'Soup and Pud' Lunch for CHAS: £1512 raised

Parish Barbecue



Avril MacFayden and Carol Bewly get organised for the Hobkirk and Southdean Church Barbecue

Community Development Trust proposed

A Community Development Trust is being set up in order to improve the facilities within your community, provide for the young and elderly, regenerate the area and even benefit tourism.

We want your ideas, your views and your help.

Come to a meeting on Tuesday 23rd of January at the Laidlaw Hall, Bonchester Bridge at 7pm.

This is about you! What ideas do you have that can make a difference in your community? Why don't we buy some extra land to expand the Hobkirk cemetery? What about a village green, a re-furbished kitchen area in the Laidlaw Hall, a Valentine Day's dinner dance or maybe even a community shop? Have you got an hour or two to spare to help your community?

A Development Trust will open up funding avenues to help improve our area. We are keen to administer small projects in the area as well as utilise the Hobkirk Primary School for community benefit. Ideas include a back packers hostel for walkers and cyclists, an over-winter caravan park, or a community shop.

If you would like to help with the school project or any other projects, or have your own ideas to help your community, then please come along to the meeting or get in touch with Gemma Lubbock on 07581 503340.



The former Hobkirk Primary School

The Great Bonfire of Denholm!

Denholm Bonfire has its history back to medieval times when it was referred to as "Bow O' Bale" when boughs and branches were gathered to create a large bonfire on the 4th of November. This preceded a festival day on the 5th of November. Although we now have the bonfire on the 5th of November this is not to burn the Guy - you will not see a Guy on Denholm bonfires.

In the past, bonfires were not the most environmentally friendly with old upholstered furniture giving off toxic fumes. As the bonfire is on the Feuars' land it is their responsibility to manage the build and burn safely. In one year exception was taken to the contents of the bonfire and the whole bonfire build was removed, the toxic items separated out and the remains returned to the Green! During the build the stack is checked daily for any unwanted items being deposited and this year we were fortunate until the last day when a large plastic solicitor's sign arrived. This was removed and returned to the solicitor! We are indebted to Ray and John from Deanfoot Farm who stack the materials and remove the ash debris, and also to Charlie McCrerie of H.M. Fencing who erects and removes the safety barrier around the fire site.

GUILD NEWS

Ruberslaw Guild

Having hosted the annual Senior Citizens' Christmas lunch on 10th December, Ruberslaw Guild's next meeting will be on Tuesday 16th January 2018 at 7.00 pm in the Church Hall when we will be looking at this year's discussion topic, "Loving when it's difficult to love" which is sure to stimulate some lively debate. Everyone is welcome to come along and contribute to the discussion – or simply listen.

On Saturday 20th January the Guild will hold a Coffee Morning in the Church Hall from 10.30 to 12 noon in aid of Guild projects. This is the third year of a 3-year cycle of Guild projects and this year we will be dividing the money we raise between the projects we have supported in the previous 2 years. In 2015-16 we contributed £175 to Feed the Minds: Breaking the cycle of FGM.. Through their support of this project the Guild has been instrumental in raising awareness of this subject and its impact across the world and even here in Scotland. In 2016-17 we contributed £180 to Care for the Family, a national charity promoting strong family relationships, helping those who face family difficulties.

The amounts we are able to contribute may seem small, but currently the Guild across Scotland has raised over £112,000 for Feed the Minds and over £86,000 for Care for the Family. We hope, with your support, to help these excellent causes even further.

During the winter months Guild members are continuing to knit Prayer Shawls. If you, or anyone you know, would like to receive one, please speak to any Guild member.

Hobkirk and Southdean Guild

We have had another busy summer! Although we do not have meetings, members have been busy with church flower arranging, cleaning and serving coffee and baking for the first Sundays in the month and of course, helping at the highly successful barbecue for church funds!

We were most fortunate to have an enjoyable outing to St. Giles Cathedral, thanks to our most kind minister driving us. We had a fascinating guided tour which lasted far longer than it was scheduled but I think we were all enthralled and moved!

Our autumn session always starts with an evening Service of Dedication at Southdean in October, which was much enjoyed by members and friends. It is a chance for a good chat over tea afterwards, after the summer break.

In November we are hosting an Afternoon of Christmas Carols at Bonchester Care Home by kind invitation of the management. Over tea and cake residents enjoy chatting to members.

When lighting, multiple ignition sites are identified and packed with paper ready for lighting. This year we made a lighting torch and Douglas, our minister, made good use of it to create a ring of fire which soon engulfed the whole stack. Volunteers in high-viz jackets mingled with the crowd, keeping everyone informed of the night's schedule with the Cross Keys' fireworks being the second highlight of the evening.

The intense heat from the bonfire soon had the spectators moving further away! No fireworks are allowed on the green but supervised children are allowed sparklers. Following the spectacular fireworks, spectators soon dispersed but a continued watch was maintained on the bonfire. This year these conditions were met for a safe departure at 3.15am.

News from Southdean

The Harvest Supper was held at Southdean Hall on 21 October. There was an excellent attendance with entertainment provided by local ladies singing group – 'The Dolly Mixtures.'

