

# The Stanegate

Newbrough, Fourstones, Warden  
and surrounding hamlets

*A message from the editors.....*

In the November edition of The Stanegate the editors reluctantly felt it necessary to draw attention to the fact that spiralling printing costs meant that printing 500+ copies, to be delivered to each household in the parishes, was no longer sustainable. A plea was made for help to ensure that the December/January edition could proceed as normal, and details were provided of The Stanegate's bank for those who felt able to donate in support.

Our thanks go to all who have kindly made donations and to Document Solutions Ltd who generously printed 530 copies of that edition. We are also delighted to report that a grant has been pledged from Warden Parish Council which, together with your donations, has enabled us to produce this full 500 copy print run of the February edition.

Sadly, the editors have decided that this will have to be the last print run of that size, although The Stanegate will remain available online.

As advised in the November edition, henceforth a limited number of printed copies will be available at locations throughout the parishes, as indicated :

**SETTLINGSTONES**  
by the notice board at the  
Settlingstones road end

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by the door to main reception

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to the right of the entrance door

**EAST FOURSTONES** bus shelter

**WARDEN**  
by the notice board at the north  
end of the bridge

Last, we wish to thank all those who have expressed their concern and offered their enthusiastic support during the period when we have had to make this difficult decision.

#### The Editors

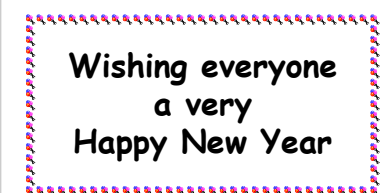
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Further donations can be made, if you wish, either by cash to a member of the Editorial Team, or bank transfer:

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**Over 60s' party**

at 12 noon on Saturday 3rd February at  
The Red Lion, Newbrough

For bookings : please contact

Sue & Andy at The Red Lion : 01434 674226  
or  
Christine Robley : 07555 907281

## Shrove Tuesday

Tuesday 13th February

Is marked annually as the day before Ash Wednesday. It comes from the word 'shrive' which means to absolve and is seen as an opportunity to confess to sins before the beginning of Lent.

Shrove Tuesday is known in the UK as Pancake Day. It is a time for people to eat pancakes or participate in pancake races.

But what does Shrove Tuesday have to do with pancakes? Before the Lenten fasting, people traditionally used up ingredients they are not allowed to eat during the next 40 days - especially ingredients that will spoil like eggs.



Please send material to the editorial team

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

at

**thestanegate@hotmail.com**

**the deadline for the March issue is**

**Friday 16th February 2024**

### Calendar of Events

#### FEBRUARY

- 3rd Over 60s' party  
12noon at The Red Lion,
- 8th WI monthly meeting  
Town Hall, 7pm
- 9th Methodist Chapel  
Coffee morning, 11am –2pm
- 13th Shrove Tuesday
- 13th Messy Vintage, 2.30pm  
Methodist Chapel
- 14th CAN representative at  
The Town Hall. See p 11
- 14th Valentine's Day
- 15th Quiz at the Town Hall  
7.30pm for 8pm
- 16th School breaks for February  
half term holiday
- 23rd Methodist Chapel  
Coffee morning, 11am - 2pm
- 27th Return to school after half  
term holiday

### Advertising

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Private and community advertising is free.

# Flood Warden Group Flood Recovery checklist

The following Association of British Insurers flood check list is an ideal way of passing on this information. Whilst this was originally circulated by hand, over 5 years ago, to those at most risk from flooding from the Tyne at Warden it could well serve as a reminder to them but also for all residents in the area, as they could be at flood risk from drainage systems and burns unable to cope with the increasing volumes of rainwater.

**ABIA** Are you **FLOOD READY?**

**READY**  
Prepare a bag of **emergency supplies** in case you have to evacuate your property.

**STEADY**  
Keep your **insurance policy documents and contact details** for your electricity and water suppliers somewhere safe.

**GO**  
Move your most **valuable possessions** upstairs or out of your home if possible. If you have a car try to move it to higher ground.

**Include items such as:**

- Bottled water
- Spare house and car keys
- A small amount of cash
- Blankets
- A torch
- Essential medicines

## FLOOD RECOVERY CHECKLIST

**Contact your insurance company**

- Don't throw anything away without speaking to them
- Ask questions e.g. what costs will they cover, will they provide temporary accommodation
- Keep receipts, keep a record of conversations, ensure contractors are suitably qualified
- If you are uninsured, contact your local authority

**Re-entering your property**

- Only enter once safe to do so and when flood water has subsided
- Wear safe, suitable clothing and take necessary equipment
- Take photos of the damage to show your insurance company
- Mark a line on the wall where the flood water level reached
- Inspect electricity, gas and water supplies and contact your supplier if they are not working

**Cleaning up**

- Wash and disinfect any hard surfaces, furnishings and belongings
- Throw away any soft furnishings or belongings that cannot be thoroughly cleaned or disinfected
- Ensure your property is fully dried out using central heating and ventilation, or dehumidifiers.

