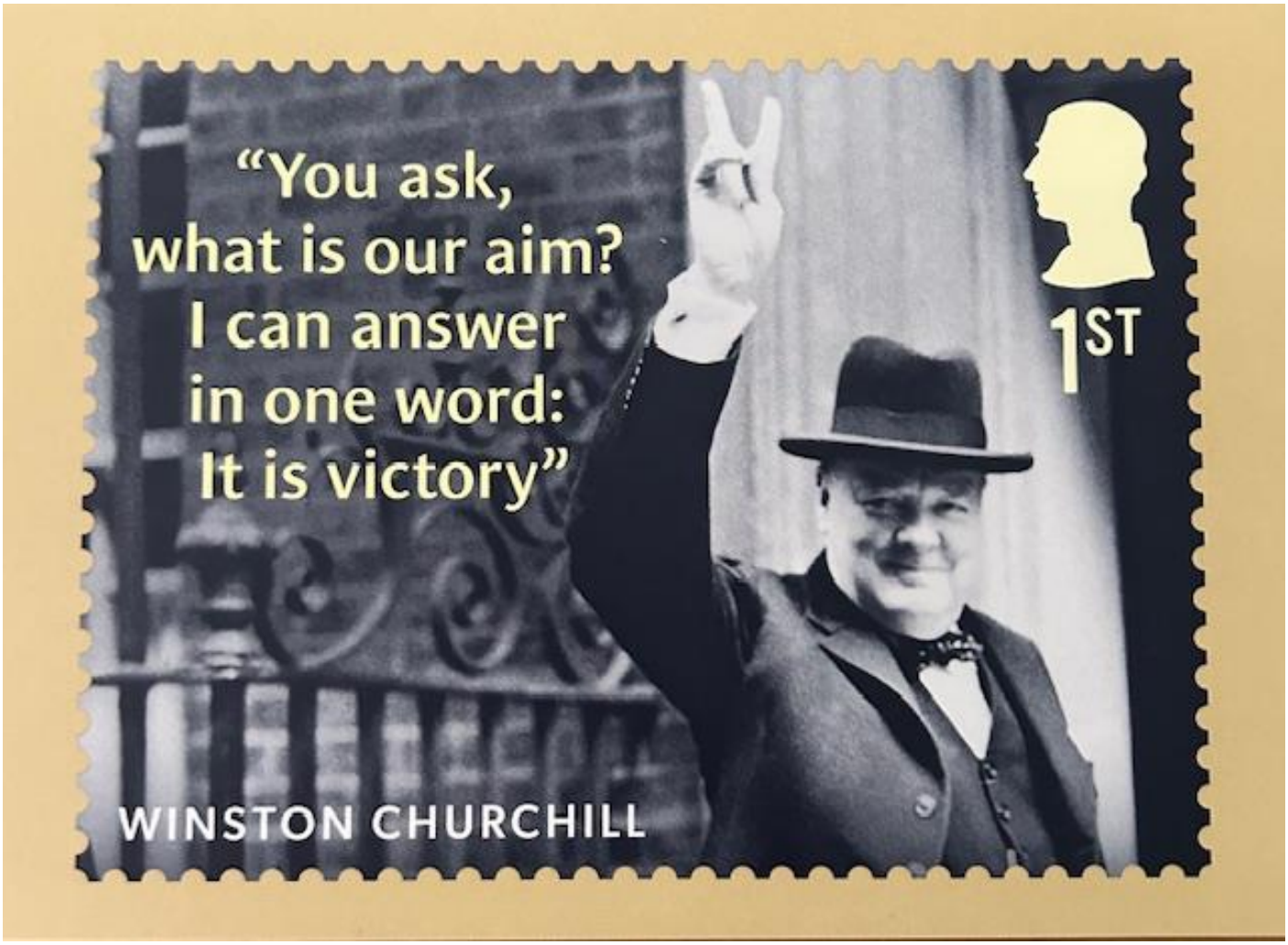
`Kirk News



St Andrew's Wallace Green & Lowick

Spring 2025

(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
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 Terri Bearhope	07521 585828
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	Dr Nathan Hood	01289 302787
Work Party	Ms Evelyn Mavin	01289 306086

Kirk Session Sub Committees

Finance
Lead: Mr Brian Tait

Fabric
Lead: Mr Chris Budzynski

Pastoral
Lead: Mrs Terri Bearhope

Mission and Nurture
Lead: Rev Dr Adam Hood

Serving Elders

Alan Aitchison, Karen Aitchison, Linda Bankier; Dale Hall; Fiona Hall; Rita Inglis; Alan Irving; Bryon Longbone; Joan Montgomery; Keith Montgomery; Brian Tait; Grace Tait; Rena Telfer

Holy Communion

We will be celebrating Holy Communion on Sunday 15th June at 11am. There will be a retiral offering in support of SAAFA Northumberland, the armed forces charity that offers immediate and long-term support to veterans.

