



# THE HAYDON NEWS

FEBRUARY  
2002

Published by The Friends Of Haydon Bridge

**Editorial comment**

In this issue you will find that there are a number of articles relating to HEALTH. In fact you might say that it is a 'healthy' issue. Obviously Dr. Ford has provided his 'musings' which I am sure gives everyone here something to think about and, no doubt smile about also. Doesn't he have a way with words?

There are others relating to Complementary Medicine (Holland & Barrett of Hexham) where Jill Henderson would be more than willing to answer any queries you might have. Maybe people out there might have recipes handed down the generations for 'cures' which they might like to divulge to the rest of us! June Henriksen has provided us with a list of websites which open the door to problems associated with the lungs although she stresses that getting out-and-about beats sitting in front of the computer! How right she is.

Health, of course, doesn't necessarily only refer to the physical. What about the health of the village? No, not whether there is a pall of smoke hanging over it on particular days but regarding what happens in the village.

The village is quite well off, comparatively speaking, with the shops we have. Competition in business is always a healthy thing but I wonder whether too much competition could harm the 'village body'. The small shops we have have catered for our needs for many years – each has found its own niche and built up its clientele. It would be very sad indeed if a bigger organisation were to cause its neighbour to lose out.

We have the Butcher, the Chemist, Spar, Chippie, Indian Take-away, four Pubs/Inns, two Newsagents, two garages, Hairdressers and the Co-op which also has the Post Office. They provide us all with a 'healthy' choice so I think it is incumbent upon us to use them wherever possible. Yes, prices might be just a little bit more – but consider the cost of getting to Hexham and back.

Talking about healthy signs. The committee of the 'Friends of Haydon Bridge' is gradually increasing and it is therefore apt to mention at this point that our beloved 'Mitch' has stepped down as Treasurer. He kept the *Haydon News* going (as its Editor also) for a long time building it up from its inception to what it now is. Might I, on behalf of 'the Friends' and the village offer my thanks to him for his commitment. Alistair Bowen takes over as Treasurer and Mike Parkin becomes Membership Secretary. Please note change of address at the foot of page 7.

*Richard A D Snowdon. (Editor)*

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*Notes from the Parish Council Meeting held at the Community Centre (Haydon Bridge)  
Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2002 at 7.30pm.*

**Present were:** 8 Councillors (apologies from 2), Parish Clerk, County Councillor and 6 members of the Public.

The Vice Chair opened the proceedings by welcoming 3 officers of TDC Contract & Technical Services Division who then proceeded to talk about their cleaning services.

Ian Douglas (Director) spoke about the procedures followed when dealing with the sweep of road-side verges and the clearing of litter.

Parish Councils had indicated that the service offered to them was, on the whole, poor particularly on the minor roads, verges and the laybys.

In law, TDC has a duty to clear RELEVANT LAND (adopted roads, adopted footpaths, road-side verges from the road up to the nearest obstruction/fence etc & public Open space owned by TDC) of litter and refuse .. BUT ... suggest that if it's not dirty then not to clean it! Relevant land is NOT village greens, Byways or Bridleways as these are the responsibility of either the Parish Council, Landowner or the County Council.

Laws which apply are: Environmental Protection Act 1990 & Code of Practice of Litter & Refuse 1991.

TDC has three parts to conform to: a minimum frequency

for road sweeping, footpath litter picking and verge litter picking; a requirement to respond to requests and that every road, footpath and public open space has a specified grade of cleanliness.

Haydon Bridge is divided into ZONES for the purposes of cleaning and they are graded accordingly. The grades are 'A' to 'D' with 'A' being clean to 'D' being filthy.

Photographs were displayed indicating what the law thought represented the various grades.

Also slides were shown which outlined the response times suggested when faced with a cleaning/litter concern. This gave some indication as to how it appears that litter remains in place alongside roads for a long while before being removed. Sometimes the response times can be a matter of hours, sometimes up to two or more weeks depending on the zone applicable.

Ian Douglas concluded by suggesting that we could become Community Inspectors linking in with TDC when concerns arise. TDC could then be informed of problems relating to where the problem is, the state of it and the size involved. He said that the division would be very happy to hear from the public and that the following number would be useful in making contact:

**01 434 652 437 (Street Cleaning department)**

Road-side GULLEYS (the tops) are swept routinely as part of the service but the insides are the responsibility of the County Council. However, if a gully appears to be blocked then to phone TDC in the first instance.

Mr Douglas responded to a query about the removal of litter bins from the A69 laybys. Road Link undertook this following legislation. Even though signs had been posted suggesting that people should take home their litter, there had been an upsurge in fly-tipping.

The officers were thanked for their attendance and then they left.

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**Public Matters:** (1) David McVay voiced his on-going concerns regarding the parking of vehicles on the pavement outside of the Co-op. He had asked for a joint meeting with the parties concerned, last September, but to date has heard nothing. He has been to the Police and he indicated that a very dangerous situation has occurred just today when a delivery lorry unable to find a suitable place to park up had reversed down the A69, used Church Street and the bridge to turn around, all without any consideration to either pedestrians or other traffic. He suggested that there could be a serious accident one of these days. His life is being made increasingly miserable but the placing of only 3 bollards would give him respite. What about yellow lines to stop parking? Or how about a Traffic Warden to enforce the current No Parking areas. However, the problem of Co-op deliveries would be transferred elsewhere.

Cllr. Horncastle re-iterated that Road Link, Highways Agency, the Parish Council, himself and David McVay should get together on site.

(2) Cllr Charlton mentioned the state of the road leading up to Rattenraw from the A69. Very poor condition.

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**Minutes** of the previous meeting were agreed.

**Matters arising:** Cllr Fletcher indicated that contact had been made with Julie Gibbon (Bardon Mill) regarding rail use. Possibly Haydon Bridge, Bardon Mill and Haltwhistle could get together to approach *Arriva* to try to get a 2-for-1 travel deal.

Cllr Garrow also said that there were quite significant differences in the bus fares between *Arriva* and *Stagecoach*. Why? Could they be resolved?

Cllr Mitchell reported that the plans for the toilets giving concern to Mr Holmes (see last month) had been seen. The PC will contact Mr Holmes re: the outcome.

**Spa Well:** The report has been compiled and Brian Bell is to be invited to the next PC meeting.

**Tynedale Council Minutes:** Innerhaugh development is being reduced to 41 houses (31 private / 10 Social) owing to road widening scheme. Cllr Charlton still con-

cerned about perceived traffic speed approaching from the west.

Cllr Mitchell has recently received further plans for the works to be carried out on Church Street. Looks like we are in for some more serious disruption with recently laid pavements being lifted etc. Sighs and looks of disbelief greeted this news!

**Highways:** Concerns raised over the state of the road to Rattenraw, the lack of footpath behind the station towards Springfield and the damage at the Hordley Acres entrance.

**Village Projects:** Lighting for the Church. Cllr Philp had spoken to County Council who, once they receive plans should set about getting costs.

**Golden Jubilee:** It is getting to look like Haydon Bridge will not be putting on anything which has been organised for the village as a whole. Perhaps there might be individual road/streets 'happenings' Such a shame!

