



The Broadsheet December 2013



for the parishes of Humshaugh
with Simonburn & Wark, and
Chollerton with Birtley,
Gunnerton & Thockrington

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Editorial

As proofreader, I feel a bit like a 'film critic', who sees the film before everyone else, and gets to sense the mood of the moment. The Broadsheet this month seems to reflect a growing disillusion, not with Christmas, but with materialism – the stuff we buy and that people try, so cleverly, to sell us at Christmas. I know it still brings tears to my eyes – and to Mike Slade's, I suspect – to remember toddlers, worn out after long Christmas Days spent opening gifts, finally just playing with boxes – the packaging of stuff abandoned.

So, if you're going out to buy gifts again this Christmas, think again. Maybe you just need to give your *time* – and stuff you can eat in a day – and have a truly Merry ~~Xmas~~ Christmas. (Russell Fairless)

Editor

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HUMSHAUGH BENEFICE

Michael Thompson's letter

Humshaugh Vicarage

Dear Readers,

Not the 'X factor'

Quite often, when I am selecting Christmas Cards to send to friends and relatives, I let out a deep sigh! So often the picture seems right but the printed words seem inappropriate. I keep working through the pile and find I have a heap of cards left over because they wish people a 'merry Xmas'. I am always grateful to receive festive greeting, and think nothing of receiving a card which mentions 'Xmas', but sending them: that's another matter!

In other areas of life 'X' has come to represent the unknown factor. Across Christendom, and beyond, hearts are gladdened at Christmas time, not because of the unknown, but because of the known. The retelling of how God himself entered His World, in the life of an infant born in unpromising circumstances, makes a difference in countless millions of lives, and softens the hearts of the care worn and the cynical. Amongst those who dismiss our festive joy as based on 'mere myth and legend', there are many who think it's a 'good myth' and many who wish they could believe it!

For those who do believe that "*God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, to the end that all who believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*", the Christmas Festival is key to a realisation that we are caught up in something far bigger than a 'philosophy of life'; we are caught in the hand of a God who knows us individually and cares for us, insignificant as we seem in the infinity of the cosmos. The implications of what happened in Bethlehem long ago are big enough to shape our attitude to life. Christmas is not so much an 'X Factor' – an unknown – but rather an answer to our questionings.

May yours be a truly blessed and Happy Christmas,

Michael Thompson

Humshaugh School Christingle Service

As part of Humshaugh School's Christingle Service, we hope to make a collection of toys and gifts for the Salvation Army. There will be an appeal for the congregation to donate an unwrapped gift, which will be placed under the Christmas tree in St. Peter's during the service.

The Salvation Army welcomes any new, or nearly new, toys (complete & clean, please). Gifts for teenagers and adults are also always gratefully received. Gifts received are then distributed by the Salvation Army and Social Workers to those less fortunate than ourselves – ie: children in care, women's refuge centres, foster children, etc.

The appeal will continue at the following Advent Services on Sunday 1st December:

St. Peter's Humshaugh, at 9.30am

St. Mungo's Simonburn, at 11.00am

St. Michael's Wark, at 6.00pm

There will also be an appeal at the Stonehaugh Christingle Service, at 6.30pm on Sunday 15th December.

I hope you can support this appeal in some way – maybe by making space for those toys from Father Christmas!

Janice Rowcroft

Round and about Humshaugh

(Notes compiled by Liz Hayward)

Mothers' Union

The members of Humshaugh Mothers' Union had a wonderful afternoon in November, enjoying the presence of the Revd. Michael Slade, vicar of Chollerton, who gave a brilliant talk on "How I became a Christian." Everybody wants him to come back next year! The Christmas meeting will take place on December 5th at the Langfords' home, when John Cox will give his talk: "A Christmas Box: Readings and Music." The meeting will start at 2pm and, as

always, everybody is more than welcome to join us. We would like to wish everybody a very Happy Christmas and all the best for the New Year.

