



Parish of Upper Tweeddale

KIRK MATTERS

Easter 2025

CHURCH'S VISION STATEMENT

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

UPPER TWEEDDALE WEBSITE

www.uppertweeddale.org.uk Charity No. SC004728

Part of the West Tweeddale Parishes linkage (www.westtweeddale.org.uk)



@parishofuppertweeddale

SUNDAY SERVICES

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

In Broughton Village Hall at 11am

In Tweedsmuir Church at 9.30am

In Skirling Church at 11.30am



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Skirling and Tweedsmuir
Church of Scotland**



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For the Parish of Upper Tweeddale



Front cover picture: view from Skirling Church

A letter from our Minister

Having faith in Faith

To live in faith is not the same as living in certainty. It is logically impossible to be certain about faith. Christians have never been certain. There is too much at stake for that.

Most of the 18th-century philosophers who led the Enlightenment weren't particularly interested in getting rid of religion. They just wanted us to call it what it was, an act of faith. Their arguments offered an unintentional gift to the Church, a gift that sought to keep the categories of certainty and faith separate. Our desire for certainty is very understandable especially today, when it feels like politically, socially, and economically the ground is shifting beneath our feet. We're desperately looking to be certain about something. And our relationship with God is no different. But for centuries Christians have confessed the Apostle's Creed, which begins with the words, "*I believe...*" not "*I am certain. . .*".

All healthy relationships are bound together by a shared faith. All weddings are an act of faith. Our marriages and our friendships are held together by the belief that when a crisis happens our family and friends will rush to our side. Ironically the easiest way to destroy someone's love for us is to ask for certainty, to continually ask them to prove it.

Easter marks the time of year when the Church celebrates the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. The first apostles taught that the resurrection brought with it the assurance that our sins could be forgiven. It wasn't certain that God would love us despite our sins, It wasn't even certain that God would forgive us. The decision to give those blessings was God's choice and His alone. Faith in Jesus is our way of accessing those blessings.

Thankfully, for reasons only He knows, God keeps choosing to have faith in our faith. Why not offer him yours this Easter and see what happens in your life.

Happy Easter to you and yours.

Peace, Tony

PS You are also invited to join us for a joint service of all the churches in West Tweeddale on Sunday 29th June at 3pm in the grounds of the old Newlands church. Bring a picnic to share before the service. If the weather is not kind, we'll take shelter in Newlands church.

Films That Make You Think – An Update

We are coming to the end of our first year of 'films that make you think' and thought we would take stock of how the films have gone and what we do next. This programme of films was set up by the Parish of Upper Tweeddale as something we could do to re-engage with the wider community. We wanted to give people the opportunity to enjoy a range of thought-provoking films and to share their thoughts about the content of those films and how they relate to the sometimes-confusing world in which we live.

The films we have enjoyed so far have been wide-ranging in their content and target audience. We started with WALL-E and Babe, both family friendly films which led to discussions about the environment, and diversity and inclusion respectively. Our Christmas offering was the classic: It's a Wonderful Life. Moving into this year Paul, Apostle of Christ told the story of Paul's time in prison in Rome and the persecution of the early Christian community in that city. And we have just shown the wonderful satirical comedy: Monty Python's Life of Brian. Audiences have grown slowly but steadily.

We have just one more film in this year's programme on Friday 25th April at 7pm: a British drama set in Yorkshire that was only released in 2022. It has a 12A certificate. Because of licensing restriction we're unable to name the film here but you can write to films@uppertweeddale.org.uk to find out. These films are free (donations welcome) for everyone and not ticketed. Just turn up on the night. Refreshments are provided free too

Looking further ahead we intend to continue our programme of 'films that make you think' into next year, starting in September, and would love to hear of any such films that you would like to see (or see again). Please let us know by writing to films@uppertweeddale.org.uk

Neil Robinson

March 2025

UPPER TWEED COMMUNITY CINEMA

If you enjoy film on the big screen but can't face a trek into Edinburgh or Galashiels the Upper Tweed Community Cinema shows films once a month on a Saturday evening in Broughton Village Hall from the end of September through to the end of April. Please contact [**uppertweedfilmclub@gmail.com**](mailto:uppertweedfilmclub@gmail.com) for more information.