**Any Other Business:** Damage to the wall at the Bridge. Road Link to be contacted to put right.

Corner of the 'old' Post Office: Cllr Philp asked that the PC think about what could be put in the open space there. Ideas would be welcome.

Cllr Parkin wondered if PC insurance would cover the proposal by the 'Friends of Haydon Bridge' to put hanging baskets on the Old Bridge.

Discussion on the HERS project deferred to the next meeting.

Date of next meeting: Thursday 28th March at 7.30pm

**RADS**

### PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

Held on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of each month.

The meeting is usually held in the Community Centre but occasionally goes elsewhere.

The notice board, next to the Butcher's shop on Church Street always shows the likely agenda for each meeting and the venue.

The General Public is welcome at the first part of every meeting. Have your say – Brickbats and Bouquets!!

### HAYDON BRIDGE PARISH COUNCILLORS

Mr D Charlton	684 505
Mrs E Charlton	684 505
( Chair ) Mr E J Faulks	Chesterwood Park
Mrs V A Fletcher	
Mrs E Garrow	684 324
Mrs L Gilhespy	684 632
Mr S B Mitchell	684 980 *
Mr M R Parkin	684 340
Mrs L A Philp	
Mr D C Smith	684 480 *
Mr T J Stephenson	

\* also Tynedale District Councillor

### PARISH CLERK

Mrs Carole McGivern 688 020

e-mail: carolemcgivern@aol.com

## HISTORICAL NOTES OF HAYDON BRIDGE – Dennis Telford

*January's notes were written and delivered to Richard, our Editor, and then, within a few hours, I came across another piece of information which would have fitted neatly into my story seeking to uncover rhymes and songs about our village and parish.*

*This is what is so compelling about local history. The story is never quite complete. No matter how much time I spend or however diligent my research may be, there is always something else that I have overlooked or was not available to me at that time.*

*So to return to last month's theme. Do any readers remember hearing reference to a song passed down by our old mining community?*

Those miners may have worked for William Benson of Allerwash, mining the coal leased by the Greenwich Hospital until 1910. Or perhaps they were the village men who acquired the royalty in 1916 to mine the same seam, which they reached from Whitechapel and connected up with the railway at Low Moralee by means of an aerial flight over the river. In 1924 over 200 men were employed. I can well remember the colliery waste heap at the east end of Willie Creer's saw mill, clearly seen from the United Bus window on weekly trips to my Grandmother's at Haltwhistle in the late 1940's and early 1950's. The site of the screens and railway siding can still be found today, amongst the undergrowth in a small copse beside the main Newcastle to Carlisle railway line.

Maybe the men were mining the Stublick coal seam for the Langley Barony Coal & Fireclay Co. Ltd. or those contracted to the Mid Tyne Coal Company, formed to work the "Little Limestone" seam to the east of Mill Hills Farm.

A notable Haydon Bridge character in those days was Walter Maughan or "Watty Maffer" as he was known. Watty professed to have poetical inspiration and his ode on Staward Peel Picnic, when they ran short of bread, became famous locally.

I have no doubt that this story is true so where are those words now?

Watty's poetic talents were rubbished by "Old Anty Gills" a fellow miner from Allendale and that led to a certain amount of jealousy between them. The two protagonists were coerced to compete for a small wager to produce the best four lines of poetry. The first difficulty, who should start first, was solved by drawing lots. Watty picked the short straw and it fell to him to set

the ball rolling. This is what followed.

Watty, standing erect with hand outstretched and finger pointing to "Old Anty" sitting:-

*"There's Anty Gills, come frae the hills  
Of lovely Allendale  
But to be a poet of any note,  
He's vary nigh sure to fail"*

Anty did fail. Apparently he withdrew from the contest immediately and refused to pay the wager on the basis that Watty had insulted him. Walter Maughan remained to receive the plaudits and maintain his reputation.

**[I am indebted to the records of W.S. Walton, written in 1924, for the basis of this story]**

Around the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the 'Wheatsheaf Hotel' in our village was the venue for an annual "Fish Supper" held under the Chairmanship of Gabriel Wood our Station Master. Once the official business was completed the evening invariably became one of song and entertainment.

Charlie Dodsworth, 'Father of the South Tyne Angling Association' which had been established in 1869, looked on as Mr Wood sang, "My Pretty Jane" Jack the Loter on the tongs and Old John Hunter on the fiddle accompanied Harry Walton, Jim Strickland, Bob Watson and Irving Reay while William Potts gave his annual rendition of, "All Among the Barley" The Public Bar-room was a place of music and merriment.

Not much change there then! The 'Wheatsheaf' is now called the 'Haydon Hotel'!!

I cannot let talk of music, song and entertainment in our village pass without giving a mention to more recent activity. For example, I have just enjoyed listening to a recording of story telling with

the popular raconteur, "Taffy Thomas" and friends. Four of Taffy's 'friends' on this occasion are from our locality.

Giles Rumney recalls part of the King Arthur legend which is attributed to Sewing Shields on the Roman Wall. Jason White from Langley introduces "Dickie of Kingswood" a cunning marauder who lived at Staward-le-Peel. Amy Oldham tells of the mysterious sounds of children heard crying in a cottage ¼ mile from Haydon Bridge. A cottage where three children had been locked in the attic many years earlier and Mathew Wilson tells the story of a haunted dwelling on the Haydon 'Heath' when the lady of the house is visited by the ghost of a priest who had been hung at Hexham. Mathew tells me that the stories were narrated during an English lesson at Allendale Middle School around 1990.

My library of tapes also includes two performances by our own Methodist Chapel Choir. The first of these was recorded for the BBC World Service and Radio Two's "Sunday Half Hour" in Haltwhistle Methodist Church on Remembrance Sunday. The occasion recalled remarkable shared acts of worship between local people and German POW's from Camp 18 at Featherstone Park forty years earlier.

"How Great a Flame" was the 250<sup>th</sup> celebration of the conversion of John Wesley the 'Father of Methodism' on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> May 1738 and the service recorded at Hexham Trinity Church includes our Chapel choir.

These recordings are especially poignant now, when listening to

voices of those who were part of our village life but are no longer with us. Drew and Maureen, Trevor, Bobby and my Dad come immediately to mind.

I have mentioned Jimmy Hunter from 'Standalone' and his prowess on the mouth organ, in a previous issue of the *Haydon News* (October 2000). Jimmy's recordings were made by the BBC on 78rpm records in 1954 and are now classics of their time.

Another classic in my opinion was a 1987 Tyne Tees Television programme called "The Long Tradition". Our local interest centres on a scene filmed at Henry Robson's farm "Town Shields" beyond the Roman Wall. Henry plays traditional Northumbrian music on the accordion in his inimitable style. He is supported by Katherine Tickell on fiddle and, if I'm not mistaken, a large glass of whisky!

We have many other talented musicians of today of course. Dennis Osseleton of East Elrington for example. Dennis plays the Piano Accordion and in 1971 took part in a BBC recording which was released as an LP called "Northumbrian Folk". Dennis plays the "Morpeth Rant" on the record. It is amusing that this record includes tracks by Sword Dancers and Clog Dancers. This is almost as unusual as listening to a ventriloquist on the radio, which I did with great

pleasure every Sunday as a young boy.

"Whapweasel" is a group in which Brian Bell plays Bass Guitars. The group is in much demand and recorded their first CD "Skirlnaked" in 1990.

