

# DRYBURGH DISTRICT CHURCHES

(Church of Scotland) SC010210

**Maxton, Mertoun, Newtown & St Boswells**



‘Winter’ by Eva, P7, St Boswells Primary School.

**DECEMBER 2023 – FEBRUARY 2024 NEWSLETTER**

# WHO'S WHO IN THE CHARGE

- Minister** Rev Sheila W Moir, The Manse, Strae Brigs, St Boswells TD6 0DH  
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-  [https://www.facebook.com/Dryburgh District Churches: Maxton, Mertoun, Newtown, St Boswells](https://www.facebook.com/Dryburgh-District-Churches-Maxton-Mertoun-Newtown-St-Boswells)
- Session Clerks** Mrs Winnie Milligan, 26 Glenburn Avenue, Newtown St Boswells, TD6 0QW Tel: 01835 823457 E-mail: [winnieandsandym@gmail.com](mailto:winnieandsandym@gmail.com)  
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- Treasurer** Mr Brian Evans, Alderwood, Main Street, St Boswells TD6 0AP  
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- Gift Aid Treasurer** Mrs Lucy Smith, Sunnybank, Main Street, St Boswells TD6 0AT  
Tel: 01835 822425

Please submit material for the **March – May 2024 Newsletter** to Lucy Smith: [editornewsletter24@gmail.com](mailto:editornewsletter24@gmail.com) by **Friday 26 January 2024** at the latest.  
**St Boswells Church Hall and Vestry bookings:** Mrs Lucy Smith, Tel: 01835 822425

## THE RETURN O' THOMAS

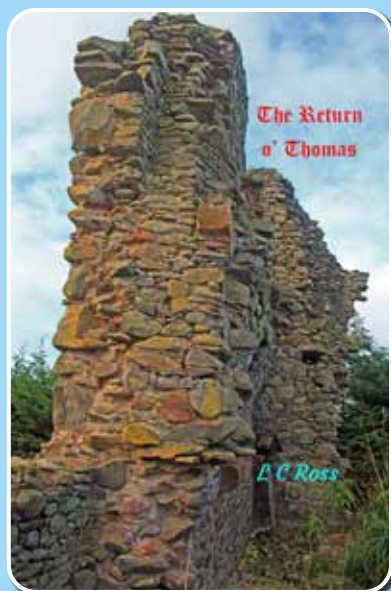
We all know the myths and legends behind the man who was Thomas the Rhymer, the famous Borders' Man.

This short story, written by one of our Church members – Laura Ross – is just the thing as the nights draw in, with a new adventure and scenario about Thomas the Rhymer.

Fiction it may be, but use your imagination and get lost in the story of intrigue, aliens, ancient folk of the Borders and more. You won't want to put it down, it leaves you wondering what if, and wanting to know more.

Just £5.00 and all the proceeds go to Church funds.

Please contact Lucy Smith to purchase your copy:  
[editornewsletter24@gmail.com](mailto:editornewsletter24@gmail.com)  
tel 01835 822425



*Dryburgh District Churches take no responsibility for the advertisers in this newsletter, nor the services or goods offered by them.*

## HELLO FROM THE MANSE

This is one of my favourite Christmas pictures with Rosie standing outside a wonderfully decorated house for Christmas. There is however something wrong with this picture, it is not real, although Rosie is! The picture was taken inside a shop, and is a display piece, with a picture of Rosie inserted.



All of which had me wondering about how we can tell in our very modern society what is real and what is not about history. There are those who would debate whether that first Christmas happened, but if you were to really take the time to ponder, you would I am sure come to the same conclusion as Christians and believe that it is true. It is what we call having faith.

The events leading up to the birth of Jesus are written, they are known in history, at a time when there was no such thing as 'fake news,' or 'AI' which can make anything look real. Why would the historians, writing at the time, make up the birth of Jesus? The prophets foretold his coming – Isaiah especially notes in chapter 9 from verse 6:

*"<sup>6</sup>For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace*

*<sup>7</sup>Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and for ever."*

This was the beginning of the Good News, brought into being by the birth of Jesus, as we read in our Gospels. From a humble birth in a stable, to being mocked, crucified, dying, being buried and rising from the dead, to ascending to heaven, for the forgiveness of sins. This is the foundation of the Christian Faith. We have all sinned and fallen short, but we believe in a comforting, grace-giving, forgiving Lord, who accepts us just as we are.

