**BARK**



**D**ear Friends, Spring 2017

**I**t was 1939 that firmly established the Royal Christmas Broadcast as a British tradition. In those days it was given on Christmas Eve, and the king addressed the nation in a BBC radio broadcast. In the uncertain last days of 1939 the king spoke words of peace to calm his people. He reminded them of the only true King, the One who can provide true peace and real rest in such troubled times.  As King George concluded his message of encouragement, he read the preamble of a poem that had been brought to his attention by his young daughter, Princess Elizabeth.

**P**rincess Elizabeth was only thirteen years old in 1939.  The poem that she brought to her father’s attention was written by British poet Minnie Louise Haskins (1875-1957)*.* Published in 1908 and titled *God Knows,* the poem was part of a collection of poems in a book entitled *The Desert.* Years later, this poem gained popularity with a new title, *The Gate of the Year,* taken from the poem’s first line.

**D**ressed in the uniform of the Admiral of the Fleet, sitting in front of two microphones on a table at Sandringham, King George VI spoke live to offer a message of reassurance to his people. It was to be a landmark speech and was to have an important effect on the listening public as they were plunged into the uncertainty of war:

**“**A new year is at hand. We cannot tell what it will bring. If it brings peace, how thankful we shall all be. If it brings us continued struggle we shall remain undaunted.”

He went on to quote from Minnie Haskins’ poem :

**And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year:  
“Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown.”  
And he replied:  
“Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand of God.  
That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way.”  
So I went forth, and finding the Hand of God, trod gladly into the night. And He led me towards the hills and the breaking of day in the lone East.**

**A**fter the King’s death, the Queen Mother had the words engraved upon brass plaques and attached to the gates of the King George VI Memorial Chapel at Windsor. Later the Queen had the words read at her mother’s funeral.

**H**ow do you ‘put your hand into the Hand of God’ and let him lead you? By believing better and learning to put your trust in Him.

 Commit this year to knowing Jesus better through reading and studying His Word.  When you know Him better, you will love Him more and you will find peace in Him.

 Commit this year to entering into deeper communion with Jesus through prayer.  When you commune with Him more, you will find rest in Him.

 Commit this year to remembering all that Jesus has done for you and all that He has given you.  When you remember Jesus, your mind will be transformed and God will faithfully conform you more and more to the image of His Son.

**T**hese are days when we need to renew our faith in God and seek his blessing upon our church and our land. The days ahead are uncertain, but through God a safe way can be found.

With all good wishes,

David Bartholomew.

**Interim Moderator**

**Invitation to Communion**

The next Communion Service takes place at Kelton Kirk on 2 April at 9.30 am. Most will remember that in the past you were given a Communion Card which was handed in at the church door and was a record of your attendance. This practice ended some years ago, however, an Invitation to Communion was introduced to ensure members knew when the Communion was and to encourage members to come along. It was agreed at a recent meeting of Session to re-introduce this Invitation and cards are available at both churches for Elders to pick up over the next few weeks. It was also agreed to reintroduce the practice of issuing members with an envelope at this time into which they could place an additional special offering should they wish to do so. We heard recently from our treasurer that offerings are down so far this year.

Don’t worry if the invitation doesn’t reach you in time. You will still be made very welcome.

**Guild Centenary**

In January we celebrated 100 years of Church Guild at Kelton. During the service on the 15th Marleen Jardine outlined a brief history of the Guild reminding us that in those days members had to walk to meetings as few had cars. Members did a lot of work providing comforts for soldiers and for poorer people. In October 1917 a Sale of Work raised £450—equivalent to over £22,000 in today’s money! Each Christmas a gift was sent to the 120 serving men from the parish.



Shirts, jackets, skirts, socks, etc were made and sent to missions in Africa and China and boxes of eatables were sent to Govan each New Year. In 1922 the Guild paid for the original church hall which was eventually built and opened in August 1925.

