

April 2024 ----- **BENEFICE NEWS** ----- April 2024

For enquiries please contact Revd Dr Robert Brown

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

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

email: Robert.Brown@BewcastleHouseOfPrayer.org.uk

Date	Sunday	Bewcastle	Stapleton	Hethersgill	Kirklington
7 th Apr	Easter 2	10am HC			
14 th April	Easter 3				10 am HC
21 st April	Easter 4			10 am HC	
28 th April	Easter 5		10 am MP		
5 th May	Easter 6	10 am HC			

HC = Holy Communion, MP = Morning Prayer

Knowe United Reformed Church, Bewcastle

2.15 pm

Prayer for the Month – Christ Everlasting Friend

Christ at my beginning, Christ there at my end, Christ be in my journey, Christ everlasting friend, Christ be in my waking, Christ at my repose, Christ in every action, Christ when eyelids close. Amen.

From the Registers Funerals:

Nicola Kathleen Simpson (55) formerly of Waingatehead, Kirklington, at St Cuthbert, Kirklington on Friday, 23rd February 2024

Church Notices

Good Friday 4pm, Liturgy of the Rood, Bewcastle. Outside round the Bewcastle Cross (or in the church if the weather is inclement), a service of meditation listening to the ancient, Anglo-Saxon poem of the 'Dream of the Rood'. The whole service will last between 30-40 minutes and will include an extended period of silence. If you would like to be seated outside you will need to bring your own furniture. Please dress for the weather.

The Annual Parochial Church Meetings (APCMs) for each parish will all take place this year in Stapleton Public Hall at the same meeting under a shared agenda. Business and voting unique to each parish will be conducted after the joint meeting, which will be addressed by Canon Tricia Rodgers, interim rector of the Brampton group of parishes, appointed by the diocese to facilitate establishing a mission community in our deanery.

Notice is hereby given for Annual Parochial Church Meetings and Election of Church Wardens for each of our three parishes as follows:

St Mary Stapleton

Wednesday 1st May 7pm at Stapleton Hall

St Cuthbert Kirklington with St Mary Hethersgill

Wednesday 1st May 7pm at Stapleton Hall

St Cuthbert Bewcastle

Wednesday 1st May 7pm at Stapleton Hall

Full statutory notices will be displayed on church websites and noticeboards where feasible.

Funerals at the Crematorium. I have become aware that some families in the benefice do not know that I take funerals at the crematorium even if there is no service at one of our churches. It appears that at least one Carlisle-based undertaker has not been informing bereaved families of this as an option, instead just offering them the services of an independent funeral celebrant. It has caused some consternation when families discovered that I could have taken the service. If you would like me to take a funeral service at the crematorium for someone from our parishes, please ensure you say this to the undertaker if they do not offer you the option, or alternatively, contact me directly.

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,

A few weeks ago I welcomed a small group of special visitors to our benefice. They gathered from Europe and North America to spend some time looking at, and touching, one of the most important Anglo-Saxon monuments in northern Europe. I am, of course, referring to our Bewcastle Cross. They were the top Old English runologists in the world. What is a runologist? Well, someone who studies runes, the ancient form of writing that was used in the northern part of Europe by Germanic peoples, including Scandinavians, before the Latin alphabet was introduced, and for a long period after for special purposes. Runes are comprised of straight lines (although some later forms have a few have curved elements) and so are well adapted to carving on wood and stone. Both the Bewcastle Cross, and its sister at Ruthwell, have extensive runic inscriptions, and many of the characters have similarities to the letters we use today. For example:



This runic inscription from the Ruthwell Cross reads 'Krist was on rodi'. 'Rodi' is 'rood' as in 'rood screen' that you find in some churches and is the Old English term for 'cross'. So this translates as 'Christ was on the cross', a line from the ancient Anglo-Saxon poem 'The Dream of the Rood', which we read together and meditated on around the Bewcastle Cross on Good Friday.