Congregational Register
Deaths

(*denotes communicant member)

David Windram	26.1.25
Maureen Chisam	20.2.25*
Isabel Lindsay	26.2.25
Jessie Dodds	22.3.25*

We welcome to our Congregational Roll

Isobel Robson
Mark Robson
Pat Shearer

Minister's Letter

Dear Friends,

Joan has asked us to think about the VE80th anniversary. I have no recollections of the war years, so I thought I would say a few words about one element of our recent commemorations in the town, which were memorable in a host of ways and reflected well on our local community. On VE Day itself, alongside a range of other activities, there was a civic ecumenical service in Berwick Parish Church, which movingly combined themes of thankfulness for victory and the return to normal life, and sorrow over the tragedy of war. The service included emotive music from the Berwick Concert Band, Holy Trinity School Choir and the parish church organist and choir. There was the sharing of

memories of VE Day itself, curated by Linda Bankier and read by children and adults. The Bishop of Berwick preached on the continuing significance of remembrance, particularly in a world beset with wars and rumours of war. The service culminated in the congregation taking a vow to serve God and others, with a view to 'the peace and welfare of the Nations'.

There have been many positive comments about the service. One said: "Such a moving and human service, proud to be there". Another added: "I'm not generally the biggest fan of commemoration but …the balance was so right today… the song of celebration from the children set such a resonant tone". Still another said the service: "Superbly combined the community and national memories, the schools and the town's organisations, and the religious content of the day".

One aspect of the service that I found meaningful, was that we sang two hymns that our forebears sang, in the same venue, 80 years ago as they marked VE Day, namely 'Praise my soul the King of Heaven' and 'All people that on earth do dwell'. Both hymns affirm that God's mercy is trustworthy, express thanks to God for the blessings of life and for the way in which God carries us through 'distress', when our 'feeble frames' are ready to give up. What powerful hymns, conveying a message that is always relevant. Incidentally, if you weren't able to come along to the service, a recording can be viewed online at www.youtube.com/watch?v=fcFbsVBvr_8.

Yours, Adam

Membership

Adam always welcomes 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. Those who have been members of, or confirmed into other churches can join by a simple process of transference. Those who have not been

members of another church, are invited to take some simple vows of membership, which would be explored through informal gatherings. 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 15th June – 11am, Holy Communion & ordination of new elders
Tue 24th June – New Horizons Summer Trip to Paxton House

New Horizons

The programme for this session will conclude on the afternoon of Tuesday 24th June when we are visiting Paxton House for a guided tour. The cost is £19, including something to eat. If you are interested, please sign up in the Session Room.

Linkage

The Presbytery plan for our area, suggested that SAWG would link with Ayton & District churches (Ayton, Foulden & Reston). Happily, the two congregations have now voted overwhelmingly for this linkage.

A linkage will mean that Adam will now be formally the minister of Ayton and District as well as Berwick, and the costs of ministry will be shared between the two churches.

Our minister will continue to live in our manse and there will be no change in the governance of the congregation and in our financial independence. The exact details of how the new linkage will work are presently the subject of ongoing discussions. We have decided that there will be a service to enact the linkage, led by the Moderator of the Presbytery, on Sunday 7th September. Please keep that date free if possible.

Whilst the linkage is necessitated by the finances and ministerial numbers of the Church of Scotland, our hope is that we will find the new arrangements enable increased cooperation with nearby churches to the mutual benefit of all.

Kitchen Refurbishment Fund – May

Since the last update the craft group have been busy knitting crocheting Easter Chicks which were sold out the first day that we produced them. There was a demand for more in that last week before Easter. Thanks to all their hard work and your generosity, those little chickies raised the amazing sum of £242 so our fund is now sitting at £2,242.

In addition, a generous donor took pity on our cleaners and bought us a cordless Dyson vacuum – we can't tell you how delighted we are – so a big big thank you to our donor! That means we can take the vacuum off the wish list and free the money (we had put by £300 for this) for other things…… hurrah!

Our wish list now looks like this:

Super-duper dish washer	£1200
Boiling water tap	£300
Double cupboard unit	£200 x 3
Microwave	£60

That leaves us with £82 to put towards a nice large cooker which will be the next item on our list – it will cost approx. £1000 so let's keep on fundraising!

