



## St Margaret's Chapel Guild

### Newsletter

July 2021 Issue:40

#### Lockdown Alternative Flower Arranging

Having been unable to arrange flowers in the Chapel, the Margarets took up an alternative form of flower arranging in the shape of a 500 piece jigsaw. Should you like to take up the challenge of attempting the rainbow of flowers, please get in touch at [hazel@poststreet.net](mailto:hazel@poststreet.net). It would be great if you could send us a photograph of the completed puzzle, and possibly a short note to the next Guild member to receive the jigsaw. There could be logistical problems getting it to and from far flung countries, but we will do our best to get it to whoever wishes to try.



Tia Millar completed the puzzle with a little assistance from her son and sent these lovely colourful pictures. Having a rainbow of fresh flowers in the background is optional.

#### Jigsaw



#### Online Flower Demonstration

What could be better than to spend a winter's evening during lockdown watching the Zoom Flower Demonstration by Hazel Dunn and Margaret Hunter? An hour of sheer joy as their deft hands created beautiful arrangements with roses, freesia, lisianthus, and yes even pasta, test tubes and chicken wire! Margaret gave us a taste of the traditional and Hazel the contemporary – will I be brave enough to try a St Margaret's Lump next time I am at the Castle?

Thank you, Margaret and Hazel, for a 'beautiful' evening, and for the reassurance about our arrangements in the Chapel, 'remember your arrangement is how you see it, in your own eye'!

Enjoy being in the Chapel once again arranging flowers. It is such a privilege spending time there remembering the example of St Margaret all those centuries ago!

The demonstration can still be viewed on :-

[https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/JBB3bkCXXGWDgYdoOZgPFkbWKjfTN0ZxQ0IP3g5tDtUVmwnCbyYTEBZuvWWwYAfW.FMFp4c3nm\\_5Ui\\_XJ](https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/JBB3bkCXXGWDgYdoOZgPFkbWKjfTN0ZxQ0IP3g5tDtUVmwnCbyYTEBZuvWWwYAfW.FMFp4c3nm_5Ui_XJ)

Passcode: 0B2q=Ve5

## Fresh Flower Arrangements

### in the Chapel

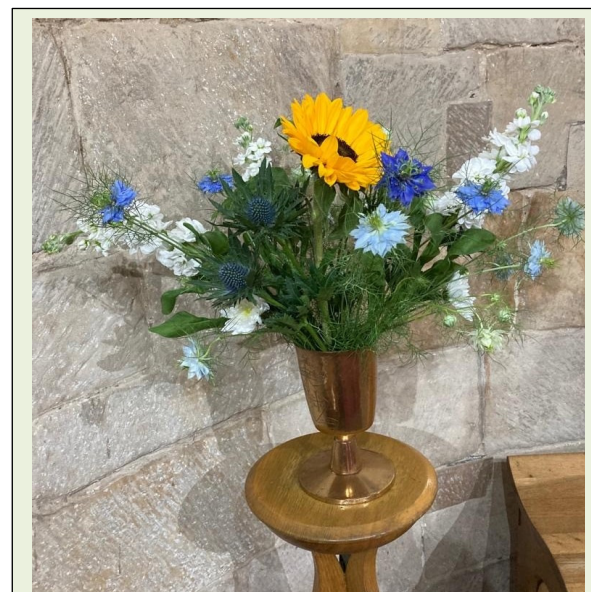
I am delighted to report that fresh flowers have been arranged in the Chapel once a week in May and twice weekly in June. It is my hope that our normal service can continue going forward, however as previously mentioned we remain cautious and ready to act if the government guidelines change. Individuals are required to wear a mask inside the Chapel and a hand sanitiser station can be found inside.

The last 14 months have been difficult for many, and I am certain that the quiet surround of St Margaret's Chapel with the burst of colour provided by a flower arrangement will bring joy and allow reflection for visitors over the coming months. I find that photographs of arrangements can transport me into the Chapel, if only for a moment. For those with access to Instagram and Twitter, you will have already seen some of the beautiful arrangements from recent weeks. For those without social media, I have included some photos in the newsletter which I hope will raise a smile.