Holy Week Services

No Future Without Forgiveness

We have chosen this title for our Holy Week Services in April. It is the title of a book written by Archbishop Desmond Tutu about his upbringing in apartheid South Africa and about his time as head of the post-apartheid Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

It is also true that there is no Christianity without forgiveness. Forgiveness is central to Christianity, but among Christians, especially it seems in our current times, not so much.

Our Holy week services focus on different aspects of forgiveness:

Monday 14th April at 7pm in Tweedsmuir Kirk. Forgiveness within community - as needed in the Parable of the Prodigal Son

Tuesday 15th April at 7pm in Broughton Village Hall. Recognising the hurt we cause – with King David in his cry for mercy in Psalm 51

Wednesday 16th April at 7pm in Skirling Kirk. Repentance. Shown by the criminal crucified with Jesus

Thursday 17th April at 7pm in Newland Kirk with Holy Communion. Balancing justice and forgiveness – with divine grace.

Friday 18th April at 8pm in Carlops Kirk. A Tenebrae service for Good Friday.

Saturday 19th April at 10.30am there will be a gentle Wandering in Glenholm churchyard followed by a cup of tea at Glenholm Cottage.

The source for our services is the book Forgiveness - A Lenten Study by Marjorie J. Thompson which has been the text for this year's Lent studies in the West Tweeddale Parishes.



Holy Week Pilgrimage Around the Churches of West Tweeddale

Sunday 13th April: joint Palm Sunday service in Broughton Village Hall at 11am (refreshments from 10.30am)

Monday 14th April: Tweedsmuir Kirk at 7pm

Tuesday 15th April: Broughton Village Hall at 7pm

Wednesday 16th April: Skirling Kirk at 7pm

Thursday 17th April: Communion in Newlands Kirk at 7pm

Friday 18th April: Tenebrae Service in Carlops Kirk at 8pm

Saturday 19th April: Wander at Glenholm Cemetery at 10.30am followed by refreshments

Sunday 20th April: joint Easter Sunday service in Tweedsmuir Village Hall at 10am followed by refreshments and eggtrivies

Isobel Hunter

What is the Guild?



The Guild was started in 1887 by Rev Dr Archibald Charteris, an ordained minister of the Church of Scotland and for 30 years Professor of Biblical Criticism at the University of Edinburgh. Originally called the Women's Guild, in 2007 it changed its constitution, encouraged men to join and changed its name to The Guild. Taking as its motto, "whose we are and whom we serve", the Guild seeks to encourage and enable members to express their faith in worship, prayer, action and fellowship.

From the start the Guild has been involved in projects to help women all over the world. By 1894, it had raised enough money to open a hospital in Kalimpong, in the Indian state of West Bengal. A few years later a school was added. In Scotland one of the projects, opened in 1904, was a Guild Cottage opened in Lasswade, Midlothian, for women who "had fallen victim to intemperance". Over the years, Guild members have raised money for, and supported, a wide variety of projects both home and abroad. The latest collection of projects gives some idea of the range: from "Blether with BEAT", an eating disorder charity that exists to end the pain and suffering caused by eating disorders, to the "Vine Trust" enabling volunteers to provide medical, home-building and care support to communities living in severe poverty in Tanzania and Peru; from "Playful Beginnings", supporting children in Scotland with additional support needs and parents struggling with the early years of parenthood to have the support they need for a positive start, to "Release International: Operation Hope", supporting the Christian community in Upper Egypt by providing practical and pastoral support.

The West Tweeddale Guild was formed 2 years ago from the two remaining active Guilds in our new Parish. We meet monthly from September to March on the third Wednesday afternoon of the month. We always have a varied and hopefully interesting syllabus. This year it included a trip to Biggar Museum, a visit from West Linton Fire Brigade, to give advice on keeping our homes and ourselves safe and well, and a lesson in cheesemaking including lots of tasting. An important part of each meeting is time for a cuppa and a chat, a chance to catch up with friends old and new and plan future activities.