Rita

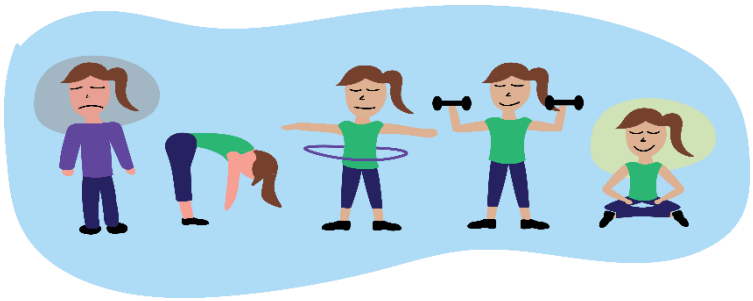
Summer Opening Afternoons and Heritage Open Days

Our Friday open days have been very well received over the last few years and it is our intention to do them again this summer.
We will be opening the church to visitors from Friday 4th July through to Friday 19th September. The Church will be open from 2-4pm. We need 2 people each day to do this, so if you think you can help, please put your name on the rota which will be on the noticeboard in the Session room. If you want any more information, please ask me and if you need a partner, have a word and I can sort something out.

This year the Heritage Open Days will be the afternoons of Friday12th, Friday 20th and all day on Saturday 21st September.
Both events are very important to welcome people who otherwise wouldn't come through our doors.

If you think you might like to help out but have any queries then please speak to me. This is an important opportunity for us to open our doors and welcome visitors to our beautiful church. Please consider if you can help.

Rita



Keep Fit

The Keep Fit class continues to keep up its incredibly good work with a loyal group of increasingly fit members. They continue to meet every Tuesday morning at 10.00 for gentle exercise, fellowship, friendship, tea, coffee and biscuits.

Susan Jordan

Success for the Walking Group

Photograph courtesy of Andrew Green

Walking Group supports Lifeboats and the Church

Our walking group nominated Berwick lifeboats as the main recipient of its surplus funds this year, with a further £250 being donated to church funds.
A cheque for £350 was presented by the group's leader Grace Tait to Lifeboat Operations Manager Kevin Knox at the lifeboat station, with many of the group's members also present.
"It's through donations such as this that we are able to carry on saving lives at sea, and also train our volunteer crew", said Mr Knox.

The walking group has been in existence for over twenty years and meets weekly for a moderate-paced walk of an hour or so in the local area, which is always followed by tea and cakes.
"We are a friendly group of just over a dozen members and welcome people whether they are members of the church or not", said Grace.

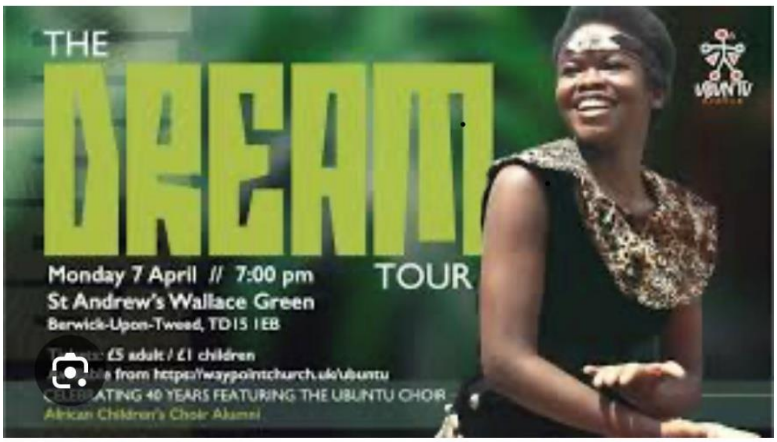
“We each contribute a pound a week, and at the end of the year decide how to use surplus funds. This year we were pleased to be able to support Berwick RNLI, which is so important to locals and visitors alike, as well as the church”.

Anyone who would like to join the group should meet at the church at six o’ clock on Thursdays for a prompt start to take advantage of the light evenings.

Article courtesy of Tim Barnsley (Press Officer)

The group is not restricted to SAWG members, guests are very welcome.
If you require any further information, please contact:
Grace or Brian Tait

News Round Up



Ubuntu Choir

We were privileged as Churches Together to host and fund the Ubuntu Choir from 6th – 9th April as part of their ‘Dream Tour’.
We, in SAWG, had the joy of welcoming the choir, and enabling both the concert, and around 670 local pupils aged from 5 to 19 to attend and benefit from the workshops put on during the day.

