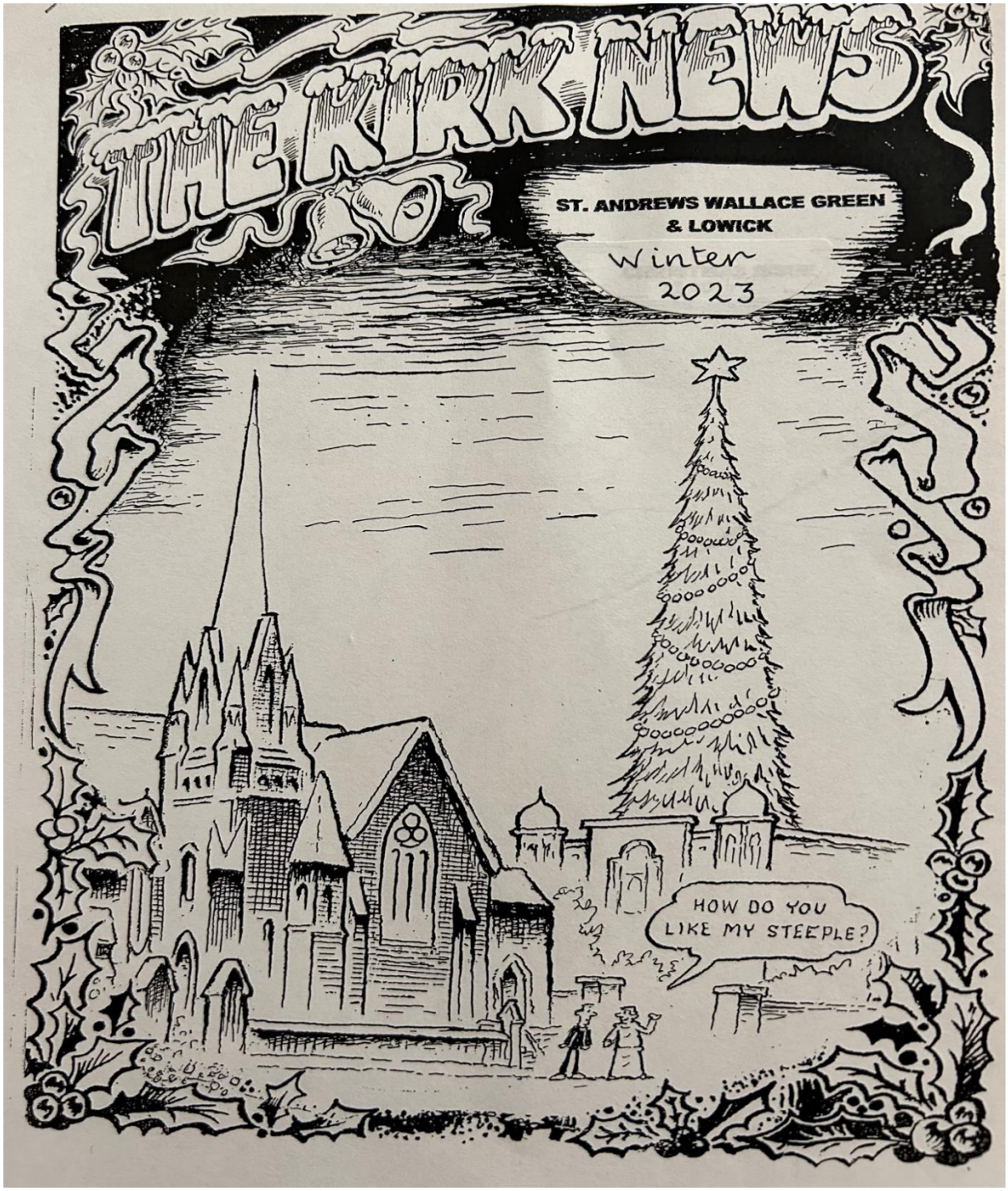


St Andrew's Wallace Green & Lowick
Winter 2023

(Registered Scottish Charity No SC00867)

Minister	Rev Dr Adam Hood	01289 332787
Session Clerk	Miss Rita Inglis	01289 307421
Treasurer	Mr Brian Tait	01361 882897
Organist	Miss Rena Telfer	01289 302080
Choir	Miss Rena Telfer	01289 302080
Church Flowers	Miss Rita Inglis	01289 307421
Churches Together	Miss Rena Telfer	01289 302080
Gift Aid	Mr Alan Irving	01289 308741
Investments	Mrs Sarah Weatherburn	01289 298579
Kirk News	Mrs Joan Montgomery	01289 763151
Keep Fit	Mrs Susan Jordan	01289 306144
Life & Work	Mrs Anne McQueen	07526 223274
New Horizons	Rev Dr Adam Hood	01289 332787
Pastoral Care	Mrs Betty Mathieson	01289 308686
Presbytery	Miss Rita Inglis	01289 307421
Property	Mr Chris Budzynski	01289 305303
Safeguarding	Mr Dale Hall	01289 308944
Walking Group	Mrs Grace Tait	01361 882897
Website	Mrs Allison Longbone	01289 302249
Work Party	Ms Evelyn Mavin	01289 306086

Kirk Session Sub Committees

Finance
Lead: Mr Brian Tait

Fabric
Lead: Mr Chris Budzynski

Pastoral
Lead: Rev Dr Adam Hood

Mission and Nurture
Lead: Rev Dr Adam Hood

Elders

Alan Aitchison, Karen Aitchison, Linda Bankier, Dale Hall, Fiona Hall, Rita Inglis, Alan Irving, Bryon Longbone, Betty Mathieson, Joan Reed, Brian Tait, Grace Tait, Sarah Weatherburn.