Head Steward, Nigel, has suggested that ladies visiting the Castle to arrange flowers arrive at 08:00 and aim to depart by 09:00. This would ensure there are no visitors trying to access the Chapel. The option to park on the esplanade and walk up to the Chapel remains, as does access through the tunnel (which is normally open from 07:30).

If you are interested in arranging flowers in the Chapel, please get in touch ([gillianbaptie@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:gillianbaptie@hotmail.co.uk)). Along with the main list of monthly arrangers, we have a list of emergency arrangers who are willing to help out at short notice if required. Should you wish to add your name to this list, please let me know.

I am delighted to confirm that Fenella James has been appointed September Flower Supervisor.





## Queen Margaret University

### Telling our Story of Covid 19

#### Joy and Trivia



When I said goodbye to my daughter, we hugged as if forever. I had given my little granddaughter a small white plastic shoe belonging to her Barbie doll. I kept the other one and when lockdown was over, we would put the two together again. As they walked down the path, they both turned and did the “I Love You Sign”. I felt so forlorn as I went and sat at the window. The world felt sad. But I knew I had to just give myself a good shake because everything was out of any individual’s control, and so put on some music.

Each day followed a pattern and endless lists. I also know how lucky I have been. My family lives near, my neighbours are great, I have a garden and I enjoy social media. My daughter and granddaughter walked by my window every day and waved, and we had a shouted chat. I dressed up sometimes in silly clothes and hats to cheer up my little granddaughter who was missing her friends so much or drew funny pictures to hold up at the window for her. I could wave and chat across fences to my neighbours, my younger neighbours offered to get shopping and my wonderfully supportive daughter brought my main shopping. I didn’t need to make any major decisions or watch the clock to go and collect my granddaughter from school, or drive to meet friends or play bridge or go to the floral art club. But I could still stay in touch with family and friends through Face-Time, WhatsApp etc. Everyone made such an effort to try and keep spirits up with funny videos, twee cartoons, and silly stories. I did my exercises with The Green Goddess in the morning. I cleaned cupboards and repainted everything in sight. Neighbours baked and shared goodies with each other.

Yet it just felt like a game. A game which was scary and without an end. Yes, there were days when I just wanted to stay in bed, but I made myself get up. My lists became important. I wanted to be able to tick items off that I had achieved. The first walk was a highlight. But I was glad when I got home to safety! The first time I went into the local park and walked on the grass and just stood gazing at the river and fields beyond felt magical. The first stroll round the harbour at Fisherrow felt like my liberty had returned. The first time the family came round to the back garden through the communal close was so joyful that we cried. These firsts were so important and yet I knew they were so transitory and that my front door was my safety net.

And then, my daughter told me about Maggie’s at QMU. She and Eve had been for breakfast one day when they went for a walk round the campus. By now, days had become weeks and weeks were becoming months. So, I felt so excited as I walked up to Maggie’s. This was my first big outing. The large round tables were great for socially distancing and that first day I was there, the sun shone from a deep blue cloudless sky. We could have been sitting in some Mediterranean Piazza as we looked over the rooftops of Musselburgh to the glinting Firth of Forth beyond. Coffee and a bacon roll had never tasted so good. The staff were fabulous. It was also the first shop I went into because I felt safe. I bought flour and scones. It all felt so normal. And, then it hits you again. No, it is not normal. There is a killer on the loose devastating families, communities, countries, and economies. But, just for a short time, being at Maggie’s recreated a sense of normality.

*(cont.pg.4)*





*Cont. from pg.3*

Joy and Trivia

QMU has been a highlight of lockdown for many locals. It has provided the backdrop for so many happy memories during these crazy times when the same four walls were the only vistas for many. It has enabled locals to benefit on so many levels. The physical and mental health benefits have been fantastic. People of all ages took advantage of the grounds and looked relaxed and happy, as they walked, greeting others in the passing. Stepping into the campus grounds immediately gave a feeling of security. Sitting at a table in the open air surrounded by buildings, distant views and calmness felt like a nurturing womb. Even for a short time everything was going to be ok. Everyone obeyed social distancing yet felt part of a community again, even if only to wave to a stranger. And the bliss of no noise from the traffic less A1; only peace, birds, and greenery. Mums out with babies in prams enjoying the fresh air, older children 'ooing' and 'aahing' at the cygnets and moorhen chicks. Going to look at the swans and feed them became an important regular activity for children. People practised yoga or tai chi on the grass. My granddaughter practised on her bike, without stabilisers, and the joy on her face will always stay with me. Even my daughter got caught up in the cycling fervour and hired one of the campus bikes and ended up buying a bike. The various pieces of fitness equipment were such fun once we were able to use them. I even had a go swinging from the bars of one of them, giving my family a great laugh.