Liesbeth Langford

Next month's quiz at The Crown Inn will be on 17th December, with proceeds going to Tynedale Hospice at Home. After the success of the first Crown Inn folk night, the second one will take place on Tuesday 10th December, from 8.00pm, and the intention is to have a session on the second Tuesday of every month. We do need people to take part, but listeners would also be most welcome. We play music informally throughout the evening, so it lends itself to people popping in for a short time if they wish. Musicians of any age and ability will be made most welcome, and none will be asked to play solo – unless they wish to, of course! We are particularly keen to add harmonica players to our ranks. We had musicians from Wall and Chollerton, who were known to us, but also a man from Bellingham, who had read about us in the Courant. He enjoyed himself and is looking forward to the next session. For further details, please contact Jen Ogle on 681193.

The final production figures for the Humshaugh Apple Juicers' venture were an amazing 300 litres of apple juice from 600kg of assorted apples.

The Humshaugh Oil Buying group has been operational for 2 years now, and has 170 members who have purchased over half a million litres of fuel oil, at an estimated saving of £20,000.

Two festive events to note:

The Youth Theatre Group's production of The Snow Queen is in the Village Hall on 6th & 7th December at 19.30. Tickets are still available in the Village Shop. Ticket price includes seasonal refreshments.

Humshaugh School's Carol Service in St. Peter's Church at 9.15am Friday 20th December - family and friends welcome.

Finally, I would like to extend to everyone my warmest seasonal greetings for a Happy Christmas and peaceful New Year.

Carol singing in the village 2013

We propose again an evening of Carol Singing around the village of Humshaugh during the week leading up to Christmas. A collection will be taken for The Church of England Children's Society.

This will take place on Wednesday 18th December, and we will meet at 6.30pm outside The Crown. This is by way of an invitation to anyone who would like to join us – you would be most welcome – and to everyone else at home to let you know that we shall be coming around the village and we shall try to visit as many of you as possible. Do please keep lights on, so that drives and lanes are as safe as possible. Don't be too disappointed if we do not visit you, but we shall try. It is impossible to visit the whole village during one evening!

We shall be out for about two hours and will end with seasonal refreshments.

John McCollum, Roger Langford, Corinne Campbell

Information for the next Broadsheet

Please send any information about Humshaugh, that you would like including in the next Broadsheet, either to 681463 (Liz Hayward's answerphone) or by email to: nick.hayward310@btinternet.com.

Simonburn notes

In what seems like the blink of an eye, we are back to our Christmas edition. Maybe it is a sign of getting older, but I do feel that preparations for Christmas are taking on a life of their own. We made the mistake recently of going to the Metro Centre on a Saturday afternoon. It is not a place we visit that often, maybe once or twice a year (if we are unlucky). Well... yes, the decorations did look lovely... but all that unabashed consumerism: it was frightening. When was it decided that Christmas is about nothing more than spending vast amounts of money on buying a dream – buying happiness – or that's the theory? How can spending what seemed like hundreds of pounds on one day in the year bring us happiness? In many ways it does nothing more than emphasise the emptiness in our lives, and illustrates the need for a return to a

simpler time when the true message of Christmas had not been hijacked by big business, wanting to maximise profits.

Fortunately, in Simonburn, we are not surrounded by the lights and sounds of Christmas in the same way. True we can still turn on our televisions and be lured into the magic of an M&S or John Lewis Christmas, but we can contrast this with the beauty and simplicity of the Carol Service on the 22nd, and Holy Communion at 11.30pm on Christmas Eve.

Details of all Christmas services can be found in the Broadsheet (page 13), but I would like to draw your attention to the Advent Service on Sunday 1st December. There will be a special collection of toys, both new and nearly new, at this service. All gifts will be distributed to the less fortunate by the Salvation Army.

Other news from the parish.

