



THE PARISH OF BELTINGHAM WITH HENSHAW

Parish Newsletter August 2021

Notes from PCC meeting

Although the PCC had planned to meet in the church room for its latest meeting, in the event it was held by zoom, as one of our members had been “pinged” and was isolating. We received an update from Sheila Walker, our Safeguarding Officer, about our responsibilities as a PCC for safeguarding, and the training as members that we should undertake.

We also discussed what steps we should take now that many of the Covid restrictions have been eased. We were mindful of the concerns that many of our parishioners have about the rising rates of infection, and so it was resolved that we would continue with the precautions that had previously been in place, whilst recognising that we could not insist on people wearing masks. There was clearly a wish from the congregation and from PCC members for the resumption of hymn singing, and although we are not going to introduce this yet, we will reconsider the position at the end of August.

The PCC confirmed that services will continue to be timed for 10.30 am through to the end of the year. There was also an update on progress with regard to advertising the vacancy for a new Vicar, and dates have now been fixed for shortlisting (September 11) and interviews (September 27). A DVD had been made showing the churches in the three parishes of Greenhead, Haltwhistle and Beltingham with Henshaw, to be used as part of the information for prospective candidates.

As part of our wish to become a more environmentally friendly church, some steps were proposed including the creation of a wild flower meadow in the lower part of the cemetery at Beltingham.

The next PCC meeting will be held on 21 September.

Services in August

1 August	Eucharist – Rev Keith Teasdale
8 August	Eucharist – Rev Chris Simmons
15 August	Eucharist – Rev Keith Teasdale
22 August	Eucharist – Rev Gill Alexander
29 August	Eucharist- Rev Michael Jackson
5 September	Eucharist – Archdeacon – Rev Catherine Sourbut Groves

Re-alignment of Benefices

We have now completed the drafting of our Parish Profile, and it has been amalgamated with those from Haltwhistle and Greenhead. There is also a DVD in production, kindly done by a friend of one of our retired clergy, which will be used as part of the recruitment package sent to applicants. The vacancy has now been advertised, and the expected date for interviews is September 26. To aid the recruitment process, the three parishes have been filmed to make a DVD which candidates will be able to watch to give them a flavour of the churches in the parishes, and the communities they serve.

The churchwardens from the 3 parishes have arranged another meeting in early August, with the aim of getting to know each other better, and to understand how each parish functions. We are supported in this process by David Ratcliff, the lay chair of the Deanery Synod, and the two retired clergy, Rev Keith Teasdale and Rev Chris Simmons, who have been helping out at Greenhead and Haltwhistle during their protracted vacancy.

Wildflower meadows

Given the PCC support for creating a wildflower meadow in the lower part of Beltingham cemetery, some observations by Jeremy Coles on the BBC website are a useful introduction.

“It may sound obvious but 100 years ago Britain’s countryside was a very different place. Back then it would have been awash with colourful flower-rich meadows and grasslands that were an intrinsic part of our agriculture and people’s daily lives. The scale of the decline is breath-taking. Fast forward to today and over 97% of wildflower meadows have been lost since the 1930s, that’s a startling 7.5 million acres (3 million hectares). Species-rich grassland now only covers a mere 1% of the UK’s land area. And what remains is mostly scattered fragments of just a few acres and vulnerable to disappearing under the plough.

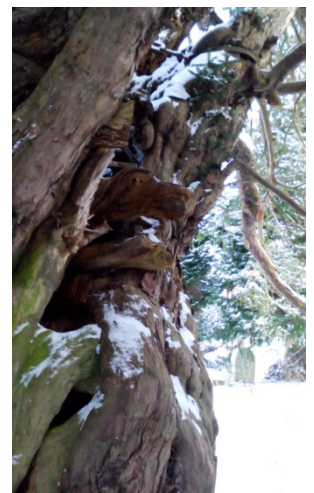
Meadows develop as a result of traditional farming practices. Each small farm would have grown a few crops, had permanent pasture for grazing, and meadows for hay that were cut and stored to feed the livestock over winter. Management followed an annual cycle of growing in spring and summer, cutting in late summer and grazing in winter. But the turning point came during the Second World War when six million acres of grassland were ploughed to grow cereals, starting the inevitable decline. It’s a decline that continues today, decades of careful management being undone in a few hours.

