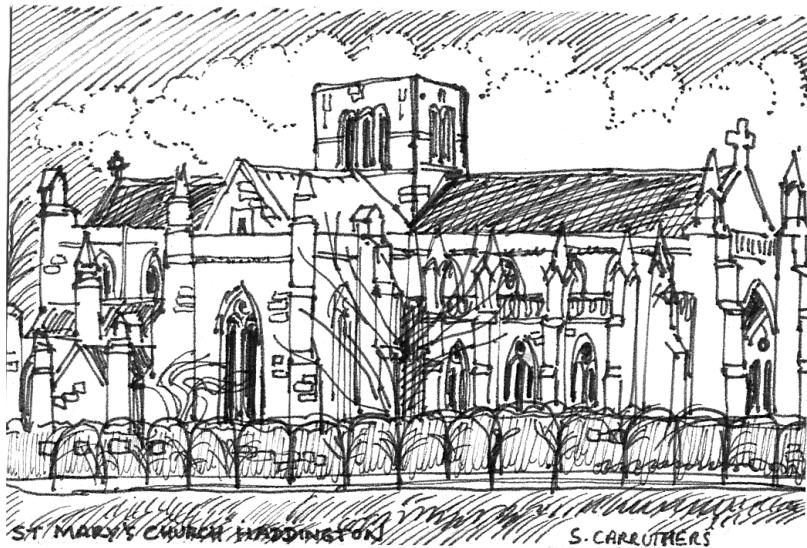


# St Mary's Parish Church

NEWSLETTER

February 2011



"For the glory of God and  
the solace of a whole community"

# CHURCH CONTACTS

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## A Letter from our Minister

The sun is shining in my study window as I am writing this letter. What a change from the weather of the past weeks. For such a long time everything was white and moving from the warmth of the house was uninviting and also rather dangerous! But we have survived the ordeal and have now ventured out into 2011. I've just heard from a friend that there are aconites out in her garden and that the snowdrops are beginning to show white. What a miracle! Isn't creation truly wonderful? Even when the earth has been buried under snow and ice new life is forming under the blanket. Now we begin now to see that the cycle of creation is once more under way.

I think that since the snow has melted I have paid a bit more attention to what is going on in God's creation. We often take things for granted, and it takes an unexpected situation to remind us of the wonder of it all. Jesus often used the examples from creation when he talked to people – the lilies of the field, the farmer sowing

seed, the birds of the air. They are all there in the pages of the gospels and we should never lose sight of the importance of God's creation in our living.

There are many other things in the pages of the Bible which will speak to our living in this New Year. So let's take with us God's promise that he is with us no matter what happens in our living, for his is a promise we can always trust.

With blessings for  
2011

Jennifer



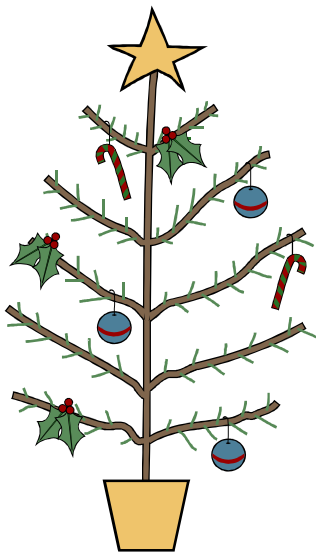
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### ***The Bell Ringers.....***

*arriving before most of us, climbing the many steps and ringing to welcome us to worship at all the Christmas Services.*



*Like Jennifer, our Minister, they were there for all four services. In spite of the atrocious weather the ringers travelled from as far away as Dunbar, New Winton, Pathhead and Edinburgh.*



## **Christmas past.....**

Although we're well into 2011, it's the first opportunity there's been so say thank you to so

many who worked so hard to make Christmas in St Mary's such a wonderful experience.

The church looked beautiful thanks to the flowers and the trees; the music was its usual high standard, the times of fellowship and food were plentiful (even if the atrocious weather meant it was soup and bread instead of Christmas lunch!); everyone played their part in many different ways with cheerfulness and determination in the face of the snow.

It's always good to have something new, so well done to our Choristers who, with the help of their new Director, Susan Hamilton, hosted a Christingle Service on 12<sup>th</sup> December. The young people who came along to the singing workshop did very well and it was encouraging to see people of all ages come along for the

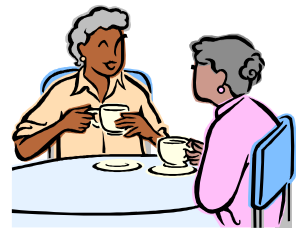
resulting service. And how many services can claim to have a world premiere in them? We had that afternoon! To the tune of 'Jingle Bells', we all sang the Christingle Carol written by two of the boys – well done, Jonathan and Joseph!

