

# The Stanegate

Newbrough, Fourstones, Warden  
and surrounding hamlets

Town Hall Christmas Fair

Saturday 2nd December

1.30pm – 3.30pm

Santa will arrive from 2pm



Christmas raffle  
(all raffle prize donations  
are welcomed)

Entry : Children, free  
Adults, £2 including  
mulled wine and  
a mince pie

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**HAPPY CHRISTMAS**

**from The Stanegate Editorial Team**

## From the Editors.....

### Thank You

Our thanks this month must go to Document Solutions Limited who have very generously printed all 530 copies of the December/January Stanegate.

**NB:** The Stanegate will continue in 2024 in printed form and copies will be available at designated points throughout the villages (to be confirmed shortly).

Stanegate is of course always available on line via the village website : [www.fourstonesandnewbrough.co.uk](http://www.fourstonesandnewbrough.co.uk)

### Canon Reverend Jeremy Thompson



A reminder that retirement is looming for Jeremy. His last service will be on Sunday 7th January.

If you wish to contribute to a retirement gift for Jeremy please visit the JustGiving page - search for Reverend Jeremy Thompson, click on his picture and follow the instructions.

If you would prefer to make a cash contribution in person via the Churchwardens, please contact George Benson, Reuben Straker or Philip Rutherford.

### Calendar of Events



#### DECEMBER

- 2nd Christmas Fair at The Town Hall 1.30pm - 3.30pm
- 12th Messy Vintage, 2.30pm Methodist Chapel
- 14th WI Christmas Party The Red Lion, 12noon Members only
- 21st Christmas Quiz at the Town Hall 7.30pm for 8pm
- 22nd School closes for Christmas break

#### JANUARY

- 8th Warden PC, 7pm, Town Hall
- 9th School reopens
- 10th Newbrough PC, 7pm Town Hall
- 9th WI monthly meeting Town Hall, 7pm
- 18th Quiz at the Town Hall 7.30pm for 8pm
- 19th Methodist Chapel Coffee morning 11am - 2pm



The Stanegate editorial team welcomes your letters. Please write to us with news and views from the community.

The Stanegate, 8 Broadacres  
Fourstones, Hexham, NE47 5LW

or

email the editorial team at:  
[thestanegate@hotmail.com](mailto:thestanegate@hotmail.com)

Please send material to the editorial team

*Janice Baylis, Dave Spearman, Sophie Straker & Chris Tolan-Smith*

at

[thestanegate@hotmail.com](mailto:thestanegate@hotmail.com)

**the deadline for the February issue is Friday 12th January 2024**



## Warm Wednesdays ‘soup on wheels’

As you will read elsewhere in Town Hall News, Warm Wednesdays are up and running again and in the first three weeks have seen 52 guests coming along.

If you received Meals On Wheels in months past you will be aware that the School is no longer able to provide that service. But Warm Wednesday events always have a surplus of soup, and volunteers are willing to drop off one or two pots to those who would like to have some, delivered in microwavable cardboard pots to your home.

There is no charge for this, being part of our community support services, but any small donations would go towards the cost of ingredients of these home made offerings!



Register your interest with [davespearman@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:davespearman@hotmail.co.uk) or message 07935 138143

## Just Passing Through

At around lunch-time on Saturday the 4th of November a small band of supervised Cubs from the 47<sup>th</sup> Newcastle Scout Group, undertaking the Baden-Powell walk, made their way down the Long Bank after visiting the ‘Look Wide’ memorial cairn in Carr Edge Plantation.

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As I write this, we have just begun to talk about our Christmas play for this year- 'Straw and order'. It's always a moment of great excitement in the school year, and one which staff look forward to as well! There will be lots of hard work ahead - learning lines, learning songs, practising dance routines - and still finding time to fit in all of the curriculum learning as well. We know that the children will all rise to the occasion and play their parts.

There will be plenty of other excitement in school too. We're hosting a visit from Newcastle University 'Street Scientists' who are presenting their show 'The story of the Earth' complete with lots of fantastic experiments which the children will really enjoy.

The Climate Club is organising a Christmas jumper swap and making and selling 'bags for life' and sustainable wrapping paper.

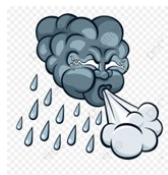
We have a Christmas story time every afternoon with the whole school settling down for a suitably seasonal story read by a member of staff.

There is Christmas dinner, parties, our Christmas hamper raffle which is always such a great fundraiser for the school, and of course our actual performances to look forward to.

Time to get the Christmas play costumes out of the attic, dust down the CD player and check the lights are still working!

A very, merry Christmas to you all from everyone at Newbrough C of E Primary School.

**Jo Trotter**  
Head Teacher



## Storm Babet and beyond

As reported in Weatherwatch the rain swept in by Storm Babet caused serious country-wide flooding. But while the rainfall in our neighbourhood on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of October was only a fifth of the 129.5 mm that cascaded down on Fettercairn in Kincardineshire on the 19<sup>th</sup>, it did not emerge from the storm entirely unscathed.

On the 20<sup>th</sup> coffee-coloured water pouring out of the field entrance by the sycamore copse beyond the layby above St. Aidan's Terrace streamed down the road to leave a train of soil and a scattering of stones of varying sizes in its wake, before depositing a delta of silt at the side of the junction where the newly painted St Aidan's Church stands.

The west end of Newbrough fared much worse. Tons of soil washed from the ploughed field adjacent to Crow Wood turned the roads by Home Farm and Bridge House into the proverbial sea of mud until this was removed in an intensive clean-up operation. Inevitably the Mossy Bank was awash.