**Future proofing your property**

- Consider property flood resilience (PFR) to help your property recover quicker if flooding occurs again
- Ask your insurance company if they will reinstate features with PFR in mind
- Purchase flood insurance
- Create a flood plan and sign up to flood warnings

2

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# Town Hall Christmas Fair

Sheron Robson, Co-Chair

The Town Hall hosted its annual Christmas Fair on the 3rd of December. It was a great success generating almost £1,000, the profit from which will be put towards the warm Wednesday initiative.

It was lovely to see the community coming out to support the Hall, enjoy the festive atmosphere and get some Christmas gifts in the process. Stall holders were pleased with the footfall and around 25 young ones enjoyed visiting Santa and Mrs Claus in the grotto.

Thanks need to go to the WI who offered the bottle stall and refreshments, Cllr Gill Charlton who organised the tombola and the small gifts for Santa to share, and everyone who donated items for the raffle and other stalls.

We did receive some comments asking for more content/stalls/activities for children and we will look at this for next year.



## Town Hall Bookings

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

## Valentine's Day

Valentine's Day, also called Saint Valentine's Day or the Feast of Saint Valentine, is celebrated annually on February 14.

It originated as a Christian feast day honouring one or two early Christian martyrs named Saint Valentine and, through later folk traditions, has become a significant cultural, religious, and commercial celebration of romance and love in many regions of the world.



# The little grey (teal) church

Looking back through Stanegate copies, we came upon an article written in December 2014 by past Editorial team member, Stephen Pedley, about the little grey church. As many will know, the church has had a recent makeover (2023) and has been described as various shades of green, the most commonly referred to as teal.

There have been several new arrivals to the villages since that December date and we thought it would be appropriate to repeat the article and history of the church as written by Stephen.

\*\*\*\*\*

“Recently the little green church on the corner suddenly became the little grey church. The grey paint was, of course, the undercoat for a new coat of green paint so it’s the little green church all over again. At least that is the plan! Repainting was necessary to protect the woodwork and thankfully some special reserved funds have made this possible amidst our dwindling resources. Doesn’t it look rather smart now?

The little green church is St Aidan’s and it stands central to our communities. Why on earth was it built when the Anglican Parish already has two churches, one at Newbrough and one at Warden? If we were starting all over again I doubt whether we would plan for three churches for so small and scattered a settlement, but at the moment this is our heritage.

The little green church is known affectionately as ‘The Mission’. It arrived in 1872. I guess it arrived in a pack! A lot happened in the 19c! The Church of England followed the imperial dream to distant lands. Commerce and Christianity went hand in hand. And then it discovered that Christianity was as much needed as Commerce at home and overseas.

The industrial revolution had changed everything, including Fourstones. Lead mines were opening here and coal mines and quarries. These needed a work force. People came from all over and some of their descendants live with us still.

St Peter’s rented out its pews. Anyway it seemed miles away and in every way! The Methodists shrewdly moved in and offered free seats. Anything to keep the workers free of the public houses. There were more Methodists than Anglicans in Newbrough and Fourstones in those days.

Then in 1872 The Church of England acted. The incumbent living in Warden, George Cruddas, paid the bill for ‘The Mission’ and built it on land offered by the Bensons. And here, unchanged, it stands. Of its type it is a rare survival. The original furnishings are complete and the stained glass lozenge windows are of particular merit. The back pews are reserved for ‘The Choir’. The only real development is its heating which is instant. Its central location is a huge advantage. Pity about the parking! The parish thinks it is important to maintain it, so it is good that once more it is in good repair and hopeful for its future. “

## Bonus Ball Draw

### DECEMBER

2nd	Mr Weaver	40
9th	Saffron Scott	30
16th	Sarah Liddle	8
23rd	Stewart Leadbitter	44
30th	Barry Dixon	38

## 200 Club

### DECEMBER

1st	Mark Trickett	165
2nd	Christine Blunt	50
3rd	David Kirby	107

### JANUARY

1st	Margaret Blaylock	182
2nd	Peter Lee	27
3rd	Teresa Bessant	194

Christmas Bonus : David Liddle, 94



Every Friday, as part of our celebration assembly, we reflect on the learning that has been happening in school.