In addition to our monthly meetings on the first Wednesday afternoon of the month we've started visiting Whim care home. We lead a short, informal service with hymn and song singing, short prayers and a chance to chat to the residents.

If any of this sounds like something you might enjoy, we are always pleased to welcome new members to our group. The new session will start in September and is planned as a visit to Rosslyn Chapel. If you'd like more information or need a lift to one of the meetings please give me a call. Look forward to hearing from you.

*Fiona Burnett, Chair West Tweeddale Guild
(Tel 07844196234, fiona@glenholm.co.uk)*

Pentecost

When I was at school I knew the word Whitsun but didn't know what it meant beyond the opportunity to enjoy an early Summer holiday. Whitsun, falling seven weeks after Easter Day, coincided with the Summer half-term holiday and in those days Whit Monday was a bank holiday, a day for drives through the Home Counties countryside to spend the day at the seaside on the Sussex coast.

Today that bank holiday has been replaced by the Spring Bank Holiday and is held on the last Monday in May, regardless of when Easter falls. Whitsun is still recognised in the Church however, often as another name for the holy day of Pentecost. In Greek the word Pentecost means "fiftieth" and so Pentecost is the fiftieth day after the Jewish festival of Passover/Easter.

Pentecost is often regarded as the birthday of the church. It is the day when the followers of Jesus, who had gathered on the day of Pentecost, were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in languages other than their own. But not only did they speak in other languages, they, and those witnessing the event, heard and



understood what was said. And so began the spread of the Gospel message to people beyond the original early church community.

As it has spread the Church has gone through processes of division and further subdivision based on differences in belief and doctrine and now there are churches representing many different denominations. But we all share the same roots and, recognising the need to occasionally celebrate those differences, can come together to enjoy what we have in common, one of the messages of Pentecost.

Pentecost Sunday this year is 8th June. Would you be interested, at a date and location to be decided, in joining with fellow Christians of all denominations in our community to celebrate our shared faith and explore how we can encourage each other in sharing our faith in our community? If you are interested in coming along, we'd like to hear from you.

Neil Robinson (neil@glenholm.co.uk)

Get Healthy – Take Up Singing

The advent and popularity of TV's Gareth Malone programmes over recent years, as well as mainstream music being added to the choral repertoire has resulted in an upsurge of people joining choirs. Traditional community choirs and choral societies now sit alongside rock choirs and pop choirs in most cities and towns in the UK. It is estimated that 2.8 million of us Brits are now members of some sort of choir.

GREAT NEWS FOR THE NATIONS HEALTH.

Music generally has been used throughout history and different cultures in healing rituals and is used as a therapy in our own culture for the relief of mental health issues and illnesses, breathing conditions (asthma & COPD especially), language impairment – to name just a few.

Listening to and participating in music has been shown to be effective in pain relief, through the release of neurochemicals such as endorphins. There is also evidence to suggest that music can help sustain a healthy immune system by reducing the stress hormone cortisol and boosting the immunoglobulin A antibody.

The benefits of singing are wide ranging and as everyone can sing – however much some people protest! – this makes it one of the most accessible forms of music making.

The physiological benefits of singing have long been explored, examined and tested. It is beneficial for exercising the brain as well as the body, improving breathing and breath capacity and for improving posture and muscle tension. Then from the psychological aspect, community singing is excellent for forging bonds. Personal bonding within groups is an ideal behaviour to improve broader social networks. This is particularly valuable in today's often alienating world, where most social interaction is conducted remotely via computers, tablets and phones via Facebook, Twitter etc. In a recent study, choir members reported that learning new music is cognitively stimulating and helps their memory with other tasks as well. It has been proven that singing can significantly help those suffering with dementia. The satisfaction of performing together,



even without an audience, is likely to be associated with the activation of the brain's reward system, including the dopamine pathway, which keeps people coming back for more.