The clue is in the name; a *moss* in Northern England and Scotland is a bog or a marsh. Runoff flowed down the bank to create a water splash for motorists at its base. With added late-October and early November rains the whole width of the road was covered at times and there was roadside pooling to be avoided towards the paper mill level crossing and along the straight towards the Boatside Inn.



## Invited Editorial

### Returning to Newbrough after 45 years !

My recollections of Newbrough between 1963 and 1974 when I left to join the army, are that of a village with fewer cars and fewer dogs! I don't remember Crow Wood being a Public Footpath.

Up to 1967 when the railway station closed, my father, Peter, took the train from Fourstones to Newcastle each weekday.

We purchased domestic and kitchen provisions at Fenton's Village Shop across the road from The Red Lion, or from Robbs in Hexham.

The economy was taking a battering in the 1970s. Petrol ration books had been issued and things were looking dire! In 1974 I was working at Sub-marine Products Limited, a pioneering Factory making sub aqua diving equipment at Bridge End in Hexham.

My mother, Lavinia, visited almost daily, the Post Office opposite St Aidan's church in Fourstones.

The Post Office/combined shop also sold provisions and there were always customers queueing at the counter or looking around for something to buy.

The Jersey herd at Newbrough Home Farm, run by the Lambie's for Mrs Newall, was very much part of our daily life with cows coming and going along the Stanegate from the milking sheds.

Returning after 45 years away has made me realise what an important role Sidgate plays in our village life with houses being passed down from one generation to the next. This close-knit community provides a static and stable foundation in our village.

Morag and I enjoy living in Newbrough and appreciate how welcoming everybody has been towards us.

Justin Orde

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### Panto update

The village panto makes a welcome return in February, five years after the last show raised the roof at the Town Hall.

The Raiders of the Lost Wark will be a full-filled extravaganza that is guaranteed to entertain audiences of all ages.

There will be three evening performances starting at 7.30pm on Thursday 8th February, Friday 9th February and Saturday 10th February, plus a matinee performance on the Saturday at 2pm.

Tickets will be on sale closer to the time.

Robin Perrie



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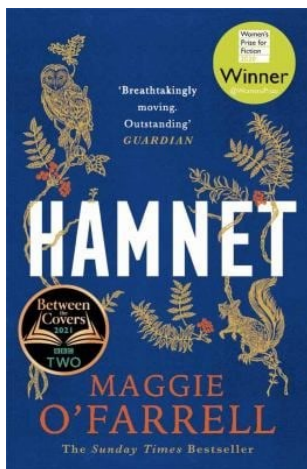
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## 'Hamnet' by Maggie O'Farrell



Some of you will have seen on both radio and TV there have been celebrations recently to mark the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's first work (folio). By way of marking this anniversary I suggested Hamnet which is a novel based on the story of the death of Shakespeare's son who died of the plague aged 11.

It is also a story of Shakespeare's romance with Anne (Agnes in the book) and their family life. Shakespeare is not named in the book, he is referred to as 'the Tudor', 'the Father' or 'the husband'.

Unlike other well respected historical authors O'Farrell didn't try to be factually accurate but simply wrote an emotional story of a 16th century family who just happened have a father who is a playwright and whose family lived in Stratford-upon-Avon, but spent a lot of time in London working.

His name was given to one of the most celebrated plays ever written, the names Hamnet and Hamlet being totally interchangeable.

I have been a fan of Maggie O'Farrell for many years and this book does not disappoint either. Although historical novels would not be my first choice, after several recommendations I gave it a go and was totally immersed in 16th century England. When I suggested it at book club some of the members had read it before but were happy to reread it, I thought that said a lot about the quality of the writing. I also thought it was relevant because the story features the spread of the plague and it made me think about the awful spread of Covid.

The author studied Hamlet at school and a casual remark made by her teacher about his son's death started her on a journey to find out more about him. Sadly there isn't much recorded about his life, in fact he does not have a marked grave, so O'Farrell decided to create a world in England in his time.

The story starts with Hamnet trying to find help for his sick sister, who knew one week later he would be dead. His Mother, Agnes, who is really one of the main characters, is away studying her plants a mile away. She is an incredible woman, feisty and independent also quite the celebrity in the community because of the belief and work with plants and herbs to heal ailments. O'Farrell's description of domestic life in 16th century is wonderful and clearly very well researched. Essentially the story is about how the death of a son haunts his parents. His father takes to his work and clearly O'Farrell makes the connection between his work and what had happened in his own life. There are several nods to Shakespeare's plays in the book, very cleverly woven into the story. Although it is a story of grief, it is also a story of love and compassion.

The book has now been translated into a play by the Royal Shakespeare Company.

The group, for the most part, really enjoyed the story but a couple failed to connect with it. The book won Women's Prize for Fiction in 2020 and I can quite understand why.

## Update on bus times

The 08.09 to Hexham and the 15.25 from Hexham are operated by **Go North East**  
 The 11.06 to Hexham and the 11.29 from Hexham are operated by **Snaith\***  
 \*at the time of going to print the Snaith trips are free.

NB : these four buses are **only** Monday to Friday. There are no weekend services.



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## Warden Parish Council (WPC) meeting held on Monday 6th November 2023 in Newbrough Town Hall

The primary focus at the start of the meeting were issues related to the recent storms and rain. The first issue that required attention was the flooding through the allotments. Cllr Liddle had coordinated the necessary actions to remedy the situation. Cllr Liddle also reported that Cllr Foot and he had drilled a hole in the well cover to enable the pump to be installed in early spring.