The aims of the Guild have changed little and we continue to share fun and fellowship on the second Tuesday of each month and would love to see new members come to join.

The minister when the Guild began was Rev Donald Henry. Our photo shows the celebration cake which was enjoyed after the service being cut by Mrs Christine Henry, his daughter in law who is one of our current members.

**Bengairn Parishes Guild meetings**

Guild members celebrated their 100 years anniversary on Sunday 15th January. During the service taken by Rev Oonagh Dee, a short history of the Guild was given by Mrs Marleen Jardine whose mother in law was an original member in 1917.

The January meeting was led by Mrs Rosemary Gladstone who introduced Kathryn King. Kathryn is a well known jewellery designer and qualified diamond grader and we were privileged to see her intricate work and hear her history. She brought along with her some instruments of torture—well, actually, they were tools of her trade and showed how an item developed from first plans through to the finished masterpiece.

February’s meeting took the form of Any Questions. Mrs Marleen Jardine our leader appropriately, as it was St Valentine's day, based her devotions on love. The questions were varied and topical leading to much discussion. Marleen kept us all in order, an excellent question master.

Our March meeting will be held in Auchencairn hall when Mrs Nicky Smith will be leader. Speaker, Mr Ross, Auchencairnwill give some reflections on life.

In April we welcome Miss Jean Brown who will show us examples of her miniature craft work. Please note that this meeting is being held on Wednesday 12th.

Do come along to any of our meetings. Look forward to seeing you.

Margaret Shanks

Church Diary

**March**

Sun 26 Annual Stated Meeting after morning service

**April**

Sun 2 Communion Kelton 9.30 am

Wed 12 Guild—Kelton Hall 2.00 pm

Thu 13 Maundy Thursday Service Communion 7.00 pm - Castle Douglas

Fri 14 Good Friday Service7.00 pm – Kelton

Mon 24 Bible Study—Kelton 1.30 pm

**May**

Mon 8Bible Study—Kelton 1.30 pm

Tues 9 Guild—Outing

Mon 22 Bible Study—Kelton 1.30 pm

**Jun**

Mon 5 Bible Study—Kelton 1.30 pm

Sun 11 Garden Open—Orroland, Dundrennan

Mon 19 Bible Study—Kelton 1.30 pm

Sun 25 Communion Auchencairn 9.30 am

**Jul**

Mon 3 Bible Study—Kelton 1.30 pm

**Aug** 20 Dundrennan Abbey Service 3.00 pm

**Oct** 15 Communion- Kelton 9.30 am

Bengairn Parish Duty Rota

Please arrive 20 minutes before the start of the service. If you are unable to attend please arrange a substitute.

Mar

05 (K) (L) Margaret Shanks, F Twiname

12 (A) (L) A Hyslop, Evelyn McArthur

19 (K) (L) R Ramsay, J Jardine

26 (A) (D) Kate Smith, Jeanette Walker

Apr

02 (K) (L) Dawn Campbell. Jean Brown

09 (A) (L) P Davis, Freda McCubbin

16 (K) (D) Nicky Smith, J Hendry

23 (A) (L) D Henry, K Ross

30 (K) (D) R Bellamy, Rosemary Gladstone

May

07 (K) (L) W Hean, Carol Ashton

14 (A) (D) A Campbell, Agnes Ross

21 (K) (B) W Kennedy, A or M Dunlop

28 (A) (S) Margaret Shanks, F Twiname

Jun

04 (K) (D) A Hyslop, Evelyn McArthur

11 (A) (L) R Ramsay, J Jardine

18 (K) (L) J Hendry, Nicky Smith

25 (A) (L) Kate Smith, Jeanette Walker

Jul

02 (K) P Davis, Freda McCubbin

09 (A) Brownie Wright, Jean Brown

16 (K) D Henry, K Ross

23 (A) R Bellamy, Rosemary Gladstone

30 (A) W Hean, Carol Ashton

Aug

06 (K) A Campbell, Agnes Ross

13 (A) W Kennedy, A or M Dunlop

20 (K) Margaret Shanks, F Twiname

27 (A) A Hyslop, Evelyn McArthur

(K) Kelton (A) Auchencairn (B) Rev Dr Bartholomew (D) Rev Dee (L) Rev Dr Lochrie (S) Mrs N Smith

**Parish Register**

Funeral Mrs Betty Smith OBE date of death 23 February

We welcome new member Mrs Isla Ditchburn who has been worshipping with us for some time now.

