

## Minister's Report

2022 saw a return to some normality in church life, as much of what was put on hold during the pandemic started to resume. Many regular events resumed, and some new initiatives we introduced, too numerous for this report, so I mention just some highlights. For the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity we hosted daily prayers via Zoom, but for our Lent Course we met in person to discuss Teresa White's book "Hope and the Nearness of God". This course was well attended with about 12 – 15 attending the sessions at St George's with others attending the sessions at the Methodist Church.

In April the Junior Church were fantastic when they presented the Ballad of St George's for our St George's Day event. The costumes were great (including our 3-headed dragon), the acting superb and the afternoon was well attended. In May our Ukraine coffee mornings began and these have had a big impact on many Ukrainian families that have settled here, with English lessons, donations of clothes and other items, and knitting items that were sent across to Ukraine to help those on the front line. This has become a regular social time on Friday mornings not just for the Ukrainians but for others too, and has had an impact on many aspects of Church life.

In June, a number of church folk enjoyed the Synod Day Out at Beamish, in August we held a Summer Songs of Praise and in September the Tea Time Talks resumed. Also in September regular evening services were introduced on the last Sunday of the month allowing an opportunity for reflective worship. The Advent Course "Sharing the Christmas Story" was run jointly with the Methodists and we had a fantastic Community Carol service with the Cadets and our Ukrainian friends, along with music by Emma Straughan & Ken Irvine. None of these would have been possible without the help of the stewards, volunteers and organisers and of course those who came and supported the events. Thanks to all those who give their time and effort to make St George's a place of welcome, fellowship and support for so many people.

### Worship on Wednesdays

Every Wednesday, tea/coffee from 12midday, service 12.30 to 1pm.

Our WOW services go from strength to strength. We can regularly expect around eight or nine attendees, sometimes less but more often more than that num bet.

We do have one lady who comes to us regularly and doesn't attend any other Church, another lady who goes to her own Church every Sunday but comes to us on Wednesdays.

On occasions visitors to the town will call in and often stay for the service.

Our WOW services are more informal and sometimes more interactive than Sunday mornings. They are always informative, spiritual, thought provoking and very welcome.

I am so grateful to all those who give their time to lead these services. People would soon get fed up if it was me every week. Thank you to Julian, Carol, Margery, Margaret, Suzanne and Andrew.

Special mention to Andrew as our wonderful pianist. Pat Hills is now our back up pianist so when Andrew has to go off to greet the latest Hamnett grandchild our hymns will still be accompanied. Thank you to them both.

We do have a great team of greeters and tea/coffee makers.

Thanks to them all as this is such an important role, making people welcome when they come to God's Church is what we're all about. All are welcome in this place and at our WOW services.

***Sue Rutherford***

## **CHURCH SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR 2022**

As of 31<sup>st</sup> December the Annual Return to the URC head office and Northern Synod showed our membership to be 113. During 2022 there were two losses as two members died, those being Ann Crombie and Liz Elders. The funerals of Kenneth Oakes, Peter Bennett and Catherine Strachan were also held at St George's. Thanks were given for their lives and witness.

We had no new members in 2022 but recently we have welcomed Ron Forster and Shirley Forster back into our church family.

We have 6 regular attenders at church who are not church members.

The number of serving Elders is currently 12 as Karin Jackson and Penny Oxley have both stepped down.

Junior Church has six children who attend regularly, one in the 0-4 category, 1 in the 5-10 category and 4 in the 11-17 category.

There are 96 children and young people across all age groups in the uniformed organisations, comprising Rainbows, Brownies, Guides and Rangers.

There was one wedding in Church in August 2022.

***Morag Stead***

Church Secretary

## **Annual Report from the Managers for 2022**

Andrew Hamnett: Clerk to the Managers

The year began with the aftermath of storm Arwen, which struck in late November 2021. Although the damage to the church was not great, we lost some tiles and had to initiate an expensive operation to repair roof damage. In a large building like ours, this always requires scaffolding, which adds appreciably to the costs. Repairs took substantially longer than anticipated, owing to the huge demand for scaffolding to repair damaged roofs throughout Northumberland.