We are sad to mark the passing of one of our retired elders, Mr Sid Burgon. Sid had been an elder for over 50 years and was a well-kent and loved figure in the congregation, where, until recently, he was a faithful worshipper, along with Shena his wife. Sid worked

as a professional cartoon artist and used his skills generously in support of the church. For thirty years he designed covers for the Kirk News, as well as baptismal certificates, calendars and Christmas cards. We will remember Sid as a gentle-man of self-effacing modesty and ready humour. Our condolences to Shena, Isabel and Glen and to all of Sid's family.

Holy Communion

We will be celebrating Holy Communion on Sunday November 26th at 11am. **Please note that we are no longer handing out communion cards to everyone on our roll quarterly.** The function of the card is to remind us that communion is happening and invite us to come along, and this task is now carried out by the Kirk News. We will, however, continue to return those cards handed in at previous communions, since many of us appreciate the tradition of handing in our communion cards as we come to the sacrament. If you have not received a card with your magazine, but would like to hand in a card when you next come along to communion, please just look out one of the cards you have previously received and hand this in. If you cannot find a card at home, and would like to receive one, please let me know.

Congregational Register

Deaths

(*denotes communicant member)

David Stewart 23.8.23*
Mary Cooke 3.10.23
Sid Burgon 12.10.23*

New Communicants

Carole and Sandy Lang – by transference of certificate
Judith and Danny Paterson – by resolution of Kirk Session

Minister's Letter

Dear Friends,
The word 'celebration' is often associated with festivities, such as those that we anticipate at Christmas. But, the idea of celebration has wider meanings too. It can, for instance, describe the actions of a minister in presiding at, or celebrating Holy Communion. It can also refer to rituals through which we honour or make widely known some aspect of human achievement or experience.

It's in this sense that we celebrate Remembrance each November. It is a season in which we recognise and honour the sacrifices that men and women have made in war on behalf of home and duty. We are, as human beings, aware of ourselves as fragile, short-lived creatures and this brings poignancy to the sacrifices of hundreds of thousands, largely in their late teens and early twenties, who, as we say, went long before their time. And the causalities of war are not just an abstract group that we call the 'dead'. Those who were made voiceless by war were real flesh and blood people, who did things, felt things, laughed, cried, loved and hoped. Remembering and honouring them as individuals is colossally significant, for each of them is known and loved by the God who, in the cross, shares in the agonies of the world.

Yours, Adam

Membership
Adam would welcome enquiries from anyone who would like to join the membership roll of the congregation. Membership formalises a commitment to the congregation and our mission, and allows for involvement in congregational decisions and leadership of the church. Though, of course, all are welcome to participate in any and all of our activities regardless of whether they are formally members or not.

For your calendar

Sun 12th Nov	9.45am, Civic Remembrance Service, Berwick Parish Church – no stream this week. 6pm - Brief Remembrance Service, SAWG
Mon 13th Nov	6.30pm, Kirk Session
Sat 25th Nov	Christmas Fayre, 10am-2pm
Sun 26th Nov	11am, Holy Communion
Wed 6th Dec6	6.30pm, Schools Big Sing
Sun 10th Dec	3pm, Service for those who find Christmas difficult
Sun 24th Dec	11.30pm, Christmas Eve Service – with carol singing from 11.15pm.
Mon 25th Dec	10.30am, Christmas Day Worship

New Horizons
We have made a good start to our session, with two interesting and informative talks. The next meeting is on the 14th Nov at 2pm, when we will be entertained by **Eyemouth Fishermen's Choir**. Thereafter we will be gathering on the 12th Dec for our **Christmas Party**. All welcome. (AH)

Cleaning

We now have a rota for the weekly cleaning of the church premises, and more helpers would be welcome. If you can help – it doesn't normally take any more than an hour to do the basics – please sign up on the sheet in the Session Room. (AH)

Day of Giving

Thanks to all who gave so generously to the Day of Giving. The Day has raised over £6000 which will more than cover the cost of the recent, necessary repairs to the steeple.

Advent Discussion Group

At 7.15pm on 30th Nov, 7th, 14th and 21st Dec we will be meeting informally to discuss aspects of Christmas in preparation for the annual celebration. All welcome. See the minister for further details.

Harvest Thanksgiving

Many thanks to all those who helped prepare the church for harvest, and who contributed to our collection of foodstuffs and money for the Berwick Foodbank. As usual, the church was beautifully decorated for the occasion with flowers and the produce of the land. We were able to collect lots of items and £300 for the Foodbank, which was gratefully received by staff.

Stamp Appeal

"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." *Galatians 6:9*

As we soon begin the approach to Christmas, please do remember to collect any stamps that come through your door and drop them into the box at the back of the church near to the audio system. These stamps are then sent on to the Church of Scotland who sell them and use the money raised to support a worthy project, which changes from year to year.

This year the project supported is:

Firmly Planted: Agroforestry for Sustainability

Firmly Planted is a community-based agroforestry initiative with the ambition of making a sustainable impact across Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe. It is spearheaded by our partners in the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP), and built around the church's community structures. The initiative will resource individual groups to respond to the various challenges affecting Malawi today.

Agroforestry presents an opportunity to address challenges of food insecurity, deforestation, climate change and youth unemployment. Tree nurseries create employment opportunities, fruit trees improve nutrition and wider tree planting helps mitigate the impact of the climate crisis, in turn improving agricultural productivity.
Firmly Planted will provide community-based training tailored to the community's needs, ensuring woodlots are well maintained to have the greatest chance to thrive. The programme, through effective distribution, looks to attain large-scale tree planting of locally relevant woodlots – these could be linked to schools, churches, clinics and community groups. Having already established a pilot tree nursery, CCAP is looking to replicate this across the Synods by implementing Central Tree Nursery Hubs allowing each nursery to grow tree seedlings based on the needs of their communities.
Mission partner, Gary Brough, is one of the project coordinators and is looking for opportunities to grow the project. You can keep up to date with Gary's work on the Mission Partner page of the Church of Scotland website. The Guild is also involved in supporting this programme.
This year stamp appeal proceeds will go towards establishing the tree nurseries.