"The Street Martins" were established about fifteen years ago when all the members of the band, including John Stenhouse, lived down John Martin Street. The present day line-up has three of the original Haydon Bridge musicians Andrew Garner (Lead guitar), Ren Hunter (Bass guitar) and Terry Harrington (Guitar). Supported by Phil Bell (Drums), Mike Bersin (Guitar) and Jill McMahon (Vocals), the band has regular engagements and fortnightly sessions at the 'Anchor Hotel'.

It is also worth recalling that last month in the *Haydon News*, the Head Teacher at the High School reminded us that the Community Band and the ever-popular Sunshine Panners Steel Band are deserving of our support.

Some of the most enjoyable sing-alongs in recent years have been accompanied by Alan White until his untimely death in April 2000. Alan's enthusiasm portrayed through his "Country-and Western" style singing, guitar and Harmonica playing will not be forgotten in this locality.

One Haydonian who does appear to have been forgotten is Henry Armstrong. Born in 1795, Henry had his occupation recorded as a labourer

when he married Dorothy Davison on December 31<sup>st</sup> 1825. When he was found dead in bed, in his own house at Haydon Bridge on the morning of October 30<sup>th</sup> 1864, our local historian of that period, William Lee, described his as a 'teacher of music and singing'.

The intricate stone carving of his tune "Watling Street" adorns Henry Armstrong's headstone in St Cuthbert's Churchyard and is a lasting tribute to his life and talent as a tunesmith.

**[I have searched without success so far, for more of his tunes. Can any reader help?]**

Finally, another request for information. The Landlord of the one-time 'Wheatsheaf' tells me that a popular pub song about Haydon Bridge in the 1950's started with the lines:

*"I was told I never should  
Play with the big boys in Geeswood"*

This introduction suggests that the remainder of the song may not be appropriate for a family news sheet, but my informant insists that it does have literary merit and it was a party piece of our Postman Eric Taylor.

**If you know the rest of the words please let me know so that we can record them for posterity.**

### LANGLEY WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

Langley W.I. was saddened to learn of the death of Anne Dryden, past-President, and a minute's silence was observed.

This was an Open Meeting and well attended by many menfolk. The speaker was Mr A L Parrini and his subject was 'The Role of the RAF and Military Low-Flying'.

Mr Parrini is the Regional Community Relations Officer for Cumbria and Tynedale, one of three posts established in 1992 to deal with complaints. He is based in Penrith and the other two posts are at Dumfries and Central Wales. His job is to maintain good public relations and to respond to complaints and compensation claims. The talk was accompanied by videos and slides and he took great pains to explain the various aircraft to us, and their roles.

For over fifty years the nations of Western Europe have enjoyed peace, freedom and stability. Events around the

world today demonstrate that there is a continuing requirement for well-trained armed forces able to defend our interests at short notice whenever the need arises. Low-flying is a vital element in meeting this requirement. Military fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters are required to penetrate sophisticated radar and anti-aircraft systems. The best chance of survival, therefore lies in flying very fast and low, using ground contours to delay detection and to screen them from fighter aircraft, missiles and anti-aircraft artillery. Low-flying, he explained, is a highly demanding skill which takes intensive training and practice in peacetime both day and night to enable aircrews to acquire and maintain such skills. The authorities, he continued, are aware that low-flying is unpopular with the public. There are many exclusion zones. For example, airports, airfields, nuclear installations, cities, industrial hazards, Country Hospitals, but there are no uninhabited areas of the UK large enough to meet their essential training needs. The whole of the UK, therefore, is used for low-flying by military aircraft in order to spread the disturbance as thinly as

possible. Mr Parrini then discussed the effect on livestock especially horses, how much flying is carried out, what measures are taken to reduce disturbance, the flying height permitted etc. The safety of low-flying was also discussed and the question of compensation and the problems of night flying.

An interesting evening and the vote of thanks was given by Sylvia Mitchell.

The competition "Wings" was won by Peggy Dakers with the runner-up being Myra Bowen.

*Myra Bowen*

### OVER 60'S CLUB

At their last meeting, the Over 60's held a delightful joint birthday party for Edith Benson and Doreen Taylor. Mrs Benson was 90 and Mrs Taylor 80.

The catering which was done by ladies from the Haydon Bridge Methodist Church was thoroughly enjoyed and beautifully presented.

Sylvia Mitchell and Pauline Tulip, on behalf of the 'Friends of Haydon Bridge', gave each of the two ladies a lovely basket of flowers.

A most enjoyable time was had by everyone.

We wished Mrs P Stewart a hasty recovery from her recent illness.

At the next meeting, Pauline Tulip will demonstrate the making of Easter cards and everyone is welcomed.

*Myra Bowen*

### Edith Benson – 90 years young



Haydon Bridge  
Carpet Bowls Club  
send Edith their best  
wishes.  
Still going strong and  
bowling as well as ever.

### HAYDON BRIDGE CARPET BOWLS CLUB

Haydon Bridge have had a mixed season so far, concerning results. It is fair to say that more matches have been lost than won.

The Bowls Club are very saddened at the loss of one of our members – Fred Flanagan – who passed away recently. We would like to offer our condolences to Fred's wife Ellen, and family.

The Club has welcomed a number of new members recently who have settled in well. Their arrival was timely, as the Club has been struggling to field a full team for matches. The new members helped Haydon Bridge gain a thrilling 60 – 60 draw with Bellingham a few weeks ago.

We are still trying to recruit more new members, regardless of ability. Even if you have not played the game before, come along to **Haydon Bridge Community Centre on Thursday evenings at 7.00pm** and give it a go. Admission is £2.00 per head and 50p for the Under 16's.

Enjoy your first night free of charge.

*White Jack*

### OPEN MEETING LANGLEY VILLAGE HALL 7.30pm 18<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2002

To discuss the Golden Jubilee  
Celebrations

Come and bring your ideas.

If unable to attend please leave your  
suggestions at the Langley Post Office  
or telephone:

David – 01 434 684 346

or

Muriel – 01 434 684 237

### PLEASE HELP SUPPORT 'THE FRIENDS OF HAYDON BRIDGE' MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please find enclosed subscription of ..... to 'The Friends of Haydon Bridge'

Name: .....

Address: .....

Minimum donation £1.20. Larger donations most welcome. Cheques payable to: 'The Friends of Haydon Bridge'.

You may leave your envelopes in Marsh's or John Clarkes Newsagents. Or, you can post them to:

**The Membership Secretary, FOHB, 'The Rambler', Brigwood, Haydon Bridge, NE47 6EX**

## NATURAL REMEDIES FOR A HEALTHY BODY

### COLDS AND FLU.

There are over 200 viruses that cause the common cold. If you fall prey to an infection sucking **Zinc** lozenges may help to reduce its duration.

Many of our customers have been using **Vitamin C** to fend off those horrible winter bugs, including the flu. Research indicates that **Vitamin C** may help to reduce both the duration and incidence of flu cases.

The most popular herb for preventing colds or getting rid of them quickly this year, once again is **ECHINACEA**. Recent research in Germany has shown that it stimulates our immune systems by increasing the number of white blood cells. Taken with **GOLDENSEAL** many people find it helps as a decongestant.