A big THANK YOU to Elsie Glendenning for the cleaning she has done for us in the church over many decades (no-one is quite sure HOW many). Elsie has now moved to Acomb, and we wish her all the best for her new life there. As you might expect, we now need to find someone else to take over the cleaning. We will never be able to replace Elsie, but we do need to find someone to sweep up after all those bats, and the 'footfall' of visitors to our lovely church. If you know of anyone who might be interested in taking over the cleaning, Michael is now 'collecting names'. [Ho, ho, ho – Ed.] It might not need to be weekly, as Elsie did it, and there will be a modest fee for the job – all subject to mutual agreement.

Many thanks to all those involved in the preparations for the Remembrance Day Service. Both church and War Memorial provided a fitting venue for this annual act of Remembrance. A sombre occasion, well attended by people from across the Benefice.

On a slightly different, if related note, the 'Book of Remembrance' for St Mungo's, which is kept in the church, is to remember anyone who has no grave or headstone in the churchyard, but has a strong connection with the parish. We are about to have a number of new names added – quite an event, as it requires the services of a professional scriptwriter. If you know of someone who you think

should be included in the Book, a form is available in the church, or just ask Michael or the churchwardens. (The form is yellow, and called: '*Application for an entry in the Book of Remembrance - Parish Church of St Mungo, Simonburn*') At least one of the names to be included this time takes us back nearly 20 years – Miss de Knoop, who used to live at Stewards House – so have a think about anyone you would like to be considered.

Russell Fairless is 'retiring' as co-organiser (with Roger Hadley) for the Village Fete – because of his work and other commitments – so we are looking for 'new leadership' for 2014. If anyone would like to step forward, Russell can 'give you the lowdown' on how he used to do things, but this should really be about FRESH ideas, so don't feel constrained by anything we may have done in the past. Russell says he has been helping to organise the Fete for 6 years now, but insists it doesn't have to be a 'job for life'. Maybe we can have more leadership 'rotation', especially with so many new faces, and ideas, in the village.

Thanks to all those who contributed to the Christmas Bingo. £220 was raised on the night. This money will go towards the annual running costs of the Village Hall.

A warm welcome to two families who have moved into Red Lion Terrace: Andrew, Jade and Morgan into No. 3, and Chris, Rachel and Hannah into No. 4. We hope you enjoy your first Christmas in Simonburn.

Other dates for your diary:

Saturday 21st December, from 10:00am: Decorate the Christmas tree, in the church.

Saturday 21st December, at 7:30pm: North Tyne & Redewater Choral Society Christmas concert in the church

Sunday 22nd December, at 6:30pm: Carol Service, with Antiphon. Mulled wine, soft drinks & mince pies afterwards.

I hope you all find something to bring you peace this Christmas.
Season's Greetings

Pat Fairless

Wark Parish news

Are you prepared? For what? – you will be asking! Christmas is almost upon us. Is it not so commercial that we almost ignore the purpose of the celebration? Christmas is the time we celebrate the birth of our saviour Jesus Christ, which, here in Wark at St Michael's, we do in grand style. We have our annual visit to Stonehaugh on Sunday 15th December, for the Christingle Service at 6.30pm. This is always a joyful, warm and enjoyable occasion, traditionally with wonderful refreshments. Sunday 22nd is the Carol Service, which this year Bishop Pedley will be leading. Further service details will be listed in this Broadsheet

Wark School are to hold *their* annual Christingle Service on Friday 20th December at 2.15pm in St Michael's. Your writers are unable to go along this year, however judging from previous years, we recommend that those who can, do. The children will inspire you with the reason we celebrate Christmas. We also note that, on Wednesday 11th December, they are holding a 'School Christmas Performance' at 2pm and 6pm – sounds interesting. If you can, please do go along to support them.

At the time of preparing these notes (late – apologies Roger), the slightly younger of your two writers has tears in his eyes viewing a poignant television programme reviewing Remembrance Day. Powerful viewing, reminding us all just what has been, and is still being, given for all. Our Remembrance Day services enjoyed a glorious autumn day here in Wark. Despite bemoaning the still-closed bridge, at least the service at the War Memorial was not interrupted by traffic.