It is a really rewarding part of the week because the children are always bursting to tell you an amazing fact that they have read (this week's fact was that there are apparently 4 million rats in Paris!), a new author that they have discovered or something that they can do in maths at the end of the week that they couldn't do at the beginning. Sometimes, the children really surprise you with the things that they have found memorable - it's not always the (to me) most obvious and stand out experiences of the week that they talk about. This week, for example, one child was really inspired by the idea of a circle having so many lines of symmetry that you can't count them!

Of course, as always, there are some exciting new opportunities in school as well. Our 7–11 year old children are all trying boxing in PE this half term and we have an after school gymnastics club for our 4– 6 year olds. Our Year 3 and 4 children have been making mini- documentaries about their learning on rocks and soils - taking on the role of

the experts. These will be on our website shortly if you would like to learn more! Our Year 5 and 6 children are off to the Nissan factory in Sunderland with the robot they have built to take part in a regional competition and our school council are working with Northumberland County Council's road safety officer to devise a road safety campaign for our local villages.

But while the children are so excited about their everyday learning as well as these additional opportunities, then we know we must be doing a good job!

If you would like your child to join our wonderful school, we have a few places available in Reception for September. We are also increasing the hours which nursery children are able to attend. If you would like further information about joining our lovely school , please do get in touch on

01434 674284 or email

[admin@newbroughceprimary.org.uk](mailto:admin@newbroughceprimary.org.uk).

**Jo Trotter**  
Head Teacher

## Fourstones with Warden Methodist Church

### Coffee mornings at the Methodist Chapel

Friday, 9th February, 11am - 2pm

Friday 23rd February, 11am - 2pm Big Brew

Soup and sandwiches



### Messy Vintage

Tuesday, 13th February, 2.30pm

Methodist Chapel

## Panto postponement

The village pantomime was due to take place at the town hall on 8th – 10th February.

A decision has now been made to postpone it until a later date.

We will let everyone know when it has been rescheduled.

## 'Taste' by Stanley Tucci

This is primarily an autobiography — with a cook book thrown in for good measure. I am sure you will know of Stanley Tucci the movie star – think Devil Wears Prada, The Hunger Games – but he is also a huge foodie.

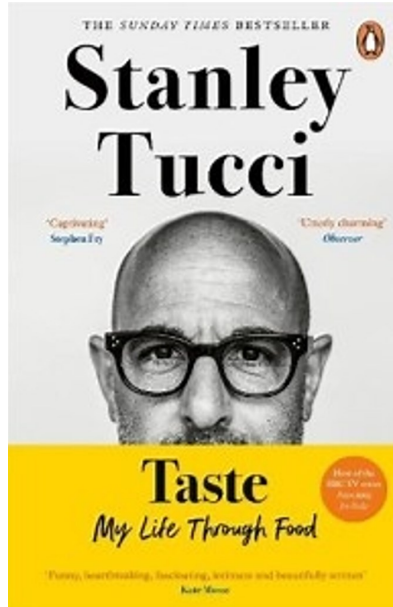
The book was prompted by his recovery from throat cancer that was diagnosed at Christmas 2017, and penned during Covid. Tragically he lost his sense of taste during his illness and the whole experience brought home to him the huge part that food played in his life.

In fact food basically was his life.

Happily, he is now recovered from the cancer and his prognosis seems good. He has also recovered most of his taste.

Italian by birth and upbringing (he grew up in New York) the book traces his life and career through food. He now lives in England with his second wife Felicity and their children but his spiritual home is Italy.

He returned to Italy to make a TV series for CNN about the food of the country (which was also shown by the BBC) and if you did catch any of the episodes his love for food sings out loud.



The book starts with his childhood and his mother's cooking and weaves its way through his life and his eventual success in Hollywood. He recalls the on set catering in many countries and is suitably impressed with Iceland in this regard. He found this most unexpected. England does not come out so well in his experience.

The book is a series of recollections peppered with recipes — primarily for pasta –that mostly relate to family occasions and I found it a nice touch. However some of the group weren't so keen on this aspect of the book.

I found myself hearing his voice from the TV series when I was reading it. I loved the recipe for a Negroni and his wedding menu and I will be making some of his recipes.

The book has been described as 'a love letter to food'. In the group some absolutely loved it and others just couldn't see the big attraction. Everyone seemed to be pleased to have read it though and like so any of books it was just something that they would not usually have chosen to read.

And that is the strength of a book club.

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## Newbrough WI



On Thursday 11th January our Chairman Judith Kirby welcomed 13 members and 1 guest. Jerusalem was sung and the business of the night was conducted.

There was very little to discuss but the membership was reminded about the payment of subs due by the end of February. Maureen Carr announced that the overall competition winner for the year was Susan Sutton, having the most points for entering and winning the monthly competitions. Susan was presented with a gift voucher.