Christmas Card Competition

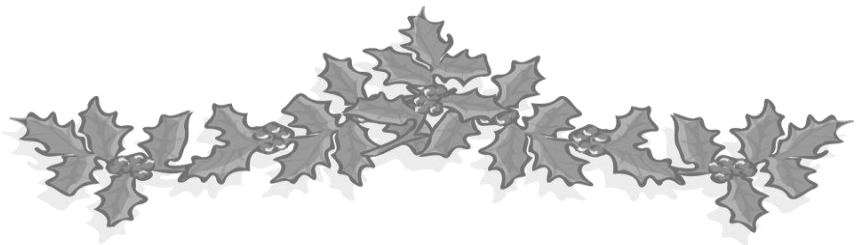
Well, I did send out a request to you all back in the summer and I am sad to say I haven't had any entries yet!
Hopefully, now that the nights are drawing in and Christmas is looming on the horizon you will all start to feel inspired.
You can paint, draw, collage, applique, computer generate – any medium at all – just produce your card on any size paper or card up

to a maximum of A4 size (in old money – that's 8.5" x 11.5") and hand it into me with your name attached. If you feel you would like a go but would like some support or materials or just to have a go in the company of others then come along to the craft group or speak to me.
Just remember our cards are much cheaper than store ones and ALL proceeds go to Charity – your Church.

Christmas Fayre – Saturday 25th November

Yes, it is very nearly time for the Fayre again, so I trust you all have the date in your diaries. Once again, this year we will be running the cake delivery service before the event – so keep your eyes peeled for that so important email! If you aren't on email and would like to participate then ring me and I will see you get the list. So far this year, all you cake eaters have raised the amazing sum of £1671.91 so well done you and keep munching!
For the Fayre we will have the usual craft stalls, cake stalls, books, bric-a-brac etc so there will be something for everyone. I can guarantee we have some interesting looking draught excluders this year to keep you all draught free during the winter.
So do come along – it's a fun morning with plenty to see and buy that you didn't even know you needed, but, now realise you can't do without!
Come along and if you can help out in anyway – please grab me in Church or give me a call.

Rita



St Andrew's Wallace Green & Lowick Church

Local Christmas card delivery service

Minimum donation of 60p per card

(2nd Class Stamps are now 75p)

Delivery to the following areas:

Berwick	Lowick	Hutton
Tweedmouth	East Ord	Paxton
Spittal	Horncliffe	Norham
Scremerston	Foulden	

ONLY to the villages—NO outlying properties

We regret that cards received for other areas cannot be delivered

Please hand in your cards and your donations

BY FRIDAY 15th DECEMBER 2023

to

St Andrew's Wallace Green Church

1.30pm-4pm Friday 15th December

And

Before or after services on Sundays

3rd & 10th December

OR from Monday 4th December to Thursday 14th December at:

Bank of Scotland (Hide Hill)

HB Longbone & Son (Walkergate)

The Head Gardener (2, Ord Drive)

NB: Please put money in bag with cards—no change given by shops

St Andrew's Wallace Green and Lowick Church of Scotland Berwick-upon-Tweed
Registered Scottish Charity No. SC000867

Angels & Stars

I hope you have all been knitting frantically and have many stars and angels ready – and if you haven't then now's the time to get busy. We will be having the Christmas Big Sing again this year and we will require enough Angels and Stars to distribute to the children that attend.

We also need enough to distribute to the care homes and to other members of the Congregation. These small gifts are so very much appreciated so it will be great to continue doing this for our community. If you do have a bundle for me then please bring them to Church and I can see that they are tagged ready to go out.

Thank you!

Rita

The Christmas Presence

As we get closer to the end of the year, and Christmas, my thoughts turn again to the Christmas Presence. As you already know this has been running in Berwick for several years now, and has been a valuable and successful project. Last year we were in the café area of the Town Hall, but this is now unavailable since it is back to being used as a café. While this is good, it means that once again

we are having to find somewhere else to go. At the moment of writing, I'm not aware that anywhere suitable has been acquired as yet, but companies with empty shops have been very positive and helpful in the past, and we look to seeing God's provision for this Space. Last year, we ran it through January too as a Warm Hub, but I'm not sure what will happen this year.

The congregation here in St Andrew's Wallace Green have been staunch supporters of this venture, as of the Food Bank. This was shown recently in the very generous donations at our Harvest Service, and I am aware that at least one person has already started collecting gifts for the Christmas Presence. It's so encouraging to have the church's backing, and support in donations, gifts, helpers, being part of the Chaplaincy team, etc.

I will try to update as things change and there are definite arrangements made, but do start collecting little gifts - both new and recycled. (We all have things stashed away that we don't use, or need.) Donations of money are always helpful as heating has to be paid for, and jars of coffee, packets of tea, and biscuits, are both useful and essential, as are toiletries.

I'd be very happy to tell you anything that you would want to know, but in the meantime do think of this outreach made possible by people from many of the local churches, and do remember it in your prayers. Truly a Churches Together project.

******Stop Press******
Christmas Presence Update

We have now got what was Wilkie's shop and we are aiming to open for business from Tuesday 28 November until Saturday 23 December. The Presence will be closed Sunday and Monday and open from 10.00-3.00, Tuesday to Saturday. This is great news and if you can help, we would be delighted for you to join us.

Rena

Message from your Treasurer

It is very difficult to appreciate we are in the final months of another year, and I hope everyone survived the October storms without any hardship.

In the last edition I reported that our finances were not in the best of health and the Kirk Session organised a Day of Giving to help boost our funds which had been depleted by costs of repairs.

I believed all of us would respond but the amount of £5,644 was beyond all we could have hoped for. A heartfelt thanks goes out to all who contributed in some way to this fantastic total. This amount will be topped up with gift aid tax from the Government when the claim is made in 2024.

