

Diary: July

August

1		3.30pm Meditation Group
2	10.30 Makerstoun	
3		
4	3.30pm Meditation Group	
5		
6		10.30 Makerstoun
7		
8		3.30pm Meditation Group
9	10.30 Stichill	
10		
11	3.30pm Meditation Group	
12		
13		10.30 Stichill
14		
15		3.30pm Meditation Group
16	10.30 Smailholm	
17		
18	3.30pm Meditation Group	
19		
20		10.30 Smailholm (Communion)
21		
22		3.30pm Meditation Group
23	10.30 Stichill	
24		
25	3.30pm Meditation Group	
26		
27		6.30pm Stichill, Songs of Praise
28		
29		3.30pm Meditation Group
30	10.30 Roxburgh	
31		

Kelso Country Churches



The Country Link

~~~~~July/August, 2017

Hello,

There is an old chorus going round my head at the moment. I can't find the lyrics anywhere but I am sure they are based on a Philippians Text - **For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. (Phil 1;6)** It goes on to say have you heard the encouraging word/that brings confidence?/ God will continue what he started in you/have confidence. And that is all I remember.

Why is it buzzing around – well everywhere I seem to look people are losing confidence. The horrible fire in the Tower Block in London led to an outpouring not just of anger but an utter lack of confidence in politicians local and National along with the agencies that are charged with protecting our safety or delivering our services. The fire and the reaction to the fire was shocking and while I continued day by day to feel distraught by the continuing stories of human tragedy, I was almost overwhelmed with disbelief that it could happen and found my confidence shattered in the competence of our guardians.

In the hours that followed the self-organising relief that the neighbourhood brought was encouraging. Such a little candle of hope in a fire that engulfed so many lives. But that little candle was a symbol for me of a rising energy among people not to be crushed by the failings of institutions. At the heart of the NHS the good works go on day by day in spite of the structural turmoil that worries many. We wonder if they are becoming self-serving, if they have our interests at heart.

The signs of hope in this are people cracking on with what needs done, as they did in London. The faith planted in us will find expression and grow and find fruition. As our institutions get weaker and we lose faith in them so an independence of expression grows and we find ways of being church or Christians outside of the mainstream. God will continue what he planted in you.

Robin McHaffie Interim Moderator

## *Parish News and Updates*

There have been some really good events in KCC over recent weeks which have brought people together to socialise and raise much needed funds at the same time. Apart from the Bike Ride mentioned elsewhere in the magazine, there was a lunch in May for Christian Aid which raised £201 (including donations from folk who couldn't be at the lunch).



The Stichill Summer Fayre was held on 3<sup>rd</sup> June at the church hall and adjacent walled garden. It was a beautiful day and Bert Duncan and his team erected marquees the evening before and the tea ladies and stallholders swung into action on the day to set up. As usual many people came to buy their garden plants, sample the delights of the various stalls,

and enjoy delicious afternoon teas and they were not disappointed. Teas were served in the church hall and in the garden and there was ample space for everyone to enjoy the event at their leisure, and activities for children. The total amount raised was £1,367.20. The dismantling and clearing up was done in record time with everything ship shape by early evening.

We are grateful to James Leeming once again for giving us the use of his garden.

**Davinia Inglis:** I'm sure many of the Stichill church family would like to know that Davinia has been transferred from Kelso Hospital to Knowesouth Nursing Home near Hawick. A card with our good wishes will be sent to her, and she would appreciate a visit if you are passing that way.

### *Our Church Family*

3<sup>rd</sup> June: The wedding took place in Smailholm Kirk, of Kirsty Shaw, daughter of Ronald and Wendy, Smailholm, to Robert Little from Annan, Dumfriesshire.

The marriage was conducted by Rev. Robin McHaffie.

6<sup>th</sup> June: The funeral took place of David Smith, from Nenthorn, dear husband of Blitz Smith, in Borders Crematorium.

The funeral was conducted by Rev. Anna Rodwell

Church of Scotland charity no. SCO000958

### *Meditation Group*

The Meditation Group continues to meet most Tuesdays at 3.30pm at the Roxburghe Hall in Kelso (opposite Kelso Old Parish Church). We meet for an hour or so – at present we start with a reading from a book or other text which someone has brought and wants to share, and we spend a little time discussing that. Then we move into silent meditation for around 20 minutes. All are welcome to join us anytime – you do not need to attend every week if that's not possible for you (I only manage intermittently – but I so enjoy it when I am there!) and Lynda Stark is on hand to guide anyone new to the practice of meditation.