Why not come along to our services in Advent and over Christmas, to experience the joy that getting to knowing God in your lives brings? You are all welcome to come along and get to know what Christmas is really all about – the greatest gift that was given freely to all humanity, in love, from God our Creator. The details of services in our Churches are in the Newsletter.

Christmas Blessings  
Rev Sheila





**3 December  
St Boswells 10.30am  
1st Advent Sunday  
Communion  
Coffee after Worship**

**10 December  
Newtown 10.30am**

**17 December  
Mertoun 10.30am**

**24 December  
Christmas Eve  
St Boswells 10.30am**

**24 December  
Christingle  
(Church Hall 3.30pm)  
St Boswells Church 4pm  
see page 5**

**Monday 25 December  
Christmas Day see page 6  
Newtown 10.30am**

**31 December  
Mertoun 10.30am  
Service of Lessons & Carols**

**7 January  
St Boswells 10.30am  
Coffee after Worship**

**14 January  
Newtown 10.30am**

**21 January  
St Boswells 10.30am**

**28 January  
Maxton 10.30am**

**4 February  
Newtown 10.30am  
Communion  
Coffee after Worship**

**11 February  
St Boswells 10.30am**

**18 February  
Mertoun 10.30am**

**25 February  
Newtown 10.30am**

**3 March  
St Boswells 10.30am  
Coffee after Worship**

*All dates and events in this Newsletter were correct at time of printing (end October).  
Please check website and noticeboards in case of unexpected changes.*



## ST BOSWELLS CHRISTMAS LIGHTING UP

A small group of folks from our Parish Community Council, Church and Primary School have been working hard for quite some time on a plan to add to our village festive lights.

We were lucky to secure £5,000 grant monies from Cheviot Neighbourhood Support Fund. Although this seems a lot of money, it is only paying for the installation of some of the necessary infrastructure but it does mean we can now start to firm up plans for the coming year and hopefully grow the festive lights in the future with your help.

Time is a bit tight but we are very much hoping that the new electrical connection point on The Green will be ready for the start of Advent which means we can install a Christmas tree with lights. We're planning a "switch-on" event for the whole community if all goes to plan!

Dates, times and venue will be firmed up nearer the time, and we may be looking for a few more helpers, so do please keep an eye out for updates from any of the groups that have been involved this far.

We'd love this to become a regular village event and to expand our festive lights even further.....but that is for the future!

***Annette Patterson, Minutes Secretary, St Boswells Community Council***

Dryburgh District Churches (Church of Scotland) SC010216

## Come & Celebrate Christingle

Christmas Eve  
Church Hall, St Boswells  
3.30pm

Bring children to make  
Christingles  
(all materials provided)

Service in Church 4pm  
Everyone welcome

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## CHRISTMAS FOR EVERYONE

**SUNDAY 3 DECEMBER**  
**1st ADVENT SUNDAY**  
St Boswells Church,  
10.30am

**CHRISTMAS EVE**  
St Boswells Church, 10.30am

**CHRISTINGLE** (see page 5)  
Church Hall, St Boswells 3.30pm  
Service in St Boswells Church, 4pm

Retiring Offerings are  
invited at all our  
services in aid of

**VERSUS**  
**ARTHRITIS**

SC041156

**CHRISTMAS DAY**  
**ALL-AGE FAMILY SERVICE**  
Newtown Church 10.30am

Everyone is invited to bring a gift they  
have received to 'show and tell'.

**SUNDAY 31 JANUARY**  
**SERVICE OF**  
**LESSONS & CAROLS**  
Mertoun Kirk 10.30am





# WHAT'S ON IN OUR CHARGE

*(Continued on next pages)*

## CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY DATES

### Choir

last 13 December • restart 10 January

### Bible Study

last 14 December • restart 11 January

### Lunch Club

last 15 December • restart 5 January

### Messy Church

last 22 December • restart 12 January

### Craft Group

last 13 December • restart 10 January

### Tea & Chat

last 18 December • restart 8 January

## WOWRSHIP ON WEDNESDAYS

1st Wednesday in Month  
(please note change)


Midweek Service  
Church Hall, St Boswells

Wednesdays 10am

A time of  
Praise  
Prayer  
Reflection  
and  
Fellowship  
in the middle of the week  
Followed by a cuppa and chat

Everyone Welcome

Dryburgh District Churches  
(Church of Scotland) SC010210



**Sunflower Grief Café**


An informal space to talk about grief.