The visit was organised by Professor John Hines of Cardiff University, an internationally renowned expert on Anglo-Saxon and Viking Age archaeology, history and literature, now retired. He wrote to me in December asking for permission to visit, with the small international community of runologists, to see if, together, they could make some progress on deciphering the main runic panel on the west face of the Cross. They came one weekend in early March; some of them, including Professor Hines and his wife, joining us for the Sunday morning service in St Cuthbert's church. At the conclusion of the service I went outside, as I always do, to finish by greeting the cross with a kiss and praying before it for God's blessing on all who have been worshipping, and the whole of creation. I think the runologists who arrived too late to join the service, and were outside looking at the cross and waiting for the others, were rather bemused to see this! For them, the cross was an archaeological object of intense interest, rather than an enduring icon of Christ's presence among us.

But this old stone cross has been standing here, silently, for the last 1,300 years, proclaiming Christ's passionate and unquenchable love for us and all creation; through the period of the Anglo-Saxon monastery that was once here, followed by the violence of the Viking invasion, the Norman conquest, the border battles, and then that turbulent and murderous period of sad reiving history. Always there, always silent, just waiting for us to listen.

Previous, rather over-enthusiastic Victorian antiquarians have tried force their own readings by engraving into the panel what they thought the runes should say (I wonder how often we do the same). That, plus the long years of rain and wind, have rendered much of the panel now indecipherable. Hence the visit by the runologists. It was fascinating and such a privilege to be in their presence. I spent the next couple of hours with them, watching, listening and occasionally asking questions, as these experts went over each line of carving. They gently ran their fingers over the runes feeling for the slightest hints of carved depressions. I think it was this, more than anything else, that most affected me: bare fingers, gently caressing this ancient rock-hard stone, millennia old, with extraordinary tenderness, and in so doing, yielding its secrets, identifying characters the eye could not detect, hidden from sight. It made me think of all the hidden things in the world that can only be detected through gentleness and tenderness – the reality that lies behind all life. And that reminded me of one of my favourite poems by Gerard Manley Hopkins that begins, The world is charged with the grandeur of God. It will flame out, like shining from shook foil...

Your friend and priest,

Robert

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Tuesday 2nd April 7.30 pm Hethersgill Social Committee Meeting in the village Hall. New members and volunteers welcome

Saturday 6th April 7.30 pm Stapleton Public Hall Dance with Brian Griffin. Bring & Share Supper. Details Mary Thompson 016977 48378

Tuesday 9th April Kirklington & District WI AGM

Wednesday 10th April Stapleton WI at Stapleton Public Hall

Tuesday 16th April 8pm Bewcastle Heritage Society Meeting at Roadhead Hall. An illustrated lecture by Rev Dr Rob Brown "Death or Deluge – Water and the Art of Hydrological Science". £3

Friday, 19th April 6.30 pm Hethersgill Parish Council public meeting in Hethersgill Parish Hall. All parishioners are invited to an evening to hear about local organisations and what they do followed by a Q and A session. We hope to have presentations on Fraud Prevention, Himalayan Balsam, Parish Plan, Neighbourhood Watch and Broadband & I.T. and the village Social Committee. Light refreshments will be provided from 6.30pm. Please check the parish website and Facebook page for further updates. We look forward to seeing you particularly if you are new to the area.

Sunday 21st April 10.30 am – 2 pm Bewcastle Sunday Hub at Roadhead Hall. Free entry and hot drinks. Bacon rolls and cakes for sale, craft stalls

Sunday 21st April 2-4 pm SPARK event at Shankhill School. A celebration of our local community, art and culture with a free community event at Shankhill School with lots of free activities for all ages. Everyone welcome.

Tuesday 23rd April last day to drop off donations for Bewcastle Primary School Great North Air Ambulance clothing Collection. Bags are available from school. Please contact 016977 48662 if you have any questions or queries. Thank you for your continued support.

Monday 29th April 7.30pm folk tunes sessions at the Black Lion, Hethersgill. All welcome to come along and play or listen. List of tunes to ensure we have something in common to play can be found on the [Bewcastle House of Prayer](#) website.

Claiming Dates

Saturday 4th May Stapleton Public Hall Dance with Bon Accords

Saturday 4th May Hethersgill's Annual Picnic and Play Event. Fun and games for all the family at the village hall. This year there will also be a hog roast and live music. More details to follow

Friday 24th May 7 pm Stapleton PCC Pudding Night at Stapleton Hall. £10 a head, under 12s free. There will also be a plant stall and produce table. Any contributions very welcome.