Southdean Community Council organised various talks and presentations during September, October and November, including presentations on the proposed Borders National Park, extending broadband and the development of 'The Courses' footpath.

On 23 September, Southdean Hall hosted a renewal of vows event for local girl, Holly Dowler-Smith who now lives near Victoria in Canada. The Scottish and Canadian flags were flown to mark the occasion, which was very enjoyable for all who attended.

Films in Southdean Hall, continue to be popular every fortnight, with the "chippy" van run by Michelle and June, always on hand.

The Hall Committee and helpers organised a Craft Fayre on 26 November and a there will also be a Gift Fayre on 17 December.

The Southdean Community is looking forward to another performance from Denholm Drama Group on 9 December. See below for details of how to get tickets!

Drama Group production 2017

Denholm Drama Group is presenting four one-act plays this year with an emphasis on local writing skills! Two of the short plays have been penned by Steve Smith of Chesters, following the popularity of his first offering "Apps in the Alps" last April. A third play has been written by Jackie Hale, a member of the Group from Cavers.

The plays will be held at Kenmore Hall in Jedburgh at 7:30pm on 5th and 6th December, Denholm Village Hall on 7th December, Hermitage Village Hall on 8th December and Southdean Village Hall on 9th December. Tickets are £7, apart from Southdean were £12 will also buy you a two-course supper and a bar will be available. Book your tickets in advance by calling Caroline Smith on 01450 860267 or Shirley Passmore on 01450 870604. You can also buy tickets at P&S Dorricott Hardware in Jedburgh, or at the door.

As always, the Group is always on the look out for new members, particularly to take an active part on stage! So if you think you can act, and would like to join a light-hearted, fun-loving but committed Drama Group, please give Shirley a call on 01450 870604.

Correction

Many people have commented on the poem, "The Ashgrove", which was included in the last issue of Parish News. However we have to apologise to Ruth Milligan, the writer of the poem which was wrongly attributed to Ronald Wight. A copy of the poem was discovered in his hand-writing, but he was not in fact the poet. Like many of you, he must have enjoyed the poem and written out a copy for himself.

The title of the poem also caused some scratched heads – but "Ashgrove" is the tune to which it would have been sung!

Things you may not know about your Elders.....!

In this issue, we learn about Ruberslaw elder Michael Braithwaite:

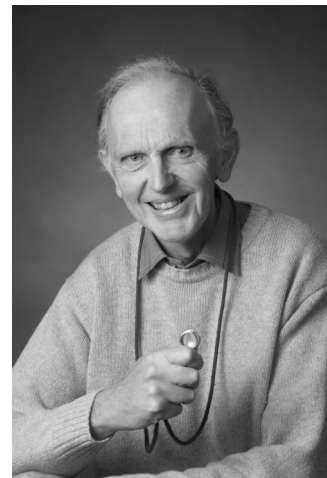
I was born in Corbridge, Northumberland during the war and was brought up there in a large family, all boys. I liked books, tennis and anything in the countryside, especially horses.

Academically I was a success at school, but not so socially. I won an open scholarship to Trinity College, Cambridge. I shall never forget the evening the telegram arrived.

I made friends at Cambridge and went on to study accountancy in London. My friends in London were all country folk who were there by default, so I did not settle. It all became too much and I came to work in Hawick in 1969 for a month or two while I worked out what to do next. The rest is history. I had a marvellous diversity of clients at Welch's, mostly industrial and commercial.

Living in Hawick I rediscovered a childhood interest in wild flowers. I came into the company of fellow naturalists and found my niche. I met my wife Paddy while botanising on the top of a mountain. I served for 25 years as secretary then chairman of the Scottish Wildlife Trust in the Borders with evening meetings from West Linton to Duns. I was the first chairman of St Abbs Head NNR in 1977. I also served for 35 years as botanical recorder for Berwickshire and have written extensively on my studies. In my retirement I have served as treasurer, project leader and then president of the Botanical Society of Britain & Ireland and have given talks as far afield as Dublin, Belfast, Shrewsbury, London, Edinburgh and Glasgow as well as attending a garden party at Buckingham Palace.

We had lots of chapel at school but I lapsed in London. I was a bit slow in transferring to the Church of Scotland on coming north, but the difference was a revelation and I was soon an elder and serving on committees at '121'.



Boys' Brigade begins!

The Boys' Brigade year began on 28th September. Our first event was a coffee morning on 30th September which raised £225 for our funds. For Harvest Thanksgiving, we dressed a window at Bedrule Church. At Minto Remembrance Service, Callum and MacKenzie carried the flag for the Boys' Brigade and Ben laid the wreath. The Christmas Fayre at Denholm School is where the B.B's sell marmalade for funds towards our charity 'Mary's Meals'. We will be delivering Christmas post in the village again, this year and the last date for posting is 14th December with delivery on 16th. We will be taking part in the nativity on Christmas Eve. We wish everyone Seasons Greetings and thank you to all who support us!



NEXT NEWSLETTER

Spring 2018 Issue

Copy Deadline: 11th March 2018

Target Issue Date: 18th March 2018