

February 2025 -----BENEFICE NEWS-----February 2025

For enquiries please contact Revd Dr Robert Brown

Priest-in-Charge, Bewcastle, Stapleton and Kirklington with Hethersgill

Greenholme, Bewcastle, Cumbria, CA6 6PWT: 016977 48438

email: Robert.Brown@BewcastleHouseOfPrayer.org.uk

Date	Sunday	Bewcastle	Stapleton	Hethersgill	Kirklington
2 nd Feb	Candlemas	3 pm HC			
9 th Feb	4 th Before Lent			10 am HC Revd Liz Gough	
16 th Feb	3 rd Before Lent		10 am HC		
23 rd Feb	2 nd Before Lent				10 am HC
2 nd Mar	Next Before Lent	10 am HC			
5 th Mar	Ash Wednesday		6 pm HC with Ashes (BCP)		

HC = Holy Communion, MP = Morning Prayer, EP = Evening Prayer

Knowe United Reformed Church, Bewcastle

2.15 pm

Prayer for the Month

Almighty God, you have created the heavens and the earth and made us in your own image: teach us to discern your hand in all your works and your likeness in all your children, through Jesus Christ, your son, our Lord. Amen.

Church Notices

From the Registers:

Baptisms:

Ferne Emma Metcalfe of Fine View, Irthing, at St Mary, Stapleton on Sunday, 24th November 2024

Monday 17th February 7 pm Stapleton PCC Meeting at Stapleton Public Hall

A selection of podcast sermons can be found on the [Bewcastle House of Prayer](#) website under the 'Podcasts' menu tab. Please do sign up to receive notifications and updates.

If anyone would like to receive communion at home because they find it difficult to attend a church service, or knows of anyone in this situation, please do get in touch with me and I will arrange a date to come round. Similarly, if you know of anyone who would appreciate a visit from their parish priest for whatever reason, do please let me know.

Dear Friends,

Many people find poetry tedious and irrelevant. It can be dense, obscure, and lacking the narrative of a good story to keep you hooked. Much modern poetry has little or no rhyme, or obvious rhythm, which some find irritating. I understand this completely. For forty years I had absolutely no interest in the stuff. Perhaps it was because I was forced to memorise Wordsworth's 'The Daffodils' at school, and just couldn't see the point of it, but I was completely put off verse. Apart from limericks, of course. Who doesn't smile at an amusing limerick!

That changed over a few months in 2003-4. When I had finished my ordination training in Durham, I took up a curacy in Upper Weardale, Co Durham. My training incumbent was Philip Greenhalgh, who went on to become the rector of these parishes a few years later. Every Wednesday we sung Evensong in Stanhope parish church. Instead of a sermon, Philip would read a selection of poems. I have to confess that, to begin with, I found this exceedingly dull. The words washed over my head as I looked around at the old wooden carvings on the choir stalls, or the ornate stained glass in the windows, or the Rugosa fossils in the black Frosterley Marble on the chancel floor. But after several weeks of time-wasting in this way, I decided to hang up my preconceptions and try to listen. So I closed my eyes and started doing the hard work of concentrating on the words. To my surprise, I found pictures being painted in my imagination. They weren't coherent to begin with, but they were sharp, vivid, with a certain angle or 'feel' to them: 'This darksome burn, horseback brown, his roll-rock highroad roaring down', and there it was in my mind, a full, peaty burn bucking and tumbling down the fells off the rain-soaked moors, noisy and violent. As the weeks passed, I began to see the extraordinary skill these poets had in their surgically precise choice of unexpected adjectives or turn of phrase. And because of this, I found these lines began to open windows in my spirit and I started to catch glimpses of a reality I knew to be true, but that seemed elusive in the ordinariness of everyday life. The more I listened to these poets, the more I found my spirit being watered at an oasis in a dry and barren land, like a panting hart. 'Love bade me welcome, yet my soul drew back, guilty of dust and sin.' There it was again, that ache inside me as George Herbert nailed exactly how I felt in the presence of pure Love. I was beginning to 'get the point'. From then on, I began to look forward to Wednesday evensong each week; it became my watering hole. It was the still place where I received a refreshing draught from God to carry on ministering in sometimes difficult circumstances. Among the many gifts I received from Philip, I think this love of poetry is the greatest. That, and a love of birds.