IN SUMMARY - 10 REASONS TO JOIN A CHOIR

- Improves your posture
- Improves your lung capacity
- Improves your quality of sleep
- Reduces stress
- Keeps your brain healthy
- Improves your memory
- It is an antidepressant
- Strengthens your immune system
- Improves empathy and social relations
- Helps you live longer

So what more is there to say?

START SINGING NOW

Ann Dawson, one of our regular organists



Schoolhouse Garden Produce

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Email: schoolhousegardenproduce@btinternet.com

Schoolhouse, Skirling by Biggar

Broughton Church Update



Under the Church of Scotland plan for the rationalisation of the existing church buildings. Broughton Church was categorised as a "B". This edict gave the congregation until December 2025 to dispose of the building which was not well used. The church is not in an accessible place and not centrally

placed. It also suffers from rising damp which has rendered it unhealthy.

After much soul searching, the Kirk Session agreed to move elsewhere and the church has not been used for the last year. We have found a temporary home in Broughton Village Hall. It has been difficult to move but times change and the small congregation must move with the times. The church has been vetted and catalogued by one of the Church of Scotland trustees. Items such as ceremonial flags, the cradle roll and historic artefacts have found a new home in Skirling or Tweedsmuir churches. The organ which was bought after fundraising has been relocated to Skirling church where it will be dry and warm. Any other items which carry no local historic value may be auctioned. The church is now up for sale and we live in the hope of finding a buyer.

The small hall in the village hall has become a place of welcome for anyone who would like to join a service on a Sunday morning at 1100 with refreshments from 1030. The move has given us the opportunity to try various forms of service. We have piloted a series of "Films that make you think" on Friday night once a month. There is also a prayer group meeting on the first and third Mondays in the hall meeting room to pray for the church in Broughton as we search for a new direction.



Recent services have run worship in a café style setting in the large hall. These have included a Christingle service. A Christingle is made from an orange, four small sticks, a red ribbon and sweets, to represent Jesus as the light of the world. Much fun was had putting them together. There was a Pancake service where pancakes were cooked to order and eaten before the service with a variety of accompaniments. There will be a café style service for Palm Sunday on 13 April with cake and coffee available before the service at 1100.

A permanent home for the church is not yet visible but things always take time to develop. The church aims to serve the community and welcomes ideas and visits from our neighbours.

I hope you have a lovely Easter.

Alevis Marr



Wanderings – gathering to connect life and faith

Wanderings is a project being run in partnership with the Church of Scotland parish of Upper Tweeddale and some support from The Novum Trust and Cairn Movement. We meet twice a month, once on a Saturday afternoon (usually the last of the month) and once on Wednesday or Thursday mornings followed by an option to join in Bite and Blether or Skirling Community Lunch.

Wanderings is a reflective woodland wander; a gathering where all ages can reflect, talk and walk together. There will be some thoughts shared, a Bible verse, story or poem perhaps, time to chat, share and consider as well as some silence and a cuppa. Everyone is welcome. if you would like to join a Wander just turn up at the right place, usually Broughtonknowe woods main carpark, with warm, waterproof clothing and stout boots with good grip, some of the routes are a little steep, rough and muddy. We will be walking about 3km and should be back to the car park within an hour and a half. There are composting toilets on site, if you have any additional needs, questions or need a lift (car sharing encouraged) get in touch. Anyone under 18y needs a responsible adult with them.

What3words/// certainty.questions.flown OS grid ref: NT103391

Dates for next meetings

- April** 2nd 9.30am Broughtonknowe then Bite and Blether in Broughton Village Hall
19th 10.30am Easter Saturday, short Prayer Wander around Glenholm Graveyard followed by refreshments meet at Glenholm Cottage ML12 6LF
26th 2.30pm Broughtonknowe Wandering with refreshments provided
- May** 8th 10.30am Broughtonknowe followed by lunch at Skirling Village Hall
24th 2.30pm Broughtonknowe Wandering with refreshments provided
- June** 4th 9.30am Broughtonknowe then Bite and Blether in Broughton Village Hall
28th 2.30pm Broughtonknowe Wandering with refreshments provided
- July** 10th 10.30am Broughtonknowe followed by lunch at Skirling Village Hall
26th 2.30pm Broughtonknowe Wandering with refreshments provided
- Aug** 6th 9.30am Broughtonknowe then Bite and Blether in Broughton Village Hall
30th 2.30pm Broughtonknowe Wandering with refreshments provided.