I always walked home feeling lighter in spirit after visiting QMU. As if my soul had been nurtured. The memories of my birthday breakfast at Maggie's will always stay with me too, because the staff made it extra special. There were balloons on the table and a card. Then they came, with their masks on, and sang Happy Birthday, before presenting me with a chocolate cake. If I had been at The Ritz in London, I couldn't have had a better birthday celebration than I did that day.

All these things were possible for locals because QMU let us use the facilities during one of the worst periods in our history, and for that, I say thank you, because, during the bleakest of times, you helped give us hope.

Olivia Begbie – August 2020



Coffee Chats



We have held five Zoom Guild Coffee Chats on the 16<sup>th</sup> of the month, starting in February. It has been lovely seeing and hearing from members both near and far. One member joined from Canada – she had to get up early specially! The topics of conversation have been many and varied, and in addition to book and film suggestions, we discussed letter writing and pen pals one morning. One Margaret met her Australian pen pal 50 years after they had first exchanged letters and had planned to attend the wedding of her friend's granddaughter in Australia before restrictions prevented this. It has given me the opportunity to see some of the former Fellowship members, and hopefully for them to feel more part of the Guild. A number of attendees take time out of their busy working lives to join us, and to let us know what they have been doing. We will be taking a break over the Summer and will consider if we should have the occasional on-line chat even once we can physically resume meeting in the Dome. We will let you know when we are permitted to meet at the Dome again.

To those attending, thank you for taking the time to join us, I always enjoy your company. If you have any thoughts on future online Coffee Chats, please get in touch at [hazel@poststreet.net](mailto:hazel@poststreet.net).

Hazel Dunn

## The Duke of Edinburgh

Following the death of the Duke of Edinburgh in April, I wrote on behalf of the Guild to our Patron to express our sympathies for the loss of her father. I received a letter from HRH's Private Secretary thanking us for our message of condolence and passing on her warmest wishes to the members of the Guild. We thought that you might be interested to read about the time when two Guild members met the Duke.

In 2017 Margaret Lindsell and Kathy Fairweather were presented to the Duke at the Royal Garden Party at Holyrood. This was the last Garden Party which the Duke attended at Holyrood before he stepped down from royal duties. Kathy Fairweather recalled at the time, "The royal party emerged on the dot of 4.00pm. The Queen goes down one line meeting guests and the Duke of Edinburgh another. We were beside the Duke's line. The Chief Archer came along looking for people to meet him, asked us where we were from and took notes. Then when the Duke came down the line we were invited forward to meet him. (Our convenor's curtsy was very impressive). He asked us if we cleaned the Chapel and we told him no, but we put the flowers in. He said it must keep us fit climbing up to the Chapel. We said how much we appreciated our Patron, the Princess Royal. He is amazing for 96 and has certainly earned his retirement."



The photo shows from L to R Sheila MacTaggart (also a Guild member), Margaret Lindsell, and Kathy Fairweather, in their finery.

## Donations

Over these many months of lockdown, Edinburgh Castle, and St Margaret's Chapel have been closed to visitors, and so we have not been receiving donations from the booklets. Indeed, over the past months we have only received £303.35 from donations, and £683 reclaimed from Gift Aid. This is a huge shortfall and will of course impact on our Charitable giving this year. A few of our membership have very kindly donated the equivalent cost of the flowers, they were unable to arrange in the Chapel through lockdown, to the Guild. There may be other ladies who may wish to do this, and I will happily accept their donations either by cheque or via a direct bank transfer to St Margaret's Chapel Guild RBS account no 10313026, sort code 83-06-08

It was so encouraging to receive a donation from a gentleman, and when I wrote to thank him, I asked if he had a family connection with the Chapel. He answered,