A second item requiring quite extensive investigation was fire safety in the church: the managers would like to acknowledge the great help of Ken Anderson in putting together a fire-risk assessment, and the helpful advice from the Fire Brigade. Careful record keeping and attention to necessary periodic safety checks, such as PA Testing of all equipment used in the church were pinpointed, and the managers approved additional emergency lighting and signage. We also initiated a thorough review of current evacuation procedures, including the setting of maxima for attendance in the sanctuary (140) and the upper hall (155) for normal events. In addition, training sessions have been introduced for managers and elders, which have proved very helpful. As a result of recommendations by the Fire Brigade, the Minister has formulated a new door policy, which has now been approved by members.

The Quinquennial survey was finally carried out in June and the report was received in September; the managers subsequently held a special meeting to consider its recommendations. The report was a considerable improvement on previous reports in terms of clarity. The main items of concern, aside from the roof, were the need to re-paint the down pipes, grates and railings, to attend to the stonework near the North-East doorway and the front elevation buttress, and (rather to our surprise) to increase the height of the railings on front and back stairways opposite the exit doors from the upper hall and the Horsley Room. These jobs are now all arranged, with many thanks to Neil, and will be carried out later in the year. None of these are likely to be every expensive.

The usual number of smaller jobs has occupied the attention of the managers: these include the replacement of the flowerbeds by the railings and the wall of the East Garden with turf, to reduce demands

on labour; the renovation of the gents' toilet on the east side of the upper hall; the improvements to the lighting in the vestibule, and the installation of wooden battens on the sanctuary floor to prevent chairs being placed too close to the heaters. Repair jobs are not infrequent; the managers are grateful to Neil, Andy and others for their continued help.

An item that has engaged the Managers for some little time has been the proposal to upgrade the audio-visual system in the church. This was initiated by the Minister, and fund-raising events took place during the year, with a grant from the Northern Synod Trust completing the funding target and allowing the project to be undertaken this year.

The social life of the church has returned to something like its pre-pandemic vigour. Coffee mornings have proved extraordinarily popular, perhaps reflecting the pleasure of getting together once again for a chat and a cup of tea or coffee. St George's day was celebrated in style in the upper hall, the players have returned to their Thespian triumphs, and Messy Church has been hosted. Our plant Sale in May 2022 was outstandingly successful once again, following the wonderful sale in 2021. A Christmas card sale took place in October, and a Christian Aid Ceilidh in November. Unfortunately, owing to the illness of the director, we had to cancel the Christmas Social this year, but we did have the pleasure of a visit from the Mid-Northumberland Chorus later in December which was very well received. Lunchtime concerts also re-started, but sadly Ken and Gillian have decided they can no longer run these as regular events, and the series drew to a final close in December 2022. Our very grateful thanks to both of them for all their hard work.

Managers inevitably have a huge number of often invisible tasks to perform. The housekeeping team have been engaged in a near ceaseless programme of keeping the church clean, removing unwanted bric-à-brac and interesting ecologies from the kitchen, as well as keeping the vestry tidy. To all involved: Sarah, Joan, Mary and many others, a very big thank-you. The church has moved into the social media age: both the website and the Facebook page seem to be thriving, the former having an increasing role in celebrating recent church events and the latter in alerting its contacts about upcoming events and occasions.

The managers were extremely grateful to Andy Cleverley for taking on the role of Lettings Manager; the financial loss to the church during the lockdown was considerable, and not all our groups that met pre-lockdown have returned, but Andy has been building back our portfolio. One very welcome initiative was the opening of the church to Ukrainian refugees in the aftermath of the Russian invasion in February 2022. A significant number of these refugees have been accommodated in the North-East and Morag and Keith Stead have led a concerted effort to make them welcome and teach them the new language; their children are now at local schools and we will continue to provide Friday morning coffee as long as the refugees find it helpful.

To conclude, as many will know, Neil Robson has stepped down from his role as Property Manager after a great many years at the helm; the church's debt to him is incalculable, and, very fortunately, he has been on hand, continuing to offer sage advice, as well as helping with many of the minor faults that a complex building like ours throws up. The managers are in the process of setting up a mechanism to make sure that faults are identified and brought to the attention of the Clerk, the Minister, the Church Secretary or the Lettings Officer so that remedial action can be taken. We would ask all members to let one of us know if there is something that needs fixing.