The weather might have meant that Christmas was rather low key this year, but thanks to the efforts of so many dedicated people we shared the Christmas story in St Mary's with our community in exciting ways. So well done, and thank you to you all!

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## **POP IN**

Due to the treacherous underfoot conditions in

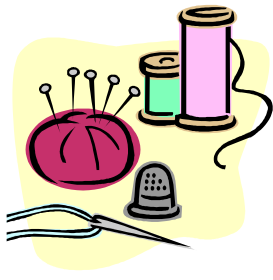


December Pop In was cancelled. Then in January it was cancelled again because Newton Port Hall could not be used due to weather damage.

However from Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2011 Pop In will resume in the Trinity Centre at the usual time of 10.30am to 12 noon and we look forward to welcoming you all back.

Isobel Colley

## The Crafty Folk



Christmas celebrations and, hopefully, the snow are now behind us and we look forward to another, happy, sociable and busy session.

As you know, Jean Van Schalkwrk has taken over the important task of supervising and arranging the actual work. I know you will give Jean the support you have so willingly given the group over the years. Like the bad penny, my name will still pop up as Jean has asked that I be "unofficial secretary" and act as liaison person with the Church.

Our machines are well oiled and needles sharpened up ready to go as soon as we have access to the hall and our beloved cupboard holding our materials. I feel here that we must place on record our thanks to our fabric convenor John Thynne. In spite of all the worry and stress he has kept a close eye on our material making sure it has not suffered damage in the aftermath of the leaks in the church hall. This has relieved us of a great deal of worry. "Thank you John".

We welcome one new member to our group. Elizabeth Williams is an "Old Haddingtonian" and retired from Durham back to her roots. We hope that Elizabeth will soon feel at home with us and enjoy the company as well as the work.

On asking Jean if there were any requests she would like me to make, her reply was "Yes, two more ladies". So, a welcome awaits you ladies! You do not need to have any special craft skill. We can always find something to suit everyone and all you have to bring along is an outsize sense of humour.

We send our best wishes and love to you all, Kit

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## Sunday Teas & Coffees

Your donations in 2010 went to the following charities:



### Jan/February

Parkinson's £168.05

### March/April

Scottish Bible Society £159.51

### May/June

Water Aid £334.50

### July/August

Bethany Trust £179.72

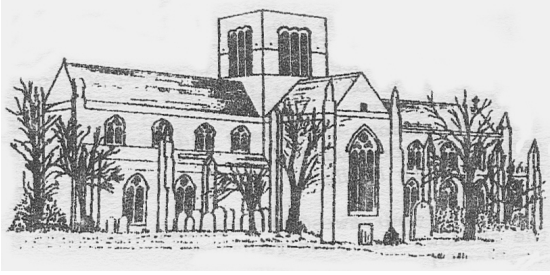
### Sept/October

Mission Aviation £194.72

### November/December

East Lothian Women's Aid  
£160.25

# St Mary's People



## Les Puckering

### The Will to Live

When I left school at the age of about fifteen the only thing I was sure that I wanted to do was cycle.

I joined the Sheen Wheelers cycling club in Putney and enjoyed training alongside the club's star road racer. After a while I realised I was actually quite good and, to my surprise, was beating him to the finish line. I then joined another London club, the Bellevue Cycling Club, and branched out to do track as well as road racing. I won several medals including a couple of golds.

My success came to the attention of the Raleigh cycle company who asked me if I would ride their bikes. They provided road and track bikes and all the spares and, on top of that, gave me a job as a junior clerk in their London headquarters. I couldn't have been happier when four of us

in the Bellevue club were approached to train to be the Great Britain pursuit team for the 1940 Helsinki Olympic Games.

Unfortunately, Hitler had other plans. With the outbreak of the war I was called up and, after basic training on Salisbury Plain, we climbed aboard a train for our first posting with the 155 Field Regiment Royal Artillery, "The Lanarkshire Yeomanry", to the Middle East. We were somewhat surprised to be turfed off the train, resplendent in our desert gear, in Lanark with the snow thick on the ground and the temperature five below freezing.

Just as I was getting used to being a clerk in Lanark, we were sent to a place I had never heard of called Haddington and were billeted above a garage on Market Street. Trying to make the best of things, some of us heard that there was a dance at the Town House (we had to ask directions even though it was only a few yards away). At that dance I plucked up the courage to ask a local girl to dance. Jean Cumming and I danced all night.