This Broadsheet may *just* drop into your letterbox ahead of the Christmas Bazaar in Wark Town Hall on Sunday 1st December, arranged by St Michael's wonderful Ladies Guild. It all kicks off at 2pm. Get your Christmas shopping underway!

A 'phone call the other evening informed us that £1,125.00 has been donated to our surgery here in Wark to purchase ECG equipment. The money came from the regular Wednesday coffee mornings in West Acres Community Room (£500), along with the coffee morning arranged by Yvonne Tully and her assistants on

19th October. You know, Wark always does come out shining when fundraising is requested. Well done all

Love them or hate them, wind farms are here with us. They do have the advantage of providing funding to organisations within an agreed area. Our local, Green Rigg, has a radii allowing organisations in Wark to apply. The fund from EDF Energy is controlled by Community Foundation, based in Newcastle, with a local committee. The slightly younger of your two writers does sit on this committee, allocating the cash, however we do all declare an interest in any application – leaving the room whilst that particular one is discussed. 2013 has seen a number of Wark organisations receiving funding for specific purposes. One has been our wonderful ‘Monday Boys’ (those regular readers of ‘The Courant’ will have clocked that I am about to join them), who have received funding towards a mower – which must have power steering and air conditioning for the cost – but which, I’m sure, will be well used by them to maintain our village to the high standard we enjoy. Wark School have also received funding for their creative ‘Let’s get cooking’. Please contact John, for details of how to apply, should any organisation be interested – as always, those words ‘terms and conditions apply’.

Now a few more general village notes. For those waiting, of which I know there are many, there will be (what the bank account statement calls) ‘Wark Old People’s Party’ – I shall say a festive meal – for those receiving a state pension, along with their partner (NEW this year), on Wednesday 15th January 2014. This is not a church-arranged event, however the band of merry helpers all have connections with St Michael’s. Watch out for your invite. Also – most important – should you *not* receive one, and feel you are eligible, please contact John.

Word may already be out that the Silver Jubilee of Wark Charity Lunch this year, will be to support the work of Tynedale Hospice at Home. Wednesday 14th May 2014 is the date for your diary. Again there are two sittings, and bookings can be made with Ann Bell, on 01434 230259. Any offers of help would also be appreciated. Get in quick, as tickets sell fast.

This issue of The Broadsheet has, in print-speak terms, 'gone to bed' before a PCC meeting on Monday 18th November, where the question of restoration of windows in St Michael's will be discussed – a major project, necessary to maintain St Michael's, and something we hope you will support.

May we, the older of your two writers from Close House, and the slightly younger from Burnside Cottage, be amongst the first to say to you: Happy Christmas.

What more can or should we say?

Love to all from Cyril and John

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Date	Time	Details	Page
Thu 28 Nov	7:30 pm	Christmas Bingo, Barrasford Village Hall (page 19)	19
Sun 1 Dec	2:00 pm	Ladies Guild Christmas Bazaar, Wark Town Hall; cakes, tombola, raffle, Christmas stall	14
Mon 2 Dec	6:00 pm	Preschool Play, Barrasford Village Hall	19
Tue 3 Dec	7:30 pm	Monthly meeting, Barrasford Village Hall	19
Wed 4 Dec		Chollerton WI: Christmas decorations to wear and social; contact: Pauline	
Wed 4 Dec	9:00 pm	Compline, Birtley St Giles	17
Thu 5 Dec	10:30 am	Coffee Morning, Barrasford Village Hall: home bakes, delicious coffee, great conversation	19
Thu 5 Dec	2:00 pm	Humshaugh MU: "A Christmas Box: Readings & Music", with John Cox - at the Langfords'	4
Fri 6 Dec	8:00 pm	Quiz Night, Barrasford Village Hall	19
Fri 6 Dec	7:30 pm	The Snow Queen – the Panto, Humshaugh Youth Theatre Group, Village hall	5/20
Sat 7 Dec	7:30 pm	The Snow Queen – the Panto (see Fri 6 Dec)	5/20
Sun 8 Dec		Parish Children's Party, Barrasford Vill'ge Hall	19
Mon 9 Dec	6:00 pm	Christingle Service, Chollerton Church, with children from Chollerton School – all welcome	17
Tue 10 Dec	7:00 pm	Birtley & District Gardening Group: 'Alnwick Garden – a light at the end of the tunnel'	18
Tue 10 Dec	8:00 pm	Folk Night, The Crown Inn, Humshaugh, informal music, any age, any ability	5
Wed 11 Dec	10:00 am	Dunkers coffee morning, Barrasford Village Hall, 10.00-11.00am	19