There's a chance a walk might get cancelled or changed last minute if the weather would not make the walk safe. This will be e-mailed out and posted on our Facebook page, find this by searching "Wanderings – Scotland".

If you would like to sign up to our emailing list, contact Nicola Campbell
nshawcampbell@hotmail.com

What's happening in Upper

Look out for updates on noticeboards and

Listening Hour

Rev Dr Tony Foley is available in the Laurel Bank Tearoom on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month from 10:30 – 11:30 am if you wish to drop by.

Bite and Blether

Broughton Village Hall

1st Wednesday of every month from 10 – 12.

Hot roll, home baking tea/coffee. Suggested donation £5

Skirling Lunch Club

Skirling Village Hall

2nd Thursday in the month. From 12-1:30

Soup, roll, traybake and tea/coffee. £2. All welcome

Stobo Community Coffee Mornings

Stobo Village Hall

2nd Saturday in the month 10:30 – 12

£2 donation, children free. All proceeds to Peeblesshire Food bank

April

Easter in the parishes of West Tweeddale

Holy Week Services

Theme – No future without forgiveness

Palm Sunday 13th April Joint service in Broughton Village Hall . Coffee and cake from 10:30am, service at 11 am

Monday 14th April. Forgiveness within community. Tweedsmuir Kirk 7pm

Tuesday 15th April. Recognising the hurt we cause. Broughton Village Hall 7pm

Wednesday 16th April. Repentance. Skirling Church 7pm

Thursday 17th April. Holy Communion. Newlands Church 7pm

Friday 18th April Tenebrae service. Carlops Church 8pm

Saturday 19th April A gentle Wandering in Glenholm churchyard followed by a cup of tea at Glenholm Cottage. 10:30am

er Tweeddale this Easter

and websites for the events listed below

Easter Sunday 20th April

A Joint service in Tweedsmuir Village Hall followed by refreshments and "eggtivities" 10am

Films that make you think

Broughton Village Hall

Friday 25th April 7pm see pg 4 for details

Messy Church

New Hall, West Linton

Sunday 27th April 4pm

Theme:- Sowing seeds. Join us for a story, craft activities, food and fun mainly for P7 and below.

May

Biggar Singers Concert

St Mary's Hall, Biggar. Saturday 3rd May 7:30pm

Karl Jenkins – The Armed Man, Tickets from choir members or phone Anne (07748 638933)

Christian Aid Car Boot sale

Skirling Green

Sunday 18th May from 2pm (but stalls appear from around 12 noon)

Plants, ice-cream, home baking, bargains and of course teas in the Village Hall
£8 per car with all proceeds going to Christian Aid (see pg 14 for more details)

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Hope you are looking forward to the annual Skirling Green car boot sale which this year is on the afternoon of Sunday the 18th of May.... Start clearing out your cupboards now for items to sell on the Christian Aid stall or in your own boot. We are always looking for baking for those delicious teas in the village hall, and of course we need lots of you to turn out and buy stuff! Let's hope it is a lovely sunny day bringing out lots of people to buy, eat ice cream, enjoy the homebaking and just take the chance to meet lots of your neighbours. The article below tells you about some of the worthwhile projects the money that we raise will go towards.

Isobel Hunter

Christian Aid's 80th Anniversary

Our journey together began in 1945 when Christian Aid was founded at the end of the Second World War. For 8 decades, we have been united in the fight against poverty and injustice – and with your continued support, we won't stop. 2025 will be a year to reaffirm our resolve, to remember the work we've done together, and to reflect on how we should respond to the challenges we're still facing as a global family. We've always shared a gospel call to champion dignity, equality, justice and love. Together we've grown and evolved, living these values – even when the going got tough. We've never been more committed to our calling and hope we can count on you to stay the course with us.