We got very little notice that we were being redeployed. I never managed to say goodbye to Jean when I was sent back to Lanark, then Gourock and on via India to Northern Malaya.

Our regiment fought south through Malaysia to Singapore. On February 15 1942 Singapore was overrun by the Japanese and I, and thousands of others, was taken prisoner.

The first six months in a camp there were pretty tolerable but it didn't last and I was moved to the island of Formosa – now Taiwan – where I was put to work in the Kenkasaki copper mine. That wasn't very good at all and the punishments were, as I found out, harsh.

To get out from underground I volunteered to load stones onto railway trucks. Two and a half years went by and I heard that the sickest were being chosen to work in a sugar factory so I managed to make myself look very ill indeed and was moved to a place where I found I could eat as much sugar as I wanted, which was a Godsend.

Unfortunately a few months later the Americans bombed

the factory and the camp where I was. A piece of shrapnel lodged in my forehead between my eyes (it is still there) and I lost my sight. I even overheard someone say I wasn't going to survive but I was determined to survive and to go home. Over the years, others simply lost the will to live and, however much we prodded them and tried to cheer them up, once they had given up, they died.

I contracted Beriberi and at one stage lost the use of my legs. I gradually got my sight back but when the war ended I weighed just five and a half stones.

People ask if I can forgive the people who treated me as a slave labourer. I have no hatred for them, nor do I love them. They did what they were ordered to do. Throughout my captivity I went to "church" services as often as I could, even when I had to be carried. It helped.

Jean and I got married in 1946. In four years of captivity I had been allowed to send just four short messages home and, only once I got home, did I know that they had arrived. I had heard nothing from my family. We celebrate our sixty

fifth wedding anniversary this year. Jean had waited for four years for me. She had never given up. I promised her then that I would never let her down.

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## YOUNG CHURCH

*We hope you enjoyed the Young Church nativity in December. The older members enjoyed putting together a short modern day drama looking at the fact of Jesus being born for us and the whole group enjoyed dressing up as angels, kings, sheep etc for the traditional nativity scene.*

*Thanks to all who came along to our epiphany party on 8 January, to help out and to join in. Everyone had great fun playing party games, dancing and eating party food, and the children left the party carrying lighted balloons into the dark night as an epiphany symbol.*

*After the excitement of Christmas we are looking forward to spring and keeping an eye out for green shoots in the churchyard, first signs of the daffodils planted months ago by Young Church. We also welcome Nicola Sales as*

*a new leader with the older group.*

*We will be providing activities between 10 and 10.30 am on Sundays as always, loosely following the themes suggested in "Roots" magazine.*

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## Social Committee News

*'The best laid plans.....'* I'm sure you know how the quotation ends. And that's what happened with our plans for December. The Craft & Coffee morning went ahead and those who came enjoyed the chat and the opportunity to decorate our church Christmas trees but we were a much smaller group, just under fifty, than we had expected owing to the snow.

Because of the warning of further snow for the weekend of the church family lunch we altered our plans and served only soup after the Nativity service. We were sorry to break the usual pattern but felt it the sensible thing to do under the circumstances. However we did manage to serve mince pies on Christmas to a packed church! And now we look forward.....





On **Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> February** there will be a **Ploughman's Lunch** after the

11am service. All are warmly invited and the money raised will go to the Church of Scotland HIV/Aids campaign.

We hope to hold our annual Clearout Sale in March but we are dependant on Newton Port Halls being available for this event. More info in the March newsletter but do start looking out suitable items for the sale – it will take place eventually!

If you have any bright ideas for events or have heard of another church running something we've not thought of then please share that with the Social Committee.

Janet Chrystal, Convener



**FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT**

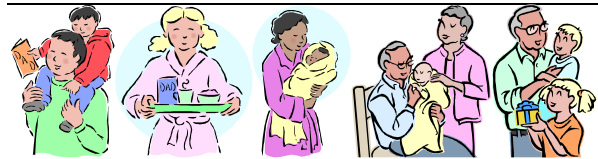
**28<sup>th</sup> February to 13<sup>th</sup> March**

This Fairtrade Fortnight, one of the many ways to show off about Fairtrade will be to paint, draw or sew a piece of Fairtrade cotton bunting. When Fairtrade Fortnight's over, the plan is to stitch them all together in an attempt to break the world record for the longest

continual piece of bunting to help tell more people about



how Fairtrade cotton protects the livelihoods of cotton farmers in West Africa and India. The older members of our Young Church are taking part in this project with some help from our Crafty Folk and the World Issues Group. There will also be a display about Fairtrade – with a particular emphasis on fashion and cotton – and maybe some sweet things to eat with your Sunday teas & coffees!