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Date	Time	Details	Page
Wed 11 Dec	2:00 pm & 6:00 pm	Wark School 'Christmas Performance'	9
Wed 11 Dec	9:00 pm	Compline, Gunnerton St Christopher	17
Thu 12 Dec		Dunkers Christmas Lunch, Barrasford Arms	19
Sun 15 Dec	6:30 pm	Christingle Service, Stonehaugh	
Tue 17 Dec	6:30 pm	Carol Singing, Barrasford & Gunnerton; meet Barrasford Village Shop if you'd like to sing	19
Tue 17 Dec		Pub Quiz, Crown Inn, Humshaugh, proceeds to Tynedale Hospice at Home	5
Wed 18 Dec	12:00 pm	Gunnerton Lunch Club Christmas Special, 12noon, £4.00. Contact: Susan Reay, 681852	19
Wed 18 Dec	6:30 pm	Carol Singing in the Village, meet outside The Crown Inn, Humshaugh	6
Wed 18 Dec		Birtley Local History Group: Members' Evening; Old School, Birtley	19
Wed 18 Dec	9:00 pm	Compline, Thockrington St Aidan	17
Fri 20 Dec	9:15 am	Carol Service, Humshaugh School (St Peter's Church), family and friends welcome	5
Fri 20 Dec	2:15 pm	Wark School Christingle Service, St Michael's	9
Fri 20 Dec	7:00 pm	Friends of Chollerton Churches: Yuletide at Chipchase Castle Chapel – carols & music	18
Sat 21 Dec	10:00 am	Decorating the Christmas tree, St Mungo's, Simonburn, refreshments, all welcome	6
Sat 21 Dec	7:30 pm	North Tyne & Redewater Choral Society Christmas Concert, St Mungo's, Simonburn	6
Tue 24 Dec	6:00 pm	Santa visits Barrasford to check the chimneys, Barrasford Village Hall, details to be confirmed	19
Sat 4 Jan	10:00 Am - 4:30 pm	Vicarage Open House, Chollerton: 10am-12noon & 2pm-4.30pm: fire, coffee & cakes.	17
Wed 15 Jan		Wark Old People's Party / festive meal (tbs)	9
Sat 18 Jan	10:30 am - 4:00 pm	Chollerton Benefice Mission Action Plan: day at Shepherd's Dene; Mike Slade, 681721	
Sat 18 Jan	3:00 pm	Messy Church, Barrasford Village Hall; messy but creative activities, worship, family meal.	16
Fri 14 Feb		Friends of Chollerton Churches: Valentine's Evening Gourmet Meal, The Barrasford Arms	18
Sat 3 May		Friends of Chollerton Churches: Heart of All England Race Meeting, Hexham Race Course	18
Wed 24 May		Wark Charity Lunch Silver Jubilee, to support Tynedale Hospice at Home: Ann Bell, 230259	9