It is also the time of year when all institutes vote on the short list of resolutions to go forward to our National Association. The 2024 short list was very varied, including Dental Health Matters, Impacts of Poor Housing Conditions, Say No to Gambling Advertising and Improving Outcomes for Women in the Criminal Justice System. The secretary collected each members' vote and will send it to the Northumberland Federation office who will collate all of the votes from our region and send them to our National Headquarters. The winning resolution will be voted on at the Annual Meeting at The Royal Albert Hall in London next year. If passed, The National Federation will have a mandate to launch a campaign to try to influence the government and other organisations on subjects important to us all.

After a busy December, we all enjoyed a 'Members Evening' when instead of having a speaker, we dusted off the old photographs, played a few board games and generally just sat and chatted to each other, something we don't always have a lot of time for when we have a formal speaker. We rounded the evening off with a supper of pies and peas from the butcher at Haydon Bridge and muffins to follow, courtesy of Carol Ellis.

The raffle was won by Dorothy Sowerby and the floral table decoration by Ann Wodzinski.

The competition this month was to choose a new motto for the year ahead and was won by Teresa Bessant with: 'No Act of Kindness, however small is ever Wasted'.

Our next meeting is on Thursday February 8th at 7pm in Newbrough Town Hall when we are having a craft evening. Susan Sutton is bringing a small project for us to attempt and any one interested in finding out more about the W.I. is very welcome to join us.

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## Nature Notes

*And tree and house, and hill and lake, are frosted like a wedding cake.<sup>1</sup>*

As one of the first signs of the coming spring snow-drops are always a welcome sight, but traditional Northumbrian winters check the appearance of their nodding white flowers. In cold starts to the year, such as those in 2009, 2011 and 2013, flowering was held back until early February, but in the milder winters of more recent years snowdrops have been recorded in the early stages of flower in mid-January or earlier.

This year white cotton bud flowers on clumps of greyish-green stems by the steps that lead down to the footbridge over Newbrough Burn and the field below St Peter's Church were noted on the 4th of January<sup>2</sup> and furred petals on snowdrop groups in St. Peter's churchyard the next day. Thanks to a mild late December this was the earliest record in Nature Notes since snowdrops were first mentioned in 2009. Perhaps white pin-pricks were showing before the end of December ?

Evergreen trees and shrubs provide all year-round greenery, including the green sheen of prickly holly leaves with its bright red berries that are devoured by birds in winter, but after colourful autumn leaves have been shed bare deciduous trees are left a sepia monochrome. However, once in a while this monotony of colour is broken as the trees provide the framework for spectacular displays of winter beauty. These are staged by rime; opaque ice that

forms when supercooled water droplets of fog freeze on contact with freezing surfaces exposed to the wind. These droplets freeze so rapidly that they trap tiny air bubbles, giving rime a milky white appearance.

One such spectacular display took place on the Arctic morning of December the 2nd when the sun rose to reveal the tracery of trees covered in a dazzling coating of thick rime.



### Note

The photographs are of a rime frost on 13/12/22.

<sup>1</sup> 'Winter-Time' by Robert Louis Stevenson.

<sup>2</sup> Mary Wilson.

## Town Hall 200 Club

The Town Hall 200 Club annual subs are up for renewal at the end of February. It is still £5 per number for the whole year and you have a chance of winning £25/£15 or £10 each month. But also you are supporting the Town Hall.

We prefer you to pay by bank transfer, please put your name and initial followed by 200C :

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Please note cheques cannot be accepted. If anyone would like a number please contact Elaine:  
tel : . 07786 988251

## Warden Parish Council (WPC) meeting held on Monday 8th January 2024 in Newbrough Town Hall

The 2024-2025 Local Transport Plan programme has been released by the County Council. At the request of the Parish Council the whole of C234 between the Boatside Inn and Fourstones has been identified for surface dressing and drainage improvements. Ahead of the required major improvements the Clerk had received a response from Andy Craig, the Senior Programme Officer at NCC, confirming that he has asked the Highways Delivery Team to undertake a safety inspection of the road and undertake any necessary remedial works to ensure the road is maintained in a safe condition.

The provision of dropped kerbs between Fourstones and Butt Bank is still under consideration. It was also agreed to contact the Highways Maintenance Team about the blocked gullies on the North Bank

Cllr Morphet had met with N Snowdon, County Council Highways officer to discuss the Hardhaugh traffic calming measures requested by the Parish Council. Agreement had been given to refresh centre lane markings, increase slow road markings and replace road narrowing signage. The County Council is also considering the installation of road studs, 'pedestrian in road' warning signage and Welcome to Hardhaugh gateway signage. A further traffic speed survey is to be carried out in the spring which will be compared with the previous survey; following which the introduction of a 40mph limit will be considered.