Meditation has been found to have many benefits for those who practise it regularly. It is a very effective stress-reducer, and many studies show that not only can it benefit your mental state of mind, but it may improve your physical health also.

If you are thinking of coming along, it's probably a good idea to contact Lynda first (225567) to confirm that we will be meeting that week as we have the occasional Tuesday off.

We look forward to seeing you.

*Liz Orr*

## Prayer Time

*The Brick* by Michel Quoist

*The bricklayer laid a brick on the bed of cement.  
Then, with a precise stroke of his trowel  
spread another layer,  
and without a by-your-leave, laid on another brick.  
The foundations grew visibly.  
The building rose, tall and strong,  
to shelter men.*

*I thought, Lord, of that brick buried in the darkness at  
the base of the big building.*

*No one sees it,  
but it accomplishes its task,  
and the other bricks need it.*

*Lord, what difference whether I am on the roof-top  
or in the foundations of your building,  
as long as I stand faithfully at the right place?*

Michel Quoist was born in La Havre in 1921. He was an inspirational figure to Catholics and other Christians around the world, seeking to relate their faith more directly to every day life, presenting Christianity as part of the gritty daily reality rather than in forms of traditional piety. He became a Catholic Priest, Theologian and Writer, most widely known for his best-selling book "Prayers of Life" which was first published in French in 1954 and has since been published in many languages.

'The Brick' is one of the prayers from that book.

He died in 1997.

## Preaching Plan for July/August, 2017

|                        |                                   |                    |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| July 2 <sup>nd</sup>   | Makerstoun                        | David Harvey       |
| " 9 <sup>th</sup>      | Stichill                          | Rev Marion Dodd    |
| " 16 <sup>th</sup>     | Smailholm                         | Jim Smith          |
| " 23 <sup>rd</sup>     | Stichill                          | Elizabeth Findlay  |
| " 30 <sup>th</sup>     | Roxburgh                          | Sophia Duncan      |
| August 6 <sup>th</sup> | Makerstoun                        | Rev Robin McHaffie |
| " 13 <sup>th</sup>     | Stichill                          | James Smith        |
| " 20 <sup>th</sup>     | Smailholm(Communion)              | Rev Robin McHaffie |
| " 27 <sup>th</sup>     | Stichill(evening Songs of Praise) | Sophia Duncan      |

### A note from the Convener of the Vacancy Nominating Committee;

To date, unfortunately the same message as in the last Country Link - nothing to report. The Committee will be meeting in August to see what to do next. *David Harvey*

An advantage of being in a vacancy is that it enables variety to be built into our services and we certainly get that in KCC with the Ministers and our own Worship Team who strive to bring innovative and thought provoking ways of worship each week. On Sunday, 27<sup>th</sup> August there will be a **Songs of Praise at 6.30pm** in Stichill Church. Do make a note of this and come along to what I trust will be a time of joyful singing and meaningful worship when all ages can come together in loving fellowship. Worship is the highest act we can participate in as human beings and should be a true reflection of the worship of our hearts day by day. *Sophia Duncan*

## Kelso Youth Worker



Rosalind Monie, Moira Land and myself, on behalf of Kelso Country Churches with Oxnam, have been working with representatives from Kelso North and Ednam and Kelso Old and Sprouston to plan a project which we hope will see us be able to employ a youth worker in the Kelso and Oxnam area. Working with ministers and volunteers from our churches this youth worker will support young people and

help them gain knowledge of the Christian faith. The plan is that, although the youth worker will have a base in Kelso where they can be contacted by the young people, they will hopefully work with the schools and church groups, as well as each individual church.

Planning of this is moving forward and our Kirk session have already agreed to support this project and we are going to apply for grants to fund the venture. Church of Scotland have a "Go For It Fund" which we will apply to and we will also have to apply to other funding bodies and trusts to match fund the money we will get from Church of Scotland.