SERVICES FOR DECEMBER 2013

Benefice of Chollerton	Benefice of Humshaugh
Sunday 1st December – Advent Sunday	
<i>(Year 'A' readings from Common Worship begin)</i>	
9:00 Gunnerton Holy Communion 10:30 Birtley Holy Communion	9:30 Humshaugh Holy Communion, 1662 11:00 Simonburn Holy Communion 6:00 Wark Holy Communion, 1662
Old Testament: Isaiah 2, 1-5 Gospel: Matt. 24, 36-44	Epistle: Romans 13, 11-14 Psalm: 122
Sunday 8th December – Advent 2	
9:00 Thockrington Holy Communion 10:30 Chollerton Holy Communion 6:00 (9 th Dec) Chollerton Christingle	9:30 Humshaugh Holy Communion 11:00 Simonburn Morning Prayer 6:00 Wark Holy Communion
Old Testament: Isaiah 11,1-10 Gospel: Matthew 3, 1-12	Epistle: Romans 15, 4-13 Psalm: 72, 1-7 & 18-19
Sunday 15th December – Advent 3	
9:00 Gunnerton Holy Communion 10:30 Birtley Carol Service	9:30 Humshaugh Holy Communion 11:00 Simonburn Holy Communion 6:30 Stonehaugh Christingle Service
Old Testament: Isaiah 35, 1-10 Gospel: Matthew 11, 2-11	Epistle: James 5, 7-10 Psalm: 146, 4-10
Sunday 22nd December – Advent 4	
9:00 Thockrington 1662 Communion 10:30 Chollerton Holy Communion 6:00 Chollerton Carol Service	9:30 Humshaugh Holy Communion 6:00 Wark Carol Service 6:30 Simonburn Carol Service
Old Testament: Isaiah 7,10-16 Gospel: Matthew 1, 18-25	Epistle: Romans 1, 1-7 Psalm: 80, 1-8 & 18-20
Tuesday 24th December – Christmas Eve	
18:00 Gunnerton Crib Service 23:30 Chollerton Midnight Mass	18:30 Humshaugh Carol Service 23:30 Simonburn Holy Communion
Old Testament: Gospel: John 1, 1-14	Epistle: Hebrews 1, 1-12 Psalm:
Wednesday 25th December – Christmas Day	
9:00 Thockrington Family Communion 10:30 Birtley Family Communion	9:30 Humshaugh Holy Communion (said) 10:30 Wark Family Communion
Old Testament: Isaiah 9,2-7 Gospel: Luke 2, 1-14	Epistle: Titus 2, 11-14 Psalm: 96

SERVICES FOR DECEMBER 2013

Benefice of Chollerton	Benefice of Humshaugh
Sunday 29th December – Christmas 1	
10:30 Birtley Benefice Service	8:00 Humshaugh 1662 Communion (said) 11:00 Simonburn Morning Prayer 6:00 Wark Holy Communion
Old Testament: Isaiah 63, 7-9 Gospel: Matthew 2, 13,23	Epistle: Hebrews 2, 10-18 Psalm: 148
Sunday 5th January – The Epiphany	
9:00 Gunnerton Holy Communion 10:30 Birtley Holy Communion	9:30 Humshaugh Holy Communion, 1662 11:00 Simonburn Holy Communion 6:00 Wark Holy Communion
Old Testament: Isaiah 60, 1-6 Gospel: Matthew 2, 1-12	Epistle: Ephesians 3, 1-12 Psalm: 72, 10-15
Sunday 12th January – The Baptism of Christ	
9:00 Thockrington Holy Communion 10:30 Chollerton Holy Communion	11:00 Simonburn Benefice Holy Communion, St Mungo's Tide
Old Testament: Isaiah 42, 1-9 Gospel: Matthew 3,13-17	Epistle: Acts 10, 34-43 Psalm: 29
Readings for St. Mungo's Tide	
Old Testament: Gospel: Matthew 28, 16-end	Epistle: 1 Thessalonians 2, 2-12 Psalm:

Wark Ladies Guild

Christmas Bazaar

Sunday 1st December, from 2.00pm, Wark Town Hall

Cakes, tombola, raffle, Christmas stall with decorations and wreaths.
Refreshments available

Come along and get your Christmas shopping off to a good start!

CHOLLERTON BENEFICE

Mike Slade's letter

Chollerton Vicarage

Dear friends,

By the time you read this, Hallowe'en will seem a distant memory. We shall be focussed on our preparations for Christmas. The television in mid-November is already full of it, and some advertising executives for a store 'not knowingly undersold' will be rubbing their hands with glee that a certain bear and rabbit have made such an impression on many of you.