Cllr Charlton reported that the litter pick had been successful and had also included several of the volunteers clearing mud from the paths at the Green Church junction that had washed down from the fields in the heavy rain.

Concern was expressed regarding the continual flooding between the Mossy and the level crossing. Following communications from the Parish Council and Cllr Morphet, NCC attended and have pumped water away from the road on several occasions. Unfortunately this was only a temporary solution. The Parish Council have identified the resurfacing of the Mossy and improvements to associated drainage as its main priorities for the Local Transport Plan. Cllr Morphet reported that he had met the Area Highways Maintenance Officer who has advised that improvements are in hand. The Clerk is to officially contact Andy Craig, Highways Officer; and John Riddle, NCC Cabinet Member to stress the importance of rectifying the recurrent flooding issue because of the consequential hazards.

Cllr Kay will represent the Parish Council at the Floods' Forum on 30<sup>th</sup> November to be convened by Guy Opperman MP. The Parish Council Emergency Plan has been forwarded to Nigel Fisher at the Northumberland CC Civil Contingencies Team for comment prior to adoption and delivery to all parishioners.

The Parish Council has procured a new defibrillator and cabinet to be installed at the Fourstones Filling Station. Unfortunately the funding application to the Community Foundation had been unsuccessful

so the Parish Council is funding the purchase which is at a discounted price via Rotary North East England.

Cllr Kay advised that she had acquired new pads and battery for the Parish Council defibrillator at the Boatside Inn, and reregistered it on the Circuit (the National Defibrillator Network). It was also agreed to purchase the British Heart Foundation training kit and Cllr Kay will facilitate a number of training events in the Parish.

Other issues discussed included:

- > an offer to meet with the Editorial Committee of the Stanegate to explore any assistance the Parish Council can offer to support the Stanegate's continued future publication;
- > Cllr Foot has removed the Noticeboard at Warden to undertake necessary repairs;
- > Cllr Bowman to coordinate repairs to the Coronation Seat on the Fourstones main road;
- > a large bin and locking post for dog waste to be purchased from NCC to be installed at Crossgates.

The Parish Council congratulated Newbrough Cricket Club for its outstanding performance this year – finishing 5<sup>th</sup> in the league, reaching the cup final, and being named as club of the year by the West Tyne League's umpires.

Detailed minutes of this meeting can be found via: [Documents | Warden Parish Council \(northumberlandparishes.uk\)](https://www.northumberlandparishes.uk/documents/warden-parish-council)

The next meeting of Warden Parish Council will be held on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2024 commencing at 7pm.

The first item on the agenda for all council meetings is devoted to issues raised by members of the public. Please come along if you have any issues you would like to us to address. Alternatively please contact one of the Parish Councillors whose details can be found via: <https://www.northumberlandparishes.uk/warden/people>





# Town Hall News



## Warm Wednesdays are back!

A warm welcome awaits alongside a bowl of delicious soup (usually two choices) and a freshly baked roll on our regular community open day in the Hall between 11am - 3pm every Wednesday including over the Christmas period.

We keep the lounge toasty, and there is tea and coffee available all day and sometimes a cake or sweet treats.

Come with friends, or make new ones there. Provided free of charge by the Town Hall, although you can make a donation towards costs if you wish.

## Christmas Fair

Come along to the Christmas fair on Saturday 2nd of December 1.30pm – 3.30 pm. Crafts, tombola and bottle stall and raffle which will be drawn at 3.30.

Santa will make a special visit for younger members of the community around 2pm.

Entry is free for children, £2 for adults which includes a mince pie and mulled wine. Profit from the Fair will go towards the Warm Wednesday initiative so please come along, bring your friends or neighbours and support this work.

## Christmas Quiz Night

This great value, local night out will be on Thursday 21st December with some Christmassy questions thrown in.

£2 entry and up to 6 per team. Snacks provided at half time.

Winners take home the glory, and a free round of drinks at the next quiz!

Doors open at 7.30 and the quiz starts at 8pm  
January quiz night will be the 18th January

## Regular group bookings in the hall that all welcome new members include:

**Yoga** on a Monday at 6.30 (contact [JJyoga83@gmail.com](mailto:JJyoga83@gmail.com) or check the town hall facebook page for details of the class, how to book and class schedule over the Christmas holidays)

**Art Club** on the last Tuesday afternoon in the month (Contact [Lynne.garton23@gmail.com](mailto:Lynne.garton23@gmail.com) for details)

**Bowls** on a Wednesday at 7pm (For more details and to join contact Paula Hall on 01434 674 406)

\* \* \* \* \*

We held our AGM in November and were pleased to report a stable financial position with increasing income (from events and the bunkhouse) keeping pace with the increasing energy and maintenance costs for our lovely building. We could do more though and provide more events and opportunities to build our community but we need more members of our committee to help with everything from updating our social media, organising events, including helping set up or clear away on the day.

You don't need to take on any financial responsibility for the Hall and the current minimum commitment is a 60 minute meeting once a month - anything else you volunteer for beyond that is up to you.

The Town Hall is a brilliant resource for all of us so I'd encourage you to do everything you can to support it, by booking your family parties and get-togethers here, coming along to the regular events and yes, even volunteering for the committee!

Thank you  
**Sheron Robson & Nick Springham**  
Town Hall Chairs

## Town Hall Bookings

If you wish to book the Town Hall please email:  
[secretarynewbroughttownhall@gmail.com](mailto:secretarynewbroughttownhall@gmail.com)



The WI met on November 9<sup>th</sup> and 18 members and two visitors were welcomed by the President Judith Kirby. After the singing of Jerusalem Val Johnston showed her presentation of Newbrough WI's centenary year using pictures, sound and music culminating with the Party on 12<sup>th</sup> October. It had been a very special and busy year.