Another decongestant many people swear by is good old **GARLIC**. Not only do people say it keeps colds away but vampires too!

### JOINT STIFFNESS.

There are various causes of joint problems - arthritis being the most common. It can be caused by wear and tear of the connective tissue ie. cartilage or earlier injuries, allergies or infections.

Being overweight puts extra strain on the joints so it is im-

portant to stay within a healthy weight range.

Diet is important. Many people find saturated fats found in red meat and dairy products aggravates their condition, as can citrus fruits and other acidic foods.

Anti-oxidant nutrients especially **SELENIUM**, **vitamins A, C, E** and **ZINC** are vital for slowing down the progress of degenerative diseases.

We have a lot of customers who swear by **COD LIVER OIL** for their joints, and for the joints of their pets. Other popular supplements for humans and animals alike are; **Green Lipped Muscle Extract, Aloe Vera and Glucosamine and Chondroitin**.

**Glucosamine** is the raw material the body uses to build and repair cartilage, tendons and ligaments. **Chondroitin** helps the **Glucosamine** find the right place in the body to do the work! Many of our customers find this helpful for injuries and strains.

**IMPORTANT:** Pregnant ladies, anyone under medical supervision or taking prescription medication should always consult their doctor before taking **Complementary Medicines**.

*Jill L. Henderson. - Holland and Barrett.*

Dear Editor

Reading about the possibility of restoration work and a new pathway to **Spa Well** prompts me to mention a wish of mine for the Haydon Bridge environment, that there should be a proper pathway created right from Haydon Bridge, along the riverside to **Spa Well**. When I was researching the Churches of Haydon Bridge, I looked at many of the older **Haydon News** issues and in one there was a reminiscence to the earlier part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when it was common on fine evenings for folks to leave whichever church they attended on Sunday evening, after the service, and walk along the riverbank to **Spa Well** with their families, to enjoy the locality and get some fresh air and exercise.

Dr Ford was encouraging us all to take some gentle exercise in his article. Maybe some well defined short off-road local walks would be one way of making gentle exercise more available to those who don't wish to drive some distance before taking a five-mile hike (not that I would in any way wish to decry the value of doing that, for those who are up to it).

I used to take my dogs along the river path, but it is very dilapidated in parts - in fact my tiniest dachshund just about fell into the river at one point and I had to pull him out by his lead and collar, until I could get him by the scruff of the neck. I would not wish to see a concrete path with all the greenery and shelter for wild birds and other wild life hacked back at either side. There are probably those who wish to protect otters and other shy creatures who would not welcome my suggestion. However, I feel protection of

the countryside and access for locals could be achieved harmoniously, with a bit of forethought.

There would probably have to be a fenced off access through the field at the far end of this walk.

Only a suggestion.

### ALSO

Recently I put together a list of URLs for some friends like myself with **Lung** problems, and I wondered whether anyone else would like the list. Some of the items are of interest rather than directly useful, depending on what your problem is. My advice would be not to spend too much time on any web site, or at the computer for that matter, but to get out and about. However, I do think it can be of value to know where information is to be found. For example, I was given a **peak flow meter** several years ago during a hospital appointment, but not told how best to use it, and just left it on the shelf until I found out which website gave good advice on getting the most out of it. Since then, I have found it very useful in working out when I need help.

Probably one of the most useful sites is the British Lung Foundation ([www.lunguk.org](http://www.lunguk.org)). It supports Breathe Easy groups which meet round the country, but I notice the nearest one to us is in Newcastle. Perhaps we could do with one in Hexham. Another useful organisation is the National Asthma Campaign ([www.asthma.org.uk](http://www.asthma.org.uk)) which has, amongst much else, a Kids' Zone offering facts and a magazine.

(Continued on page 9)

Other URLs are shown here.

<http://www.dailylung.com>  
<http://noairtogo.tripod.com/index.htm>  
<http://www.pneumothorax.org/>  
<http://www.emedicine.com/emerg/topic469.htm>  
<http://copd-support.org/> (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease online support mailing list)  
<http://www.emphysema.net/bindex.html> (Emphysema Foundation For Our Right To Survive)  
<http://www.intelihealth.com> (Harvard Medical School medical health advice)  
<http://omni.ac.uk/> (UK health resource guide)  
<http://www.onhealth.com> (Health news and advice)  
<http://www.ama-assn.org> (American Medical Association)  
<http://www.patientsguide.com> (Helps patients locate helpful sources on the web.)  
<http://www.aspergillus.man.ac.uk/patient> (The Aspergillosis main website and patients' website)

The last one is of most interest to me, as I have Allergic Aspergillosis. But I find some of the others useful and I have e-mailing friends who sing the praises of any/all of the above that have relevance to their own conditions.

If you have a lung problem, you can always make one or two appropriate URLs your favourites.

Take what is of use, and then just forget them until you need them again.

*June Henriksen*



IS ANYONE OUT THERE  
 INTERESTED

In an exciting opportunity?

Would you like to set up a  
 CAFÉ

In Haydon Bridge Community  
 Centre?

If you would like to discuss your  
 ideas further, please contact

Catherine Stirling Hill on:

**01 434 684 497**

Dear Editor

Having left Haydon Bridge 22 years ago it was nice to come across this newsletter from the place I grew up.

I left when I was 18 but still consider Haydon Bridge to be my home.

It has been nice reading about the streets I used to play in and I look forward to reading some more and will visit this page again.

Regards

*Robert Turnbull.*

*rturnbull9@netscapeonline.co.uk*

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**THE ADVENTURES OF AN OLD AGE TRAVELLER – by S.E.P****SPIRIT OF THE WOODS**

Barbara struggled along against the icy north east gale, her old weathered cheeks stinging with the biting blast of the wind.



In the distance black ominous clouds gathered in glee-full formation clustering together before sending down sleet, and snow over the countryside.

Turning off the road Barbara crossed the frozen field path leading to the wood.

Once inside Barbara found herself in a different world. Less cold and with plenty of shelter. Bracken and wood-sorrel made a springy carpet beneath her tired old feet and Barbara stooped to retrieve a cluster of fallen acorns lying on the woodland floor. Giant ferns remained evergreen in the shelter of the old oak trees, providing a thick warm haven for numerous small animals. Hoar frost clutched the oak marble galls, each one a winter home for larvae.

The door mouse makes his a mossy nest inside the wood and snuggles inside to wait for the coming of Spring while the hedgehog concocts a more elaborate weather proof nest of dry leaves and grasses, building in a more sheltered spot. Barbara feels the presence of the woodland inhabitants all around her but sees none. All are safely tucked away until spring comes again.

Sometimes on days like this Barbara wished she could just build herself a nice warm shelter and sleep away the icy coldness of winter. She eased her body down against the trunk of a mighty oak and took her wood smoked kettle and tin mug from around her neck. Her meagre bundle of rags she set down at her feet and brought forth her tinderbox and old clay pipe. Barbara filled up the pipe with some dried leaves then struck the tinder box to get a light. A sudden flutter of wings occurred as a host of oak-wood

moths flew upwards and out of the ancient tree. Like a shower of confetti they danced, and shimmered in the half light, filtering in between the trees. Barbara watched as a solitary grey squirrel ran helter-skelter down the old gnarled trunk and scampered away into the undergrowth.