A few days ago I was in church on my own, kneeling on the chancel step having just prayed through the psalms set for the day. I decided to read a poem by RS Thomas. Thomas was a poet-priest who ministered in the mid Welsh valleys among the hill farmers in the second half of the 20th century. For me, though, he is also the priest's poet because I have found no one who captures the loneliness of being a priest as well as he. The poem I read was called 'The Prayer'. It is not long, but too long to recite here. I read it aloud slowly. It begins 'He kneeled down...' It goes on to speak of the emptiness of prayer. Towards the middle, 'after the weather of his asking, no still, small voice, only the parade of ghosts, casualties of his past intercessions.' I stopped. My heart choked up and I started sobbing uncontrollably. Those words were written for me. They expressed concisely and precisely the pain and grief and weight I felt, the heartache, the sorrow, the guilt and the disappointment, everything that goes with being a parish priest. My tears became my prayer. After a while I managed to compose myself, finished the poem, rose from my knees and left the church. The poem had become my communion with the God of Love that yet bids me welcome, even knowing my failures and shame.

I want to leave you with a short poem that Philip sent us this Christmas in his card by the Orkney poet George Mackay Brown. It is called Lux Perpetua, which means Eternal Light, and is about the four stages of life.

*A star for a cradle
Sun for plough and net
A fire for old stories
A candle for the dead
Lux perpetua
By such glimmers we seek you.*

Your friend and priest, Robert

February 2025-----BENEFICE NEWS-----February 2025

Friday 24th January 7 pm Stapleton PCC Burns Night at Stapleton Public Hall. Supper with a light touch of Burns and dancing led by the wonderful Margaret Main to help the PCC raise funds for St Mary's Church. Tickets £12.50 (under 12s free) to include 2 courses and a nip of whisky. Haggis, neeps & tatties, or steak pie/veggie option. Bar available. Details and tickets from Catherine 016977 48322/07746 286311 or Tricia 016977 48833 or PCC member. Please bring plate, glass & cutlery.

Monday 27th January 8 pm Folk Tunes Session at the Black Lion, Hethersgill. All welcome to come along and play or listen. Some tunes to ensure we have something in common to play can be found on the [Bewcastle House of Prayer](#) website. Music can be found on [TheSession.org](#) website.

Saturday 1st February Stapleton Public Hall Dance with Denis Westmorland. Details Mary Thompson 016977 48378

Friday 7th February 7 pm Gilsland Show Fundraiser at Stapleton Public Hall. Jason Arnup Band from 8 pm, cash only bar. Tickets £8.50 in advance, £10 on the door. Contact 07818 072594

Tuesday 11th February 2 pm The Knowe Church Poetry, Prose and Song Afternoon at Roadhead Hall. Everyone is welcome and invited to bring along their favourite piece of poetry, prose or song on the theme of Candlemas & light or a favourite memory about the start of the farming year to share - or just come along and listen. Free to attend, donations welcome. For more information please contact lisa.wilson@nwsynod.org.uk 01228 642858

Tuesday 11th Kirklington & District WI Lesley Connelly: Jewellery Making

Wednesday 12th February 7.30 pm Stapleton WI at Stapleton Hall. The speaker is Alison Higgs, on the history of the POW camp at Featherstone Castle.

Sunday 16th February 10.30am- 2 pm Bewcastle Hub at Roadhead Hall. Community drop in event - free entry and refreshments. Cakes, bacon rolls, crafts and produce for sale. All welcome.

Tuesday 18th February 8 pm Bewcastle Heritage Society at Roadhead Hall. "Cocidius - A God on the Roman Frontier" An illustrated lecture by Prof Eleri Cousins. £3.

Thursday 20th February 10 – 11 am "The Caring Cafe" - NEW monthly event from the Bewcastle Hub team at Roadhead Hall (supper room). A 'quiet cafe' for local carers and their adult dependents, those who find a noisy space difficult, or anyone who would simply like some company - this is for you! Come along and share a coffee, chat and some homemade cake with us! No charge.

Saturday 22nd February 7.30 – 11 pm Hethersgill Social Committee Ceilidh at Hethersgill Parish Hall with Iain Anderson's Band. £5 to include tea/coffee and biscuits. Raffle. Bring your own drinks. Details Irene 01228 675389.