**Hymns Ancient and Modern**

If you’re anything like me you will often find yourself standing in church giving a particularly well known him “laldi” when suddenly you realise that people round about you aren’t singing quite the same words as you are. Or maybe it is one of the “new” hymns which can seem more like a nursery rhyme or has a tune that seldom goes in the direction you expect. If so you’ll enjoy this contribution sent in by Brownie Wright. It is from the “Organist’s Review February 2002. The well known hymn, **Dear Lord and Father of Mankind**

Dear Lord and Father of mankind,

Forgive our foolish ways,

For most of us, when asked our mind,

Admit we still more pleasure find

In hymns of ancient days.

The simple lyrics, for a start,

Of many modern song

Are far too trite to touch the heart,

Enshrine no poetry, no art,

And go on much too long.

O for a rest from jollity

And syncopated praise!

What happened to tranquillity?

The silence of eternity

Is hard to hear these days.

Send Thy deep hush, subduing all

Those happy claps that drown

The tender whisper of The call.

Triumphalism is not all.

For sometimes we feel down.

Drop Thy still dews of quietness

Till all our strummings cease.

Take from our souls the strain and stress

Of always having to be blessed.

Give us a bit of peace.

Breathe through the beats of praise guitar

Thy coolness and Thy balm.

Let drum be dumb, bring back the lyre.

Enough of earthquake, wind and fire

Let’s hear it for some calm.

**Happy Christmas**—yes, I know it’s past but…...

Did you enjoy Christmas? I hope so. It is a time of much rushing about both in mind—what will I buy for him, how will we amuse the children once their toys have run out of battery or the internet has gone down again. What will we feed everyone on—and in action with all the preparations, cleaning, shopping etc.

There were several opportunities to stop, rest and think though and what fun and joy they gave us.

Those of you who were part of the Carol Service in Auchencairn enjoyed the singing of the Auchencairn Community choir and the Auchencairn School children as well as music from the Handbell Ringers. Those of you who were at the Nativity at Kelton on Christmas Eve must have enjoyed the fun either taking part in the tableau (nearly everyone did) or just watching and joining in the carols. It was amazing how many people were at both events, both children and adults hearing again the story of the birth of Christ and hopefully lots of you will take the opportunity to join us again through the year.

There were watchnight services on Christmas Eve at both ends of the parish —perhaps not so well attended as in past years but still very much appreciated by those who were there, and, of course our service on Christmas Day.

Whether you went to one or all of these the chance to step back from the busyness of the secular side of Christmas must have been appreciated - but spare a thought for Oonagh and John. They also have families and friends who want to share Christmas festivities with them but they still give us a great deal of their time not just during the services but in preparation and in visiting members of the parish, including those in care homes and hospital. Indeed they have asked that you are reminded to contact them if you know of anyone who needs them for any reason. They are always happy to visit.

Thanks also to Donald who led the Watchnight Service at Kelton, to Freda and her team who organised the Auchencairn Carol Service and to those who decorated both churches so beautifully.

Editor

The Burglar entered the darkened house, quietly.  
  
Suddenly a voice shouted ' God is watching you'  
  
He stayed silent for a moment and hearing nothing moved and the voice shouted again, 'GOD IS WATCHING YOU'  
  
Then... he saw the parrot.'Was that you?' asked the burglar.  
  
'Yes' replied the parrot, 'My name is St.Peter.'  
  