## **Church Lettings in 2022**

Takings for 2022 were £4954.25 including unbilled amounts for Wednesday Concerts of £150 and £60 from Mid Northumberland Chorus.

Regular paying users are the Age UK exercise class, the Cobwebs Orchestra and Lisa's Zumba class. We have also had use of the Hall by the Lateral Art shop next to the Chantry for art classes and the Cowell Academy of Stage & Television whilst their usual premises at the Rugby Club were being renovated. In 2023, the Age UK Exercise Class will sadly reduce from 2 hours to 1 hour per week due to falling attendances, however the Lateral Art shop hopes to recommence classes.

**Andy Cleverley**  
Lettings Officer

## **Morpeth Christian Aid Report 2022**

The opportunities for Morpeth Christian Aid Group to raise awareness and funds has improved over the last year. We have struggled to achieve pre pandemic donations from house to house collections and street collections. The house to house collection came in at close to £4000 (down 35% on 2021). The street collection came in at £605 (down 12.5% on 2021). We continued to deliver envelopes and rely on donors to deliver them to a specified address. It was however noted that if a collector revisited to collect the envelope the response was much better. That said, Morpeth Christian Aid has found that it is no longer practicable for volunteers to go back to every street to collect envelopes.

It was other fundraising initiatives which brought the total donations for 2022 to the 2021 level.

Gerry Harber of St Roberts and Chair of the Committee raised a phenomenal £1556 in sponsorship by doing the Great Outdoor Challenge Walk in May 2022.

The Ceilidh was back and hosted by St Georges. It was really well attended, particularly by some very energetic children. £436 was raised.

There was also an extra fundraising activity added to last year's calendar. The Toy Sale and Coffee Morning held at St James'. It raised just shy of £300. As a result we've added a Toy Sale and Coffee Morning to this year's calendar to be hosted by St Georges, for which the Morpeth Christian Aid Committee are grateful.

We look forward to continuing to raise awareness within the wider Morpeth community, as well as funds, for the work of Christian Aid in the coming year.

I joined the Morpeth Christian Aid Committee as one of St Georges representatives in August 2022. It took a bit of persuasion on the part of Margaret Brock. Knowing the impact of the work Christian Aid has in the most deprived and war ridden regions of the world it was a no brainer. I'd like to thank Margaret Brock for her quiet, constant and continued support of the work Morpeth Christian Aid has achieved.

***Laurence Benkhaleb-House***

## **Junior Church Annual Report 2022**

Looking back is always strange - it brings many memories to the fore - so let me tell you what the children of our Junior Church have been up to this year. We are still just 5 in number, St Georges very own 'Famous 5' and yes we have had some adventures this year. On Mothers Day we resurrected some little flower-pot gifts which we had made pre pandemic added new ribbon and practiced a few lines to say in the church service - the children were all ready and Julie led the performance as I was stuck at home with Covid, I believe they did very well and all the ladies were able to take a little flower pot home. We turned tiny sunflower seeds into leggy little plants and made a competition with our Methodist friends to see who could grow the tallest - it turned out to be a hard venture and every child in our two groups got a prize as none of our sunflowers really grew to be giants. St. Georges Day was our next event - Julian provided the script and we invited our Methodist Friends to be part of the action. Noah made a dashing St George, - Heidi was the Princess with the blood curdling scream - we had a cardboard dragon and all the children dressed up and played their parts beautifully. Julian provided us with an art competition and we had food and fun - it was a day to remember. Our next venture was making a card for the Diamond Jubilee, the children neatly signed their names and the card was duly sent to Her Majesty - it seemed a happy carefree time - we could not guess what sadness lay ahead. Summer holiday time approached and Julie organised a BBQ with our Methodist Friends under the Telford Bridge - there was much laughter and everyone was very sticky with giant toasted marshmallows. Time simply flew away and before we knew it our joint Nativity had arrived. It was the turn of MMC and we threw ourselves into a very few rehearsals and on the day as usual all went to plan.

When I think of it I simply cannot stop smiling - the children were all so happy - we had a King Herod and we all booed when he appeared, we had sheep who actually baa ed, we had many angels - some even seemed to fly without wings! We had a camel and a donkey! When all the children get together it becomes a real adventure, they bring the magic of the Christmas Story alive - it was good fun. Instead of a Christmas Gift the children decided to send some money to Ukraine to help the children - it seemed the right thing to do.