To find out more please contact  
[info@qmecare.org](mailto:info@qmecare.org)  
01573-224886  
or  
075 39354680

Enjoy a cup of tea and a slice of cake, have a chat about your experiences of grief or just sit and listen.

We meet on the 1st Wednesday of every month at the Church Hall in St Boswells from 6-7.30pm.  
&  
Every 3rd Tuesday of the month at the Royal British Legion in Kelso from 6-7.30pm.

Supported By  
QME Care (Queens House Kelso Ltd)  
Registered Charity: SC010314



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**Come & Sing**  
All-Age, All-Ability Choir

Wednesdays  
6.30 - 7.30pm

Sprouston Room  
Community Wing  
Newtown

Weekly Sub £1

Sing for:  
**FUN  
FRIENDSHIP  
HEALTH**

New members  
Welcome

Don't worry if you think  
you can't sing.  
Just come and give it a try!

Choir Leader: Derek Reid  
[derekreid@aol.com](mailto:derekreid@aol.com)

Dryburgh District Churches  
(Church of Scotland) SC010210



EVERYONE WELCOME

THURSDAYS 7.30 - 9PM

Link on website:  
[www.dryburghdistrictchurches.org](http://www.dryburghdistrictchurches.org)

Meeting ID: 843 4289 1909  
Passcode: 479943

Rev Sheila Moir: 01835 822255  
Email: [Smoir@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:Smoir@churchofscotland.org.uk)

## Messy Church Play

..... or as we like to call it 'little blessings'

Church Hall  
St Boswells  
12.45 - 2pm

2nd & 4th Fridays  
of the month

This is an opportunity for children and their parents/carers to hear about the Word of God in a fun, informal and interactive way.

After the snacks we have a song, accompanied by the guitar, followed by a short Bible reading linked to the week's theme. Crafts next and we close with short prayer of thanks to God!

ALL AGES welcome  
FREE OF CHARGE!!  
Hope to see you there

There is tea or coffee and biscuits for the adults and juice and snacks for the children.

Sarah Cook, 07825 860711  
for more information

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## Community Lunch Club

1st & 3rd  
Fridays  
in the month

12noon - 1.30pm

Church Hall  
St Boswells

Everyone Welcome

Adults £2.50  
School child £1  
Pre-school 50p

Foodbank  
Donations  
welcomed



For more information  
please contact  
Wendy Davidson  
01835 823542

Dryburgh District Churches (Church of Scotland) SC010210

At a loose end?  
Looking for a bit of company?  
Everyone welcome to pop in for:

## Monday Tea & Chat Afternoon



Tea, coffee,  
biscuits  
and chat!  
No charge!

St Boswells Church Hall  
Every Monday between  
2 and 4pm

Contact Lucy Smith for further info: 01835 822425



# COFFEE MORNING

Saturday 10 February

Church Hall, St Boswells  
10am



*Donations welcomed  
for stalls*

**Bric-a-brac  
Home Baking  
Books & Jigsaws**

**Entry £2**

## A PLEA FOR HELP

**Newtown Newsletter  
deliverers needed!**



We are very grateful to the many people who give up their time four times each year to deliver Newsletters in all our parishes.

We are in need of one or two more volunteers in Newtown to help with deliveries.

If you feel you could help by delivering to a street near you,

**please contact Winnie Milligan  
(01835 823457)**

## ST BOSWELLS CHURCH NATIVITY SCENE

By the time you receive this newsletter, a gallant crew of volunteers will be starting to assemble the stable in the grounds of St Boswells Church. Mary and Joseph accompanied by the donkey, will be preparing for the journey to Bethlehem.

Our huge thanks to everyone who helps with the transport of our Christmas items and for assembling the stable, dressing Mary & Joseph and decorating all our Christmas trees.