The business was dealt with by Secretary Teresa Bessant and members signed up for the County Carol Service in Newcastle Cathedral and our own Christmas Meal at the Red Lion. Names were also taken for the cleaning of St. Peter's church.

Pat and Val Johnston then showed a number of short audio visual sequences on varied subjects including Prague, the Alps and an illustration of a song (Sand and Stone and Sea and Sky) using pictures from the Isle of Skye and also a poem (Leisure) as well as the story of the workings of the Laxey Wheel on the Isle of Man. The Northumberland coast, Alnwick and the Eden project were also visited.

They finished with photos to a humorous song by Tom Lehrer about poisoning pigeons in the park. (No pigeons were harmed). Everyone said it had been a very enjoyable evening.

Next month, December, is our Christmas Party at the Red Lion at 12 noon. We will be having a raffle with proceeds going to the Association of Country Women Worldwide. (ACWW).

We are having our usual bag stall at the Christmas Fair in the Town Hall on 2<sup>nd</sup> December and names were taken for help with the stall and in the kitchen for mince pies and drinks.

The raffle was won by Lucy Fisher and Vanessa Ashton won the flowers.

The competition for a grey item was won by Doreen Dodd with a grey shire horse and second was a grey bull from Catherine Grant.

---

## Northern Lights

Kevin Hilton's photograph of the Northern Lights or Aurora Borealis taken on the 5<sup>th</sup> of November, captures a moment of their fleeting beauty.



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# Green Notes

## Newbrough Burn

I have been monitoring the Newbrough Burn for the last 14 years. Most days I record the air and water temperature and Malcolm Newson collates my data. This is an important record in times of climate change.

In April 2010 I attended a training session with the Tyne River Trust (TRT) and was given a monitoring kit so that I could record data on Invertebrate larvae. This is great fun. Most months I am able to collect a three minute kick sample and also check water quality by measuring pH and chemicals that are indicators of pollution.

I take my sample home in a small bucket and then record and count eight key species, such as caddis and mayfly. My results are forwarded to the TRT and a national database for riverfly monitoring.

This involves about two hours once a month, with occasional gaps because of bad weather, flooding or family holidays.

I am getting older and less steady on my feet, so am wanting to gradually retire and am looking for one or two people to take over.

I am very happy to demonstrate the sampling process and to work alongside my successors. Tyne River Trust will be involved with training new volunteers and providing ongoing support.

Please get in touch

[marywilson76@gmail.com](mailto:marywilson76@gmail.com) 07884 181154

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## the lake district

Northumberland County Council Highways Department have done a great job on the road between the Boatside and the A69. They have filled in those unpleasant little holes and smoothed out the worn and rough surface on the last right-hand bend before the Two Mile Cottage. It looks very colourful as well. Well done.

Now when are you going to tackle the horrendous state of the highway between East Fourstones and the Boatside? The Mossy River can run very strongly before it slews across the road just before the last bend.

The ever-expanding lake at the railway compound seems to be getting deeper everyday and hides some alarmingly big potholes – although I doubt the assertion of one lady who told me that there was a sunken Fiat 500 at the bottom of one of these pits.

Network Rail are reported to be considering the construction of a viaduct to bridge the overflow onto the tracks. In anticipation of the coming frosts a firm popped up on my Facebook pages last week advertising winter sports equipment for the eagerly awaited Fourstones Cresta Run. I have it on good authority that the RAC or AA (I can't remember which) are arranging for vehicle recovery trucks to be permanently stationed in the layby at the Crossing in anticipation of winter mayhem. I am considering buying shares in a car spring supplier.

On a brighter note, Whooper and Bewick Swans have been seen checking out the Fourstones Lakes between the river and railway line. Come on NCC. It seems that the folks of Newbrough and Fourstones do not matter?

**Rob Tindall**

## October Weatherwatch

The bare weather statistics show that as a whole October was a little warmer and a shade wetter than average, but this hides the fact that unseasonable warmth was a feature of the first half of the month, while the bulk of the month's rain fell in a cooler second half. In a continuation of the warm end to September the opening eleven days of October were particularly warm, with the mean daily maximum of almost 17C being what might be expected in late August. However, it was warmer again in the south-east of England where the 25C recorded each day from the 7<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> was more than 8C above the seasonal average. An exceptionally warm 15.6C very early on the 9<sup>th</sup> was the warmest October overnight minimum on Park Shield record, while the monthly maximum of 19.7C on the 10<sup>th</sup> made it the warmest October day for five years.

Lingering summer-like warmth ended when passing fronts on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> brought the start of cooler conditions, but although wetter weather was widespread on these days our small part of the country stayed dry. In what was the sunniest part of an otherwise dull October no rain at all fell in the week from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup>, but generally clear skies led to colder nights and the first autumn Park Shield frost of -0.8C early on the 15<sup>th</sup>. With thick mist and a heavy white frost on grass, the monthly minimum of -3.4C recorded just before sunrise on the settled 17<sup>th</sup> was the hardest October frost in the nineteen Weatherwatch Octobers.