Friday 24th & Sat 25th May Forgotten Lands Festival at Stones Barn, Bewcastle. Full programme www.forgottenlands.org or facebook.com/forgottenlandsfestival . Weekend tickets £60 (£20 for CA6 residents)

Saturday 7th Sept Stapleton Flower & Produce Show Open to everyone in the four parishes. Classes for Flowers, Vegetables and Home Baking. Classes for the children who attend Shankhill School. Sponsorship is welcome, for further details contact Carol Baxter on 01228 577294/ 07926758332 or Catherine Lawson on 01697748322/ 07746286311.

Line Dancing Classes: Every Monday 7.30 - 9 pm at Stapleton Public Hall. Ann Robb 07855 919368

Knit & Natter: Every Tuesday 7 pm at Stapleton. For further details contact Carol on 01697 543094.

Yoga: Every Thursday 6 pm in Hethersgill Parish Hall

April 2024-----NEWS AND THANKS----- April 2024

Treasurers of Bewcastle, Kirklington with Hethersgill, and Stapleton would like to record their thanks for the support and generosity in each parish over the last year. As bills go up, such support helps to keep the church doors open in a very practical way. But it isn't just financial support that keeps the Benefice going. There are also many unrecorded generous gifts of time and service - from baking, cleaning, admin, grass cutting and strimming, flower arranging, licks of paint, running repairs, and small expenses incurred for which a bill is never presented - the list goes on. So to everyone who has contributed, in whatever way, thank you. The generosity is invaluable, and it does not go unnoticed. Gift Aid There are always practicalities with regard to Gift Aid that are worth highlighting each year: Yearly review. Where donations are made under Gift Aid, as a new tax year begins on 6 April, it's always a good idea to take stock. Do make sure that you are happy to carry on using Gift Aid, and that there will be enough tax in charge (either income tax or capital gains tax) to cover donations. Gift Aid declarations can be revoked, but that's something that can't be done retrospectively. Just let us know if you want to do this. Similarly, if you don't currently have a Gift Aid declaration in place, but would like to use the Gift Aid scheme, do please say, and we can provide the relevant form. Tax relief for donors. It might also be worth mentioning that higher rate taxpayers may be entitled to additional tax relief on donations. This can be claimed from HMRC - see under 'If you're a higher rate taxpayer' here <https://www.gov.uk/donating-to-charity/gift-aid>

Hethersgill Hall Bookings: If you would like to book the hall for an event please contact Elsie Elliott on 01228 675336

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

Shankhill Community Lunches - £5.50 for a homecooked two-course meal and open to everyone on some Tuesdays throughout term time. **The next date is Tuesday 14 May 2024.** so please book by 10am the Friday before by calling 01228 577264 or email office@shankhill.cumbria.sch.uk

Bewcastle Primary School Great North Air Ambulance Clothing Collection. Bags are available from school. Please can donations be dropped off at school either **on or before Tuesday 23rd April 2024.** Please contact 016977 48662 if you have any questions or queries. Thank you for your continued support.

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 Primary School Play Group - at Bewcastle School, Roadhead, Cumbria, CA6 6PF. Every Monday during term time 1.30pm – 3pm. From children aged 0–4 years along with parents/carers, are welcome to come along and join in the fun! £1 per child. For more information, contact Emma at Bewcastle School on 016977 48662 or admin@bewcastle.cumbria.sch.uk

Bewcastle Scouts Contact. Simon Barrett 01228 497970 or David Harding 07935172942 bewcastlescouts@gmail.com

Donations towards the cost of the newsletter would be greatly appreciated. Donations can be made direct to your distributor or to Tricia Coombe. Please note that we can no longer accept cheques, cash donations only. Thank you very much to those who have donated.

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 **May 2024** issue is **Saturday 13th April** to Tricia Coombe, Damhead, Lyneholmford, Roweltown, CA6 6LQ. 016977 48833 or triciacoombe@damhead.me