Monday 24th February 8 pm Folk tunes sessions at the Black Lion, Hethersgill. All welcome to come along and play or listen. Some tunes to ensure we have something in common to play can be found on the [Bewcastle House of Prayer](#) website. Music can be found on [TheSession.org](#) website.

Claiming Dates

Saturday 1st March Stapleton Public Hall Dance with Bon Accords

Ab Fab Yoga: Every Monday 10 am at Stapleton Public Hall. Kath 07931 285475

Line Dancing Classes: Every Monday 7.30 - 9 pm at Stapleton Public Hall. Ann Robb 07855 919368
Anyone who can't attend please let Ann Robb know. Thanks

Stapleton Knit and Natter Group: Every Tuesday 7pm All welcome. For details contact Carol 01697543094.

Stapleton WI : 2nd Wednesday of every month 7.30 pm at Stapleton Hall. Enquiries to Jennifer on 07802 896029

Stapleton Bowling Club: Every Thursday 8 pm

Yoga: Every Thursday 6 pm in Hethersgill Parish Hall

January 2025-----NEWS AND THANKS January 2025

St Mary's Church, Stapleton are looking for a self employed cleaner, about once a month, in the week before the service £12.50 per hour. Please contact Catherine 016977 48322/07746 286311

St Mary's Church, Stapleton PCC would like to thank everyone who contributed to the work on the roof and tower which have now been completed. It wouldn't have been possible without all the contributions of time and help at fundraising events as well as financial generosity. We are also indebted to the Benefact Trust, one of the UK's largest Christian grant-making trusts for their financial assistance.

Hethersgill Church: A big thankyou to everyone who helps keep Hethersgill church & church yard so lovely. If you have any spare time to help in anyway eg. grass cutting/strimming/cleaning please contact Irene 01228 675 389 or Madge 01228 675568. Thankyou

Hethersgill Village Hall All enquiries/bookings please contact Elsie Elliott 01228 675336 or Christine Falder 07790 302016

Hethersgill Parish Hall 100 Club. If you would like to join, please contact Irene on 01228 675389 or any Committee member. £11 per year, monthly Prize Draw. November Winners: 1st Bill McCormick, 2nd Ellie Richardson, 3rd Grant Sisson. December Winners: 1st Graham Telfer, 2nd Linda Somerfield, 3rd Willie Telfer. Thanks for all your support.

Great North Air Ambulance Clothing Collection @ Bewcastle Primary School Our next clothing collection has been scheduled for Wednesday 30th April 2025.

Stapleton Public Hall can be booked or enquiries made by email bookings@stapletonpublichall.co.uk or calling Eileen on 016977 3196.

Post Office at Stapleton Public Hall on Wednesdays 1 – 2.30 pm. All usual Post Office services available, post a letter or parcel, as well as take out cash or pay in cheques.

Shankhill C of E Primary School and Nursery - We have places throughout school for children aged 3 - 11, with free 15 & 30 hours places for children aged 3+ Mon-Fri 8.45-3.30 pm, with the option of Breakfast Club for everyone from 08:00 to 8:45, and After-School Clubs from 3:30 to 4:30. Please call 01228 577264 or email office@shankhill.cumbria.sch.uk for more information

Shankhill Parent & Toddler Group every Wed 1:30 –3:20pm during term time. 01228 577264 Updates on our Facebook page

Bewcastle Primary School and Nursery – places available throughout school for children aged 3 – 11. We now offer wrap around care, 8am -5pm. For further information please call 016977 48662 or email admin@bewcastle.cumbria.sch.uk

Bewcastle School Nursery – Nursery places available for children aged 3+, full and part time places available. For further information please call 016977 48662 or emailadmin@bewcastle.cumbria.sch.uk

Bewcastle Scouts Contact. Simon Barrett 01228 497970 bewcastlescouts@gmail.com

Newsletters can be picked up from: Kirklington Church porch, Hethersgill Church porch, Stapleton Church, Bewcastle Church, Stapleton Public Hall Porch, Smithfield Garage office, Garry Phillip's Garage. Or downloaded : www.Bewcastle.com/news-events, www.BewcastleHouseOfPrayer.org.uk/parish-notice

Deadline for the **March 2025** issue is **Saturday 15th February** to Tricia Coombe, Damhead, Lyneholmeford, Roweltown, CA6 6LQ. 016977 48833 or triciacoombe@damhead.me