More positive news to report which is tinged with a note of sadness is that a deceased member has left us a legacy of £10,000.

There are events coming up in the final months, coffee delivery service, Christmas Fayre and possibly Christmas card delivery. Please give these events your support.

In the three months since I last reported we have had no exceptional items of expenditure.

I have left at the bottom of the page our bank details for anyone who may wish to donate via online banking. Since the last issue there has been some new donors.

If anybody would like to receive more information about our finances, please get in touch with me and I will gladly give you the answers you need.

Once again, a very huge thank you to your response to the September gift day.

Brian

Treasurer

Bank Details

Bank of Scotland

Sort Code 12-12-57

Account No. 00741160

Remembrance Exhibition to Commemorate the Centenary of Berwick's War Memorial

We will be producing a WW1 exhibition over the Remembrance weekend to commemorate the erection of the Castlegate War Memorial which will be 100 years old this year.

The exhibition features a time line of WW1, photographs, displays and the history of those that are listed on our War memorials. On Saturday the 11th there will be a talk by Eric Musgrave entitled "Lest we Forget" – the story of Berwick's War Memorial.

Exhibition- Saturday 11th November
11am – 1.30pm
Talk "Lest we Forget" 2pm – 3pm
Exhibition 3pm – 4pm
Exhibition – Sunday 12th November 11.30am – 3.30pm

Do come along if you can – it will be very interesting and if you would like to help then please speak to Rita.

Keep Fit

Keep fit continues to keep us in good shape and on our toes – why not join the group on Tuesday mornings at 10.00. We do gentle exercises, followed by tea, coffee and biscuits and a good chat! New members are always welcome.

Susan

Come and Join the Celebration

We celebrate for so many different reasons. We celebrate milestones in our lives, birthdays, weddings, anniversaries and graduations. We mark personal achievements and memorable moments.

Celebrations often have deep roots in cultural and religious practices, such as Christmas, Diwali and Eid.
Celebrations can be a way to express joy and happiness, whether a simple supper with friends or a grand event. Celebrations can also be a way to remember and honour the past.

Ultimately, celebrations serve as a means of expressing emotions, creating shared experiences and finding meaning in various aspects of life.

November brings about some notable anniversaries:

It is King Charles' 75th birthday

It is 60 years since the National Service concluded its work.

It is 60 years since the death of C S Lewis

It is Remembrance Day.

Harvest Celebration on Holy Island.

Lowick and Holy Island C of E First Schools Harvest Festival

Adam and I have the priviledge of being Governors at Lowick and Holy Island C of E First Schools and I was invited to attend their Harvest Celebrations on Monday 16 October.
We celebrated the Harvest of the land and the sea.

At that time, the Coat of Hopes was on Holy Island and was the theme of the talk given by Sam, the Curate.

Ask me where I am going
Ask me about my purpose

The Coat of Hopes is a patchwork pilgrim Coat, on an ongoing walk through Britain.

Made, worn and walked by many hundreds of people during and since the pilgrimage on which it was created – from the south coast of England to the gates of COP 26, the UN climate summit, in Glasgow autumn 2021.

The Coat is made up of pieces of blanket into which people have worked their griefs, remembrances, prayers and hopes for the place they call home.

It walks ever calling those who encounter it, or who share it, into the present.

Supported by its warmth (love) – to bear its weight (responsibility). So each might "wear the promise that we all belong together" as we seek to respond with our whole self to the climate and ecological emergency.

The Coat of Hopes is covered in patches with each one telling a story from the Pilgrimage. Sam told Hazara's story from this simple patch. She is from Afghanistan and escaped from the war ravaged country, leaving her parents and other family members behind. The tree and bushes represent time hiding in a forest in Turkey. The Moon was often the only light they had during long nights, the water represents the seas crossed. Finally, the Sun, the same Sun that her parents see in the sky – they have lost contact and not seen them in a vey long time.

It really is a Coat of Hopes.

A new kind of Remembrance poppy.

For the first time in 28 years, there is a new kind of poppy for Remembrance Sunday this year: it is plastic free.

Director of the Poppy Appeal, Andy Taylor-White explains:

“We are very proud to introduce the plastic-free poppy. It will not only enable people to support our Armed Forces community but also continues the RBL’s commitment to sustainability.”

The new poppy design has a 40% smaller carbon footprint and is made from ‘bespoke red and green paper.’

The paper comes from a blend of renewable fibres, 50% of which has been recovered from the waste used in the production of coffee cups.
The plastic-free poppy will be available alongside remaining stocks of the current poppy, to reduce any waste poppies already produced. Poppies containing single-use plastic can be returned to Sainsbury’s stores for recycling.

Dreams do come true

Born during the war things were hard. As a child my father had abandoned my mother and I and we lived with my aunt in a flat in North Shields.
On Sundays, my mother went to church in the morning and I went

to Sunday School. My aunt cooked some lunch and in the evening we all went back to church. My aunt went to her church and my mother was in the choir, so I sat on my own and gazed at the stained-glass windows.

Sunday afternoons, my mother played the piano and I sat and listened. She was a lovely pianist and played mostly without music. She always finished with the Hebridean Overture by Mendelssohn which she called Fingal's Cave. She would tell me it was a cave on an island somewhere off Scotland but she doubted we would ever see it.

Sundays continued the same and in my early teens the church started a youth club two nights a week. It was great, the boys played billiards and the girls played table tennis and we had music for dancing and soft drinks were provided. At some point, they decided to have a trip to Iona, our church was Presbyterian and called St. Columba's so had a connection to Iona. I went home and told my mother about it. Sadly, I wasn't able to go due to having to pay towards the cost. I probably didn't miss much as it had been an awful journey by coach and boat, to spend just one night on Iona. But, they had a good time and I was upset not having been able to go.

