



THE PARISH OF BELTINGHAM WITH HENSHAW

Parish Newsletter July 2021

Re-alignment of Benefices

For quite some time, there has been discussion within Hexham Deanery about a need to make changes, in part to accommodate a reduction in the number of paid clergy in the Deanery. We as a parish have been involved in the various discussions, and while Benjamin was in post, he took many opportunities to keep the PCC up to date with developments in thinking, as did our Deanery Synod representatives on the PCC. The pace on these developments has now quickened, and set out below are some extracts from a recently published document, written by David Ratcliff, Lay Chair of Hexham Deanery.

Hexham Deanery Plan

Over the last ten years our Deanery has been developing a plan to respond to changes of personnel, the growth of new home-grown initiatives and the needs and expectations of our Diocese. In April 2021 we found ourselves in a position to propose to the Diocese the implementation of this plan, which had been created and refined by members of every parish in the Deanery. The very long-term vacancy at Haltwhistle and Greenhead Benefice, the vacancy at Allendale and Whitfield with Ninebanks, now of longer than a year, and the sudden vacancy at Haydon Bridge and Beltingham with Henshaw created a scenario in which the wishes of the Deanery could be seen as a workable plan for the future.

Meetings were held in February at which the outline plan was discussed with churchwardens. Each of the "Parishes By The Wall" (PBTW), from Greenhead to St John Lee, was represented though not every churchwarden was able to be present. As a Deanery where frank opinions can be safely and creatively shared, the plan met with a general level of acceptance, providing a seed-bed for further discussion and cooperation.

The suggested scenario might be called PBTW East and PBTW West:

- *Each new benefice would have one full-time stipendiary priest, based at Haltwhistle and (while Jeremy Thomson is there) at St John Lee*
- *PBTW East would comprise the Benefice of St John Lee and the Parish of Haydon Bridge (the historic connection between Haydon Bridge and Warden was acknowledged)*
- *PBTW West would comprise the Benefice of Haltwhistle/Greenhead and the Parish of Beltingham with Henshaw (previously the church at Beltingham was a Chapel of Ease within the Haltwhistle Parish, and it was noted that the two church schools at Henshaw and Greenhead are already in federation with each other)*

Summary

- *Parishes By The Wall West ("The Western Front"), served by a full-time priest based in Haltwhistle, would be a combination of Greenhead St Cuthbert's, Haltwhistle Holy Cross, Henshaw All Hallows and Beltingham St Cuthbert's, appointed as quickly as possible.*
- *Parishes By The Wall East ("The Eastern Bloc"), served by a full-time priest (Jeremy Thomson) based initially at St John Lee, combining Haydon Bridge St Cuthbert's and Old Church, Warden St Michael and All Angels, Newbrough St Peter's, Fourstones St Aidan's, Stagshaw Chapel and St John Lee, an arrangement which could be enacted immediately.*

In light of these developments, the Beltingham with Henshaw PCC had an early zoom meeting with the Archdeacon. We then set up a small working group to prepare the text of necessary resolutions, and to draft a Parish Profile. That work is

now complete. If you would like an electronic version of the Parish Profile, then please contact Anne Galbraith (galbraithanne55@gmail.com or telephone 684302).

One aspect of the Parish Profile is the requirement to set out our vision as a parish of what we are looking for in a new vicar – that element is set out below:

Our new Vicar

In the new Vicar of either gender the PCC would hope to find:

- *A personable, enthusiastic, competent and caring Vicar who would enjoy being part of our community*
- *Above all, a spiritual leader, not only of the current congregation but also for the wider community of all ages*
- *Someone who would be committed to devoting a fair part of their ministry to each parish in the Benefice*
- *Someone who is an effective organiser and delegator, who would work with the PCCs to develop a capable team, to help lead the parishes during a period of challenge and change.*
- *A person who is competent with modern technology, in order to maximise on developments made during lockdown in our worship patterns.*

Because Haltwhistle and Greenhead have been in vacancy for so long, the Archdeacon hopes that the process of advertising, short-listing and interviewing can begin very soon. The churchwardens have a meeting scheduled for early July to meet with the Archdeacon and the churchwardens of Haltwhistle and Greenhead.