The concert was attended by over 200 people, and in total £2,663.94 was raised for the ongoing work of the Children's Choir. That was a fantastic total. Thanks to all who came along.
Our choir members were older and in their late teens and early twenties, but had gone through the choir academy, and the education offered to them as children, and were now making their dreams become reality because of the chances offered there.
None of this would have happened without Jenny and Jonathan Mackwell's hard work, and organisation and vision, nor without the invaluable and much appreciated help of all the host families. Many thanks are due to them. There were host families from 5 different local churches, including SAWG, and I'm sure they would be blessed by opening their homes to the young people.
The choir's performance included some very energetic dancing and drumming, as well as beautiful singing, and I know the children had very much enjoyed the chance to play the instruments, and do some dancing and singing throughout their workshops. That may well be one of their lifetime memories.

We wish the choir well in their future outreach, and perhaps one day will gladly welcome them back to Berwick.
Rena

Churches Together at Easter

Easter is a very special time in the church year, and in Berwick this begins with our weekly Lent Lunches. This year we raised over £600.00 for Christian Aid, as well as enjoying spending time with our wider Berwick church family. It's nice to eat together, and have a chat with others, and also have a thought to go away with afterwards. This year's thought was based on people who had inspired us, and it was interesting to see the different people, or group of people that had inspired the speaker in some way. (It was also a more interesting lunch than I would have had at home!)

Our Walk of Witness is a special part of Good Friday, and it was lovely to have Father Lee Taylor and Father Shaun O'Neill join us this year. We were fortunate again with the weather, and appreciate the support of our Town Council and Police for this Walk and our little service at the old Advertiser Office. There was a good turnout, so we were able to sing our Easter hymns lustily, and be joined by others walking on the street. The well-known Easter hymns resonate with so many passers-by.

We thought about how Jesus is totally unique in being fully God and fully man. Our Saviour, the only one who can make us right with God. The King of Kings became the Servant King. 'What a Saviour' as one hymn puts it.

The first part of our Walk was led by Father Shaun, and Father Lee gave the Blessing.

Easter Sunday saw our early morning service on the Beach at Spittal at 8.00. It was a grey morning, with just a trace of sunshine between sky and sea. The glimmer of hope raised by an empty tomb. This gathering

was led by Adam, and again there was a good number of people turned out. Maybe the thought of our bacon roll after at St John's was a draw!

Thank you so much Audrey, and helpers. Once again singing the traditional Easter hymns was very meaningful, along with being at the seashore where Jesus called people to follow Him and become disciples. They came from all walks of life, as do we, and Jesus loves us all, whoever we are, and wherever we've come from.
Rena

Our Easter Garden

What is Safeguarding?

You may have seen posters around our church with the safeguarding coordinator details on, but what is safeguarding?

Safeguarding is about preventing harm and abuse and making a timely and appropriate response if it occurs. Harm or abuse of children and adults can happen anywhere – even in church communities such as ours. We have a duty to Ensure a Safe Church for All. This means protecting all of us.

The Church of Scotland lives the Gospel message which declares that the least, the last and the lost should be at the heart of what we believe and how we respond in our faith. Safeguarding underpins this theological imperative to care for the most vulnerable people we engage with in our life and work. Everyone has the right to feel safe and cared for in the Church and it is also the responsibility of everyone in the Church including you.

Good Safeguarding tries to ensure that the risk of harm and abuse is as remote as it can be. It is important that there is not only a theological underpinning to Safeguarding, but also clear policies and procedures for everyone to know and practice to ensure that we practice what we preach.

We at St Andrew's Wallace Green seek to build a place where all people may safely live life as well as they are able, free from the risk of harm and abuse. Abuse is incompatible with our Christian values, the love of Christ compels us to care and protect those who are vulnerable in the Church and society. As a result, Safeguarding, protecting children and adults from harm, is a permanent and necessary part of Church life here in St Andrew's Wallace Green.

Where possible, the aim of the Church is to prevent harm or abuse. However, where that is not possible, we wish to ensure a timely and appropriate response to any safeguarding concerns.

Hence, the Church's key safeguarding message is the following -

If suspect or witness harm or abuse, or it is reported to you, you must immediately report it to one of our Safeguarding Coordinators.

Trust your intuition or gut feeling about the person or the situation - if it looks or feels wrong then it probably is.

In safeguarding, it is sometimes necessary to think the unthinkable about a person or situation.

We would much rather that you spoke to our Safeguarding Coordinator if you are not sure about something rather than wait until you're absolutely sure. Not sharing a concern may result in the abuse continuing.

Below is our safeguarding contact who has undergone appropriate training in dealing with any concerns. You can be assured that all contact and aspects of your communication with our coordinator will be held in the strictest of confidentiality.