Other matters discussed included:

- >the Clerk confirming that the delivery and installation of the new bin for dog waste for Crossgates is awaited;
- >Cllr Bowman agreed to organize the repair of the Coronation Seat;
- >the Parish Council Noticeboard at Warden has been kindly repaired and painted by a local resident;
- >it was agreed to make a grant of £250 to the Stanegate Magazine to support its continued publication;
- >a grant of £60 to Tynedale Hospice at Home was approved;
- >it was also resolved to make a grant of £500 to the Parochial Church Council towards churchyard maintenance.

Cllr Morphet advised that the County Council had agreed a target of net zero GHG emissions by 2040 and reconfirmed the target of net zero carbon dioxide emissions by 2030. Cllr Morphet also reported that the local Climate Action Group is seeking funding to procure an appraisal of options to improve cycling infrastructure between Fourstones and Hexham.

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 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024 commencing at 7pm.

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# Anyone for Cornhole? and more !

## CORNHOLE

is a sort of classy beanbag throwing game - hailing from the USA where the bags are still filled with dry maize, or "corn" as it is known over there. It can be played indoors or outdoors.

A cornhole league is being set up in west Tynedale, Slaggyford and Feathersone having already put together teams, and Gilsland, Greenhead and Bardon Mill are looking to perhaps become involved and hopefully others will join up.

Northumberland Community Together is keen to fund the cost of the boards for villages such as ours and would be happy to set up a demonstration session for those interested to know more. It can be a family game or mixed teams can compete.

Northumberland is one of the first counties in the UK to have active teams. National championships were held in Manchester in 2023 organised by the UKCL [United Kingdom Cornhole League]

Plenty of YouTube videos are available - worth a look!

If you are interested, but need more information, drop an e-mail to us at the Stanegate in the first instance: [thestanegate@hotmail.com](mailto:thestanegate@hotmail.com)



## DECARBONISING HOMES PROJECT

CAN [Community Action Northumberland] has offered to send a representative to talk about their decarbonising homes project to give energy saving tips and giveaways. They will be at the Warm Wednesday event on 14<sup>th</sup> February from 11.00 am.

## AGE UK ACTIVITY PACKS

These arrived late to the Town Hall but offer some light reading for those wishing to pick one up.

## HOME SAFETY CHECKS

Northumberland Fire Service is offering free home safety checks at your home, particularly related to fire and carbon monoxide detectors.

Register your interest with Delia Farren by text on 07970 789781

## DOGS AND CRICKET.....?

Whilst dogs love to chase balls, could dog owners please avoid exercising their pets on the cricket pitch and outfield? We are very fortunate to have lovely more appropriate areas in which we can let our furry friends roam free.

## ROAD CLOSURE

The Mossy will be totally closed from Warden level crossing for some 300 yards towards Fourstones from **19<sup>th</sup> February until 31<sup>st</sup> March**. Diversion will be via Chollerford, Wall and Acomb. Follow this link to see a map and get further details from NCC Highways Department. <https://one.network/?tm=137071556> This work will we expect greatly improve the state of the lower part of the Mossy after many months of flooding, ice and multiple potholes. Hopefully the Go NorthEast 687 bus timetable will be adjusted prior to 19<sup>th</sup> February to take the revised route and timings into account.

## WMH BUTCHERS IN HAYDON BRIDGE

A reminder that WMH Butchers retail shop in Haydon Bridge has closed at the end of January. They will be a big miss. However, their WMH Quality Catering and Quality Tableware Hire businesses are continuing. See information on their adverts on page 12.



## SAVE THE DATE TYNE VALLEY FILM FESTIVAL



Newbrough Film Club will be taking part in the 2024 Tyne Valley Film Festival, organised by the Forum Cinema, which will take place in a number of local venues from 15<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> March.

The film at Newbrough Town Hall will be shown on **Friday 15<sup>th</sup> March**, details of title, pricing and where tickets can be bought will be in the March issue of the Stanegate. Meanwhile **save the date** in your diary!





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# Recipe from an Orchard Kitchen

Iain Bennett

It's February so that means – chocolate. It is the food of love after all! Chocolate originally came from Mexico and the name comes from the Aztec word xocolatl meaning bitter water. As you can guess from this, the initial use was as a drink and the cocoa tree's Latin name is Theobroma cacao which literally means Drink (or Food) of the Gods. The word cocoa is actually a result of the misspelling of cacao.