'What fool would call a parrot St.Peter' the burglar said.  
  
The parrot replied... 'The same fool who named our Doberman, God!'

**Rebuilding Communities**

In the days when the Church had Missionary Partners my congregations were partnered with John Ross, the pharmacist in Patan Hospital outside Kathmandu. We were able to visit John in Nepal several times and so came to know parts of that beautiful country and its wonderful people.

On 25th April 2015 a massive earthquake struck Nepal. A great deal of damage was caused to buildings, roads, bridges, even the landscape was changed out of all recognition in places. At the time we saw images of the spectacular damage in Kathmandu. What is very much less known was what happened in outlying areas, especially in Dhadang province which lies about three hours west of Kathmandu. This is really quite understandable as the earthquake destroyed so many roads and trails that it was almost impossible to reach this part of the country. The only way in was by helicopter, but even landing was impossible in many villages.

Much of rural Nepal is mountainous and hilly. The steep hillsides have been terraced over generations. Villages are often perched precariously on the mountainside. Many of these terraces had been destroyed by the landslides generated by the earthquake. Whole villages were simply swept away down the mountain.

The immediate response of the Church was to launch the ‘Let us build a house’ project. There was an incredible response from congregations all over the country which has raised over £250,000 so far. Unfortunately the appeal did perhaps have the unintended consequence of blinding us to the fact that much more than new homes was required. The first task was to provide immediate aid – food and water the priorities. So many crops had been lost, so many wells damaged. Food aid had to be long term as so many could no longer grow anything. Their land had simply disappeared. New terraces have to be built, a long arduous task. New homes are urgently required, but before much of this work can begin roads and bridges have to be repaired so that materials can be taken in. All of this takes time, and the task is further complicated by the difficulties of getting the necessary permissions from the local authorities to begin these works.

The funds are being sent to our partner United Mission to Nepal (UMN)support their work in rebuilding communities in Dhading, a district about three hours west of Kathmandu. So far UMN have managed to repair roads and trails, repair and rebuild schools, restore micro-hydro electricity generators to make electricity available again, water treatment plants have been rehabilitated, farmers’ fields have been brought back into production and people have trained in better farming techniques.

It is all a tremendous effort made possible by the generosity of so many here in Scotland. There is one thing more that we can do now and that is to pray that the obstacles being placed in the way of further progress in Nepal can be removed to allow UMN to complete the necessary work needed to help the people of Dhadang to rebuild their lives.

Finally, might I ask again that you try to keep me informed about anyone in need of a pastoral visit.

John S. Lochrie

**Future plans**

Another newsletter comes around. Editor says “you did say you would contribute” so here we go.

As you will be aware we have had Presbytery assessors with us for a few months now. The office bearers have had discussions with them, and as we write this we are about to have a joint meeting with ourselves and Castle Douglas and the assessors. The current timescale is that the assessors will report to the Presbytery committee this month. Depending on the committee decision, any final decision will probably go to the full Presbytery at the end of April. We all hope and pray for a positive outcome.

I have to point out that we are being very well served by our preaching team of Rev Dr John Lochrie and Rev Oonagh Dee under the direction of our interim moderator Rev Dr David Bartholomew. The work of the congregation carries on with good momentum and we all work together well.

**Communion**

We look forward to communion at Kelton on 2nd April, and elders are reminded that roll books and communion invitations should be picked up in advance. Elders are also asked to make sure that books are brought up to date and returned to the session clerk as soon as possible.

Thank you all for your support during this uncertain time

Peter Gladstone – Session Clerk

**World Day of Prayer**

A gratifyingly larger than expected number of people gathered together at St Ninian’s to take part in the World Day of Prayer service in March. This was an ecumenical service with representatives from the Episcopal Church, Catholic Church and Church of Scotland.