**Thank you to the children (and their teachers!) in Newtown which enhance the front of this Newsletter and the**

**Primary 7 pupils were asked for a 'Winter' drawing and we hope you like the winning**

**This year it was the turn of Primaries 1 - 3 to draw. Which one have you received? Aren't they all lovely?**



**Summer, P2/3 Newtown**



**Morven, P2/3 St Boswells**

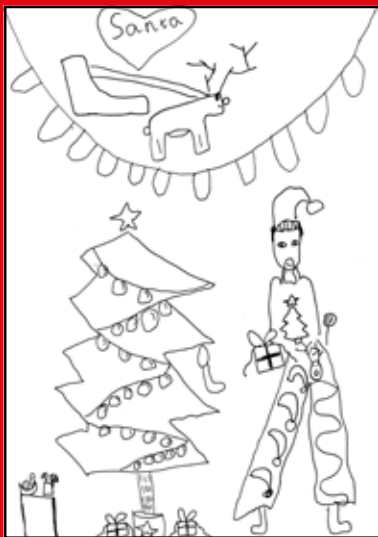


**Rosie, P1 St Boswells**

Newtown and St Boswells Primary Schools for the pictures  
 the Christmas Card you should have received with it.

er' picture for the front of the Newsletter  
ng one as much as the judges did!

y the pictures for the Cards, which are shown here.  
ely. Again, it was so hard for the judges to choose.



**Frankie, P2/3 Newtown**



**Mollie, P2/3 St Boswells**



**Millie, P1 St Boswells**



## BLYTHSWOOD CARE

On Sunday 5th November, during morning worship in Newtown Church, we were fortunate to welcome Caitlin Burdis from Blythswood Care. We heard about the work of the charity whose mission is to combine education, community and Gospel, and it was interesting to hear of projects both here in Scotland and further afield in some of the poorest parts of Europe and India.



We saw on film the beaming smiles on the faces of young and old alike as they received a filled shoebox at Christmas and it underlined how much these are appreciated by the people who receive them.

We are grateful to the people in our community who took the time to fill a shoebox for this year's appeal – the 30th year of the Shoebox Appeal. A total of 27 filled shoeboxes, together with two boxes of

shoebox fillers, a large bag of hand knitted items and monetary donations were delivered to the Blythswood van on 23rd October.

## THANK YOU

Thank you to all who support our Church fund raising events.

The Car Boot Sale in Newtown at the end of August totalled £115 and the Coffee Morning in St Boswells on 16th September raised £288.

Our quizzes have proved popular this year and the total raised for church funds from the most recent 'Missing Links' quiz was £75. Look out for the next Christmas quiz which is available in our Churches and local outlets.

Thank you to the quiz setters who have kept our brains active during the year!

## FLOWER MINISTRY

In Newtown and St Boswells Churches flowers are donated each week for Sunday morning worship by members of the Church and the community. After a service they are distributed to folks in our communities for various reasons. If you know someone who might appreciate these flowers, please contact Rev Sheila. We really like sharing these flowers which have graced our Sunday Services.

Donations of flowers or monetary contributions are welcomed. If you wish to provide flowers in **Newtown Church** or donate to the cost, please contact Newtown Flower Convener, Carol Hunter. For **St Boswells Church**, anyone is welcome to provide flowers or make a donation. If necessary, someone else can do the arrangement. Contact St Boswells Flower Convener, Mary Sargent, 01835 824261.

## AS AUTUMN LEAVES.....



We celebrated Harvest Thanksgiving in different ways over 3 weeks in October. Our thanks to the members who helped to decorate the churches and to the parents and pupils of St Boswells Primary School who passed on the gifts donated at their harvest assembly.



Flowers were distributed in the community and were much appreciated by those who received them. Non-perishable items were passed on to local foodbanks and gifts of money, which totalled £240, were donated to the Borders Branch of the MS Society.

## ROSIE'S 16 YEARS OF SERVICE AT ST MARGARET'S HOUSE

*(Editor's note – this is not Rev Sheila's Rosie!)*

For 16 years, a small four-legged friend walked the halls of the dementia specialist care home, St Margaret's House in Polmont. Rosie first came to St Margaret's House at 12 weeks old, along with her twin sister Amber. The pair were loved by many and known as "professional beggars" with a passion for pink wafers. Rosie was left to carry out her care dog duties alone when Amber passed away from cancer in 2021, aged 15. Over the years, she brought joy to the residents. On the days she was not there, her absence was noticeable with residents expressing they missed her.