*'Not really, other than the fact that my mum took me to the castle the first time I visited Edinburgh MANY years ago as a small boy, and made a point of taking me to the Chapel. The Chapel even then, to a small boy seemed to be a special place with a special atmosphere and aura, and that memory has stayed with me over these many years. I also have always had an amateur interest in history and Margaret's story is remarkable, as is the fact through her, there is a direct line from the Scottish Royal family, and now the UK Royal family, all the way back to Edward the Confessor and Alfred the Great.... Well I believe so anyway. Please keep up the good work in her memory.'*

*I am particularly fond of the marguerite daisies in the little flower beds and if we can help in any way, please ask and we will see what we can do.'*

Margaret Ann Crawford

## Request from Members – Florist Recommendations

As a novice flower arranger (there may be others amongst you), any suggestion on florist that members would recommend would be greatly appreciated. Please send recommendations to [m\\_doig@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:m_doig@hotmail.co.uk)). Happy to share with anyone in need.

## Lockdown Reflection

As I write this, I feel blessed that our vaccination program is progressing well and our elderly and most vulnerable are, in most places, fully vaccinated. Our route out of lockdown has not been easy and, as we are seeing, there are many bumps and curves in the road ahead.

With that in mind, I wanted to take this opportunity to reflect on what lockdown (and our route out of it) has meant for some of us. We have all faced different challenges and to give us a snapshot, Margarets from around the world have offered some insight into their experience over this past year.

Our member Margaret Jones from Florida talks about the initial angst she felt when the global situation started to unfold last March, and then her eventual delight as the vaccination programme began to roll out. To keep busy, she undertook a lot of cleaning projects (I am sure we can all relate to that), gardening and joined the thriving online community of 60+ to take up Zoom as a digital way to stay in touch. Margaret has also taken the time to study and became an Accredited Flower Show Judge in the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs & National Gardener; Well done Margaret.

It was also interesting to hear Margaret McLaren's insights; as an accountant, has had her busiest year since she qualified in 1983. The amount of information she had to absorb around the new rules and regulations in a truly short space of time was a challenge but allowed her to help many small businesses. Like many of us, she is grateful that our government in the UK had support in place so quickly. Although not perfect, it was a lifeline for so many. Margaret felt 'zoomed out' and missed human contact, especially when her new grandson William was born in Yorkshire last November and she couldn't give him his first cuddle from granny. I am sure that situation has been resolved many times over.

My personal journey over the last year has been challenging, life-changing and rewarding. Priorities have shifted enormously; I am not sure if I will have the time to fully go back to work and certainly don't have the inclination to 'sweat the small stuff'. I feel blessed that my family has come out the other side relatively unscathed (and with most of our sanity intact). It has made us all realise that despite our differences, we are a global community. My heart tells me a more compassionate society will emerge.

As we contemplate over a year of many 'new normals' and, hopefully, a route out of this pandemic, I'm sure it's given us all time to reflect. Here's praying for a positive latter part of 2021 for all our communities at home and globally.

Margaret McKelvie Williamson

## Mary of Guise

An interesting snippet of history relating to the Chapel is that after her death in June 1560, Mary of Guise, widowed Queen of James V and mother of Mary Queen of Scots, her body lay in a coffin in the Chapel for nine months, as the political situation in Scotland was so volatile. Around 18th March 1561, her coffin was carried out of the Chapel under cover of darkness and shipped to France. A public funeral was held for her at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, attended by her daughter Mary, Queen of Scots.

## The St Margaret of Scotland

We recently learned that during the first World War, Royal Mail passenger ships were converted into hospital ships. The *Balantia* was one, from 1915 to 1918. Its refitting as a hospital ship was paid for by the Scottish Branch of the Red Cross for the use of naval casualties, and it was renamed *The St. Margaret of Scotland*.

## New Members

Over the year we have welcomed 3 Margarets into our guild, whose ages range from a babe in arms to an octogenarian. Should you know of any other Margarets who would like to join our fellowship, we ask they be in touch before the end of July, when they will be welcomed formally at the November AGM.



## Wedding



The wedding of the Governor of Edinburgh Castle; Major General Alastair Bruce of Crionaich, to his partner Stephen Knott will take place in Edinburgh at the beginning of July.

Since he is an honorary Vice President of the Guild, the committee propose to send them a wedding present of a rose bush and I am sure you will join us in sending them our very best wishes for a long and happy life together.