However, a meadow remains an important and crucial habitat, with over 150 different species of flower and grass that support a myriad of insects from bees and beetles to grasshoppers and butterflies, which in turn support many small animals and birds. A meadow could contain up to 40 species per square metre. But they’re more than biodiversity hotspots. As well as supporting pollinating insects that are valuable for many food crops, they help mitigate flooding by holding on to rain water and capture vast amounts of carbon.

In summer a traditionally-managed, flower-rich meadow becomes a mini jungle, alive with brightly coloured wild flowers, buzzing and chirping insects, and the sweet song of the skylark as it rises and falls overhead. It is worth remembering that wildflower meadows were once present in every parish in the country.”

Yew Tree

In light of the specialist report that we have obtained from an expert nominated by the Woodland Trust, as a result of our Yew Tree being a finalist in the Tree of the Year competition, we are carrying out some of the suggested works as and when funds permit. Some thinning and lopping of branches on adjacent trees, to allow more light for the yew, has already been done. The next task is to cut (with an angle grinder) some of the bands around the tree, as the view of the expert is that these are causing more damage than any good they may have been doing. So, if you visit the churchyard and find this work in progress, you can be assured that it is all being undertaken on the basis of very sound advice.



Mary Sumner – founder of the Mothers’ Union

Mary Sumner (nee Heywood) was born on 31st December 1828, in Swinton, near Salford, Lancashire, the third of four children. She was educated at home, learning 3 foreign languages and the ability to sing well! The family moved to near Ledbury in Lancashire where her mother used to run monthly meetings for mothers. She married George Sumner, an ordained Anglican Minister, who was the son of Charles Sumner, Bishop of Winchester. Mary had three children of her own and founded the Mothers’ Union in 1876, in the Parish of Old Alresford, near Winchester, where her husband, George, was Rector.

It was after the birth of her first grandchild when she remembered the difficulties and the isolation of being a new mother that she had experienced, and she wanted to do something to help other mothers in bringing up their children. She envisaged a situation where mothers of all social classes would be together to provide support, friendship and education to each other. She organised the first meeting in the Rectory but was so gripped by fear her husband had to take the meeting and invite everyone to come again the following week!

It was in 1885 that Ernest Wilberforce, the 1st Bishop of Newcastle was preparing to address women in the Portsmouth Church Congress. Finding that he had little to say to the women, he called upon Mary Sumner who was present to address the Congress. She was understandably nervous about speaking but gave a passionate address about national morality and the importance of women’s vocation as mothers to change the nation for the better. Some of the women present went back to their Parishes to found Mother’s meetings along the lines of Mary Sumners’ meetings.

The then Bishop of Winchester, Edward Browne, declared that the Mothers’ Union should become a Diocesan organisation, as it is today. The growth of the Mothers’ Union beyond Winchester was due to the Victorian British Society on morality and contending with social ills of the time, as well as the growth of the Anglican Mission, throughout the Empire and growth was rapid. Ely, Exeter, Hereford, Lichfield and Newcastle were the first to create the Mothers’ Union in their Dioceses. The missionary zeal of the likes of David Livingstone and Robert Moffatt, his father in law would no doubt have been an inspiration to Mary. She would have been aware of Elizabeth Fry and Dr Barnardo and other social reformers of her time. Queen Victoria, in her Diamond Jubilee year of 1897 became Patron of the Mothers’ Union, as Her Majesty the Queen is today.

Mary Sumner visited Hexham on 16th June 1913, at the grand age of 84 and addressed a full house. The presiding Minister was Canon Savage from Hexham, and Canon Lowe, the Rural Dean, from Haltwhistle and the Rev’d Henderson from Beltingham plus many more were present. Mary Sumner continued to visit Branches and inspire members throughout her long life. She died on August 11th 1921. She is commemorated in Liturgical Calendar on 9th August, due to an error in the transcription of her death certificate.

The aim of the Mothers’ Union is to demonstrate the Christian faith in Action by the transformation of communities worldwide, through the nurture of the family in its many forms and to maintain a fellowship of Christians united in prayer, worship and service. Prayer is an important part of the Mothers’ Union, with a wave of Prayer in June encompassing many parts of the world, where Branch Members in Parishes come together for a short Service, aware that they are part of a worldwide organisation, open to anyone who believes in the Trinity, regardless of gender or having had children.