This year I have to thank Linda Charman and Mary Kelly for offering to give help in Junior Church we enjoyed your company. We also have Christine Richardson and Joan Cooper who are always keen to give help when needed - thank you so much. The Children were excited when Janet Johnson joined us again, our handicrafts will be much improved now and it is just lovely to have her back. Julie and I go on as usual doing what we can to tell the wonderful Bible stories to the children. They are growing up so fast - we watch them and smile - they bring the sunshine to the dullest of days.

***Barbara Pringle.***

### **Tea Time Talk Report 2022-23**

I am very grateful to everyone who supports the 'Tea Time Talks'. It is impossible to follow Jared's efficiency and enthusiasm and I am aware of many failings but your tolerance and kindness encourages me to continue for the time being. I would appreciate any suggestions you could offer.

We have been entertained by marvelous speakers and we are most grateful for their time and expertise. This year alone we have learnt about Healthcare pre NHS, how Queen Victoria became Queen and learnt what we didn't know about Fairy Tales! All fascinating.

Finally I need to thank Gillian for her delicious scones which she religiously supplies! I am enormously thankful to her. She is also responsible for the striking posters. Thank you Gillian, and also Barbara Gunn who so willingly helps me.

***Christine Richardson***

### **CHURCH ORCHESTRA REPORT 2023**

Our flexible friendly band of musicians have been able to meet regularly this past year as Covid problems have eased despite various members having been affected at different times.

We have been able to play for Sunday morning worship usually on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the month throughout the year and managed somehow to field a balanced group of between five to about a dozen players.

Our variety of instruments played this year has included tuba, bassoon, cello, trombone, alto saxophone, clarinets, viola, violins, flutes and recorder. This makes suitable transposition for each instrumental part an interesting exercise. I very much appreciate the various leaders of the service providing me with their chosen list of hymns in good time!!

Unfortunately due to the illness of our director and creator of this year's social our band of 7 players was unable to play despite having met for two enjoyable music practices. Hopefully there will be another opportunity later in the year. We are looking forward to playing for the World Day of Prayer written by women from Taiwan and to be hosted by St. George's church this year on March 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Shirley Forster has again organised small groups to play at Great Bavington in the summer for their Garden Party and evening service and again at Low Hauxley for the Carol Service.

The joint Junior Churches of St. George's and the Methodist's held their Nativity Service this year at MMC accompanied by Andrew Hamnett and six of our SGURC band who had not fallen ill, slipped on ice or broken something! We are thankfully a flexible group.

Thanks to everyone who comes to play with us from St. George's, MMC., St. Robert's, friends from the Cobweb Orchestra, Society of Recorder Players, coming from Newcastle as well as from the Morpeth area and of course to Ken Irvine and Andrew Hamnett for their support on the piano.

If you are interested in joining our happy band please contact Christine Oakes, email [oakescm@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:oakescm@yahoo.co.uk)

***Christine Oakes***

## ST. GEORGE'S LUNCHTIME CONCERT ANNUAL REPORT 2022

Following a very successful return of the St George's Lunchtime Concerts in September 2021 we were delighted to see the audiences growing in numbers in 2022. Unfortunately we realised that after seventeen years this series of concerts was to be our last. Anno domini was beginning to creep up on us and, whilst we would love to have continued, we found that the responsibility of attracting quality musicians and the general organising of the concerts and sponsorship demands were becoming increasingly challenging. We therefore took the extremely difficult decision to "quit whilst we were winning" as we wanted the audience experience to end on a high. Efforts to find someone to continue to organise these events at their present standard have not been successful.

This final series also included a special concert requested and organised by Iona Brown, principal violin at Royal Northern Sinfonia, and David Murray at which all proceeds including their fees were to be donated to the children's cancer charity Henry Dancer Days. All expenditure involved was privately funded. This event alone, including matched funding, raised £1450. Vastly more than anticipated.