The Aztecs revered the cacao bean above all other fruits; they believed that it was a gift from the God King Quetzalcoatl to the whole of mankind. After the Spanish invaded the Aztec lands, they traded the bean throughout the known world.

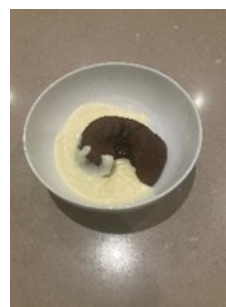
Humans are very lucky that they can enjoy chocolate. While it is harmless to us, it is toxic to many other animals such as dogs, cats and birds, and dark chocolate should never be given to dogs or cats.

This month's recipe is for the thing that has been the downfall of many MasterChef contestants, the chocolate fondant. I have however always found this to be a safe and consistent recipe. It originates from Nigella Lawson so channel your domestic goddess!

\*\*\*\*\*

This recipe makes 6 fondants This is a good dessert for preparing in advance as it can be then cooked to order. It is perfect for dinner parties as it can be taken from the fridge, placed in a hot oven and is ready to serve in 10-12 minutes.

Good quality dark chocolate	350g/12oz
Soft Butter	50g/2oz
Caster Sugar	150g/6oz
Large Eggs	4
Plain Flour	50g/2oz
Vanilla Extract	1 tsp
Pinch of salt	



Butter and line the base of 3 individual pudding containers, mine are about 3" by 2" (8cm by 5cm).

Melt the chocolate by breaking it into a bowl held over a pan of simmering water, do not let the bowl touch the water. Once melted set it to one side to cool slightly.

Cream the sugar and the butter and then beat in the eggs. Fold in the flour and when all has been mixed scrape in the melted chocolate and beat to make a smooth batter.

Divide the mixture between the pudding bowls. If you are cooking them later, cover them with cling film and store in the fridge until required.

When you want to cook them, pre-heat an oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6 and place a baking tray in the oven. When the oven and tray are hot, remove the cling film, take the tray out of the oven and place the pots on it.

Return to the oven for 10-12 minutes. After 10-12 minutes they should be risen and firm but springy.

Custard goes very well with the fondant (as in the photo), but also vanilla ice cream, double cream or Baileys !

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

## November Weatherwatch



The high winds and heavy rains of 'Storm Ciaran' on the 1st and 2nd of November caused much damage and disruption as they battered the Channel Islands and southern coastal counties, but only moderate breezes blew at Park Shield and a modest 14.2mm of rain fell over the two clouded days. Clammy grey fog that shrouded the parishes early on the 4th thickened towards mid-morning and lingered into the afternoon. November is renowned for its fogs, but this was to be the only foggy day of the month.

The period from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> produced November's sunniest weather, although both days and nights were generally a little cooler than the seasonal average. Afternoon cloud built up on the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>, but cleared overnight into the 12<sup>th</sup> to bring bright blue sky, a -2.3C daily minimum and frost-encrusted grass in the morning. Another build-up of afternoon cloud led to a wet and gloomy end to what had started out as a pleasantly crisp autumn day. Further rain, associated with the passing of 'Storm Debi', fell overnight and into the afternoon of the 13<sup>th</sup> to produce a similar amount of rainfall to that of Storm Ciaran at Park Shield, while rain fell again much more heavily in other parts of the country. Winds were stronger elsewhere, but here they rose very briefly to near gale force as minutes apart in mid-afternoon Park Shield and Butt Bank recorded sudden gusts of 35mph and 36mph respectively,

The 18<sup>th</sup> marked the start of a six day spell of milder weather, when all but the 21<sup>st</sup> registered daily maximums in double figures Celsius. However, the Park Shield monthly maximum of 13.0C on the day was also the lowest November monthly maximum for twenty years. And 9.8mm of rain made it the wettest day of the month. The milder spell ended with a daily maximum of 12.0C and the highest November Park Shield wind gust on the 23<sup>rd</sup> before the last week brought much colder, drier and more

settled weather. Of the seven days only the 27<sup>th</sup> was frost free. In a chilly end to the month a morning frost of -2.3C in the morning on the 30<sup>th</sup> was followed by November's lowest daily maximum of 2.4C and the monthly minimum of -3.2C before midnight. The frosty last week played a large part in making November the equal fourth coldest on Weatherwatch record.

On the plus side, the days in the cold snap were relatively dry, as were the days following the wet 18<sup>th</sup> which only accumulated together a modest 7.6 mm of rainfall, with a little fine snow sifting down after dark on the 29<sup>th</sup>. Even adding the more substantial 51.2mm that had fallen previously the Park Shield total of 58.8mm was still well below average and made November the ninth driest in the twenty-six year series. As a point of meteorological interest five of the ten driest Weatherwatch Novembers have occurred in the last six years.