Our Diocese is linked with countries round the world, Henshaw and Beltingham’s link is St Peters Church, East Maitland, Newcastle, in Australia. Some years ago there was a new Vicar, from Hawaii, who was appointed after a lengthy interregnum to St Peters Church. He happened to say to one of the MU members that when he was in Hawaii, his meal was cooked every evening and his grass cut by members of the Mothers’ Union. The response was “if he thinks that’s going to happen here, he’s got another thing coming!”

Our branch supports the women’s refuge centre in Hexham, 60-80-30, their telephone number, where they offer counselling, advice, practical help and support homes where victims of domestic violence are offered shelter. Every Christmas, for a number of years, we have given Christmas presents and tokens for Iceland supermarket to the users 60-80-30, which are greatly appreciated. **Away From It All** (AFIA) is part of the outreach arm of MU which supports families whose lives have met with adversity. They link up with other charities who provide caravans, during the Summer holidays, open to families in need who otherwise would never have a holiday because of hardship. We have been asked to provide “welcome boxes” for the families going on holiday to a caravan park at Seahouses. We have been challenged to fill them with dry goods, cereal, rice, tinned food (tomatoes, baked beans etc) and we will supply bread and milk on the day of departure.

If you would like to help us with either food or money, these can be given to Sheila Walker or Anne Brunton. Mary Sumner’s work continues to grow. Will you join me in saying Mary Sumner’s prayer?

The Mothers' Union Prayer

Loving Lord, We thank you for your love so freely given to us all. We pray for families around the World. Bless the work of the Mothers' Union as we seek to share your love, through the encouragement, strengthening and support of marriage and family life. Empowered by your spirit, may we be united in prayer and worship, and in love and service reach out as your hands across the world. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Thanks to Anne Brunton for supplying this material on the Mothers' Union.

School news

We were fortunate to David Ratcliff, Chair of the Governors of our church school, come to our service on 18 July, and give us some reflections about the school and its achievements. Within his address he told us:

“Many Church of England Schools (there are about 5,000 in the UK) have chosen a Bible text to be their guiding star. In the West Tyne Church School Federation (Henshaw and Greenhead) we chose:

**God does not want us to be shy with our gifts,
but bold and loving and sensible. 2 Timothy 1.7**

A special relationship exists between church and school:

What can we all do to preserve and enhance these special relationships?

- Include the needs of the children and the dedication of staff at Greenhead and Henshaw in your prayers.
- Talk positively about the schools to your family, friends and neighbours: small schools need consistent admission numbers –so be an advocate for us.
- Look for ways to keep the links alive – join in with the occasions when the schools return to holding services in church. Don't be shy in living this relationship, but bold and loving – always sensible - and a little bit more like Jesus the Teacher.”

King Oswald

In the church calendar for August, one of the people remembered each year on August 5 is King Oswald of Northumbria who died in 642 AD. As a child, Oswald was exiled to Iona after his father Athelfrith was killed in battle. He was educated there by the Irish Christian monks who also baptised him, although at that time the country was pagan. Oswald wanted to fight to get his father's kingdom back – that battle took place at Heavenfield (near Chollerford). Once established as King, Oswald brought a monk, Aidan, from Iona, to establish Christianity in his kingdom. Aidan founded his monastery on Lindisfarne while Oswald was based in Bamburgh. They worked together to vigorously promote the Christian faith.

After a reign of 8 years, Oswald fought a battle against the army of the Mercians, probably near Oswestry, where he was killed. In his writings, the Venerable Bede says that Oswald was a saintly kind and a friend to the poor. Shortly after his death, he became a Saint. There are many stories about miraculous healings where sick people went to the place where Oswald had died.

The church at Heavenfield bears the name of St Oswald. It was rebuilt in 1817. It stands in a churchyard set in the middle of a field, about four hundred yards from the B6318, the Military Road.

Barbara Chapman

Longer standing members of our congregation may remember Barbara Chapman who lived at Lipwood before relocating to be nearer her family after the death of her husband. Barbara's son has recently informed us of his mother's death. Barbara and her husband were good supporters of the church. They were both sidesmen, and were the donors of the gold carpet around the altar in Beltingham.