### Lunchtime Concert financial details are as follows

<b>Income</b>	Admissions, sponsorship, donations	£3016	
	Extra income from refreshments gifted to St George's	£112	
<b>Expenditure.</b>	Artists fees, church hire, piano tuning	£1906	<b>End of Series</b>

### Donations from Lunchtime Concert Funds

	St George's URC	( £400 )	
	Henry Dancer Days	( £500 )	£900
	The £500 given to Henry Dancer Days was matched funding for what was raised in donations at the actual concert.		

Any remaining monies at the close of the Lunchtime Concert Series will be donated to initiate and support further similar fundraising events at St George's URC in the future.

Thank you to the many people who have supported, sponsored and worked so hard to make the Lunchtime Concerts such an amazing success. They will be sadly missed by everyone.

***Gillian and Ken Irvine***

## Social Convenor's Annual Report 2022

Following the uncertainties of distancing and the COVID pandemic, many people were reluctant to venture out to social events so we were delighted by the numbers who returned to enjoy what we were able to offer at St George's in 2022.

All organisations within the church have worked extremely hard to provide activities not only for our members and friends but also for the local community. We are indebted to all those who continue to organise and support these events.

I am including in this write up those activities in which I have been particularly involved. However, the efforts of many others will be mentioned in other areas of this Annual Report.

The amounts shown as raised are approximate as on many occasions further donations were received after the event.

Musica Johannis 2021 Christmas Concert money received in 2022.	£332
Donation to Marie Curie.	£500
Total	£832

January.	Managers' Coffee Morning	£723 (+ £432. 100 Club )	£1155
April.	Pre Easter Coffee Morning		£880
May.	Plant Sale		£1700
June.	Bradley Creswick Concert.		£875

The December 2022 the Mid Northumberland Chorus Concert raised £361 but this was not received until January 2023 and will be shown in next year's annual report.

During 2022 the Church Library of Paperbacks and Jigsaws raised £222 and Hand crafted cards raised £310

Please continue to donate used cards, paper backs and jigsaws to these initiatives.

*Gillian Irvine*

## Co-ordinator's report for St George's Coffee Club 2022

St George's Ladies Coffee Club held its AGM on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2023. At the meeting it was agreed that the club would be known as St George's Coffee Club.

We are now meeting in the church hall which has proved to be a successful venue. Our current membership number is 28 and we are always pleased to welcome guests to our meetings. So if a speaker's topic interests you, do come along

Our first meeting in January was cancelled due to concerns of high COVID levels at that time. In February we welcomed Kath and Harry Gilbert who gave an audio-visual presentation of their trip to Iceland in 2011. In March Barry Mead gave a talk with photos about prehistoric Orkney. This was the talk that had been planned for 2020 before events overtook us.

In April Brain Hannaford gave an entertaining talk with songs about Tommy Armstrong a 19<sup>th</sup> century poet/songwriter who lived in north-west Durham.

In previous years we have had a summer luncheon but in May 2022 we had a social meeting in the hall with a quiz and coffee, tea and cakes and the opportunity to chat.

Meetings resumed in September when Barbara Pringle very kindly stepped in at the last minute as our planned speaker was unable to come due to changes in his holiday flights.

The Queen's funeral had been the previous day and Barbara opened with a new poem about the Queen which was very thought provoking and then lifted the mood with a more light-hearted selection.

There was a poem about Smails shop, the floods, the fire and all you could buy there, and Barbara continued about how the building is now Lollo Rosso. There were other poems including one about her daughter Katie coming in from her scan and announcing she was having twins!

At that meeting it was agreed to give £500 to church and £100 to Wansbeck Valley Food Band.

In October we learnt about finger printing from Ian Gilliard. Fingerprinting still has a very important part to play in crime detection.

In November John Whittle gave an interesting talk about Blyth born William Smith and the discovery of Antarctica. An island is named after him in the South Shetland Islands.

Our Christmas Coffee morning in conjunction with St George's Flower Committee was held on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> December. This was well attended and £905.60 was raised.

At our recent AGM it was agreed to give £800 to church funds and £200 to the Food Bank.

A big thank you to everyone who has supported our events and meetings. A huge thank you to Linda Glascott, our Treasurer, to Vivien Bennett, Judith Crosby and Patricia Gatherum, the group leaders who organise the speakers and meetings.