But troubled weather lay ahead in the form of Storm Babet, which was to dominate the national news for several days. From the 18<sup>th</sup> onwards the slow-moving low pressure weather system brought high winds, prolonged heavy rains and flooding to many parts of the country. Driven by 60 mph east winds, waves battered the north-east coast on the 19<sup>th</sup>, causing structural damage to the piers at Tyne-mouth, South Shields and Roker. Inland, wind speeds were reduced although the weather station at Butt Bank recorded a gale force easterly wind gust of 43mph on the 20<sup>th</sup>. Much more rain fell

elsewhere, but nevertheless the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Park Shield combined total of 26.4mm was more rain than had fallen up to the 18<sup>th</sup> of the month. With a fall of 23.4mm the 29<sup>th</sup> was the wettest October day. However, in what can be a wet month, the total of 85.0mm made October middling for wetness. In comparison our region suffered almost double the average rainfall and in terms of rainfall anomaly it was the country's wettest. It was the dullest region to boot.

After a light and last October frost of -0.8C on the 23<sup>rd</sup> the skies in the remaining days of the month remained stubbornly leaden with bright sunlight making its sole appearance over lunchtime on the 27<sup>th</sup>. The month ended with a blanket of stratocumulus cloud and the lowest October daily maximum of 7.9C on the 31<sup>st</sup>. Just as drier and wetter halves to the month balanced out to bring close to average wetness, so warmer and cooler halves resulted in an average October in terms of temperature.

### October Weatherwatch Factfile.

*Temperature.* Park Shield mean monthly maximum : c13.1C. Mean monthly minimum : c.6.6C. Monthly mean : c.9.9C and c.0.5C above average. E&NE England monthly mean : 10.9C and 1.0C above the 1991-2020 average. UK maximum : 26.1C at East Malling (Kent) on the 9<sup>th</sup>. Minimum : -5-5C at Dalwhinnie (Inverness-shire) on the 31<sup>st</sup>.

*Rainfall and Sunshine.* Park Shield average rainfall : c.80mm. 24 hour maximum : 23.4mm on the 29<sup>th</sup>. 1 hour maximum : 4.0mm to 00.04 on the 29<sup>th</sup>. Rain days : 20. E&NE England rainfall and sunshine 194% and 76% of the 1991-2020 average.

*Winds.* Generally westerly in the first half of the month and then easterly for the most part. Butt Bank maximum gust : 43 mph on the 20<sup>th</sup> (East). Park Shield maximum gust : 29 mph on the 4<sup>th</sup> (West). Maximum UK gust : 86 mph at Needles Old Battery (IOW) on the 29<sup>th</sup>.



## Nature Notes

The main season for mushrooms aka toadstools is in late summer and autumn, and judging from the number and variety noted in casual Nature Notes sightings, this year's warm and moist conditions seem to have suited them. A white, grapefruit sized giant puffball was noted in a West Boat verge in late August, although they can grow to be considerably bigger. Very common shaggy inkcaps, around six inches in height and with a distinctively cylindrical shape, were noted in September. They pop up suddenly in grass and have no difficulty in pushing up through harder surfaces such as gravel. Fruiting is short-lived and their caps soon curl up; giving rise to their common name: 'lawyer's wig'.

In early October small groups of rough-skinned common earthballs huddled together in short grass and a couple of fly agaric, the classic fairytale toadstool with a bright red cap covered in raised white warts, were found beneath a Scots pine.



Funnel shaped chanterelles with ribbed 'gills' like fan vaulting, and a favourite with foragers, appeared at the same time.

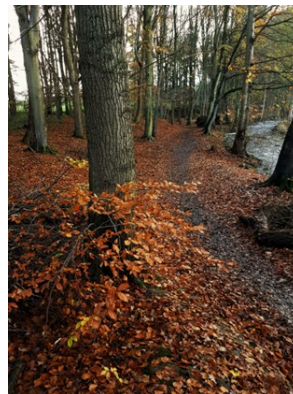
A horse mushroom, similar looking to the smaller field mushroom but a typical handspan in diameter, was happened upon a little later. Fried in butter they have a strong 'mushroomy' flavour. Their firm texture makes them feel like a mushroom steak when cut with a knife and eating one is a feast in itself.



Late October days slipped by with often sullen skies, but as dead leaves drifted slowly to earth the hues of tree foliage intensified to radiate autumnal warmth. But by the 20th Storm Babet had stripped the last green leaves from the pair of

decrepit looking ashes near the Whinny Hill junction and on the 27<sup>th</sup> the footpath in front of the Butt Bank electricity substation was strewn with yellow-green willow leaves; around ten days later than last year.

Many other trees still remained largely leafed and displayed an array of strong autumn colours. These were at their height in the dying days of October and at the beginning of November, but shaken loose by brisker breezes leaves began to fall in flurries, joining those that had already fallen to form colourful mosaics on the ground. By mid-month many trees were already bare, while others with subdued ochre and sepia foliage were in the late stages of undress. However, luminous golden-yellow larches and the vibrant medley of yellows, oranges and russets of beech trees brought splashes of bright colour to grey, rain-soaked hours.



Echoing comments in the October Nature Notes about densely packed haws, the Woodland Trust has reported the largest hawthorn berry crop in twenty years. Now deep blood-red haws on bare-twigged hedges and bushes will provide a valuable winter larder for blackbirds, the resident song thrush and visiting redwings and fieldfares, as well as small mammals like wood mice. The Trust's Nature's Calendar is concerned with phenology; using volunteers' records of dates of certain plants and animals from year to year, to study seasonal changes, e.g. the first snowdrop or the last swallow. For anyone interested in learning more about this initiative details can be found on [www.naturecalendar.woodlandtrust.org.uk](http://www.naturecalendar.woodlandtrust.org.uk)

Photos courtesy of Kevin H. Hilton



# Food for Thought

Sylvia Richardson

Step into Christmas.....nearly there !.....a time for commemorating the birth of Christ, a religious and cultural celebration among people around the world.