People moving into the village – If you are aware of new arrivals in the village, it would be helpful if you could let the wardens know, as there is a welcome letter and leaflet about our churches which we can then deliver. As this has been a rather unusual time, anyone who moved in within the last 12 months will not have received a letter, so even if they are now “well settled”, it would be nice to make contact with them.

From the registers

June 9 Funeral service for Margaret McAllister at St Cuthbert's, Beltingham, followed by cremation at Mountsett Crematorium

June 10 Funeral service for Gordon Hall, followed by woodland burial at Hexham.

Services for August

We are continuing our pattern of worship at 10.30 am at All Hallows', Henshaw throughout August.

1 August Eucharist with Rev'd Keith Teasdale

8 August Eucharist with Rev'd Chris Simmons

15 August Eucharist with Rev'd Keith Teasdale

22 August Eucharist with Rev'd Gill Alexander

29 August Eucharist with Rev'd Michael Jackson

St Hilda – a reflection

If you read a headline saying first female Bishop is dead, you might find yourself thinking about Libby Lane, the first woman to be appointed as Bishop of Stockport after changes in the rules of the Church of England – but you would be wrong. To the best of my knowledge, Libby Lane is still well and truly alive. The first female Bishop I am referring to was Hild, and if you sit in the choir stalls here in Henshaw, you are in a prime position to be able to admire the wonderful stained glass window behind the altar and its representation of St Hilda – and if you look carefully, you will see Whitby Abbey in the picture too.

What do we know about St Hilda – and for that matter, about Whitby and its Abbey? Each year, I go to a wonderful Founders and Benefactors Service for the college of Hild and Bede in Durham – a truly magnificent service, culminating in a procession through to the Galilee Chapel with the excellent College choir singing unaccompanied, and where several hundred students will be gathered, all with a candle lit from the candles around the tomb of Bede. The service culminates with a very hearty rendition of Guide me O thou great Redeemer. A key element of the service every year is a reading by the College Principal about Hild and Bede, and the student who is Head of College lays a wreath on Bede's tomb. The reading about Hild comes from Bede's great work, the Ecclesiastical History of the English people. It tells us quite a lot about her birth and background.

Let me read you some of what Bede had to say about Hild.

“She spent her first thirty-three years living most nobly in the secular habit, and more nobly dedicated the remaining half to our Lord in the monastic life. She was of noble birth, being the daughter of Hereric, nephew to King Edwin; in Edwin's company she received the faith and mysteries of Christ at the preaching of Paulinus of blessed memory, the first bishop of the Northumbrians, and she preserved her faith undefiled until she was rewarded with the sight of Him in heaven.”

“Her wisdom was so great that not only ordinary people, but even kings and princes sometimes asked for and received her advice; she obliged those who were under her direction to devote so much time to the study of the Holy Scriptures, and to exercise themselves so much in works of justice, that there might be no difficulty in finding many there who were fit for ecclesiastical duties, that is for the service of the altar.”

“All who knew Abbess Hild, the handmaid of Christ, called her Mother because of her outstanding piety and grace. She was not only an example of holy life to those who lived in her monastery, but provided an opportunity for repentance and salvation to many who lived far away who heard the happy news of her diligence and virtue.”

“After she had governed this monastery many years, it pleased Him who has made such merciful provision for our salvation to subject her holy soul to the trial of a long sickness so that, like the apostle, her strength might be made perfect in weakness. She was struck by a fever and fell into a violent heat, and for six years was afflicted continually; during all which time she never failed to give thanks to her Maker or to instruct the flock entrusted to her care both in public and in private. From her own experience she admonished everyone to serve the Lord dutifully and always to return thanks to Him in adversity or bodily illness. In the seventh year of her illness, she began to suffer internally and approached her last day. Around cock-crow, having received the viaticum of Holy Communion, she called together the handmaids of Christ who were in the monastery, and admonished them to preserve the gospel peace among themselves and towards all others; and as she was exhorting them she joyfully saw death approaching or, to use the words of our Lord, she passed from death into life. In the year of our Lord 680 Hild, the most devout servant of Christ, abbess of the monastery that is called Whitby, departed on the 17th of November after having performed many heavenly works on earth, to receive the rewards of the heavenly life, at the age of sixty-six.”