**OUR CHURCH FAMILY**

Wedding

December 24

Stephen Akers & Candy Inglis  
(in Edinburgh)

Funerals

December 10  
30

Isabel Ritchie  
Alan Brotherston

January 6  
8  
14  
17  
20  
20  
26

Hector Fraser  
John (Ian) Cockburn  
Thomas Peffers  
Janet Gordon  
Jim Hannah  
Robert Steedman  
John Guy

New member

Mrs Elizabeth Williams (from Durham)

# CHURCH FLOWERS FOR ALL

A demonstration for all who "do" flowers for a church (or would like to) and those who just love flowers

**Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2011**

10.30am

St Mary's Parish Church



Demonstrators:

Shelagh Jenkins & Pat Delahy

Doors open for coffee & scones  
at 9.45am.

Homemade soup & rolls  
available from 12.30-1.15pm.

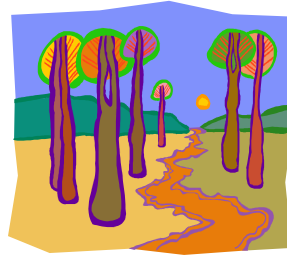
A Question and Answer session  
with our experts till 2pm.

Tickets (£6) at the door  
(includes refreshments at the  
start)

to make sure of your place  
please e-mail Shirley Patterson  
on [shirley.p4@btinternet.com](mailto:shirley.p4@btinternet.com) or  
phone Isobel Stretton on 822178

All proceeds to St Mary's Flower  
Fund

The deadline for the March  
Newsletter is **Sunday 13<sup>th</sup>  
February**. Please help the  
editor by submitting articles  
ahead of the deadline where  
possible. Thank you!  
[newsletter@stmaryskirk.com](mailto:newsletter@stmaryskirk.com)



## The Rugged Pathway

The Whitekirk to Haddington Pilgrimage, dating from the 1970s, was in its time a beacon of ecumenism, bringing people from many different churches to East Lothian to join together as pilgrims. Recent years saw a decline in numbers and reluctantly a few years ago it was decided not to hold the pilgrimage. It was however the hope that in time something new might arise from the ashes of this worthy venture, something which would speak ecumenically to people in a way that was as pertinent now as the pilgrimage had been in its day.

So it was that early in 2010 a group of interested people got together with a view to trying to develop a form of pilgrimage for the twenty-first century, and so 'The Rugged Pathway' was born. The group decided that 2010 should be the year of preparation: they would walk the suggested route (this time from Haddington to Whitekirk) and from that would hopefully come a basis on which to build

in 2011. Here is the story of that adventure.

At 10am on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2010 a small group of people joined for a short service of worship at St Mary's, Haddington. However those gathered together on that sunny day were not your usual congregation. They were dressed for the outdoors and wore sturdy walking boots. Outside several dogs were waiting for their masters, for they too were going to join the group on their journey to St Mary's Whitekirk. We were excited and apprehensive: what would it be like to walk the 12 miles? Would the less fit among us be able to keep up?

The journey took us first to the ruins of St Martin's Church, then to the abbey bridge and from there via a section of the old Iona to Lindisfarne pilgrimage route to Barney Mains and the Vaults. In Athelstaneford, the birth place of the saltire, we stopped for coffee and refreshments in the village hall. Strengthened and encouraged we walked on towards Crauchie and picked up the John Muir Way north of East Linton. This took us over Drylaw Hill where we stopped

for our picnic. After lunch we proceeded past Kamehill from where we could see the beautiful church of St Mary's Whitekirk ahead of us, with the sea in the background. Seeing the church gave us new courage and on we walked through Angus Wood and down the road to Whitekirk where we finished our journey in the church with a short evening service and well deserved refreshments.

Walking together on a journey along old historic routes, encountering religious places as we went, was a great experience. It linked us with people from long ago, but also of course with each other. And all the while we were able to enjoy the great outdoors!

We hope that such a pilgrimage may become a regular event in this part of East Lothian and that it will attract people of all ages and from all walks of life. It's a glorious chance for the paths of people who love to walk and people who are looking for a spiritual experience to cross.

For information about this year's 'Rugged Pathway' on 7<sup>th</sup> May, speak to Alan Colley or Jennifer.

Haddington: St Mary's Parish Church (Church of Scotland)  
Scottish Charity Number SCO10614