As soon as I was 18, I left home and went on to marry. I had a good job having trained as an auditor with a firm of accountants. We bought our first house which we sold a few years later and moved to the country near Wooler. We had over 20 years of happy country living, but sadly my husband wasn't well and we moved into Wooler. Over a two-year period, I lost my mother, my father (whom I had made contact with), two close cousins and then my husband died with cancer. This left me completely on my own with no close family left.

Life was miserable but I plodded on, doing art and craft fairs at

weekends. I did some travelling and tried to keep busy.

Fast forward 5 years and I was arranging a wedding. I had met Dan and we had decided to get together. He told me he had booked a week's holiday from work for the wedding. He also told me that he still had some holiday to take and did I fancy going to Mull as he had seen a cottage available. So off we went to Mull, it rained a lot! We hiked a 20 miles round trip to see fossilised trees and picnicked surrounded by otters. Dan had said he had a surprise for me but refused to tell me what it was. The day of the surprise we were up early packed a picnic and off we went. We drove to a track down to a small boat waiting and climbed aboard with about five other people and off we went. I first thought it was a fishing trip but we didn't have our rods. I then thought it was maybe to see whales and dolphins but I was wrong.
We chugged along for hours and eventually saw an island in the distance. One of the two boatmen on board said we are approaching Staffa and you will see the caves. We stopped at a jetty and all got off and were directed around the cliffside with instructions to keep a hold on the rope provided. We were in Fingal's Cave. I couldn't believe I was actually there and it was more beautiful than I had ever imagined. The colours of the water flickering green and purple round the cave. We returned to the boat and were told we were lucky to have been able to land as often the sea is too rough to land. Well, off we went again and the boatman said next stop Iona. After about 40 years from missing the trip to Iona I got to see what I had missed. It was lovely, we went into the Abbey and walked around and the sun came out as well.

Soon after we got married in Wooler Parish Church and we left the church to the sound of the Hebridean Overture being played full blast.

After 4 years in Scotland with Dan's job we moved back to Northumberland and had 14 years at St Cuthberts, Tillmouth. We then had to find a bungalow due to ill health. We have now been in Berwick 2 years and have just celebrated our 20th Anniversary.

Judith Paterson

A Celebration in Nice, France - Rugby World Cup - September 2023

Recently, I had the great privilege to travel to Nice to attend one of the Rugby World Cup games, Scotland vs Tonga - it was a double celebration as I was also able to meet up with my eldest son, who had travelled from Singapore to attend the match.

The city was awash with rugby fans from many nations and what struck me was the wonderful camaraderie between the fans. Regardless of the sporting top you were wearing, which clearly depicted which team you were supporting, there was inevitably a smile and often accompanying banter between the fans and an exchange of helpful directions and tips, as we all navigated the city. The atmosphere in Nice for the six days I spent there was one of happiness and good fun.

One the day of the match, we travelled from our local tram station to the stadium by train - we had been advised to get to the tram station early as it would be busy. The first three trams which came though were literally bulging at the seams with fans. The doors opened and closed without anyone being able to get on - it was heaving to put it mildly.

When the fourth tram arrived it was a similar story, except this time a Scottish lady standing by the door looked at me and said ‘come on get in - we’ll all squeeze up’. With some reservation my son and I boarded the heaving tram. Once on board the atmosphere was electric - everyone was happy, full on anticipation of the game, and in good voice - we sang everything from ‘Ye banks and braes’ to ‘And I will walk 500 miles’ - the vocal harmony was stunning. I think Rena would have approved!

By the time we reached the stadium friendships had been formed and there had been a great deal of happy banter in the process.

I hadn’t been to a rugby match since my school days where we travelled to Murrayfield to watch international games. The stadium surroundings and enormity were breathtaking, and the electrifying atmosphere during the match was one for the memory bank - a brilliant time was had by all.

Coincidentally, after Nice my son travelled on to watch a further Scottish game in Lille six days later and who walked into a restaurant the night prior to the match but the same Scottish lady who had asked everyone to ‘squeeze in’ - ‘where’s your Dad?’ she asked. Quite a coincidence indeed!

My short dip back into the rugby world has left me with a cause for celebration - that of camaraderie, mutual respect, and simply enjoyment. I have a great memory of my trip to Nice and a big thanks to my son, who nudged me into coming along. On reflection, I wouldn’t have missed it for the world.

Bill Chalmers.

Celebrations

Thinking about my memories of celebrations, one of the earliest is of my family moving house from one side of Selkirk to the other, and the joy, especially for my parents, of having running water, and an indoor bathroom. I can still vividly see that moment. Something to celebrate indeed.

Being a good Souter, the annual Common Riding was an event to be celebrated. There's nothing quite like the atmosphere engendered by hundreds of people lining the roadside and embankment, and cheering the Standard Bearer, his attendants, and the other riders galloping in at The Toll. Then marching round behind them to the Square to celebrate the 'casting of the colours' The 2 minutes silence after sent shivers down my spine, when there was total silence, apart from the odd whinny. The best Border Common Riding - not that I'm prejudiced!

There's the passing of exams, and being accepted for college, after being told my stammer wouldn't allow me to teach. The furthering of my faith and trust in God in the way that that was confirmed.

There have been weddings, and birthdays, especially my 60th party in the Guild Hall, and my retiral evenings. Maybe small events, but celebrations don't have to be big nor noticed by lots of people. They can be small, sometimes almost trivial things, but things that mean a lot to us and are worth marking. The peace I knew during my one stay in hospital, a beautiful dawn, a job well done. All things to celebrate, and all things to thank God for. The hope I'll soon be celebrating a fully functioning garage door and the removal from my house of all the bits and pieces that should be in the garage. That will be a Red Letter day.