All this activity amused Barbara puffing hard on her pipe. That old tinderbox sure sparked off quite a stir.

Later in the afternoon Barbara collected wood and cleared the ground for her fire. As the dry bracken and twigs caught alight a trail of smoke circled up into the sky above. Warmth sped right through Barbara like a healing balm and she felt peace and contentment as she crunched on pig nuts and hawthorn berries.

Barbara must have dozed off because later when she woke the day was fast drawing in and a strange half light cast eerie shadows over the ground. Barbara rose and threw lumps of dried bark onto the dying fire, a pair of shy frightened eyes watched her from a safe distance away.

Soon the flames flickered and danced casting a rosy glow all around the clearing; Barbara sensed the animal's presence nearby.

The shadows lengthened and the mighty oaks seemed to raise their arm like branches to embrace the night sky. Out of the corner of her eye Barbara spied the animal's tentative approach. The adult roe deer stopped only feet away from the blazing fire. His nervous stance informed Barbara of how much courage it took for him to visit her fireside.

They eyed each other across the clearing. The graceful roe deer and the weathered old tramp. Barbara stayed perfectly still so as not to frighten him away.

He was not the smallest of his kind although the buck probably weighed less than a large dog. He gave the impression of being much larger because of his graceful build and fine bone structure. His antlers had three branches on each side making six points in all. His greyish brown Winter coat shivered in the firelight and fearful eyes watched for unexpected movement. Nothing stirred, the fire began to die down but Barbara was loath to make a sudden movement as she did not wish to frighten away her inquisitive visitor.

The wood slept. Hidden away in their snug winter homes the inhabitants of the wood slept. Nature had called time on the seasons and struggled into her Winter coat.

Barbara yawned and stretched her legs. The last thing she saw before sleep claimed her, was the distinctive oval white patch on the rump of the roe deer as it turned and fled back into the undergrowth.

**HAYDON BRIDGE  
RAINBOW BROWNIES & GUIDES**

All monies from the above groups has now been paid into  
**HADRIAN DISTRICT ACCOUNTS.**

**A total of £424.21**

This money will be available to anyone interested in starting a new group in GUIDING in the Hadrian District

For further information, please contact:  
The Division Commissioner on:

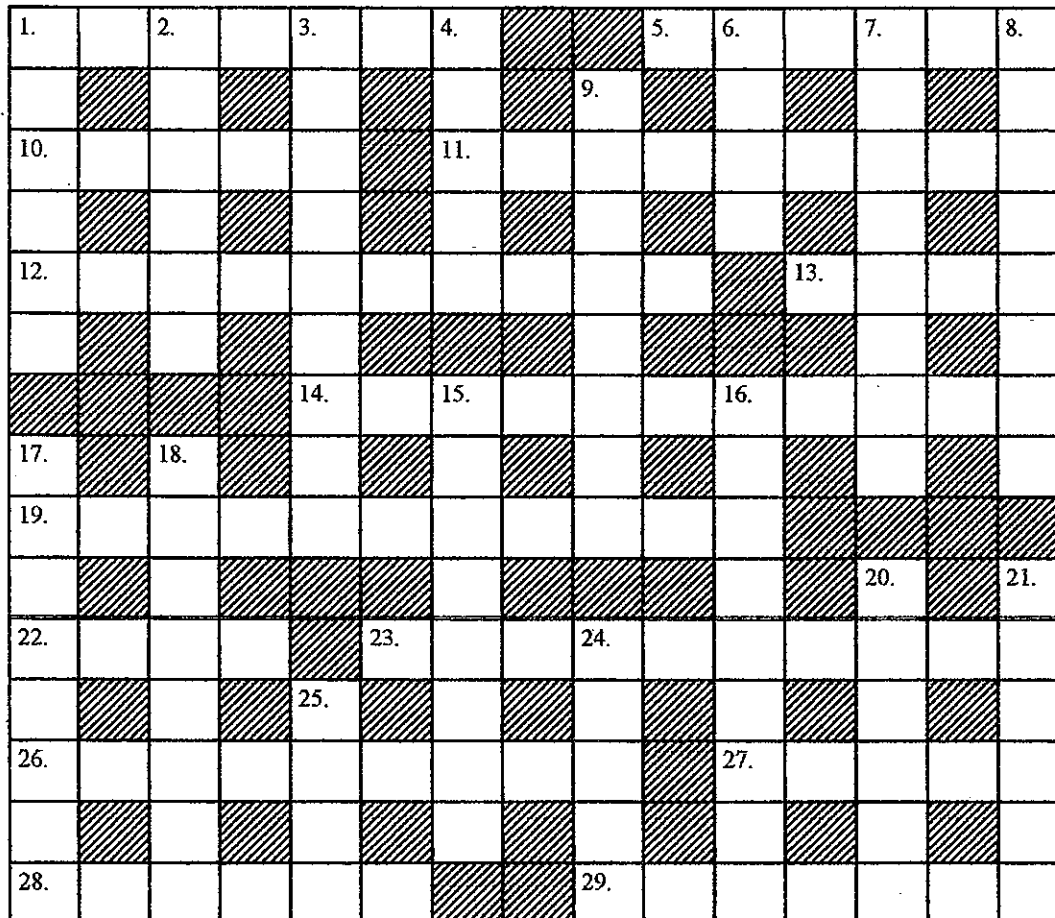
**01 434 608 370**

## The £10 Crossword

NAME: .....

ADDRESS: .....

18

Entries to be received by the Editor on or before MONDAY 25<sup>th</sup> March 2002.**Best of luck**

Please hand in your entry to:  
any of the businesses indicated at the top of Page 2  
or by post to: The Editor, Wheelsteads, Woodhall Mill, Haydon Bridge, NE47 6AS

**MOST POSSESSIVES ARE TOPOGRAPHICAL****ACROSS**

1. England's second. (7)
5. Noah's. (6)
10. Cobbett's rides. (5)
11. One of Yorkshire's two. (9)
12. Oddities. (10)
13. Links Kazakstan, 50's singer and mother. (4)
14. At times of crisis exercise with image dept. in Orkney. (4,3,4)
19. Genes linked in some rooms with H & C. (11)
22. St. Columba's. (4)
23. Inconsequential. (10)
26. Connects Brahms with New York thoroughfare. (9)
27. Womanising 60's movie character. (5)
28. One of Devon's. (3,3)
29. World's first. (7)

**DOWN**

1. Wastwater's. (6)
2. Continentally confused fighters and secret service. (6)
3. Tree, bell & laugh in Northumberland Castle. (9)
4. Leaving student reduce Orwell. (5)
6. Repair hole, adjusted for currency. (4)
7. Byers teasing? (8)
8. He attends party treatment. (7)
9. Mice ruin lawn in recent demand. (3,5)
15. Bucket encircles most letters sent. (4,4)
16. Anxious. (9)
17. N. America's biggest. (8)
18. Cumbria's creases. (8)
20. Rubbish. (6)
21. Name story about British Rail. (6)
24. North, south, central or side at place of worship. (5)
25. Goa's grain. (4)

Solution to Crossword number 17 will be found on page 14.