This year, I felt that Hallowe'en was really pushed hard in stores and on television. We were down in Somerset at the time and, there, people seemed to have adopted the new idea of dressing and making up as if one had just survived a terrible accident. It was all done for charity, so some good will come of scaring a few people. Many will have spent a lot of money on buying things to help them celebrate Hallowe'en, so businesses will be pleased that it took off so well this year, in what would otherwise be a slack time.

A month on and Christmas buying is really beginning to take off. I suspect sales over the Internet will beat all records. Consider for a moment whether you would rather track round the Metro Centre – with kids in tow, carrying bags of shopping – or spend some quiet time with a glass of wine buying online when they're safely tucked up in bed. It is, as they say, a 'no brainer.'

It is easy to get caught up with all of this, especially if you have media-savvy children who watch adverts and then petition you for what they want. Recently, we have had parents and a grannie, with their respective toddlers, at the Vicarage. We do our best to ensure they (the toddlers) are kept occupied and engaged whilst they are here. However, on separate occasions both toddlers did exactly the same thing: they both tipped out onto the floor the Duplo and Thomas train set, and put the empty plastic *box* on their heads, before playing with it! So there you have it: buy a few simple empty boxes and let the children's imaginations run riot!

Perhaps that idea, unrealistic as I know it is, somehow reflects the simple place of Jesus' birth – in a stable among farm animals – which is easy to forget (or ignore) among our busyness. Of course, my suggestion breaks down when wise men turn up, with the most expensive gifts imaginable: gold, frankincense and myrrh. But then, what would YOU buy the King of all kings?

Do remember though, that the shepherds came with nothing other than their awe and wonder as they worshipped Jesus the Christ child laid in a manger.

My hope is that you have a happy and peaceful Christmas, and safe journeys if you are travelling.

With love,

Mike

From the Registers in the Chollerton Benefice

Holy Baptism

We welcomed into the Family of the Church, **Jack Longlands**, at Birtley St Giles on Sunday, November 17th 2013.

Funerals and Memorial Services

We celebrated the life of **Charlotte Mary Walton**, 99, at Chollerton St Giles on Saturday November 16th 2013.

Confirmation

A service of Confirmation will be held in the deanery in July 2014. If you would be interested in being confirmed then please speak to me to see what would be involved. In previous years, it has been a course for adults (seven this year) to explore the Christian faith, and a similar but shorter course for young people aged over 10.

Messy Church...

...meets again in the New Year on Saturday 18th January at 3pm for messy but creative activities, simple prayer and worship and a lovely family meal. All warmly welcome as usual

Forthcoming events in Chollerton Benefice Churches

Vicarage Open House

Saturday January 4th: 10.00am - 12noon and 2.00pm - 4.30pm

Come and join us around the fire for conversation, coffee and cakes. Children and families very welcome.

This year we are inviting donations to support the new Barrasford Scout Troop. In previous years you have been very generous. If you cannot come, you can still make a donation to this lovely group.

Advent and Christmas services in the Chollerton Benefice

Services of Compline (Night Prayer) will be held at 9.00pm on the following Wednesdays:

December 4th at Birtley St Giles

December 11th at Gunnerton St Christopher

December 18th at Thockrington St Aidan

Compline is a quiet service to give us space and time to reflect and be with God in the preparations for Christmas. Other special services in the run-up to Christmas are:

Monday 9th December at 6.00pm: Christingle Service, at Chollerton Church, led by children from Chollerton CofE Aided First School – all welcome

Sunday 15th December at 10.30am: Christmas Carol Service at Birtley Church

Sunday 22nd December at 6.00pm: Carol Service at Chollerton Church

Tuesday 24th December, Christmas Eve at 6.00pm: Crib Service at Gunnerton St Christopher, with a special guest

Tuesday 24th December, Christmas Eve at 11.15pm: Midnight Mass at Chollerton Church

Wednesday 25th December, Christmas Day: Family Communion services at 9.00am at Thockrington, and 10.30am at Birtley.