We hope that our congregations and communities will support this work. We want to let our children know about Christian faith and hope that these young people can feel that the church is a safe and friendly place to come to.

Nita Renwick

## Update on the Raphael Project

We continue to receive donations of good-quality children's clothes for the children of the Raphael Centre in Grahamstown and surrounding townships in South Africa, which KCC has supported since 2009.

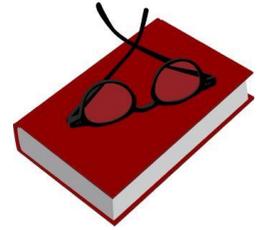
Twenty three parcels have been posted so far this year at a cost of £306.25 and we await confirmation of arrival of the last four posted on 29/5/2017. We received news that there had been a fire in the office of the Centre in April but the work of the charity is back on track.

Thank you to those who continue to donate money to cover postage costs.

## Book Review

### Strange Weather in Tokyo

By  
Hiromi Kawakami



This is a very short novel, which left a big impression on me. It is a beautifully written love story, but completely different from anything we might expect here in the West. The main character is Tsukiko, a young woman in her forties who seems very naïve, and many years younger, perhaps in her twenties. She spends most of her time alone, and one night while sitting in a bar, she finds herself next to an old high school teacher. This man is much older than her, but we don't learn how old he is. She calls him Sensei throughout the novel. Sensei means teacher in Japanese.

The relationship between them progresses very slowly, and the book becomes a meditation on loneliness, and love. They meet regularly in a bar, but not by pre-arrangement, rather by the fact that each wants to see the other, but doesn't communicate this in words. They each buy their own food, and wash it down with copious amounts of sake. They then go home. This is what feels so lonely.

In the meantime, Tsukiko meets an ex-boyfriend who wants to rekindle their relationship. It is then that Tsukiko realises that it is Sensei she loves.

As the story progresses we get a strong feeling of Japanese society which is so different from our own. There is a huge amount of formality, and of working around feeling, especially in the case of Sensei, who risks being thoroughly misunderstood.

I found this novel to be exquisite, in a very Japanese way. It's sad, and wistful, and full of tenderness. It isn't Hiromi Kawakami's first novel, and it left me wanting to read more of her work.

Lynda Stark

**Wise words:** There is no pleasure in leading a life which is less than you are capable of.

## Update of improvements to the Manse



The renovations to the kitchen and bathroom are now nearing completion. The kitchen has had new units installed, wall tiles and vinyl floor covering laid. New patio doors have been ordered to replace the existing doors which are in poor condition.

The bathroom has been fitted with new units and Vinyl floor-covering.



The work of maintaining the large garden is ongoing throughout the year.



The grass is cut regularly during the season and extensive hedges and shrubs trimmed annually by our ever-busy Property Convener, Bert Duncan.  
**THANK YOU, BERT**

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## PART 2 - Martin Luther 500: 1483 – 1546

### THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK



Luther's ideas and teaching spread rapidly across Europe because they coincided with the invention of printing. His books and texts were eagerly sought after and passed from hand to hand, but as Isaac Newton lays down in Principia Mathematica: "To every action there is always opposed an equal reaction."

Rome soon responded with their own Counter Reformation.

Martin Luther was matched by his almost exact contemporary from the Basque country in Spain, Ignatius Loyola, 1491 – 1556. Ignatius is just his Latin version of his Spanish name Inigo and Loyola is the place where he was born; in our terms, the equivalent of Roxburgh. He founded the Jesuit Order and you will remember that the present Pope Francis was a Jesuit priest in the Argentine.

Between these two great ideas the balance goes back and forth and the argument is with us yet. Put very simply, it is between freedom and obedience. As we wonder what is to become, not just of our Country Churches, but of the Church of Scotland itself, the argument is still very real. I have just spent a few days in Suffolk and you may say it applies there just as much.

But we do not want arguments, we are looking for clear understanding, something positive and reassuring in a fog of doubt, and you do not expect to find anything useful in a Basque priest 500 years ago. Try this translation to English from his prayer for Generosity of 1548, it is often quoted but seldom acknowledged.

Teach us, good Lord, to serve thee as thou deservest:  
to give and not to count the cost;  
to fight and not heed the wounds:  
to toil and not to seek for rest;  
to labour, and not to ask for any reward  
save that of knowing that we do thy will.