**Sarah Cleverley Co-ordinator January 2023**

**St George's Ladies Coffee  
Club**  
**Period ending 31st  
December 2022**

<b>Income</b>	£	<b>Expenditure</b>	£
Opening Balances		Speakers	
Bank	975.46	Expenses	122.74
Cash	5.18	In lieu of expenses	75.00
Annual Subscriptions (2022)	150.00		
Monthly subscriptions	376.00	Miscellaneous Expenses	93.57
Guests	20.00	AGM 2021	14.85
Misc. Donations	6.00		
		Coffee morning 2021	22.96
Coffee Morning - Dec 2021	794.00		
		Coffee morning 2022	16.00
Coffee Morning - Dec 2022	921.60		
		Donations	
		Church - 2021	500.00
		Church - 2022	750.00
		Food bank 2021	100.00
		Closing balances- Bank	1,548.94
		Cash	4.18
	<b>3,248.24</b>		<b>3,248.24</b>

## **St. George's Knitter Natter Group Report 2022**

It's lovely to be back after covid and not worry about speaking to each other face to face. I am pleased to say the group managed to stay in touch throughout covid and come back smiling.

We seem to have been extra busy with projects this year, firstly knitting for Ukraine, (dark wool was at a premium for Balaclavas and Beanie hats), also children's hats, scarves, gloves and jumpers for disadvantaged children in SE Northumberland as well as the Ukraine. We also knit blankets, twiddle mitts for hospitals and tiny items for the local premature baby units

We had a surprise gift of beautiful items of antique embroidery, repaired and made into aprons from a needlework group in Rivne, Ukraine as a thankyou for our knitted gifts

We made items for the Church Christmas Coffee morning which were well received and hundreds of Poppies for the display in the Town Hall for Remembrance Day plus our usual heavenly host of pretty angels.

Our social events are popular: we had a pancake lunch, also went out for afternoon tea and enjoyed a flower demonstration in a farm barn on the coldest day of the summer.

Our Christmas buffet lunch was very enjoyable: not a knitting needle in sight.

We look forward to another year of friendship, knitting for charity, nattering and drinking tea/coffee together.

***Coordinator Joan Cooper Tel. 01670 515682***

### **Tuesday and Thursday Badminton**

#### **Report for 2022**

Tuesday and Thursday morning Badminton has continued during 2022. The sessions run from 10:00am to 12:00 noon officially, but can be shorter depending on numbers present. At present we have 9 - 10 regular members. We work on the following principles

- a. Having enjoyment playing together
- b. Getting and keeping fit
- c. Having pleasant social contact

Annual membership costs £10 and each session costs £2. The money mainly goes to the Church to help defray expenses such as heating and lighting, but can also be used to purchase equipment e.g. Shuttles when needed.

Badminton (including the Wednesday sessions) contributed £1187 towards Church running costs for 2022. We would welcome more players, whatever experience or ability. You can play at any or all of the sessions, including the Wednesday morning session run by Sarah Cleverley. All members come when they can and are always welcome. I send out an email once a week requesting members to indicate whether they can play or not on either the Tuesday and/or Thursday. The responses I get allow me to determine whether a session goes ahead or is cancelled due to lack of support.

If you, or someone you know, would be interested in joining us, please contact either myself or Sarah Cleverley. My contact details are: Allen Oakes,

Email: allen@oakesa.co.uk (preferred contact system)

Telephone: 01670-518608 (answer phone available)

***Allen Oakes***

## **Wednesday Morning Badminton Club**

Badminton restarted in February 2022 following the Christmas break and the high COVID levels in January. The club now has ten members with numbers varying each week from 5 to 9 players and very occasionally 10 players. So that players are not sitting out for too long we play a shorter game to 15 points rather than 21.

We commence at 9.30 and play until about 11 then usually go to a local coffee shop for refreshments. The cost per session is £2 with a £5 yearly subscription, or £10 if you play on Tuesday and Thursday as well. The money collected on Wednesday is combined with the Tuesday and Thursday groups and this all goes to the church. In 2022 the combined groups gave over £1000 to church funds.

New members are always welcome and even if you have never played badminton before or it is a number of years since you last played come and join us at 9.30am on a Wednesday morning in the church hall and afterwards for coffee.