Friends of Chollerton Churches

The Friends held a very successful Hallowe'en Gourmet Evening at The Barrasford Arms where 50 diners enjoyed a wonderful 4-course meal prepared by Tony Binks. Thanks to all concerned over £900 was raised on the evening. There will be a further chance to attend a similar event, on Friday 14th February 2014, when Tony has kindly agreed to host a Valentine's Evening Gourmet Meal.

On Friday 20th December, at 7pm, the 'Yuletide at Chipchase' evening will be held, in the candle-lit chapel, where there will be a service of music and readings, followed by refreshments in the Castle. This is a ticket event. All tickets have been sold, but there is a reserve list. Contact Bob Fletcher on 681949 or email bob.fletcher@sw.co.uk or Ken Carlisle on 689996, for this or the Valentine's Evening Gourmet Meal.

Another note for your diary is the Heart of All England Race Meeting on Saturday 3rd May 2014, at Hexham Race Course, where a private box has kindly been provided for The Friends' use by the Charity's President, Charles Enderby. If you want more information about this, or to reserve a place, contact any of the committee members mentioned above.

Ken Carlisle, Chairman

Birtley Village Hall

Birtley & District Gardening Group

'The Alnwick Garden – a light at the end of the tunnel'

with Ian August

Tuesday 10th December, 7.00pm for 7.30pm, Birtley Village Hall

This is our Christmas Special with drinks and nibbles.

The group welcomes new visitors or prospective members, whether experienced or rookie gardeners. The 2013/14 annual membership is £20.00. Guests/single talks £4.00 (£6.00 in December).

Community Events in Gunnerton Church

Gunnerton Lunch Club - CHRISTMAS SPECIAL

Wednesday 18th December at 12 noon

£4, to include seasonal delights, soup and a pudding with a festive flavour, raffle of a Christmas Hamper, and other goodies!

Reserve your place, by 10th December please; call Susan Reay on 681852

Bookings for Gunnerton Church can be made by contacting Susan Reay on 01434 681852

Barrasford Village Hall

For more information on *any* event at Barrasford Village Hall, read the weekly “*Chollerton Notes*” in the Hexham Courant, and the monthly “*What’s On*” bulletin on the village notice boards. Or join ‘Barrasford Village Hall’ on Facebook.

Birtley Local History Group

Members’ Evening

Wednesday 18th December

Bring along anything interesting - also think of any local words and their meanings... To be held at the Old School, Birtley.

Further details from Mary White 01434 230307

New Scout Group

The Barrasford Scout Group, for Cubs & Beavers, meets weekly in Barrasford Village Hall on Tuesday evenings, 5.30 – 6.30pm.

Children aged, 5 – 10 years old, can come along and see what Scouting is all about!! Lots of fun, games and activities.

For further information, call the Group Leader:

Paul Mordue, 07966 902530 or email: pmordue@hotmail.com.

Humshaugh Youth Theatre Group

The Snow Queen - the Panto -

Friday 6th & Saturday 7th December at 7:30 pm

Humshaugh Village Hall.

Tickets available from Humshaugh Community Shop from 4th November.

£7.00 adults, £3.00 concessions



Other church services within the Chollerton Benefice

Barrasford Methodist Chapel: 6.30pm on December 1st (Holy Communion), 8th, 15th and 22nd. 29th at Haydon Bridge

Great Swinburne: St Mary's RC Church Holy Mass at 10.15am every Sunday.

The North Tyne & Redewater Choral Society

CHRISTMAS CONCERT

*including music by Purcell, Howells, Rutter and
Benjamin Britten's "Ceremony of Carols"*

Conductor – John Roper

Accompanist – Michael Haynes

Saturday 21st December, 7.30pm

ST MUNGO'S CHURCH, SIMONBURN

Admission - £10 (£8 concessions)