Dale Hall 07717871602

If you don't feel comfortable with speaking to anyone within the congregation, you can speak direct to the Church of Scotland safeguarding team via the details below

Telephone: 0131 240 2256

Email: safeguarding@churchofscotland.org.uk

Remembering VE and VJ Day

VE Day (Victory in Europe Day) was celebrated on Thursday 8 May 2025 and VJ Day (Victory in Japan) will be celebrated in August.
VE Day marks the formal acceptance by the Allied Forces of Nazi Germany's unconditional surrender in WWII, effectively ending the war in Europe in 1945.

King Charles, Queen Camilla, members of the Royal Family, the Prime Minister and 78 World War II veterans attended a most poignant service of thanksgiving in Westminster Abbey. A candle of peace was lit by Alexander Churchill, the great-great grandson of Sir Winston Churchill.

The Country certainly rallied during this week with events from Church Services, Tea-dances, Street Parties and many Beacons lit in order that we collectively remember the millions of people – soldiers, civilians alike – who lost their lives during WWII.

VE Day marks the end of immense suffering in Europe. Remembering it honours the sacrifices made by those who fought for freedom, including the countless lives lost to secure peace.

Commemorating VE Day keeps the memory of the war alive, helping younger generations understand the cost of conflict and the value of peace. As the number of living WWII Veterans declines, remembrance ensures their stories and lessons aren't forgotten.

VE and VJ Day remind us of the power of unity. Countries stood together against a common evil. They forged alliances that stretched across continents, proving that when nations unite with a purpose and principle, even the darkest tyranny will fall.

We honour the fallen best by safeguarding the values they died to defend – democracy, human dignity and the rule of law. In an age when intolerance and aggression still threaten, let the memory of VE Day inspire us to stand firm, to speak out and to act with compassion.

One Man's Story

Fusilier William Stoddart (Army Number 4274199) was in the 7th Royal Northumbrian Fusiliers, who were the Machine Gun Battalion of the 51st Highland Division.
He had arrived in Le Havre, France on 4th April 1940 as part of the British Expeditionary Force, which had been sent to reinforce the French against the German Blitzkreig.

He was deployed to the Maginot Line and was part of fighting retreat to the coast. Many of the BEF went to Dunkirk, where many were rescued went from the beaches. The 51st Highland Division went to St Valery-en-Caux, a small French port south of Dunkirk, where the majority of the Division were captured.

Exactly one month after his 21st birthday Dad was captured and spent the rest of the war in Poland as a Prisoner of War. In 1945 as the Russians advanced into Poland and then Germany, the POWs walked west during the very cold winter. Dad always told us, if we ever complained of feeling cold…… "Cold is when you see tanks going over the River Vistula."
He walked past Berlin and into central Germany, where they eventually met up with advancing American Forces – liberation and home were to follow.

Although his father died his time as a POW, there was a happy ending for him as he met his future wife, my Mum, at a Dance in the Gymnasium and the rest was history and 60 happy years of marriage. VE Day meant the world to him as he valued his freedom and his strength and stoicism following his Wartime experience, made him a determined and loyal husband, father and grandfather.

Left to right – Foster Wells, Laing Robson, Jack Marshall (possibly) and Willie Stoddart in 1940.

“Welcome Home Daddy”

“Hello little one, I can’t wait to meet you.”

My father had phoned from Southampton where the troop ship had docked in October 1945. Serving in the Army in the Far East, VJ Day was possibly more significant for the troops than VE Day. My Uncle Frank had died in Chagi Jail as a Japanese POW.

I do remember the ‘grown ups’ jumping up and down in the kitchen in Edinburgh although I had no idea why. They put the wind-up gramophone on the table and played the allegro con brio from Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony. Only later did I learn why. ‘Dot dot dot dash’ is Morse code for ‘V’ and for the Brits it was ‘V for Victory’. My grandparents were Victorians and ex-military and played it all through the War. Only a toddler, I was told to “Stand up straight, Diana. Hands by your side. Attention.”, during the opening bars.

My father had left for India and Burma in the May of 1942 and I was born in the August in the middle of an air raid on Leith Docks. Which is why I didn’t meet my dad until I was three. I remember wondering how anyone’s skin could be so brown and why he was wearing strange clothes (uniform!). Thankfully, my mother had prepared me for his return. I had to kiss his photo “Goodnight Daddy”, talked about how I would teach him to feed the ducks, take him on a tram and go to Queensferry to watch the trains crossing the Forth Railway Bridge. Happily, we bonded instantly and remained close all his life.

Yes! ‘V’ for Victory!!

Diana Higham

Some thoughts about The War

I do not remember the war, but I was born during it and I remember the aftermath very well.
Food was always a problem, the only things available were bread and potatoes. If the shops got something different you had to go and queue and hope you got it. Everything was seasonal so we only had salad in the summer and apples in the autumn. There was great excitement when bananas arrived in the shops.