***Sarah Cleverley (January 2023)***

## **BOWLING AT ST GEORGE'S IN 2022**

Carpet Bowls takes place at St George's every Wednesday afternoon in the Hall between 2.00 and 4.00 from early September until the end of April.

We currently have 27 members with an average attendance of 15 people per week who come for gentle bowling and good fellowship.

The Club has been able to donate £650 to St George's from membership fees etc.

We are sad to report the death of Ray Websell in early 2023. He had been a keen member of the club for a number of years. Our thoughts go out to Betty and the family.

If you are interested in playing, please contact:

***Andy Cleverley, Tel. 01670 515257***

## **Table Tennis Report 2022-23**

We have enjoyed another year of table tennis and one would hope we have improved! There are a regular group of enthusiasts and numbers range between 8 and 12 players. Our resident 'Super DIY Man' is Keith – he has repaired table legs and table tops, and manufactured lifting trolleys to aid in the movement of the old table. We are very grateful for his ingenuity and willingness to help.

Our coffee break is maybe too long but it is all part of the enjoyment. All proceeds are donated to church funds.

***Christine Richardson***

## **St George's URC Country Dance Club**

Well the year has been a mix of experiences. We are still going despite Covid's best efforts to stop us meeting! I wish I could say 'Going strong' but the truth is over 2022 although we met once a month, and the band has come along in good numbers and played with their usual fantastic enthusiasm often only 7 or 8 dancers have come so I've sometimes thought 'is it worth it?', 'can we even pay for the hall with these numbers?'. Are people really interested? However the dancers who come always seem to have fun, and a faithful few some come every session. Out of the blue we will have a meeting where loads of people appear and it feels like the good old days pre-covid with Jared calling to a room full of people!

The Christian Aid Churches Together dance in November was just like that!

What a wonderful night! - which raised £400+ for Christian Aid .

At our usual Country Dance Club sessions dancers and band each pay £2.00 for their night out which goes to St Georges –our monthly contribution ranges from a meagre £30 to £60+

The ceilidh band 'SGURC' has had two 'outings' playing for the October Widdrington URC harvest entertainment, and the U3A at Longhirst village hall and received £60, and £70 for Christian Aid for our efforts – and had lots of fun!

A mixed group of ceilidh band and the church orchestra folk also played for special church services notably the Bavington URC Garden Party in June and the Low Hauxley Methodist Chapel Carol service in December. So we are available to play for some small 'dos' but have to stress we are nothing like a 'professional' band for hire.

**Looking ahead to next year – what we need is more folk to come dancing! - or playing!**

Very few folk actually come from the St George's congregation although some of our dancers and musicians are travelling from as far afield as Durham!

**Dancers meet from 7.30 to 9.30 on the second Saturday in the upstairs hall.**

You don't need to know the dances because they are all called ie explained and no one minds if it goes a bit awry. !!

You don't need to be super fit, most of us are not spring chickens and we avoid the more boisterous moves like 'baskets' so you can dance at your own energy level!

You don't need to come with a partner or a friend. Very many of our dancers are single. You will almost certainly know someone if you come along, and we quickly get chatting round the tables, and we swop who we dance with all the time.

We usually have a dance/rest chat listen to the band/dance sandwich throughout the session

You don't need special clothes or shoes and stilettos are banned!

You do need a sense of humour and fun.

You bring your own drinks and nibbles; a great night out for £2.00 for St George's Church funds!!

You can turn up when you are free- you don't need to commit to coming to every dance.

**Players** – can play any instrument, we've had flutes fiddles, pipes, trombones, clarinets , saxes, drums, piano, whistles, recorders, but this year you need to be able to read simple music. We have files to share for C, Bb, Eb ,bass clef instruments -and a couple of folk play by ear. Some of it is fast!! But a lot of it is slow and gentle so beginners are welcome to come and have a go at whatever they can manage! The band meets a 6.30 before the dancers to practice. That is their only commitment. Some are regulars, some come just now and then.

They also pay £2.00 for St George's Church funds.