And, of course the greatest celebration is still to come!
“When we all get to heaven, what a day of rejoicing that will be;
When we all see Jesus, we’ll sing and shout the victory”
When I mentioned that to my friend on Bute, she said that the same words had been running through her mind. One of the joys of our faith, is that we look forward to a future beyond our imagining. Something to celebrate indeed!
Rena

An Afternoon with Diana Higham

I was privileged to spend an afternoon with a friend to many and stalwart of St Andrew’s Wallace Green, Diana Higham. I really wanted to explore her celebration of Faith and we had a wonderful 90 minutes. I was humbled by her honesty and fortified in the knowledge that I was in the company of a very special lady.

“Can you tell me something about your Faith?”

Di's journey in Faith came about through tragedy. When she was 17, her Mother died suddenly and very unexpectedly. With 2 younger brothers in the family, Di took the decision to give up her place at Art College and to stay at home to look after the boys and the family home. Unsurprisingly, at that time, Di really struggled in believing that God would have let this happen to their family. Faith wasn't really on the agenda and her thoughts were the same when, at the age of 21, she met Bob. It didn't take long for Bob and Diana to realise that they were made for each other.

Bob's work took them to Sussex and it was then that Bob became a committed Christian. He had met an Evangelical Minister and his Faith was most important to him. One evening, Di reluctantly accompanied Bob to Church where she took Communion. This was a real moment of realisation for Di and she discovered that the way to reach God is through Jesus. The gulf between God and mankind at last made sense. Always supportive of her husband, it was clear that Bob's Faith was becoming an ever-growing part of his and their lives. Whist working for a publication in Fleet Street, Bob used the travel opportunities as a way to meet and work with Missionaries in far-flung corners of the Globe. He helped at Services and this continued at home, helping at the local independent Church.
On trips 'home' to the Borders, they became friendly with a local Church of Scotland minister. It was a throwaway line from him: "you are exactly what we need in the Church of Scotland", that prompted the next huge milestone in Diana's Faith journey.

"Where's Aberdeen, Mummy?"
"Quite a long way from Sussex, on the NE coast of Scotland" was Di's reply.
That started the next chapter in the lives of the Higham family. Without a moment's hesitation and with 3 children in tow, there

was a move to Aberdeen Theological College. Aberdeen was to be home for 5 years – lifelong friends were made and it was the gateway to Bob's life as a Minister. Never once did Di's Faith fail her, even when she saw the toll on her Husband as he worked and worked.

A slight change in direction brought the family to the Berwick area when Bob took up at position at Berwick Bible College. However, there was a very strong call to preach and a friend suggested a 2-week locum on Tiree. In fact, it was thanks to Donald McDonald of Tiree that Bob and Di had 7 happy years on the island. It was on retirement from there that the couple returned to St Abb's and then into Berwick upon Tweed.
Di's happiness was simple: she wanted to be with Bob and the family. Great Faith and great love. She feels that to be complete we need to look after our body, our mind and our soul. She simply couldn't live her life without her Faith.

<u>Quickfire Questions</u>

Early bird or Night Owl?
Night Owl – I am always reading.

Favourite books?
I' m a huge fan of Alexander McCall-Smith's Scotland Street stories.

Favourite films?
Lawrence of Arabia and Dr Zhivago

Favourite meal?
Avocado and prawns, Hot Smoked Salmon, Haggis.

Favourite time of the year?
Spring – it is full of promise.
Favourite holiday?
To celebrate our Ruby Wedding, we drove from Darwin to Sydney (much to the dismay of our daughter).

Favourite music?
Beethoven's 5th Symphony – I can remember being taught to stand to attention when it was playing.

What is your Mantra?
As a young girl, Mum wrote in my Autograph Book, which I still have:
"A contented mind is a bless in kind,
A merry heart, is a purse well lined,
So, what care I, let the World go by,
It is better by far to laugh than cry.

What advice would you give to people today?
Look after your soul.

Wise words indeed.

My Life and my Faith

When Adam asked me to speak in Church about my life and my faith's importance to me, I hesitated. Life had been difficult, and I wasn't in the best emotional state to speak about a faith that, of late, had seemed to flounder. Despite this, I agreed. Arriving at Church on Sunday, I had nothing prepared. I decided that if God wanted me to speak, then God would inspire me. I should note that this is not an unusual stance for me to take.

I was born and brought up in Newcastle upon Tyne in an incredible, active Christian home, which, as a child, I thought was normal. My father was the leader of an Evangelical Church and also a representative on a National Committee. He was also involved with Prison visiting and helping prisoners on release. It was an open house with people frequently either dropping in for advice from Mum or Dad or even staying for what seemed like days on end. I was immersed in a fundamental Christian upbringing, which, I confess, did cause me problems later on in life.

Mum and Dad had their fair share of troubles. They lost my older sister when she was 12 years old to a rare blood disorder. Mum was never in the best of health with arthritis, which worsened as time passed. Yet, they never lost their faith. They tackled the despair they must have gone through with God in their midst. As a teenager, I turned my back on all of this. Needless to say, it caused immense problems with my father, spoiling our relationship for many years.

I ended up in Manchester, a City I love and still consider my home. I studied law, eventually qualifying as a barrister and having a successful and enjoyable career. I married and had the first of my three children. It would appear that I had a successful life to the

outside world. However, I knew that something was missing. I started to seek God.

The example of my parent's faith became so crucial in this journey. My young brother had been a drug addict. The addiction dragged my parents through the Courts. One of the significant Newcastle gangs had used him to steal money, only in turn to have it taken from him. It was my brother who was arrested. I was at work one day (in the courts!) when I received a phone call from his solicitor, a friend of mine. Mr. D was highly concerned as my father proposed to stand bail for my brother, who was telling the police everything. It placed my brother, mother and father at an enormous risk. My brother was safer in custody. The gang was known to do anything to stop people from talking. Mr D stated that my father wouldn't listen to him; he kept saying he had faith in God, who would look after him. I knew nothing I could say would persuade my dad away from this conviction, and I told the solicitor. My brother received his bail, and God looked after my family. My brother didn't have to give any evidence for reasons best known to the Prosecution. That's faith for you! It was this faith I witnessed, and it was this faith I was longing for.