Her skilled begging tactics never deteriorated with age as she welcomed all visitors cheerfully whilst leading them to the office where her treats were kept. Sadly, Rosie passed away peacefully in August 2023, aged 16. However, her years of dedicated service will not be forgotten nor will her impact on the atmosphere of the home and the joy she brought to those that met her.

Find out more about St Margaret's House:

[www.crossreach.org.uk/our-locations/st-margarets-house](http://www.crossreach.org.uk/our-locations/st-margarets-house)

# GREETINGS FROM PRESBYTERY CLERK

## Lothian & Borders Presbytery

People might be surprised but one of the most democratic institutions in the land is the Church of Scotland. We are Presbyterian which means decisions are made by groups of people gathered from each of the congregations. When the grouping is national it is called a General Assembly, regionally a Presbytery and locally a Kirk Session. Each person has the same authority and one vote, so a person in the job for one month carries the same authority as a person who has served for 20 years. Decisions are on the basis of majority vote though often it is clear what people want without voting. Traditionally this was indicated by stamping feet.

Lots of the Kirk's tradition and language can seem strange. For instance, we use 'deliverance' instead of 'motion' when making proposals. Intimations are notices, benedictions are blessings and the grace is how we say 'God Bless You' at the end of a meeting.

Yet for all that the Kirk has stood with the people of Scotland since this version of it came into being in 1690. Consider that it was the Kirk that championed free education for everyone also the Kirk that was at the forefront of fighting for social change. That is because the Kirk has hard wired into it the command of Jesus to love God and love your neighbour.

This new Presbytery of Lothian & Borders is wired exactly the same way. Our job is to help congregations put those commands into practice. This might be through conferences and courses or helping congregations navigate the weirdness of church tradition and law. Always though it is about love God and love your neighbour. What help do you need to live out these commands in your church and community?



***Norman Smith***

## TO PEACE

We are not fools, we who in years are young,  
We, too, have eyes to see, and ears to hear,  
And minds to answer well the challenge flung  
By these our enemies.  
We have known fear,  
And know it still, but 'tis not fear of death,  
Nor yet of war; 'tis of the troubled peace  
Which follows it, chilling with icy breath,  
Victor and vanquished both.

We shall not cease  
To fight for freedom until the war is done;  
Then shall our deepest struggle but begin;  
Keen eyes and ears and keenest minds fight on  
Until this world is fit for living in.  
The challenge of our present foe is met,  
But we have foes to conquer, mightier yet.

***F V Simpson W.A.A.F 'Let Me walk With You'  
Published in 1942 in aid of the RAF Benevolent Fund***



## Advent resources raise money for Church of Scotland HIV Programme

A new biblical resource for Advent aims to help burdened ministers and worship leaders while raising funds for the Church of Scotland HIV Programme. The story-based document, titled 'Illuminating Christmas', can be adapted as a resource for Bible study groups, Sunday services, school assemblies and other settings, with materials which can be helpful for congregations which run worship teams.



The creator of the resources, Rev Dr Robin Hill, minister at Gladsmuir linked with Longniddry, said the pack aims to see congregations 'through every Sunday in December and into January' to help worship leaders struggling with the busyness of the season. He said: "Advent is always hectic, The document helps users to think about Advent but also where it's leading, with two additional stories for Christmas Day and Epiphany."



Each week's material is supported by an accompanying image by Katie Hill, a theology graduate and illustrator. Her pictures can be downloaded by churches for presentations and printouts, all free of charge.

Though the resource is free, congregations who use it are invited to donate to the Church of Scotland HIV Programme, which supports a variety of project partners throughout the world.

## THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND STAMP APPEAL 2023-24

**We will all be receiving lots of Christmas post through our letterboxes in the next few weeks. Please continue to collect your used stamps to support the new 2023-24 project to help the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) improve nutrition, improve agricultural productivity, create youth employment and mitigate the impact of the climate crisis. The CCAP project, Firmly Planted aims to establish self-sustaining tree nurseries to nurture and protect the environment and protect livelihoods for households and communities.**

Mr Keith Scott who organises the collection of stamps throughout Scotland is having a record year. So far £7400 has been raised for this very worthwhile project. Let's help him to raise this total before the year end in February!