Christmas, to most of us, is the most anticipated and tasty time of the year and we all look forward to spending time with family and friends and, of course, good food.

Christmas snacks easily prepared are welcome before and after all the preparation of cooking and are good to have in the fridge or store cupboard. Sometimes the use of frozen pastry is a welcome addition at this time of year, but this is a personal choice.

\* \* \* \* \*

## Sausage Snacks

8oz short crust pastry      8oz sausagemeat  
1 small onion              1 tsp mixed herbs  
Mashed potato



Roll out pastry and line 12 patty tins  
Mix sausagemeat, chopped onion and herbs together.  
Divide mix evenly and place on pastry.  
Bake for 20 mins, Gas 6, Elec 200 for 20 mins.  
Remove from oven and pipe with mashed potato, brush with beaten egg and return to oven for 10 mins.

## Chicken/Turkey Puffs

Pkt frozen puff pastry      1lb cooked chicken/turkey  
4oz finely chopped onion    2oz flour  
1/2 pt milk                      Lemon juice  
Salt and pepper              Beaten egg to glaze  
2oz margarine or butter



Cut chicken into small pieces  
Melt fat and saute onion until soft. Stir in flour and cook for 2 mins.  
Add milk and stir. Bring to boil. Add chicken, lemon juice and season.  
Leave to cool.  
Roll out pastry thinly, cut into 4" rounds, moisten edges  
Place heaped tsp of mix in centre. Fold pastry over into semi-circle. Seal edges  
Glaze with beaten egg. Cook for 15/20 mins. Gas 6, Elec 200C

## Mincemeat and Walnut whirls

4oz plain flour      )  
1/4 tsp salt          )  
3oz margarine      ) flaky or puff pastry  
1 tsp lemon juice    )  
3/4 tbsp cold water )

2/3 tbsps mince meat)  
2oz chopped walnuts ) topping

Make flaky pastry (or use packet pastry)  
Roll out 12" x 10". Spread mincemeat over.  
Sprinkle walnuts over.  
Dampen edges and roll over as a swiss roll.  
Cut into 1/2" slices and place flat on baking sheet.  
Bake for 15 mins, Gas 7 / Elec 220.



continued.....



### Rocky Road Crunch Bars

125g / 4 1/2 oz soft unsalted butter      300g / 10 1/2 oz best quality dark chocolate, broken into pieces  
 3 tbsp golden syrup      200g / 7 1/4 oz rich tea biscuits  
 100g / 3 1/2 oz mini marshmallows      2 tsp icing sugar, to dust

Heat the butter, chocolate and golden syrup in a heavy based saucepan over a gentle heat. Remove from the heat. Scoop out about 125ml / 4 1/2 fl oz of the melted mixture and set aside in a bowl.

Place the biscuits into a plastic freezer bag and crush them with a rolling pin until some have turned to crumbs, but there are still pieces of biscuit remaining.

Fold the biscuit pieces and crumbs into the melted chocolate mixture in the saucepan, then add the marshmallows.

Tip the mixture into a 24cm / 9in square baking tin and smooth the top with a wet spatula.

Pour over the reserved 125ml / 4 1/2 fl oz of the melted chocolate mixture and smooth the top with a wet spatula. Refrigerate for about two hours or overnight.

To serve, cut into 24 fingers and dust with icing sugar.



If there are any recipes that you would like to share or if you would like a suggestion for a recipe, please contact Iain Bennett via e-mail at [iain-bennett@orchardkitchen.co.uk](mailto:iain-bennett@orchardkitchen.co.uk).

## St Peter's Churchyard Tidy Up

Thank you to the usual hardy team, and one or two new faces, who turned up to tidy the Churchyard, ready for the first snowdrops to put in an appearance in the coming weeks.



Bonus Ball Draw		
OCTOBER		
7th	Stewart Thompson	26
14th	Keith Annan	48
21st	Andy Smith	6
28th	Andy Smith	6



200 Club		
NOVEMBER		
1st	Steven Gardiner	199
2nd	Steven Stanley	54
3rd	Sheila Bell	18

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# Newbrough Parish Council

Notes on Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023 Clerk Rob MacFarlane

Cllr HA Walton opened the meeting at 7pm.

## **TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015**

### **Planning Consultation 23/03968/LBC**

Listed Building Consent for replacement of glazed section of roof following recent failure, reduction in extent of glazed area. External landscaping and new garden walls. Location Newbrough Farmhouse Newbrough Hexham Northumberland NE47 5AR Mr & Mrs S Esland The Council supports the application.

### **Planning Consultation 20/03237/FUL**

Land North West Of Greyside Farm Newbrough Proposal Erection of agricultural workers dwelling and garage Location Land North West Of Greyside Farm Applicant Mr Graeme Walton GRANTED permission.

### **Planning Consultation 23/03036/VARYCO**

Land North West Of Greyside Farm, 2 more windows & extra accommodation. GRANTED permission.

### **Consultation 23/02992/FUL**

East View Newbrough NE47 5AR Bay window extension and new front door, GRANTED permission.

### **Storm Babet and Storm Ciarán**

Flooding on Stanegate and road damage, especially at Whistlecock. NCC Highways to be informed, supported by photographs.

Flooding on the Mossy:- This was reported to NCC and flood warning signs have been put in place. Photographs have been taken for the NCC Highways. However there are long term issues that require attention.