There will be a service of thanksgiving on Saturday 17th May 7pm – 9pm at St.Giles Cathedral – all are welcome to attend.

Christian Aid Week 11-17th May 2025

Last year, a fantastic total of £730,000 was raised due to the generosity and creativity of churches and supporters in Scotland. CA Week is one of the biggest acts of Christian witness in our country. For CA Week 2025, we will be sharing stories from our work in Guatemala, where farmers like Aurelia are pushing back against poverty and the effects of the climate crisis. Guatemala faces immense challenges:

*more than half the population work in agriculture, yet Guatemala is a hunger hotspot

*Guatemala has one of the highest rates globally of stunted development in children

*Guatemala is one of the 10 countries in the world rated most vulnerable to climate emergencies

Aurelia is an inspirational farmer of the Q'eqchi community. She has 8 children and many grandchildren. She moved to the region when she was 2 years old. Things were very different then: "there was an abundance of trees, plants and wild animals. There was lots of water close to the community and it wasn't that hot."

The water sources that were near Aurelia's home have been drained by heatwaves and industrial plantations that monopolise the water supply and deforest the land. Now collecting water for her crops is laborious and time consuming.

It's testimony to Aurelia's endurance and hope that she proactively set out to find solutions. She discovered the work of our partner Congcoop, putting herself forward to attend the specialist training on offer. She has learned to adapt to the changing climate. She now grows climate resilient crops, produces fertilizer and builds rainwater collection systems. She's leading her community by sharing the skills and knowledge she has gained. It's vital that this programme continues.

For more information, go to the website caweek.org

Robert Higgins, Linkage Christian Aid Chair



Christmas Donations

A big thank you to all who contributed to any of the opportunities to give this past Christmastide. The following groups benefitted from your generosity

From our gift services

- 1) Edinburgh Old Church in Muirhouse took delivery of a fair few bags of toys and presents for children up to about 8 years old and these were distributed to help support needy families in their parish.
- 2) The Scottish Borders CHIMES service in Galashiels were given £565 in tokens, a joint effort between the Parish of Upper Tweeddale and Stobo Church. These were passed on to young carers aged 7-18 and to young people affected by parental substance abuse,

From our Christmas services and events

- 1) £200 was sent to the Peeblesshire Food bank
- 2) £400 was sent to the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon to support their Middle East humanitarian appeal

Peter Worthington, Treasurer



Tweedsmuir Update

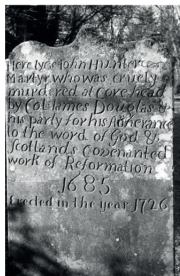
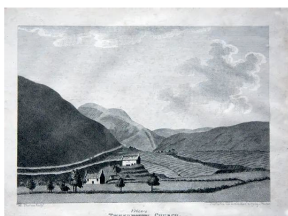
Tweedsmuir Kirk survived storm Eowyn but the graveyard was covered in fallen limbs and branches and we even lost a lovely Rowan tree. The lower wall was crumbling onto the road but an email to our contact in Scottish Borders Council who maintain the graveyard resulted in a fantastic tidy over the next week. - As well as clearing the wood, the Autumn leaves were gathered from the path to the car park and the whole area "hoovered". We have also had our first grass cut and the Kirk looks amazing with it's row of snowdrops and daffodils. We have an L.E.D. cross in an upstairs window shining throughout the dark hours which can be seen from the A701 .

Christine Parker

Tweedsmuir Kirk

Our Kirk was originally founded on this site on 1643 after which followed a turbulent history.

The present Kirk was completed in 1874 and in October, we Celebrated our 150th year with coffee and cake and an Upper Tweed worship service entertainment by a local choir.



We have several sheets printed of the history of Tweedsmuir Kirk and local area. Also, information of some of the famous people

buried in the graveyard and welcome visitors as the Kirk is opened daily. But - will Tweedsmuir Kirk have a future beyond 2028 when it is proposed by presbytery to be closed.....