**HAYDON NEWS WEB SITE: [www.haydonbridge.demon.co.uk/](http://www.haydonbridge.demon.co.uk/)**

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Gill Valentine                      River House  
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**THE MEETING PLACE**

AT  
THE METHODIST CHURCH

Come and Join your friends for  
Coffee and Refreshments on  
**Tuesdays and Thursdays 10am - 12 noon**

FAX facilities

**Warm welcome to all**

**HAYDON BRIDGE UNITED  
ASSOCIATION FOOTBALL CLUB**

**HBUAFC** hold their monthly meeting on the first Tuesday  
of every month at 7:30pm in the Lounge of the *Railway*  
*Hotel* where representatives of every football team in the  
village are invited to attend.

This meeting is also open to members of the public.

NEED HELP WITH  
Tax Returns, Accounts, Book-keeping etc ?

Ring

**BASSETT HERRON & CO.**  
Chartered Accountants  
3, Market Street, Hexham

**Tel: 01 434 605 666**

**We Can Help YOU**

**Committee of the 'Friends of Haydon Bridge'**

Charles Thomas ( Chairman )    Mike Parkin ( Vice Chairman )  
Elena Parkin (Secretary)    Alistair Bowen (Treasurer)    Richard Snowdon (Editor)  
'Mitch' Mitchell    Pauline Tulip    Sylvia Mitchell    Louis Parkin    Jacqueline Outterside

PLEASE SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL SHOPS. THEY NEED OUR CUSTOM TO SURVIVE.

## **HAYDON & ALLEN VALLEYS MEDICAL PRACTICE**

**( Haydon Bridge Health Centre )**

Monday to Friday: 8.00am to 12.00 noon  
2.00pm to 6.00pm

Doctors consult from: 8.00am to 11.00am  
3.00pm to last appointment at  
5.30pm

All phone calls for appointments and visits, including 'out of hours':

**01 434 684 216**

All phone calls for dispensing or prescriptions:

**01 434 688 351**

E-mail address: **sford-hb@dircon.co.uk**

Web-site: **www.sford-hb.dircon.co.uk/hc**

## **Tynedale Citizens Advice Bureau**

We hold a free, confidential, independent advice and information session at:

**The Health Centre, Haydon Bridge  
on Monday afternoons  
from 2.00pm until 4.00pm.**

We can give you advice and information on:

Social Security Benefits	Money Problems
Consumer Rights	Problems at work
Relationship issues	Housing
Employment	Legal Proceedings

And much more .....try us!

We can help you fill in forms, draft letters, negotiate by telephone or letter, and prepare Social Security reviews or appeals.

Ring the Health Centre ( 01 434 684 216 ) to make an appointment or, if required, to arrange for a home visit.

## **MUSIC and MOVEMENT**

Calling all Mums! Did you know that there is a Music and Movement group running in Haydon Bridge?

We meet at the Methodist Church on Friday afternoons ( 1.10pm and 1.50pm ) during term time.

This is a fun get-together for Mums and pre-school children alike which involves singing, instrument playing and movement with coffee and orange juice served afterwards.

Please contact **Susie Steven** on:

**01 434 674 260** for further details.

## **ACHES and PAINS?**

Do you or your pet suffer from aches or pains?

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For more information contact:

**Iris Stafford** Four Winds

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NE47 6ND

**Telephone / Fax: 01 434 688 014**



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## **HAYDON BRIDGE JUDO CLUB.**

Keep Fit and Have Fun!  
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Seniors: 7pm - 9pm

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Contact Michael on: **01434 684 783**



## **Everest FIT THE BEST**

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**WHIST DRIVES***Langley Village Hall*Fortnightly on Saturdays  
at 7pm.50p entrance  
(Everyone welcome)*Solution to crossword (17)**Eight (8) entries were received.  
All were correct.*

*Mrs Jukes  
B. Pearson  
Denis Bell  
Philida Irving  
Rosemary Shout  
Dennis Telford  
Maureen Robson  
A. M. Scott*

**TINY TOTS***From Birth to 3 years.*

The sessions, run on Tuesday and Thursday mornings, from 9.30 to 11.30 at St. Cuthbert's Church Hall, aim to provide a friendly environment where parents / carers can meet, have a coffee and chat, whilst the children play and have fun.

**Cost:** £1 for the first child, 50p for each additional child.

For further information contact

Genevieve Stone on: **01 434 684 537** or call in at one of the sessions.

**PLAYGROUP - From 2 years 6 months**

Playgroup currently runs on Monday and Friday mornings from 9.15 to 11.45. Each session provides your child with the opportunity to learn through play and to experience a wide range of activities. Children learn, through play, to communicate effectively and happily, at their own pace, with other children and adults. Playgroup is run by a qualified Nursery Nurse Teacher plus assistants.

**Cost:** £3 per session.

For further information contact Helen Easby on: **01 434 674 371** or call in at one of the sessions.

St Cuthbert's Playgroup is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.



£10 winner out of the hat:

**DENIS BELL**

K/

	O	C	H	I	L	S		T	O	O	F	E	W		
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	D	R	E	S	S	Y		E	D	W	A	R	D		

**'THE FRIENDS OF HAYDON BRIDGE'**

Formal Committee Meetings are held at 7.30pm on the **MONDAY** before the fourth **THURSDAY** of each month at The Community Centre, Haydon Bridge.

(The General Public is welcome at the first part of every meeting.) Any items for discussion must be notified in writing to the Chairman one week in advance of the meeting so that Committee members can be advised, enabling worthwhile discussion to take place. The Chairman will then advise the person concerned of the right to attend.

**EDITORIAL POLICY OF THE HAYDON NEWS**

The editorial policy of the *Haydon News* is ultimately the responsibility of the Committee of the 'Friends of Haydon Bridge', although day-to-day responsibility is delegated to the Editorial Committee of the *Haydon News*. Our intention is always to ensure that the content of the *Haydon News* is as fair and factually correct as possible. Any complaints concerning editorial policy should be addressed in writing to the Chairman of the 'Friends of Haydon Bridge', and will be considered by and receive a formal response from the Committee of the 'Friends of Haydon Bridge'. Complaints other than those made above will not be entertained.

The Editorial Committee reserves the right to decide which letters are to be published, and to alter or shorten letters when necessary. Anonymous letters will NOT be published. A nom-de-plume may be used provided that the Editorial Committee has been advised of the writer's name and address.

Charles Thomas, (Chairman)  
South View, Heugh House Lane,  
Haydon Bridge, NE47 6ND

**DEADLINE:** All contributions to the *Haydon News* to reach the Editor no later than Monday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2002.

# CHURCH PAGE

## CLERGY MESSAGE

### *A Lenten Reflection*

Father Leo Pyle

Water, light and life: the symbols of the Christ. And we are called to follow in the same. The Christ of God. "God enters into the dialogue with our doubt and fears, as reluctance to make the leap of faith and our inability to recognize the divine presence in our lives."