My search began.

Gradually, faith started to return. I belonged and was active in a local church. My family increased to three children. However, life at home was difficult. I had a bullying husband, both to me and to the children. I retired from work early, hoping that would help. It didn't.

My brother seemed to have been great for many years. However, when visiting me and the kids in Manchester he had a fall, fracturing his skull. It was due to alcohol! He may have kicked the drugs only to become an alcoholic. During this time my mother was bed-ridden and needed 24 hours care. My brother had put my

mum and dad through so much. We all loved him dearly, and prayed so hard for his recovery. It is another story there isn’t the space to tell, only to say God once again pulled us all through this tragedy.

At the age of 16, my eldest daughter had a breakdown due to her father. I left the marital home with the children. Financially, the situation became extremely difficult, but my faith was getting me through.

As a distraction, I immersed myself in study at the Open University (I am a bookworm). I achieved degrees in Music and an M.A. in Art History and a Diploma in Jazz. What next! I knew I would never study anything about my faith and Christianity. Why? Because I didn't want the challenges it would bring to me. If I lost my faith, I knew life would be impossible. One day, as I was filling out an application for a PhD in Art History, I felt firmly moved that if my faith meant anything, it would stand up to any challenges. So, a change of direction! I obtained a place at The University of Manchester to study for an M.A. in Theology. My father was concerned that I wasn't attending a 'bible college,' but I knew I needed that blank piece of paper the University would bring. My faith was greatly challenged during the time I spent there. It was worth it a thousandfold. I met some fantastic people, both Christians and Atheists. The discussions were lively and thought-provoking. My walk with God became so rich. It was fantastic, so close, held up, and blessed.

I would like to say it ends there, but I wouldn't be telling the truth. My father died. During the later years of his life, we had become very close. He had been my lifeline. As all my children were living and working in London, I decided to take the step and move to Berwick, a place I've always loved. I was in such a happy place, a strong faith and walk with God. I found St Andrew's Church, Adam and the people were so friendly. I felt at home.

Disaster! Covid happened.

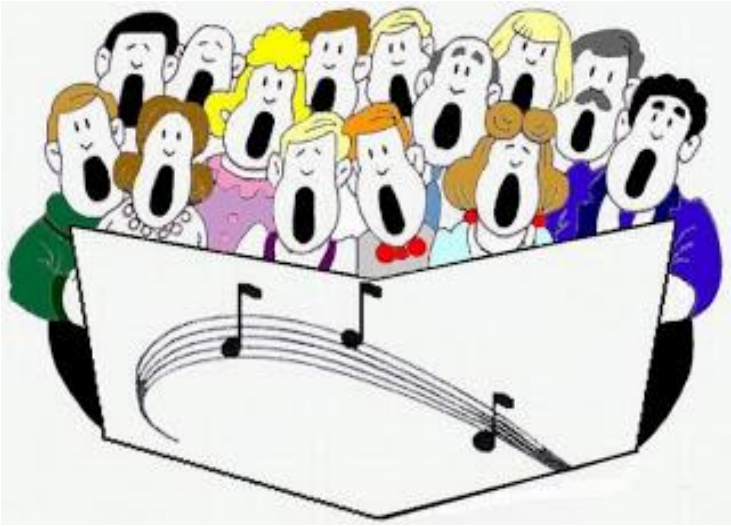
It affected many people in different ways, but it became the catalyst for a very dark time for me. My son, who was in the music industry, was among the first to lose his job and had to come and live with me. He has an OCD condition that has been controlled for several years. Covid opened up a pit of misery for him. His condition became extreme to the extent he ceased to function as a human being. OCD can be misunderstood, often portrayed with humour, such as in ‘The Big Bang Theory.’ Believe me, it is a 'hell on earth' for the person suffering, and, of course, that deflects onto those who love and care for them.

My prayers weren’t being answered. I was begging God. I became unwell, making the situation more difficult. I prayed. Silence. The NHS services were appalling. Ultimately, I used the money to renovate my house and turned to private treatment. OCD has a financial impact – soap, cleaning products, toilet paper – and water if you are on a meter! I used ten times the amount of water. Financially, it was a disaster. I prayed. Silence. Or so it seemed.

As I write this today, although things aren't perfect, my son is back working in the Music Industry in London. Although he is still receiving treatment, he is so much improved. I can't thank God enough, and every day, I pray for God's strength for my son (and me).

We have an extraordinary and amazing God. I may have let God down with many things in my life. He has never let me down. God's faithfulness towards us never flounders. Sometimes, you must wait and trust, and God will bring you through. When I am in dark places, I always remember the faith of my parents, who have been such a witness to my own life.

Susan Charlton



**** Risk Assessment for Christmas Carols ****

From Church Headquarters

It is important that this risk assessment be taken into account by all worship leaders contemplating any official or professional involvement at any Carol Concert or similar event.

"As shepherds watch their flocks by night"
It is highly undesirable for all the shepherds to watch their flocks by night. To avoid excessive working hours the shepherds should either have a rota or use an out of hours provider. This line should preferably be modified to avoid encouraging a long hours culture.

"**All seated on the ground"**
Due to the uncontrolled nature of the lie of the land it is unlikely that the ground will provide an ergonomically suitable seating position. Properly designed seating should be used. The line should be modified to reflect this.

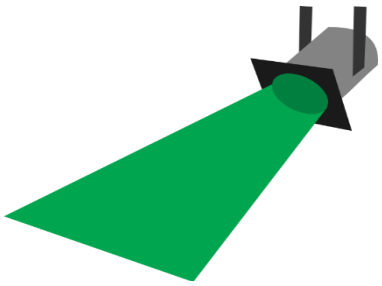
“And glory shone around”
In the absence of adequate research about the effects of such divine glory on the retina it is suggested that exposure be limited to 15 minutes.