Where we lived on Tyneside had a lot of bombed areas, everything flattened and nothing left but rubble. Families were decimated, husbands and sons gone forever and no benefits for the wives and children left. My own father never came back to us but only because he met someone else. My mother would say war changes people. She served in the WRENs during the war stationed in Kenya but came home to have me. She told how she got a ship to Port Said and it went up the Suez Canal at night with no lights and no talking. She then got another ship home but it was shadowed by a submarine. They dropped depth charges and made a run to Gibraltar for safety.

My first husband [sadly died young] lost his father on the Russian convoys the ship was torpedoed and sunk with all the crew lost. He remembered going to soup kitchens for food as there was nothing in the house to eat.

Celebrating the end of the war is fine but there is nothing good about wartime we should be remembering the hardships and praying that it never happens again.

Judith Paterson

VE 80

Our Editor has requested reminiscences of VE Day in 1945

Well, I don't have any – I was not there.

My parents and grandparents were there and have recounted to me the stories of the parties on the street etc …. But then again you have heard all of these sorts of things.
So, what to write?

Well, the date of VE day and the signing of the treaty has puzzled my brain somewhat. It did not seem correct to the things I remember being told… and that led me down the road of wondering what, historically, is correct about WWII.

Clearly it is correct that VE Day was 8th May but….. well here is some more information about times and dates in WWII.

WWII started?

Conventionally this is on 1st or 3rd of September 1939 with the invasion of Poland.
But did it start then?
What about Spain?
What about Japan invading China in 1937 or even Japan attacking Manchuria in 1931. The September 1939 date is something seen from an Anglo /Franco / Germanic/ Northern European viewpoint.

When did it end in Europe?
Montgomery accepted the German surrender on 4th May 1945 on Luneburg Heath;
A further treaty was signed at Allied HQ at Rheims on 7th May with a more comprehensive surrender and another in Berlin the following day with the Russians.

All German and Axis forces did not surrender there and then, rather it happened piecemeal. In some parts of France, pockets held out until 3 or 4 days later; the tiny Chanel Island of Minquiers was not surrendered until 23rd May and hostilities continued in many places for months, notably Czechoslovakia , Yugoslavia. It was only on 11 June that an island in The Netherlands surrendered and early Sept when a Norwegian Island surrendered.

Indeed, the final treaty ending the German part of WWII was not signed until March 1991when a united Germany was able to finally sign the treaty and the USSR ratified the same.
What does all this mean? Who knows?
However, perhaps we could spare a few moments of thought and prayer for those who died "BEFORE IT BEGAN" and after it was " ALL OVER".

Pensive of Berwick.com

Enjoying Daylight Once More

I do not remember any celebrations for VE Day or VJ Day, but I am sure there would have been some. At the time I lived in Newton Village, situated about 6 miles south east of Edinburgh. It consisted of 104 flats in blocks and formed a triangle around a field. They were built by the Niddrie Coal Company for their work force and were completed just after the war began.

I remember being very happy at throwing the blinds away, seeing the street lamps lit once again and the shop windows lit up showing their displays. Bus and tram drivers must have known a huge difference having the black paint removed from the headlights so they could actually see where they were going during the hours of darkness.

During the war SMT buses had the top half of their windows painted black and blinds were fitted to the lower half. These were rolled up during daylight so that passengers could see out of the windows.

Edinburgh Corporation buses and trams had their interior lights painted black leaving a small piece in the centre about an inch in diameter clear. It must have been very difficult for the conductors to collect the fares from passengers, the buses and trams being so dimly lit.

Ian Hannah

A tale of two families and two countries

At the start of WW2 my dad, John, who most of you will have known, was a schoolboy living in Osborne Crescent and attending Tweedmouth West School. He was 5 when the war started and the war period was probably the start of his memories.

He lived in the downstairs one-bedroom flat with his Ma- Roberta and Da- Norman alongside his older sister Norma and brother Raymond. Not sure how they all squeezed into the flat but Da was soon away at war having joined the RAF. As a brewery man by trade who had driven drays he was soon employed as a driver moving goods, ammunition and planes around the country. He was one of 7 children and 6 of them (5 brothers and one sister) were to serve safely for the duration of the war. The last brother much to his disgust was refused permission as he drove the buses in Glasgow and this was counted as a reserve occupation. As a family we were incredibly lucky to come through unscathed.

John remembers sleeping with Raymond under the Morrison table shelter in the front room. He remembers waking up on a night there was a raid to see “Auntie” from upstairs sitting with Ma having a cuppa by the fire while “Granny” from upstairs had crawled under the table with the two boys clutching her bag of precious belongings in her hand.