And we are thirsty with a God-given thirst. As with the people of the Bible, it is Christ that drives us on. Thirst for meaning. Thirst for coherence. Thirst for a spiritual life and frame of reference that sustains and satisfies. Like the people of the Bible, our thirst makes us look aggressive and unattractive. Our thirst takes us down aberrant paths, searching for the emotional quick-fix – even the spiritual quick fix. As Saint John of the Cross put it: *We journey in darkness, by night, in search of the light. Only our thirst drives us onward.*

And Jesus says to us, as he says to the Samaritan woman, "If you only knew what God was offering ..." Jesus cut through to the heart of our human sadness. He invites us to worship in spirit and in truth. Such worship accepts us where we are – praying as we can, not as we should! He honours and recognizes our experience – what we have been through and are enduring; who and what we are. And we are encouraged to recognize the God who is with us, no matter what. Christ comes to find us in our own rejection. And the foundation of our vocation to discipleship is the experience of being known and recognized and accepted by Jesus. It is this that enables us to grow in faith. It is this which enables us to proclaim God's presence in our community.

In his answer to the Samaritan woman – indeed in his answer to all of us – Jesus echoes the words of Ben Sirach [The Israelite writer whose book some churches call *Ecclesiasticus*], who speaks of the water of wisdom. Those who drink the water wisdom only increase their thirst. Our unease, then, our dissatisfaction and frustration is not a sign of spiritual ill-health. On the contrary. Despite the unpromising forms that our human desire for God takes, it is the thirst that drives us on into a relationship in spirit and in truth. Our thirst is a God-given thirst.

And Jesus is the only one who can slake and satisfy our thirst!

[after Gemma Simmonds, IBVM, in *Priest and People*, Feb 1999, pp.74-75]



GOOD FRIDAY  
MARCH 29<sup>TH</sup>



EASTER DAY  
SUNDAY MARCH 31<sup>ST</sup>

February / March 2002

christians together in haydon bridge



## AN INDEPENDENT SUPPLEMENT TO THE HAYDON NEWS

### WHO AND WHERE

The names and phone numbers of the clergy who minister in Haydon Bridge

Rev David Hasson, with the Methodist congregation  
The Manse, Moorview, Haltwhistle 320.051

Father Leo Pyle, with St John's Catholic Church  
St John's Presbytery, North Bank 684.265

Canon Vincent Ashwin, with St Cuthbert's C of E  
The Vicarage, Station Yard 684.307

### HOLY WEEK AND EASTER

Each church in the village has its own services. We list below the inter-church services, where we join one another in fellowship as Christians together.

#### Palm Sunday, March 24<sup>th</sup>.

10.00am All meet at St John's for the ceremony of palms, and the Bible readings. Then in procession down to ...

10.20am The Methodist Church; sermon from Mr Mark Knowles, and prayers for the church and the world.

10.40am At St Cuthbert's, for the final part of the Holy Communion service.

#### Tuesday in Holy Week:

7.30pm at St John's. Stations of the Cross.

#### Wednesday in Holy Week:

7.30pm at the Methodist Church: Devotions by Joan Appleby.

#### Maundy Thursday

7.30pm at St Cuthbert's: Holy Communion of the Last Supper

#### Easter Day

6.00pm at the Methodist Church: United hymns and preaching.

We wish all readers of the Haydon News  
a happy and blessed Easter

## METHODIST CHURCH SERVICES

### Sunday March 3<sup>rd</sup>

10.00am Mr Kris Anderson  
6.00pm Rev Marie Hall

### Sunday March 10<sup>th</sup>

10.00am Mrs D Mallett (Family)  
6.00pm Mrs H Pinkney

### Sunday March 17<sup>th</sup>

10.00am Rev M Peters  
6.00pm Prayer Group

Tue 19<sup>th</sup> 7.30pm Men's Fellowship  
Wed 20<sup>th</sup> 2.00pm Women's Own

### Sunday March 24<sup>th</sup>

10.00am Mr Mark Knowles *\*\*below*  
6.00pm Rev Russell Hilborne

### Easter Sunday, March 31<sup>st</sup>

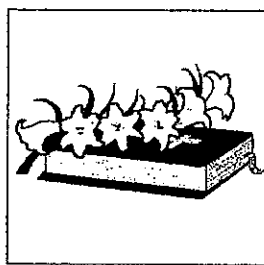
10.00am Rev Leo Osborn (Sacrament)  
6.00pm Rev David Archer (United)

Wed. 3<sup>rd</sup> 2.00pm Women's Own

### Sunday, April 7<sup>th</sup>

10.00am Mrs M Weatherson  
6.00pm Mr R Anthony

*\*\* This service begins at St John's Roman Catholic Church, and is a united service.*



## MOTHERING SUNDAY, MARCH 10<sup>TH</sup>

Don't forget all who act as mothers on 'Mothering Sunday':

- The Church, which is the mother of us all (and where *Mothering Sunday* originated);
- Our own mothers, giving thanks for all they have done;
- All those women who have kept an eye on their neighbours over the years; Haydon Bridge is full of them.
- All who have acted like mothers to us: grandmothers, aunts, friends' mothers.

Rev David Hasson the Methodist minister is on Sabbatical at present. He is visiting church projects in Nepal, and will return home in May. We wish him safe travel and an interesting fruitful time. Other ministers in the circuit are providing care.

## CALENDAR FOR ST CUTHBERT'S CHURCH

### March 3<sup>rd</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Lent

8.00am Holy Communion (Order 2)  
10.30am Morning Prayer, & Sermon

Friday and Saturday, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> 9.30-11.30  
Vicar in church to receive donations

### March 10<sup>th</sup> Mothering Sunday (Lent 4)

10.30am All-Age Communion

### March 17<sup>th</sup> 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent

10.30am Parish Communion

Mon. 18<sup>th</sup> 7.30pm, Appeal Committee

### March 24<sup>th</sup> Palm Sunday

10.00am Inter-church Communion  
begins at St John's (see overleaf)

Wed. 27<sup>th</sup> 7.00pm Holy Communion  
7.30pm Mothers' Union

Maundy Thursday, 7.30pm Communion  
Of the Last Supper, with foot washing

Good Friday, 10.30am Devotions, and  
Holy Communion.

Easter Eve: 8.00pm Easter Vigil

### March 31<sup>st</sup> Easter Day

8.00am Holy Communion  
10.30am Festival Communion

### April 7<sup>th</sup> Second Sunday of Easter

8.00am Holy Communion  
10.30am All-Age Service of the Word

## £80,000 Appeal Launched

The Archdeacon of Northumberland, the Ven Peter Elliott, launched the appeal for the restoration and improvement of St Cuthbert's on February 24<sup>th</sup>. The scheme involves repairs to the roof and walls of the historic building; providing access and facilities for the disabled; taking down and rebuilding the vestry wall, which is leaning dangerously, before it falls down; and converting the vestry into a small meeting room for the community. This would provide a crèche and Sunday School on Sundays, and replace the church hall when that comes to end of its life; the hall's main function now is to give a home four days a week to the playgroup and toddler group.

Leaflets about the appeal and the urgent need have been distributed to every house in the village.

Five individuals had given cheques totalling nearly £5000, before the Appeal was formally launched.

If people of the village give generously, then this attracts matching funds from Trusts, charities, the National Lottery and English Heritage.

The aim is to reach the target by Easter 2004.

## SERVICES AT ST JOHN OF BEVERLEY CATHOLIC CHURCH

Mass each Sunday at 9.30am.

Mass at 11.0 at Haltwhistle each Sunday.

Mass on weekdays (except Mondays), at 10.00am, either at St John's or at St Wilfrid's, Haltwhistle.