The service had been prepared by the women of the Philipinnes still striving to rebuild their lives following the devastation of Typhoon Haiyan when sustained winds of 147 mph hit on 8 Nov 2013. Their theme was “Am I being unfair to you” and used the parable in Matthew 20. The landowner started early in the morning and all through the day hired workers. He agreed with each of them on a wage for the work but at the end of the day there was grumbling when the workers all received the same wage irrespective of the number of hours they had worked. The landowner’s question “Am I being unfair to you” asked because the wage had been agreed with each worker in advance, showing that all were equal.

Mrs Christian Williams, Convenor of the Congregational Federation, says

“Jesus shows that same standard with His unconditional love to us all as He builds his Kingdom. He has no favourites. We are all equal and import.

Circumstances sometimes make us question the fairness of God, but we need to remember that He works on eternal perspectives while we are hampered by seeing things from a human viewpoint.

The Judge of all the earth sees the big picture and He will only do what is right for you, for us.

That’s a promise to blow away any doubts about the fairness of God.”

**Bengairn Word Alive**

“*Nothing has a greater impact on spiritual growth than reflection on Scripture.”*

We all know the Bible is important but how many of us are regularly reading the Scriptures and spending time with God outside of formal church activities?know from personal experience that life can get in the way, but I often wonder how different our churches would look if everyone was regularly feeding from God’s word?

A few months ago we started a group we’ve called**Bengairn Word Alive**toprovide an opportunity for people to get together to read and discuss the Bible. Currently we are reading Mark’s Gospel together.

Our next group of meetings starts on Monday April 24th from 1:30pm to 2:30pmthe Kelton Kirk Room and we meet fortnightly on the following Mondays: April 24th,May 8th & 22nd,June 5th & 19th, July 3rd. Please think about joining with us and don’t worry if you can’t manage all the dates—just come and go as you can.

Nicky Smith

**The Boy in the Train**

Whit wey does the engine say Toot-Toot! Is it feart tae gang in the tunnel

I am sure many of our readers will know this Scottish poem. But did you know that it was written by Mary C Edgar who was born in Tongland manse on the 3rd of January 1869 where her father, Rev. Andrew Edgar was minister.

Of even more interest is that Mary's mother, Sybil, was born in Kelton manse, the daughter of Rev. Samuel Cowan,minister of Kelton for 47 years. His bust looks down on us from the church wall. Mary married George Smith Headmaster of Merchiston Castle school in Edinburgh and the poem describes a small boy met on a memorable railway journey to Fife. Mary C Smith's poem is in many anthologies of Scots poetry.

Robert Burns writing about rough roads.

I'm now arrived-thanks to the gods!

Thro' pathways rough and muddy.

A certain sign that makin roads

Is no this people's study.

Alto' I'm no wi' Scripture crammed.

I'm sure the Bible says

That heedless sinners shall be damn'd

Unless they mend their ways

Still an ongoing problem. Margaret Shanks

**When You Thought I Wasn’t Looking**

(Written by a former child)

A message every adult should read, because children are watching you and doing as you do, not as you say.

When you thought I wasn’t looking, I saw you hang my first painting on the refrigerator, and I immediately wanted to paint another one.

When you thought I wasn’t looking, I saw you feed a stray cat, and I learned that it was good to be kind to animals.

When you thought I wasn’t looking, I saw you make my favourite cake for me and I learned that the little things can be the special things in life.

When you thought I wasn’t looking, I heard you say a prayer, and I knew there is a God I could always talk to and I learned to trust in God.

When you thought I wasn’t looking, I saw you make a meal and take it to a friend who was sick, and I learned that we all have to help take care of each other.

When you thought I wasn’t looking, I saw you give of your time and money to help people who had nothing and I learned that those who have something should give to those who don’t.

When you thought I wasn’t looking, I saw you take care of our house and everyone in it and I learned we have to take care of what we are given.

When you thought I wasn’t looking, I saw how you handled your responsibilities, even when you didn’t feel good and I learned that I would have to be responsible when I grow up.