“Once in Royal David’s City stood a lowly cattle shed, where a mother laid her baby, in a manger for a bed.”
The Nursing and Midwifery Council have confirmed that in no circumstances can this practice be endorsed due to the risk of neonatal tetanus. This carol should not be used as it in breach of child protection policies.

“The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head”
In view of the current obesity problems the word ‘sweet’ should not be used to indicates adorability. A less semantically challenging word, such as ‘cute’ should be used instead. It is also important that the correct sleeping position be emphasised as a footnote to this carol.

“Ding dong merrily on high”
“Hark the herald angels sing”
Reference to noise abatement regulations should be added in each case.

Please note:
All carols are sung at your own risk!



Spotlight on a local charity

Citizens Advice Northumberland

An interview with Sam Dewhirst of the Citizens Advice Northumberland.

Sam is the Learning & Development Coordinator for North Northumberland. He is responsible for Recruiting in the area and works in Berwick on Mondays and Fridays.
Although it follows principles laid down by Citizens Advice (formerly called the Citizens Advice Bureau), the Citizens Advice Northumberland prides itself on being an independent, non-political, registered charity. By following their central aims and principles, the service is consistent across the country.

There are 2 paid employees in Berwick and 10 volunteers. Sam stressed that the office relies totally upon volunteers to deliver the service, and he is always looking for volunteers who are prepared to commit to this interesting, challenging, rewarding role - volunteering with like-minded people.
Sam explained that the Citizens Advice Northumberland is a free, totally confidential, equitable advisory service with the aim of giving advice, information and confidence to individuals to find their way forward - whoever they are, and whatever the problem. They help their clients make informed decisions.
In short, the aim is to empower clients to navigate the problems of life. However, the Service does not give legal or financial advice.

Sam explained that in order to ensure clients get the service they deserve, all cases are recorded so that a suitably qualified supervisor can monitor the quality of advice given, and give constructive feed-back to the volunteers. Occasionally, with clients' agreement, clients are also contacted and asked for their feed-back on the service. Both forms of feed-back play an important role in the on-going development of volunteers and the service. If the office is unable to help, they 'sign-post' the client to other organisations.
Sam stated that the information advisers record - clients' stories, are collected, anonymised and used as evidence. When a theme or pattern becomes evident of a systemic issue, the Charity presents its evidence to local and national decision-makers to advocate for changes to policy which negatively impact their clients and society.

Sam emphasised that cases are subject to total confidentiality, without which clients would be less likely to give the 'whole story', thereby inhibiting advisors ability to give the best advice. Sam explained that the Berwick office deals with a wide range of problems from disputes with neighbours, housing problems and consumer issues, to benefits and debts, to name but a few. In response to the current cost of living crisis, Citizens Advice Northumberland also delivers money management sessions as part of the national Multiply adult numeracy initiative.

Overall, Citizens Advice Northumberland and its amazing volunteers and staff plays an important role in the life of people in Berwick upon Tweed.

KHM

Something to make you smile

Two elderly members of the Congregation had been friends for many decades. Over the years, they had shared all kinds of fun and adventures but of late they had been limited to meeting a few times a week to play cards. One day, when playing cards, one looked at the other and said, “Now don’t get mad at me, I know we have been friends for a very long time, but I just can’t think of your name. I’ve thought and thought, But I can’t remember it. Please tell me what your name is.”

The friend got a bit cross and for ages, just sat and glared. Finally, the friend said, “ How soon do you need to know?”

So you think you know…… Berwick?

Highfields has a lot of streets named after Saints. Can you name four which are not ‘Cannonised’?
(check with Bryon for the answers)

Bryon

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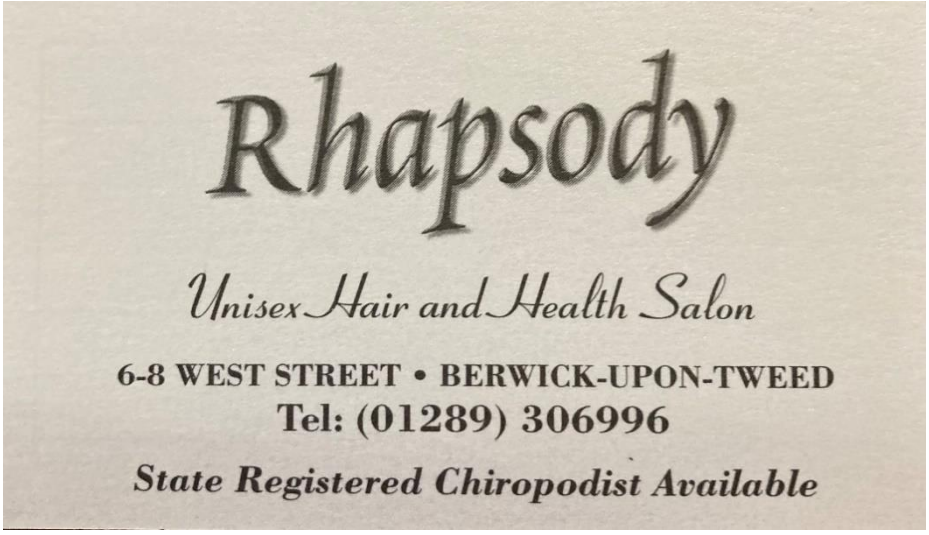
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Back Pain
Neck Pain
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Most Joint Problems

Notes from the Editor

Many thanks for all of the contributions to the Kirk News. Special thanks to those who shared their thoughts about Celebrations.

Special thanks to Diana Higham and Susan Charlton.

This edition we recognise and acknowledge the incredible thirty-year contribution to the Kirk News by the late Sid Burgon.
Thank you.

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