**Stamps may be left in any of our churches, the Church Hall, St Boswells, the Old Post Office, St Boswells or 9 St Cuthbert's Drive, St Boswells. (Cliff Ellershaw tel: 823445).**



# WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

**12th NOVEMBER 2023**

Thank you to everyone who decorated our Churches for Remembrance Worship which was held in Newtown Church on 5 November Church and St Boswells Church on 12 November.



Acts of Remembrance were held at the War Memorials on Sunday 12 November – in St Boswells at 11am and Newtown at 1.30pm. Thanks also to Rev Sheila, assisted by Greg, for beautiful services and for coping with the technicalities of outdoor worship! Wreaths were laid by members of the community.



Hospitality in Newtown Community Wing followed their Act of Remembrance, with entertainment by the 'Come and Sing!' Choir.

£203.50 was received from retiring offerings and has been donated to Poppy Scotland.



Please visit our website: [www.dryburghdistrictchurches.org](http://www.dryburghdistrictchurches.org) for more pictures.

# PRAYER

**Glory to GOD in the highest and on earth peace  
among men with whom HE is well pleased.”**

**Luke 2 v 14**

The above words were spoken by GOD’S angels just over 2000 years ago to humble shepherds who believed them and spread the news. About 33 years later, just before HIS death by crucifixion, JESUS said to those who loved HIM

“MY peace I leave with you ...” John 14 v 22

There are different kinds of peace. The peace which CHRIST spoke of is that which comes to us through reconciliation with GOD through CHRIST THE SAVIOUR. Our world is full of turmoil. Every Christian is called to love and to pray.

In 1972 the evangelist Reverend Billy Graham went to Northern Ireland. He was walking with a friend in the Catholic area along Falls Road. They had come to tell the people how much GOD loves them. He spoke to several people and prayed with them. When they were further down the road there was a mighty explosion. In his own words, Billy Graham said “We could not see its flash, but we certainly felt its impact. People poured out into the streets and ran in the direction of the noise. We joined the crowd and soon came upon the dreadful sight.”

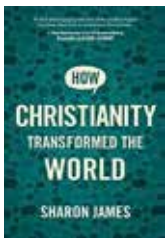
Carnage! “We tried to bring some measure of comfort to the chaotic scene. Several of the people recognised me. I was not wearing clerical garb, of course, but they insisted on calling me ‘Father,’ begging me to give last rites to the dead and the dying. It was not a time for theological distinctions: I knelt by each one and prayed for them.”

A few days later Billy Graham, in a meeting sponsored by both Catholic and Protestant chaplains, at Queen’s University in Belfast, spoke to the students about the power of CHRIST to change lives and fill hearts with love. There was silence as each one listened attentively. Peace is not the absence of storm, it is the presence of CHRIST in the storm.

We will shortly celebrate the first Coming of THE PRINCE of PEACE who calls us to prayer.

“Almighty GOD, help us to be like those shepherds who believed and told others. May we kneel in our hearts before YOU and pray in love and faith that lives and hearts may be changed by the power of CHRIST. In HIS Name we pray. Amen.

*Rev Winnie Munson*



## BOOK RECOMMENDATION

I have recently read a book by Sharon James ‘How Christianity Transformed the World’ and would recommend this book. I wanted to include one quote in the book from Junxido Bai ‘The Spectrum of the Divine Order: Goodness, Beauty, and Harmony.’

*Jackie Jones*





Scottish Women's Institutes

**Come and join St Boswells SWI for conversation, fun, and learning.**

We meet in the Village Hall on the second Tuesday of the month from 7.15 to 9pm.  
(£3 per evening)

Phone: Marilyn 01835 823070 or  
Wilma 07842 040771

**Wednesday 13th December**

Decoupage Christmas candles

**Tuesday 9th January**

AGM plus games, quizzes

**Tuesday 13th February** – 'Power of Attorney' – what do you need to know?



**Church Hall, St Boswells,  
Thursdays at 7.30pm**

**Meetings:**

**21 December ■ 18 January  
15 February**

**Committee:**

**14 December ■ 11 January  
8 February**

# WHITE AUTOTEC

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SMALL TOWN CAFÉ"**

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## St Boswells Mowers



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Charlesfield Ind. Estate, St Boswells TD6 0HH

Tel: 01835 824555 Mob: 0771 1587 894

**Contact: Ian Hunter**

## Shimmer

Hair Studio

**01835 823888**

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