When you thought I wasn’t looking, I saw tears come from your eyes and I learned that sometimes things hurt, but it’s all right to cry.

When you thought I wasn’t looking, I saw that you cared and I wanted to be everything that I could be.

When you thought I wasn’t looking, I learned most of life’s lessons that I need to know to be a good and productive person when I grow up.

When you thought I wasn’t looking, I looked at you and wanted to say, “Thanks for all the things I saw when you thought I wasn’t looking.”

**The Ten MinutesBefore and After Services**

Recently two church members moved to another city due to job transfer. They visited two congregations near their new home. Both congregations came highly recommended. They arrived early, stayed late, and made themselves available. Yet despite their eagerness, no one from Congregation No. 1 greeted them or expressed any interest. They contacted the minister during the week and shared their concern. The minister apologized.

The next month they visited Congregation No. 2. During the first two visits, dozens of people greeted them, two Bible classes invited them out to eat, four families had them into their homes, and they received numerous invitations to become part of the congregation.

Guess which church this couple decided to attend? The friendliness of Congregation 2 made a deep impression. The ten minutes before and after each service are significant times. Friendliness must be constantly practiced. This is perhaps a familiar story to you as it was for me. I believe we are a friendly congregation and will continue to be so with friendly smiles, outstretched hands and a welcome for everyone.

**Shrove Tuesday**

Mum was making pancakes for her sons Jason and Rabbie. They began to argue over who was to have the first pancake. Mum saw the opportunity for a moral lesson. “If Jesus were sitting here”, she said, He would say “Let my brother have the first pancake. I can wait”. Rabbie turned to his younger brother and said,

“Jason, you be Jesus”. (MS)

**An Easter Prayer**

## Lord Jesus,

In this time before Easter, help us to commit ourselves to you through prayer, reading your word and the acknowledgement of all that you have done for us.

We must remember when things go wrong in our lives and in this world that it is not you that has “let it happen”, but that our thoughts and actions and those of other people have consequences. Help us to work towards good consequences through your Blessing upon us and by spreading your word and your love for all people.

Amen

Dear Friends,

Greetings to you, One and All.



I do so hope you are enjoying this time of year in this gorgeous part of the world we live in. Weren’t the snowdrops this year amazing? And now here we are with the brightness of yellow daffodils everywhere we look.

They are such an encouragement for the journey. Over the next few weeks, the journey we make with Jesus as He turns His face towards Jerusalem and the cross is not an easy one. It’s always a journey of recognising human failings and the Grace of God’s loving, even us, to the end.

This is such a deep time, a time of examining and letting go; a time to turn again and grow towards New Life. It’s better expressed in a poem by a dear friend of mine, Sarah Howarth. It’s called “Winter Waiting”.

Praise for the autumn days shrouded and shortening,

Praise for the fields lying battered and bare.

Praise for the plough blade deep thrusting and slicing

Turning the depths to the sky and the air.

Praise for the seed drill, the rake and the roller:

The bashing and crushing dis-peace of men’s tools.

The grain lying buried, outer husks rotting;

Death before life, ground base of God’s rules.

Praise for the winter of darkness within me

Seeming desertion, the cold of the tomb.

Praise for the silence and death of all longing

Slowly preparing the soil of the womb.

Praise for the stirring of life in the darkness,

Praise for the flush of the dawn of the day.

Praise for the Son, poised to leap into Glory,

Day-spring of the world, Easter life, Easter Way.

As we journey through these weeks together may we know deeper fellowship between us; a deeper sense of Hope; deeper assurance that in Christ, “All will be well”.

Every blessing to you,

yours, Oonagh.

Items for the **next** newsletter should be given to the Editor **IN WRITING** at Church, by e-mail to rosemarygladstone@gmail.com or by post to Mrs R Gladstone, Lansdowne, 93A St Mary Street, Kirkcudbright, DG6 4EL. Contributors should give contact details in case of any queries.