

THE PARISH OF BELTINGHAM WITH HENSHAW

Parish Newsletter August 2020



Off With His Head - July 1941

79 years ago, almost to the day, lightning struck Grey's Monument and removed the Earl's head, which plunged on to the street below, landing on a passing tram. The Chronicle reported the dramatic incident: "The stone head of Earl Grey, 133 feet above the ground at the junction of Grainger, Grey and Blackett Street, crashed to the tram lines without causing any personal injuries, and was badly damaged. It was impossible to state whether the original head could be restored."

In the event, it could not, and a decapitated Earl Grey stood forlornly atop his monument, during the remainder of the War and afterwards, for seven years before getting a new head. The sculptor Roger Hedley (the son of Ralph Hedley) made the new head, using a plaster cast of the original head which had been pieced back together.

Grey's Monument was paid for by public subscription and the original design envisaged an upright column 46m in height. But the appeal fell a little short of the funds required and consequently so did the column! That is why it stands at only 41m.

When excavation took place for the construction of the Tyne & Wear Metro below in the late 1970s, it was discovered that the column had been built on foundations which were less than 2m deep while supporting 41m of stone above ground. It is now supported by a circular column of piles running nearly 40m into the ground. Even so it is said that the Monument can be seen leaning a few centimetres in any direction on a windy day.

Vicar's Letter

One of the most evocative images we find in Jesus' parable is the Parable of the Sower. It is one of the most powerful and challenging images of the exuberant and overflowing form of God's love. At the heart of the parable is the image of a – frankly – not very good farmer. Throwing with gay-abandon precious seed not where he thinks it ought to grow but anywhere and everywhere, because this farmer knows that we never truly know where things will grow and flourish.

Usually this parable is read as a challenge to us to prepare ourselves to be the fertile soil where we can receive the gifts and seeds of God's grace and allow them to flourish, and pray that we are not in fact the stony ground where no growth can come, or the thin ground where the roots of faith never fully taken root. But as we have been beginning to return to our churches for worship there is a different reading of this image which I have been returning to.

As each landscape is different, so each one of us is different. The things that speak to one person in worship will leave another cold, and vice versa. But when people meet God in worship in a way which speaks deeply and truly to who God has made them as an individual, then deep and transformative growth and flourishing can come. In this reading, our task as a Church is to sow with this confidence and abandon, and not simply to sow the seeds of our worship in the places where we would want them to grow or would prefer them to grow. Our call is to have confidence to respond to the forms and shapes and landscapes of the world around us because we do not always know where things will grow.

Before this period of Covid-interruption, we were beginning this task of broadening and developing our pattern of worship with Messy Church and God's Tent, Morning Prayer and Celebration Services, alongside our inherited patterns of Parish Eucharists. As we move through this period of transition, we need to have the confidence to continue to sow seeds, to have the courage to explore other patterns of worship whether online, in our churches, or elsewhere. As we move through this time, we will find that some seeds of worship we sow will fall on stony ground, and some will grow quickly and then fall away again. But some seeds will fall on fertile ground, and those seeds will take root and flourish and grow and bring forth flourishing and growth more than we would possibly imagine.

Benjamin

Services in church

It is a great pleasure to report that since 12 July, we have been able to begin holding services in our churches. Recognising that some of our parishioners are shielding, or not yet feeling confident to join us in church, our Vicar has continued to stream his Sunday 9 am Morning Prayer service on Facebook. There is then a 10.30 am Eucharist, alternating between St Cuthbert's Church in Haydon Bridge and All Hallows' Church in Henshaw.

On 19 July, at the first service in Henshaw, there were 23 in church. Most people chose to wear a face mask, and of course, there could not be any singing, but the organist was there to play appropriate pieces at key stages of the service.

The pattern of worship in August will follow the same sort of pattern. So at 9 am each Sunday, those who wish to do so can enjoy a streamed Facebook service. Dates for the two churches at 10.30 am are as follows:

Sunday 2 August, Henshaw
Sunday 9 August, Haydon Bridge
Sunday 16 August, Henshaw
Sunday 23 August, Haydon Bridge
Sunday 30 August, Henshaw

During this period, the PCCs and the Vicar will be giving thought to the future pattern of worship. Look out for details in the next Parish Newsletter.

From the Parish Registers:

During the period of lockdown for coronavirus, the following graveside burials have taken place:

8 April, Dorothy Stokoe
1 June, Iris Hogarth Brown, aged 102

16 July, Barry Chambers

Some lockdown fun: Answers to last month's puzzle

The answer to these clues is the name of a garden or wild flower or plant.

Industrious queen – Busy Lizzie

These would keep Basil's paws warm - Foxgloves

Caused by cold in the belfry - Bluebell

Romantic encounter in the fog – Love in a mist

A small garden flower, I presume – Livingstone Daisy

She's close to her pupil - Iris

The new one sweeps clean - Broom

Rather prudish when she got up - Primrose

Males on bikes – Cyclamen. Pussy likes polos - Catmint

Lass of the vale – Lily of the valley. A virtue - Honesty

Stitch with help from "Chubb" - Hemlock

Way up for a biblical character – Joseph's ladder

Well fed fowl – Fat hen. Bovine takes a tumble. - Cowslip

Facial hair on octogenarian – Old man's beard