### **Footpath to St Peter's Church**

Exploring further the possibility of re-establishing a footpath on the north side of the Stanegate, from

Newbrough Bridge to St Peter's Church. Various types of surface have been explored and NCC Highways will only support some. A meeting will be arranged in the new year for a site visit.

### **West Northumberland Primary Care Network:**

Report from the Council's representative, Cllr. Malcolm Newson.

West Northumberland Primary Care Network is basically a consumer watchdog for our GP practices.

Report from virtual meetings held on October 24th. Two points of interest.

All West Northumberland Primary Care practices can now offer the services of a Mental Health Practitioner. Therapies on offer vary with capacity but referrals can be made across the practices in the group.

There is alarm about supply shortages of drugs and vaccination doses in pharmacies. GPs can provide advice on where the medications are available: Hexham Hospital Pharmacy can be back-up in very urgent cases.

### **Carbon literacy for local authorities:**

Cllr. Malcolm Newson attended this virtual introduction to the aims and content of the course which is national but was developed by NCC. One of its designers, Anne-Marie Soulsby, recently offered Newbrough PC the course at a price but it would seem we could qualify free. BUT...it's a minimum of 8 hours, is certificated and requires a written commitment to climate actions.

### **Remembrance Service**

This year the Remembrance Service was conducted by Reverend Michael Holland, Tynedale Methodist Circuit, and began in the Town Hall at 10.30am, followed by the laying of wreaths and personal crosses at the War Memorial and the two minutes silence at 11am.

Cllr Karen Bell lay a wreath on behalf of the Parish.





## Church Pages

### Who's Who

#### Church of England

Rev'd Canon Jeremy Thompson  
Rector of St John Lee and Vicar of Warden &  
Newbrough  
St John Lee Rectory  
Hexham, Northumberland  
NE46 4PE

tel: 01434 600268  
website : www.sjlwn.org

#### Methodist

Reverend Michael Holland  
Fern House  
Catton  
Hexham  
NE47 6QS

Tel: 01434 683732

#### Roman Catholic

Parish Priest : Fr Jeffrey Dodds  
Assisted by Fr Paul Kilduff  
St Mary's Catholic Church  
Hencotes  
Hexham  
NE46 3EB

Tel: 01434 603119

#### St John of Beverley, Haydon Bridge

If you have any queries about service times  
please contact:

St Mary's Catholic Church, Hencotes, Hexham  
or call 01434 603119

### From the Registers November and December

#### Christenings:

*In baptism you have been raised with Christ  
through your faith in the power of God.*

On Sunday 11th November at St Michael and  
All Angels, Warden :  
Margot Lily Bowman Williams, of North Shields

On Saturday 16th December at St Peter,  
Newbrough: Rory Reuben Hutson Harrigan  
of Newbrough

#### Weddings :

There were no weddings in the Parish in  
November or December

#### Funerals:

*If we have been united with Christ through  
baptism into death, we will certainly be united  
with Him in his resurrection.*

On 8th November at St Peter, Newbrough :  
Roy Twedde formerly of Fourstones

### Fourstones with Warden Methodist Church

#### Preachers for December

3rd	Mr N Fullard
10th	Local arrangement
17th	Reverend Michael Holland Carol Service
24th	Mrs V Herod
31st	No Service

#### Preachers for January

7th	Mrs S Holland
14th	At Haydon Bridge with Reverend T Buglass
21st	Reverend Michael Holland, Covenant
28th	Local arrangement

All services at 10.30am  
Everyone welcome

# Remembrance Service : Sunday 12th November 2023



The service of Remembrance took place on Sunday November 12th in Newbrough Town Hall, taken by Reverend Michael Holland. The service started promptly with the Gathering, reading from Psalm 46, 121, and Isaiah 40. We sang "O God our help in ages past," followed by the Act of Confession and two readings from the Old and New Testament.

Prayers were said and we all moved outside to the War Memorial. Rob Tindall read the Roll Call - the names of those from this Parish who had fallen in war. An older and younger person replied "we will remember them".

Two minutes silence followed. The Kohima Epitaph was said, Acts of Commitment were made and the National Anthem sung, A Blessing and Dismissal followed.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Two minutes of silence on Remembrance Day

The first two-minute silence in the UK was observed on November 11, 1919, celebrating the day the war ended one year prior. The first minute is to remember those who have died in war and the second minute to pay tribute to those who have survived.

## What is the meaning of the different coloured poppies?

The red poppy is the most famous symbol used to commemorate those who sacrificed their lives in World War One and conflicts that followed.

The purple poppy is often worn to remember animals that have been victims of war. Animals like horses, dogs and pigeons were often drafted into the war effort. In particular many horses were killed or injured in World War One.

The BlackPoppyRose commemorates the contributions of black, African and Caribbean communities to the war effort - as servicemen and servicewomen, and as civilians.

## Fourstones with Warden Methodist Church

### Special Messy Vintage : December

Tuesday 12th December, 2.30pm  
Methodist Chapel

Christmas cards, at Fourstones Chapel  
Charge : £1 per person

\*\*\*\*\*

### January coffee morning at the Methodist Chapel

Friday, 19th January 2024, 11am - 2pm  
Soup and sandwiches



£112 was raised for Children In Need on Friday 26th November. Thank you

## Letter from Reverend Jeremy Thompson.....

Dear Friends,

As I come to write my final Stanegate *Letter from the Vicar*, I am reminded of some words JRR Tolkien put into the mouth of Bilbo Baggins' as he too made a final farewell speech. "First of all, to tell you that I am immensely fond of you all and that ~~eleventy-one~~ fifteen years is too short a time to live among such excellent and admirable ~~hobbits~~ Folk. I don't know half of you half as well as I should like, and I like less than half of you half as well as you deserve." I don't know if Bilbo was paying his friends and neighbours a compliment (they didn't know either) but I certainly am. Fifteen years is too short a time to get to know you all as well as I should have liked, and inevitably, there are some I know well, and others I've hardly met. The joy is yours and the loss is mine.