For what's on locally and more information about our churches please visit our websites:-

www.westtweeddale.org.uk

www.uppertweeddale.org.uk

www.tweedsmuir.scot



Donations to the upkeep our Kirk are very welcome

Scan this QR code for a quick link to online and Gift Aid donations – please leave a comment and include a reference to Tweedsmuir



Tweedsmuir Kirk

Usual service is 9.30am Sundays and visitors are most welcome

Note - a joint Upper Tweed Easter service will be held in Tweedsmuir Village Hall

At 10.am

Upper Tweeddale Services

Date	Skirling Kirk (11.30am)	Tweedsmuir Kirk (9.30am) & Broughton Village Hall (11am)
13 Apr	Joint Palm Sunday service in Broughton Village Hall at 11am led by Linda Hill	
20 Apr	Joint Easter service in Tweedsmuir Village Hall at 10am led by Peter Worthington and Fiona Burnett	
27 Apr	Fiona Burnett	Rev Dr Tony Foley
4 May	David Henderson-Howat	Fiona Burnett
11 May	Rev Dr Tony Foley	Peter Worthington
18 May	Steven Whalley	Rev Dr Tony Foley
25 May	David Henderson-Howat	Rev. Calum MacDougall
1 Jun	Rev Dr Tony Foley	Isobel Hunter
8 Jun	Isobel Hunter	Rev Dr Tony Foley
15 Jun	Fiona Burnett	Steven Whalley
22 Jun	Rev Dr Tony Foley	Peter Worthington
29 Jun	Julian Birchall	Rev Dr Tony Foley
6 Jul	David Henderson-Howat	Steven Whalley
13 Jul	Rev Dr Tony Foley	Isobel Hunter
20 Jul	Murray Campbell	Rev Dr Tony Foley
27 Jul	Fiona Burnett	David Henderson-Howat

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Skirling Update

Wonderful organ music can now be heard in Skirling Kirk as the magnificent Allen organ from Broughton church has now taken up residence. It is good that we have retained this magnificent instrument for our Upper Tweed parish and our organists are thoroughly enjoying exploring its capabilities. Bach's spine-tingling Toccata and Fugue in D minor has been heard more than once.

Moving the organ was no easy task and took 4 people from Allens two full days to achieve. Scaffolding was needed to reach the speakers high up in Broughton Church (rumour has it that Phil Hotham got them up there with just ladders – a health and safety nightmare!) and then to lift them up to the roof in Skirling.

Pews were removed at the back of the church to make way for the organ and the organist, who handily will have a good view of brides as they enter the church. There are now 4 speakers rather than the 6 in Broughton. Partly because of the smaller space and partly because 2 of the original speakers had been badly damaged by damp. The organ has been reprogrammed to run on four channels and toned down so that it will not blow the windows out. It still sounds amazing.

We are hoping to arrange for some short Sunday afternoon recitals and concerts to show off the organ and to raise some money towards the cost of the removal. Watch out for announcements.

Unhappier news is that we have lost three trees from the churchyard. First to go was the ancient beech tree at the top of church brae, a large limb lost to heavy rainfall and rot made it unsafe. It was a beautiful tree, part of the landscape of Skirling for hundreds of years. Then we lost two of the Scots Pines in the graveyard, one to Storm Eowyn and then one to the storms a couple of weeks later that proved even more destructive to our local trees. Some replanting needed.



The ambitions of the Skirling Community Plan are being carried forward with the recent establishment of Skirling Community Development Trust. This vehicle will enable the employment of a part time worker who with volunteer help will push forward with projects such as improving local paths and creating informative signage for the village. Already several bird boxes and an owl box have been placed in the woods by a group of enthusiastic volunteers.

Skirling residents have been well entertained so far in 2025. January saw the return of the Skirling Burns Supper with great storytelling, musical entertainment and food. In February the regular monthly lunch had the extra draw of a splendid performance from Braw Clan in Broad Scots. Then in March, showing that all tastes are catered for, a good crowd enjoyed a second Skirling Rocks evening with music from Jim Duncan and The Mighty Joes and much dancing.