### November Weatherwatch Factfile

*Temperature.* Park Shield mean monthly maximum : c.8.0C. Mean monthly minimum : c.2.7C. Monthly mean : c.5.4C. N&NE England monthly mean : 6.4C and 0.1C above the 1991-2020 average. UK maximum : 16.7C at Writtle (Essex) on the 13<sup>th</sup>. UK minimum : -7.7C at Shap (Cumbria) on the 25<sup>th</sup>.

*Rainfall & sunshine.* Park Shield average rainfall : c.85mm. Rain days : 20. One hour maximum : 2.8mm to 05.00 on the 18<sup>th</sup>. E&NE England rainfall and sunshine : 110% & 110% of the 1991/2020 average. Honister Pass recorded a remarkable 124.2mm of rainfall on the 13<sup>th</sup>.

*Winds.* Westerly for the most part; with the odd easterly. UK maximum gust : 78 mph at Langdon Bay (Kent) on the 2<sup>nd</sup>. Park Shield maximum gust : 36mph on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. Butt Bank : 43mph on the same day.

## The Barber Bus

Due to illness, the Barber Bus will not be visiting Newbrough and Fourstones until further notice.



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## December Weatherwatch



The summer-like autumn warmth that stretched into mid-October became an increasingly distant memory as the wintry weather of late November extended over the first week of December.

Park Shield recorded consecutive air frosts from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 6<sup>th</sup> and daily maximums below freezing point in the first three days. In the coldest start to December since the brutal December of 2010, a daily minimum of -5.8C was recorded on the 1<sup>st</sup>, while the icy December minimum of -8.3C on the 2<sup>nd</sup> was followed by the month's lowest daily maximum of -1.3C on the same day.<sup>1</sup> Light snow showers fell around noon and after a little more snow overnight the 3<sup>rd</sup> dawned with a white winter landscape. The thin covering thawed as the temperature eased to above zero Celsius early on the 4<sup>th</sup>. Continuous rain, which began falling in mid-morning, eventually petered out by six o'clock the next morning, but it was generally light and totalled a modest fourteen millimetres. A cheerless week ended with the wettest December day and a chilly daily maximum of 4.9C on the 7<sup>th</sup>.

Atlantic air brought a milder daily maximum of 8.3C on Friday the 8<sup>th</sup> and similar weekend maximums on the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, but this air was swept in by 'Storm Elin' on the Saturday and 'Storm Fergus' on the Sunday. Their heavy rains and high winds led to flooding and disruption in several parts of the country to the north and south, but happily it was never more than breezy in our small patch and rainfall at Park Shield was only around five mm. Colder weather returned with touches of frost on the 11<sup>th</sup> and in the night straddling the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>. After this both daytime and night-time temperatures were notably higher, resulting in a mean for the second half of December being a remarkable four degrees Celsius above that of the first half. The overnight minimum of 10.8C early on the 18<sup>th</sup> was particularly mild, although the monthly maximum of 13.2C on Christmas Eve was run-of-the mill for December. Christmas Day was, not unusually, disappointingly cool and cloudy.

After the settled first half of December blustery winds blew almost throughout the second half of the month, with windchill lowering the 'feels like' temperatures. Gale force gusts of 40mph or over were recorded at Butt Bank on a number of days, including one of 42mph there and at Park

Shield on the dry 21<sup>st</sup> as 'Storm Pia',<sup>2</sup> passed through. Christmas Eve and Christmas Day also recorded 40mph+ gusts. On the 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> the high winds of 'Storm Gerrit' brought widespread impacts across the country, causing extensive power cuts in Scotland and Wales. Local winds were not as strong, but nevertheless gusts of 45mph and 50mph were recorded respectively at the Park Shield and Butt Bank weather stations in the early hours of the 29<sup>th</sup>.

Storm Gerrit and its aftermath generated more rain than each of the three previous December storms as just over 20 mm fell in the last five days of the month. Nevertheless, the Park Shield total December rainfall of 69.6mm was below an 80mm average and made December one of the drier ones in a twenty-six year series. In stark contrast, the regional rainfall of 134.5mm was a massive 175% of the same 80mm average.

Two slightly cooler final days of December, including a light frost on the 30<sup>th</sup>, had little effect on the monthly mean, which at around half a degree Celsius above average placed December in the middle of the Weatherwatch mean monthly temperature rankings.