### Lent Groups

The inter-church study groups are continuing this month on Wednesdays: 10.30am at the Methodist Church, and 7.30pm at the Catholic priest's house. The course is called *In the Wilderness*, and looks at how God is with us in our 'wilderness' experiences. Phone 684.307 for more information.

## Thank God for the elderly!

Lord God, Eternal Father,  
You have ordered the seasons of our lives.  
We thank you for the elderly,  
for their experience of life,  
for their wisdom,  
and for all they did for us when we depended on them.  
Now they are old  
and their strength is failing,  
Show them the need for things to change.  
Enable them to adopt new ideas.  
Help them to feel wanted and loved.  
Help us to give them the respect they desire, and the care they need.  
Unite us all in the circle of Christian love and care, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

*From USPG, a mission agency that supports elderly people in North India.*

## V.I.P. VISITOR AT THE METHODIST CHURCH

The Rev Leo Osborn, Chairman of the Newcastle District, will be taking the morning service at the village's Methodist Church of Easter Day. This is the equivalent of the Anglican or Roman Catholic bishop coming. We wish them well in their worship together.

## VERSE FOR THE MONTH

Jesus said: "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest . . . But now my kingdom is from another place."

*John ch. 18, v. 36.*

*Jesus is the Servant King: "Hands that flung stars into space to cruel nails surrendered. This is our God . . ."*

## CHECK OUT THE NEW MINESTRONE COLOURED CARPET...

### MMR

Unlike Mr. Tony Blair I am perfectly happy to declare publicly that both of my children have had MMR. In fact I gave it to both of them myself which probably explains why, even now, they stand with their backs to the wall when I am in the same room. On a number of occasions I have been asked whether I would be prepared to give the vaccines separately. My reply is that I would have no hesitation at all in doing so if the materials were accessible. However, I have to point out that the vaccine must be kept refrigerated from the point of manufacture to the point at which it is injected. This is a requirement that cannot be broken and can only be achieved with the use of dedicated refrigerated trucks. Getting the vaccine and bringing it to the surgery, no matter how carefully wrapped and kept in the fridge at home, will not do. Sorry.

There are rumours of practices providing separate vaccines in Edinburgh and Newcastle. Under no circumstances will this practice put pressure on parents to go against their own judgement. Sometimes, simply delaying the vaccine for a month or two is enough to enable parents to feel more comfortable. It is undoubtedly the case that VERY, VERY RARELY a child is damaged or killed by a vaccine. On the other hand, I have seen children dying of measles and whooping cough and that is an unforgettably melancholy memory. My colours are nailed very publicly to the mast – vaccinate your children without hesitation – I did! All the partners are happy to discuss this contentious issue with parents at any time.

### HOLIDAYS ON PRESCRIPTION

Many years ago there was a vogue for doctors to recommend holidays in various locations for various illnesses. I have seen quaint letters in patient notes from the 1940s in which phrases like the following occur; *"I am sure that this delicate child would benefit from a few weeks at Skegness"*. The continentals, even now, remain fond of Spa treatments and not so many years ago large segments of the Soviet workforce were sent to the Black Sea resorts for the health.

There is only one holiday destination that I feel any degree of therapeutic confidence in recommending and that is the Dead Sea in Israel. The area is so far below sea level that the additional thickness of air above sunbathers filters out much of the harmful radiation in sunlight and allows people with psoriasis and some other skin diseases to benefit in safety. I can speak from personal experience that sunlight improves psoriasis but the risk of fatal melanoma must always be borne in mind.

A company, with whom I have no connection whatsoever, called Dead Sea Travel (0208 2382600) arranges travel to the area and offers packages in a variety of hotels with treatment at special dedicated centres. Some friends spent time in Israel during our undergraduate days and reported having to move machine guns off the dining room tables before eating. This might not be the best time to visit either but in the future perhaps.

### ANXIOUS CHAPS

Several times each year worried men appear in my surgery looking very uncomfortable as they struggle to find the right words. After a few false starts and hesitations it becomes apparent that this is going to be a lunch-box-related problem. In due course we get to the meat of the problem – blood in the semen. Naturally, the poor chap knows, this means that he has developed some grotesque, and probably fatal, rot in the wedding tackle. At the very least the whole plot will wither and fall off or require immediate amputation.

Now, there is an interesting condition called Fournier's Gangrene in which the scrotum turns gangrenous and falls off leaving the testicles in the fresh air. It is unbelievably rare!

First – is the blood from some nick in the skin of the genitals of either partner? Second – is the blood in the semen or urine? Simple physical examination, urine sample, blood sample, blood pressure check and ultrasound scan are the required steps, following which it would be unusual to be unable to offer complete reassurance. Profuse bleeding or age greater than fifty or other symptoms should prompt further checks.

### WHY, OH WHY, OH WHY...

...do such a large proportion of women harbour such negative, or at best ambivalent, sentiments about their own bodies? A natural and seemingly modesty is a wholesome thing but when thoughts stray toward self-disgust or worse then, I feel, there is an issue to be addressed. Gustave Courbet's famous 1866 portrait, *L'Origine du Monde*, is an eloquent homage that might offer direction to a new and needful paradigm for women's self regard and men's reappraisal of reality.

Channel 4 may have achieved one hundred per cent of the viewing public for the recent program called "Designer Vaginas". As usual, the media are lagging behind the professions. Over the years, where appropriate, I have tidied up the tufted parts of patients, both male and female, in the surgery. More complicated problems are forwarded to the hospital. Both men and women can suffer acute anxiety and embarrassment and restrict their social lives because of real or perceived problems with their genital anatomy.

In men, incomplete separation of the foreskin from the glans or an excessively tight foreskin can cause trouble. Minor sebaceous cysts on the shaft and scrotum also occur. In women, anxiety about the size or shape of labia is not uncommon but is almost always misplaced. Sometimes, after childbirth, healing of the tissues can go a little astray and require sorting out. Physical problems, leading to difficulty with intercourse, are often more easily solved than expected.

Repair of the pelvic floor muscles and vagina in women who have borne children is, and always has been, done in all UK hospitals, contrary to the impression created on Channel 4.

If you've got a problem, let's sort it out or, at the least, reassure you. Don't let morbid delicacy or inappropriate embarrassment hold you back.

### CHANGING MORE PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS

I have met some women who say that, for them, birth without injections or 'gas and air' etc., did not hurt – at all. Most women report some, but not unbearable, discomfort that is soon forgotten when they have their baby in their arms and at their breast. Very few women have a bad experience but unfortunately the impression is sometimes given that they are in the majority – NOT SO!

Lately, I have encountered a number of women who are angered by the portrayal of birth as a writhing, screaming agony, in films, documentaries and printed media, because of the adverse effect this has, especially on younger women.

Perhaps it is time to give birth a positive image. To emphasise the good experiences that many women have, the naturalness of the process and the wonderful way that women's bodies accomplish the giving of life. Do we have to perpetuate a negative cultural bias toward birth forever? Why pass fear and ignorance from generation to generation? If you can give a positive message to a pregnant woman that will bolster her confidence and improve her morale, then, for Heaven's sake, do so! Don't leave the job to those with negative views.

### MARK TWAIN – A QUOTE

Be careful of reading health books, you may die of a misprint.

Steve Ford.



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