Granny & Auntie had lived in Spittal and had been bombed out of their home and Granny was taking no chances. John wasn't that fussed about sweets (things changed as he got older!) so the rationing didn't bother him and he must be one of the few who missed 'powdered eggs.'

There was the excitement of being machine gunned on the way from school as a German fighter headed homewards over the North Sea and released the last of his ammunition on the very dangerous children!
The day the war ended John was on boiler duty (shovelling coal) into the school boiler when a resident of Osborne Road came running over and shouted to tell the headmaster that the war was over. Needless to say, John wasn't believed until confirmed by a phone call and the school were dismissed home for a day's holiday.

While this was happening in Berwick my mother was growing up in a small town called Goch on the German/Dutch border. She was the eldest of three with a brother and sister. Papa had his own house trading business and Mutti was a housewife. Papa had run away from his home aged 15 to join the gypsies hence his horse-trading business and unfortunately was a member of the Communist Party which was growing in popularity throughout Europe at this time.
His political leanings and support of the gypsies coupled with his inability to keep quiet and his head down ensured he was arrested and spent the early years of the war in prison being tortured by the local Gestapo.

As the war opened up on the Eastern Front, he was forcibly conscripted and spent the remaining war period fighting the Russians in appalling conditions. By the end of the war his health was gone and he didn't work again, my only memories are of an elderly sickly man.

At home, the family had lost their home and livelihood and relied on family and friends supporting them. Conditions were tough, food was hard to come by, was basic, mother always said they were lucky being with family who had a little land so could grow potatoes.
Winters were hard and mother remembered having to be carried to school as her feet had bleeding chilblains. In addition, this part of

Germany was bombed heavily – in the town of Goch only two original buildings survived the war – the church and the medieval town gate. This only survived when a British Major stood in the middle of the gate and refused to allow the tanks through.

Arnhem/Njmegen/Reichswald – all these names from the war films are in this area and it was brutally fought over. Times were really hard and at home I have a photo with my mother and uncle moving through the battle-scarred country with their belongings on their backs and in a pram while they moved to new shelter. Mother remembers being sent with her brother on an errand across the town and being caught up in crossfire. They were saved by a Scottish Sergeant dashing out and pulling them into his trench until it was safe.

Following the war, an RAF base was built just outside the town and it was here that my dad was posted in the 50's. He had been called up to National Service and six weeks in decided this was the life for him and signed up for ten years.

Just outside the base was the Malcolm Club – a handy drinking/eating establishment and it was here my parents met. Mother was one of the Cooks and serving staff. It was love at first sight for my dad but persistence eventually convinced my mother to give this gawky, shy Berwick lad a chance.

The fact that the two families had been on opposing sides only eight years earlier was in the past and the marriage was welcomed on all sides.

Rita

Second World War Battlefield Tour

The King's Own Scottish Borderers (KOSB) Association are conducting a Battlefield Tour starting on 27 May for 4 days, following the battle immediately prior to the crossing of the River Rhine involving one of their battalions and the crossing itself. The operations followed are Operations VERITABLE including the Reichswald and PLUNDER crossing the Rhine.

Operation VERITABLE was a major Allied offensive launched during World War II, beginning on 8 February 1945, in the final months of the war in Europe. It was conducted primarily by British and Canadian forces under Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery's 21st Army Group, with the goal of clearing the Rhineland—the area between the Maas (Meuse) and Rhine rivers in Germany—and advancing toward the Rhine River itself.

Assault Vehicles Royal Engineer (AVREs) one with a short box girder bridge (SBG) for crossing gaps up to 30 feet.

Here’s a detailed breakdown:

- Primary Goal: Clear the area between the Rivers Maas and the Rhine, eliminate German forces in the Rhineland, and set the stage for a crossing of the River Rhine.
- Part of General Dwight D. Eisenhower’s broad-front strategy to push into Germany.

🔷 Forces Involved

- Allies:
  - British 2nd Army (mainly British XXX Corps) including 15 (S) Division containing 6 KOSB.
  - First Canadian Army (primarily Canadian and British troops)
- Axis:
  - German forces, including the 15th Army, under General Alfred Schlemm

🔷 Operation Details

- Start Date: 8 February 1945
- Duration: Roughly a month
- Location: Reichswald Forest and the area around the Siegfried Line, in western Germany near the Dutch-German border.
- It was synchronized with Operation GRENADE, a U.S. offensive by the 9th Army from the south, though GRENADE was delayed due to flooding caused by the Germans.