### December Weatherwatch Factfile.

*Temperature.* Park Shield mean monthly maximum : c.7.3C. Mean monthly minimum : c.2.0C. Monthly mean : c.4.7C. Frost days : 12. E&NE England monthly mean : 5.7C and 1.8C above the 1991-2020 average. UK maximum : 16.1C at Rhyll (Denbighshire) on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. UK minimum : -12.5C at Altnaharra (Sutherland) on the 3<sup>rd</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> The lowest Weatherwatch December minimum remains the -17.5C of the 18<sup>th</sup> in 2010; the coldest December in 120 years.

*Rainfall and Sunshine.* Park Shield average December rainfall c. 80mm. 24 hour maximum : 8.8mms on the 7<sup>th</sup>. Rain days : 24. Butt Bank total rainfall : 75.2mm. E&NE England rainfall and sunshine 175 % and 76% of the 1991-2020 average.

*Winds.* Occasionally easterly in the first half of the month, but predominantly westerly.

<sup>2</sup> Named by the Danish Met Office.

## Church Pages

### Who's Who

#### Church of England

Reverend Jane Penn  
3 Red Houses  
Newbrough  
Hexham  
NE47 5AA

tel: 07747 865747

#### Methodist

Reverend Michael Holland  
Tynedale Methodist Circuit  
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

### From the Registers

#### January

There were no Christenings or Weddings in the Parish during January

#### Funerals:

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

On Saturday 13th January at St Peter, Newbrough : John Alexander Ellis, formerly of Wentworth Grange Care Home, Riding Mill

On Saturday 20th January at Hexham Abbey : Sam Myers, formerly of Fourstones

Following the retirement of Canon Jeremy Thompson any enquiries relating to Baptisms, Weddings or Funerals for St. Peter's, Newbrough should go to Churchwarden Reuben Straker at [reuben.straker@btinternet.com](mailto:reuben.straker@btinternet.com) and for St. Michael's Warden, to George Benson at [office@chesterestate.co.uk](mailto:office@chesterestate.co.uk)

#### Fourstones with Warden Methodist Church Preachers for February

- |      |  |
|------|--|
| 4th  | Ian Warburton                                |
| 11th | Mrs J Cameron                                |
| 18th | Reverend Michael Holland<br>(Holy Communion) |
| 25th | Mr Tom Dodds                                 |

All services at 10.30am  
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#### 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

## Letter from Reverend Michael.....

As I write, Christmas and the New Year celebrations, though just a few weeks away seem distant. The days are short and cold, the nights long and colder. We are often told that this is a difficult time of year, when the festivities are over and we are still deep in winter and good things seem a long way off. We might be tempted to cry out with the Psalmist, "How long, O Lord?"

Yet today I saw my first snowdrops of the year. Each year it seems that these little white and delicate flowers are the first to appear. They poke through frozen ground and break out in a splash of white which contrasts with the dull colours of winter. I like to see snowdrops as a symbol of hope. They flower in the depths of winter, when there is no discernible sign of the end of winter and the coming of spring. Yet here they are, flowering away. They seem to say to me 'Have hope. Spring will come.'

As you receive this Stanegate the Christian calendar will be taking us into the period of Lent. This coincides with the end of Winter and the beginning of Spring. It is a time associated with fasting in the Christian tradition - perhaps linked to the lean period of food production when we had to eat what was grown locally. Lent looks forward as well to Easter, when we mark the death and resurrection of Jesus. This new life came when there was no earthly reason to imagine anything different. Yet it came the same.

We have the benefit of knowing that each winter eventually moves into spring. The days do lengthen, the temperature does warm up. Even though we don't feel it at time. We know that eventually the crocuses will flower, then the daffodils and then not long after our farmers will be tied up with lambing and the world will erupt in leaves and blossom and birdsong.

Each year as Lent approaches, I try to make an inventory of the things that I have to be thankful for, and the reasons I have to hope. The exercise helps me to see life and the world around me in a larger context and, as the old hymn goes, count my blessings. It helps me to see God at work in my life and in the world around me, as I take time to stop and take notice. Just in the same way as I stop and take notice of the snowdrops and know, that even though it happens quietly and often unnoticed, the seasons are doing what they do, just as God is doing what God does.

So we can draw of the 14th century wisdom of Julian of Norwich, whose writings are the oldest surviving of a woman in the English language:

All shall be well,  
all shall be well,  
and all manner of things shall be well.

With every blessing,  
Michael  
Rev Michael Holland

### Parish of Warden with Newbrough

### Church Services for February 2024

Sunday 4th	10.00am	St Michael and All Angels, Warden
Sunday 11th	10.00am	St John Lee
Sunday 18th	10.00am	St Peter, Newbrough
Sunday 25th	10.00am	St John Lee

Enquiries regarding Church Services to Ian Bell, Church Warden  
01434 674653