The Skirling Car Boot Sale on the 18th May and a celebration of 750 years of Skirling history in June are events still to look forward to. *Isobel Hunter*

Easter Baking with an air fryer

Are you one of the millions of households that have invested in an air fryer but are not using it to its full potential? According to the Leatherhead Food Research organisation by May 2024 51% of UK households had an air fryer, but nearly half of those (43%) struggle to figure out how to adapt recipes for air fryer use.

The air fryer is basically a very small but powerful convection oven. So as long as it fits in the air fryer and you can cook it in a normal oven, you can cook it in an air fryer. And, usually the big advantage is that it cooks quicker and uses less electricity. However, if you are cooking large quantities or cooking lots of things, then your normal oven is probably more efficient.

With Easter upon us, chocolate and baking may come to mind. Both the recipes below can be made in a normal oven but I find the results much better with an air fryer and a lot quicker. And if you are looking for something to do with the children over the holidays, why not give it a go?

Tip: Investing in silicone cupcake cases is definitely worth it. Their more rigid structure make transferring mixture into the air fryer easier, and after baking the muffins and brownies they pop out easily and cleanly.

Easter Hunt Muffins (makes about 20)

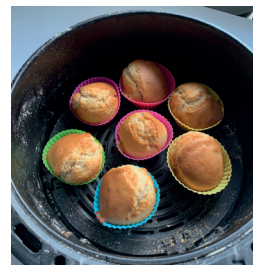
Ingredients

125ml sunflower or rapeseed oil
2 medium eggs
250ml milk
1 tsp vanilla extract
150g caster sugar
400g self-raising flour
½ tsp salt
about 20 mini eggs (the sugar shell coated ones)



Method

- 1) Whisk together the fresh eggs, oil, milk and vanilla extract in a large bowl until well combined.
- 2) Add the sugar and mix well then add the flour and combine until the mixture is smooth but don't overbeat
- 3) Put a large spoonful of mixture in a cupcake case, filling it about half full
- 4) Place a chocolate egg in the middle of the mixture in the case and press down slightly to half cover the egg.
- 5) Spoon over a small spoonful of mixture to cover the chocolate egg (the cupcakes should be no more than 2/3 full) and repeat steps 3, 4 and 5 for each of the other cup cake cases.
- 6) Transfer the completed cupcake cases to the air fryer, placing them in the basket or on the trivet, depending on the fryer model. Cupcake cases can touch but don't over crowd. You will need to cook these in batches.
- 7) Cook at 170°C for 13 minutes until risen and golden brown on top (the time may be different for your air fryer so check after about 11 mins).
- 8) Remove from air fryer and cool on a rack then repeat with next batch, Nb if chocolate eggs are not your thing, you can use the recipe as a basic muffin recipe and add things like fried fruit, spices, chocolate chips. Cooking time is the same.



Brownie Bites (makes about 16)

Once you have the correct timing for your air fryer, these come out perfectly every time.

Ingredients

- 150g chocolate, either milk or plain, broken up into small bits
- 125g butter
- 150g granulated sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 75g plain flour
- 50g unsweetened cocoa powder
- 2 large eggs



Method

- 1 Put the butter, chocolate and sugar into a large saucepan and heat gently till melted. This can be done in a microwave in a large bowl but use medium power and check frequently to avoid over heating the mixture. Stir the mixture till smooth
- 2 Add the vanilla extract, cocoa and flour and stir till combined
- 3 In a small bowl beat the eggs together then gently stir into the chocolate mixture. It should go smooth and glossy.
- 4 Spoon a spoonful of mixture into cupcake cases to 1/3 full
- 5 Transfer to the air fryer, placing them in the basket or on the trivet, depending on your fryer model. The cupcake cases can touch but don't over crowd. You will need to cook these in batches.
- 6 Cook at 160°C for 8 minutes until slightly crispy to touch on top, and soft underneath, This is 8 minutes (from trial and error) with my air fryer and you may wish to cook one first to get the correct timing for the rest
- 7 Remove from the air fryer and cool on a rack, repeat with next batch.



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