🔷 Key Challenges

- Heavy flooding (due to Germans destroying dams)
- Thick forest terrain and muddy conditions hindered movement
- Stubborn German resistance, including rearguard actions and well-prepared defensive lines

🔷 Outcome

- Allied Victory, but at a high cost
- Pushed the Germans back across the Rhine

- Paved the way for Operation PLUNDER (the crossing of the Rhine in March 1945)
- Approximately 90,000 Allied casualties (including sick and wounded), and 50,000 German casualties (killed, wounded, or captured).
- The RSM of 6 KOSB hung out his washing on the Siegfried Line!

Crossing the Rhine

Operation PLUNDER was the code name for the Allied military operation to cross the Rhine River into western Germany near the end of World War II. It took place from March 23 to March 27, 1945, and was a critical part of the final Allied push into Nazi Germany.

Key Facts:

- Objective: Cross the Rhine River, break through German defences, and establish a bridgehead to facilitate further advances into Germany.
- Commanders:
  - British Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery led the operation.
  - It involved troops from the British 21st Army Group, which included British, Canadian, and American forces.
- Supporting Operation:
  - Operation VARSITY, the largest airborne operation ever conducted in a single day, supported PLUNDER. It involved over 16,000 paratroopers (mainly American 17th Airborne and British 6th Airborne Divisions) dropped east of the Rhine to capture strategic positions and prevent German reinforcements.

Execution:

- The crossing took place near Wesel, Rees, and Rheinberg in western Germany.
- It was heavily supported by artillery, air raids, and naval craft including amphibious vehicles and landing craft.
- The smoke screen was over 50 miles long.

- The Engineers were involved in enabling the assault and operated ferries and built 5 pontoon bridges after the assault.
- Montgomery's forces successfully established multiple bridgeheads and quickly began pushing further into the German interior.

Bailey Bridge over the Rhine

Significance:

- Operation PLUNDER was one of the final major Allied operations in Europe.
- It breached one of Germany's last natural defensive barriers, accelerating the collapse of Nazi resistance.
- It opened the path for Allied forces to advance to the Elbe River, where they eventually met Soviet troops advancing from the east.

KHM

North Northumberland Voluntary Forum (NNVF) was established to promote and develop the work of voluntary organisations in the community. There is a dedicated centre at Tweed Street, manged by Fiona Calder.

I recently met with Fiona over coffee and I discovered what a diverse and interesting organisation this actually is. A key element of her job is organising many voluntary lead groups and facilitating their amazing work in the local area.
Here is an example of some of the groups which come under NNV Forum.

Memory Laners' Music Group
At the moment the group meet twice a month in the Maltings Travis Studio (new venue pending). The idea for the group is to bring music to people living with dementia.
Dementia affects many people living in our community and this group combines socialising over tea/coffee and traybakes, with music, memories and friendship.

Rural US
"Working together for mental well-being"

Funding from The National Lottery has enabled many local community projects and groups. The catchment area is from Berwick to Amble, across to Rothbury and up to the Border.

They believe that no one should be marginalised for where they live. It is their mission to reach out to people and help them to engage in their communities. Funding is available for people who want to start up voluntary groups in rural communities. They also have a directory of what is already available.

Veterans' Warm Hub
The Veterans' Warm Hub is held in the Berwick Voluntary Centre, 5 Tweed Street on the last Wednesday in the month. It is open to Veterans, ex-service personnel and their friends and families contact Berwick. Free tea/coffee and biscuits is served from 10am – 12pm.
If you would like more information, please pop into Berwick Voluntary Centre or ring Tel: 01289 304141

Crafternoon
This is held on Wednesday afternoons from 1pm – 3pm. You could join in with an afternoon of crafting – all equipment is provided, along with plenty of tea, coffee and cake.

Volunteering in North Northumberland
This is a service set up to support community organisations, groups and charities identify potential volunteers who fit the bill.
If you are looking to volunteer and want to help people, meet new people, learn new skills and support your local community – get in touch for an informal chat and you may find yourself making a difference.
Contact Verity who is the Volunteer Advisor:
Mobile: 07783 331 549
Tel: 01289 304141
Email: volunteering@gmail.com

This is not an exhaustive list of all that happens at North Northumberland Voluntary Forum, but gives a small example of some of the exciting projects happening in and around our town. Something for everyone.

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Notes from the Editor

As always, many thanks to our loyal and reliable contributors. I would happily meet with anyone with a story to share.
According to The Guardian, Berwick-upon-Tweed is one of the happiest towns in which to live. Our next edition will be a celebration of our town and what we love about it.

Publication Team:

Editor: Joan Montgomery
joaniemontgomery@btinternet.com
Advertising: Susan Jordan
Printing &
Troubleshooter: Keith Montgomery

The contents of this magazine can be found at sawg.uk

Many thanks to our generous Sponsors.