One little postscript: you will remember Brian Bilston's clever poem "Refugees" in last month's Country Link. The word refugee entered the English language in 1681 to describe the Protestant Huguenots fleeing Catholic France.

*Charlie Orr*

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## The Cobbles Four Churches Challenge Jim Smith

The challenge bike ride on 14<sup>th</sup> May was a new venture for Kelso Country Churches which we now know is a round journey of 29 miles. It was also a personal challenge for me to see how quickly I could cycle round the churches. There was also a special prize donated by the Cobbles Inn for the person who guessed nearest to my time.

So I started on 1<sup>st</sup> March getting into training after my winter lay off and by the time the challenge came around, I had cycled 355 miles and been to exotic destinations such as Lauder in the west and Horncliffe in the east, and went a maximum of about 40 miles on any one bike ride. Then I timed myself from Stichill round our churches back to Stichill and my time was a very respectable 2 hours 20 minutes. I was happy with that.

Well, the big day came and as usual I attended kirk in the morning at Makerstoun then rushed home and had some lunch before going to Stichill; no time to cycle this time so took the bike down in the trailer.

I was uncertain who was cycling that day as I was going to be timed, and as it turned out, Sophia & Bert Duncan were there. Sophia had actually done the whole thing in mid-week as the weather had not been promising for the



Sunday. So I was glad and surprised to see some Kelso Wheelers awaiting the start, (some real cyclists). Jim Fleming had alerted them and three of them turned up; Graham Easson and his son Daniel from Makerstoun, and Jill Sinton from Charterhall. David and Kathleen Wilkie had agreed to be timekeepers and travel around with us.

We left Stichill travelling at a fair speed (downhill) though Kelso and on to Roxburgh. At this point the “Wheelers” stayed with me with ease, despite chatting between themselves with no loss of breath! The first stage of 8.3 miles took me 32 minutes and 4 seconds.

After a short break outside Roxburgh Church it was back on the road again, this time the two gentlemen riders indicated they were upping the pace and went on in front. Jill who was just recovering from an injury stayed with me to Makerstoun (always in front encouraging me). From “the windy corner” at the “Duke’s Dyke” we were heading into the wind.

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but again we made it; 11.2 miles in 46 minutes and 19 seconds. Jim Fleming had opened the annexe in the church and we all had a relaxing drink.

On the third stage the men left first then Jill and me, Jill putting more into it, increasing the distance between us. However, I nearly caught up with her at the turn off for Sandyknowe. No! she had not weakened. She had to stop to let the farmer drive the herd of sheep along the road. This was the shortest stage at 4.4 Miles, and I did it in 22 minutes. Refreshments in Smailholm church were most welcome, thanks to Isobel Atkinson who had prepared lots of lovely food.

The last stage was good, with the wind on my back going along all by myself. Just outside Stichill, I met the “Wheelers” going the other way having finished and were now doing some extra training! I did the last stage of 5.1 miles in 18 minutes and 10 seconds. I met Bert at Stichill who had cycled from his house to Makerstoun, Smailholm and Stichill. We went to the church hall (Bert, Me, David and Kathleen) with the sponsor sheets and worked out the time and who had won the meal for two at the Cobbles Inn. The total time was 1hour 58 minutes and 33 seconds, and Ann Piercy was the lucky winner.

I want to say a special thanks to the “Kelso Wheelers” who really drove me on to my very special time. Also to all the people who sponsored the cycle run, the people who collected the sponsor money, the Cobbles Inn for the meal voucher and the people who helped on the day. It was a very successful venture making £696 for church funds.



A little story to go with the bike run – My step-son Ross who was trying to get fit joined me half way through my training and to begin with I was by far the stronger cyclist but a week before my sponsored cycle we went out on what turned out to be a 42 mile run and Ross by this time was up to my standard and getting better all the time and he was starting to push me. Two days after this journey my knee was swollen and I was hobbling about so I struggled till the day itself taking painkillers and bandaged my knee up not knowing whither I would be able to cycle at all. But as I have found out before, where there is a will there is a way and I thank God for that because he had a lot to do with it. From that day my knee improved and is now back to normal. No, I’ve not been cycling again with Ross.

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