You can see from Bede's writings that Hild was a truly significant figure in the history of English Christianity. As the abbess of Whitby, which was a monastery for both men and women which she had founded, she led one of the most important religious centres in the Anglo Saxon world. It was here in Whitby that the famous Synod was held, which took place in 664. The meeting was called to resolve the date of Easter, which was celebrated at different times by the Celtic and Roman Christians. The decision was taken to favour the Roman tradition, a landmark in the history of English Christianity.

The monastery Hild had founded was abandoned in the 9th C following Danish raids, but a new Benedictine community was founded there in the 11th C, subsequently suppressed by Henry 8th. It is the ruin of that later monastery which you see on the Whitby headland today. During Hild's time as abbess, she had encouraged a young poet Caedmon, the earliest English poet whose name is known. Much later, Whitby Abbey became part of the

inspiration for Bram Stoker's Dracula – the innocent tourists, the picturesque harbour, the abbey ruins, the windswept churchyard all became ingredients of his novel.

So that is all just a bit of context if you find yourself gazing at the picture of Hild in our stained glass window – what an inspiration she should be to all of us. We should remember particularly her philosophy in the running of the Abbey - no one there was rich, and no one was poor, for all things were common to all. All the more extraordinary, given that she was born into a noble family and brought up in the court of King Edwin.

And if holidays are on your mind as you gaze at the stained glass window, then what nicer place to go than to Whitby, where you can explore the ruins of the Abbey and no doubt reflect on what a remarkable woman Hild was.

Dates for the diary

World Day of Prayer 2021 Friday 2 July

This service will be held at 2 pm at Haydon Bridge Methodist Church, led by Deacon Anne Taylor.

Mothers' Union There is a meeting on Wednesday 22nd July at 2.30pm when Liesbeth Langford will be talking about Psalms and music, probably by Zoom. Ring Anne Brunton on 344557 for details.

Climate Sunday Eucharist

A service to pause and reimagine what life could be like will be held at **Hexham Abbey on Sunday 18 July at 10am.**

Climate Sunday Events

The new date for the climate Sunday events at Allendale Recreation Ground is now 12 September, when there will be an Ecumenical Outdoor Service at 11 am.

Deanery Pilgrimage

This will now take place on Sunday September 12, leaving on foot from Allendale to Whitfield, then on to Ninebanks, St Mark's, for a Songs of Praise for Climate Sunday at 5 pm. Refreshments will be available.

Shepherd's Dene

A day of prayer and reflection led by Rev'd Gill Alexander is booked for Thursday 11th November 2021. The cost for the day remains at £23, this includes coffee on arrival, a light lunch and afternoon tea (with cake). The day will begin at 10am and end at 3.30pm. No firm booking is required at present although an expression of interest would be helpful just to ensure we have a viable day. If you are interested or would like more information please contact Yvonne Hewitt, (yhewitt@btinternet.com)

South Tyneside Sustainability - Plastic recycling

The plastics recycling project is up and running. The Berry Global factory in Plenneller is now accepting clean, label-free HDPE plastic from us and in return will be supplying our choice of items from their 'plaswood' range – picnic benches, fencing, coloured lumber etc – from their factory in Dumfries. We need to establish collection points, if you could help with this, please get in touch: Sue 016977 47359 or 07935 259 416

On the Verge 2021

Please join us for one or all of our short, slow moving verge walks (1.5 mile there and back max) to identify and survey wild flowers on or near road verges near Haltwhistle.

Tues 20th July: Meet on road verge leading to Vindolanda – park at top end. 7pm – We'll walk northwards to Brackies Burn where we found lovely plants last year. Grid ref: 755663.

Tues 17th August: Meet Bardon Mill by War Memorial 7pm – We'll cross the railway and river bridge and look at some river gravel plants; this is a very short walk. Grid ref: 782646

Just turn up, no need to book. We'll be on paths and/or tarmac. We aim to finish by 9pm. Any queries, please get in touch with Lesley Silvera: 07933326711.

Adult cycling course – FREE

Four Tuesday mornings in July/August in Haltwhistle. Balance and confidence/Riding safely/Look after your bike/Try an E-bike. Gain independence, improve your fitness, go green and have fun.

Info and booking: sue@mosspectral.com or 07935 259416

Churches of the proposed new benefice



All Hallows', Henshaw



Holy Cross, Haltwhistle



St Cuthbert's, Beltingham

St Cuthbert's, Greenhead