As I look back over these fifteen years I am genuinely humbled by the confidence you have put in me in times of personal difficulties. I have conducted far too many funerals. I have sat at the bedsides of those who were passing on from this life to the next. I have been privileged to give them their final blessing. You have allowed me to hold your pain, articulate your hopes and commend your loved ones into the hands of Almighty God. Simply - Thank you.

I have, too, had the real delight and pleasure of helping our young ones (and some not-so-young ones!) to make their marriage vows. Weddings are moments of joy. Yes, for the couple and the family, obviously. But I have to say for me too. There's always lots to smile at, lots to laugh about and to enjoy. I can genuinely say I have loved being part of every single wedding I've conducted. So, again, thank you.

I couldn't not mention Christenings. After more than 25 years in ministry, am very pleased to say I have never dropped a baby! This might sound alarming, but have you ever been handed a squirming bundle of young life wrapped up in yards of lace and silk? I can tell you it's a moment of trepidation, never quite sure which end is which until you get it under control! So many little people - and a few big ones - started on their journey of faith. Where will God take them? How will God use them?

But it hasn't all been in church. There have been many other aspects of being your Vicar that I

have enjoyed. The Thursday evening quiz at the Railway was a highlight. And the Panto! Poor Robin Perrie. His beautifully crafted script mangled. I don't think I ever got a whole line right. But then isn't that Panto? The hog roasts for harvest. Getting up at 3 am to light the fire and stand beside it feeding it logs - in the pouring rain - until the hog was crisp (sometimes too crisp) succulent and brown. And then the joy of sharing it with a good crowd in the Town Hall.

Newbrough School has been a constant source of happiness. Three head teachers and ... well, not many other members of staff. That's been one of the great things about Newbrough School, the staff have stayed and built really deep relationships with the children and the community. And the children. Each and everyone a character. Perhaps one of the greatest pleasures is knowing that the first child I Christened at St. Peters 15+ years ago is now working as a Teaching Assistant at school. (I'm beginning to feel old all of a sudden!)

So, so many good times.

I don't imagine that it was perfect though. If I have offended, hurt, or disappointed any of you, then I am truly sorry.

And what next?

Well, I'm off into the wilds. To a small (tiny) cottage north of the Roman Wall. Not far from where there used to be a tree. It will be a different kind of adventure for Gill and me. An adventure we nearly started when we were in our early twenties not far from where we will be living. Children and other responsibilities made that start impossible. So, now 5 decades on we can live "The Good life" we once dreamed of.

And for you?

Well, I pray that God will find you just the right person to be your Vicar. A person with wit and charm (so very like me) with vigour and strength for the challenges that are to come (so not like me). Someone who will love you, care for you and lead you further into God's Kingdom.

With all my love, and blessings for the future,  
Jeremy

## Parish of Warden with Newbrough Church Services for December 2023



<b>Sunday 3rd</b>	<b>Advent Sunday</b>
8.00am	Holy Communion at St John Lee
9.30am	Parish Communion BCP at St Michael and All Angels, Warden
10.00am	Morning Prayer at St Aidan Stagshaw
11.15am	Zoom worship
<b>Sunday 10th</b>	<b>Advent II</b>
8.00 am	Holy Communion at St. Michael & All Angels Warden
10.00 am	Parish Eucharist in person and live-streamed from St John Lee
<b>Sunday 17th</b>	<b>Advent III</b>
8.00 am	Holy Communion at St. John Lee
9.30am	Parish Eucharist at St Peter Newbrough
11.15am	Zoom worship
7pm	A Christmas Oratorio with popular carols led by the Jubilate Choir
<b>Sunday 24th</b>	<b>Advent IV and Christmas Eve</b>
8.00 am	Holy Communion at St. Peter Newbrough
10.00am	Parish Eucharist in person and live streamed from St John Lee
3.30pm	Dressing the Crib - a service for our younger members
10pm	Midnight Mass at St Peter Newbrough
11.30pm	Midnight Mass at St John Lee
<b>Sunday 25th</b>	<b>Christmas Day</b>
8.30am	Parish Communion for Christmas at St Michael and All Angels, Warden
11.00am	Parish Eucharist for Christmas at St John Lee
<b>Sunday 31st</b>	<b>Christmas 2</b>
8.00am	Holy Communion at St John Lee
10.00am	A service of the Word at St Michael and All Angels, Warden

## Church Services for January 2024

<b>Sunday 7th</b>	<b>The Epiphany</b>
10.00am	Parish Eucharist in person and live streamed from St John Lee
<i>Please note that there will only be one Church of England service today as this will be Reverend Canon Jeremy's last service</i>	
<b>Sunday 14th</b>	<b>Epiphany II</b>
8.00am	Holy Communion at St Michael and All Angels, Warden
10.00am	Parish Eucharist at St John Lee
<b>Sunday 21st</b>	<b>Epiphany III</b>
8.00am	Holy Communion at St John Lee
9.30am	Parish Communion at St Peter Newbrough
11.15am	Zoom worship
<b>Sunday 28th</b>	<b>Epiphany IV</b>
8.00am	Holy Communion at St Peter Newbrough
10.00am	Parish Eucharist at St John Lee