*Remember you will be welcome whether you come to the whole lot or only an odd one!*

**Dates for 2023: Feb 11th, March 11th, April 8th, May 13th, June 10th, July 8th ,September 9th, October 14th, November 11th,**

**Interested? Do let me know.**

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## 4<sup>th</sup> Morpeth Guides Report for 2022

It was wonderful to welcome our girls and some new girls who joined us at the start of the year. We started this year with some science, we made bionic body parts and lava lamps. They loved just sitting watching the glitter and colours settle.

We celebrated Chinese New Year, the year of the Tiger. The girls made puppets and lanterns. We even decorated our Church notice board in celebration. Of course, we had some yummy food tasting sessions too.

Happy Thinking Day was celebrated by having a fun day filled with crafts, games and food at headquarters. This allowed the girls to think about Rainbows, Brownies, Guides, Rangers, volunteer leaders and helpers to think of each other and celebrate their sisters all around the world.

We went to visit Emily Davison's statue as it was International Women's Day. The girls learnt more about what she did and what she is remembered for.

Over the next few months, we were busy litter picking, badges, UMA's and Skill Builders and promise parties. We talked about World Water Day and what challenges may happen and how we can help. We made pancakes and held a green party for St Patrick's day.

The girls were lucky enough to go to St James's Park to watch the women's football, this was an amazing time. The number of girls showing their support was outstanding and it allowed the girls to see inspirational female role models.

We had a Division camp, held at Selby Woods. The girls had a fulfilling weekend camping, crafting, games, songs and cooking. The girls cooked their own meals, we had some day visitors where the Rainbows and Brownies joined us. The girls went on a walk, they planned their routes and the weather was good. We ended our camp with a special lighting of our jubilee beacon.

The Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations took place at Swinhoe Farm in Belford. Guides joined Rainbows, Brownies, Guides, Rangers and Leaders from the County for a party day. All the girls took part in games, trail, crafts, magic skills, inflatables.

Division Bivvy night under the stars. The girls build their own shelters and sleep (not much) under the stars for the night. We managed to stay dry.

What an adventure we had at Hawkthirst Kielder. We arrived and unpacked and had a movie night. The next morning we were on the water bell boating, rowing around the reservoir and playing games. We abseiled, climbed Jacob's ladder and went for a walk. We found a little ice cream shop en route. What a fun but tiring weekend.

The girl ended the summer term with a sunny trip to the beach, we had a sandcastle competition and played games. It was a lovely way to end such a busy term.

We started the Autumn term with the Hear Me Out pack, we learnt about adventures, days and nights away and a lot about ourselves. We also carried out some first aid involving the skill builders blazing burn and what goes in a first aid kit.

The girls spent time thinking about Harvest. They learnt about where food comes from and how and where it is produced in the world and locally. Some of the girls took part in the Harvest Parade.

We took time to reflect on our Patron the Queen. What she meant to us and how she was involved in Guiding over the years.

The end of the last term was extremely busy for the Guides. Some girls took part in the Remembrance Parade in Morpeth representing Girlguiding by carrying our flags on parade and taking part in the 2 minutes silence. We held a disco for Children in Need raising money to support them.

As we got closer to Christmas it got busier, we made ceramic baubles and Christmas cards. Some of the girls attended the Division Christmas craft day and we held a Christingle in the Church and even had a surprise visit from santa. The girls planned and held a Christmas market, stalls of homemade cakes and decorations, tombola, raffle and much more. We ended our very busy year with a visit to the Odeon to sit, relax and enjoy Matilda the musical.

How do we fit so much into the year, Roll on 2023!!!

## Morpeth Rangers Report 2022

Where do we start, what a year this has been.

It was great to welcome our girls. We celebrated Chinese New Year, the year of the Tiger. The girls made puppets and made fruit sushi, of course we had some yummy food tasting too. The girls found making their own sushi fun and very messy.

We went to visit Emily Davison's statue as it was International Women's Day. The girls learnt more about what she did and why she is remembered. They made rosettes to decorate our notice board explaining all about her and how she inspires others. The girls had a movie night as it was a dark and gloomy night. They decided that it would be Disney Aladdin and set up the room with snacks and blankets. Never heard a squeak all night. Over the next weeks and months the girls worked on their badges, crafts and litter picking. Some of the girls talked about what they have done and what they need to do for their young leaders award.

The girls had a chance to go and see the women's football team at St James Stadium. The girls were proud to represent Girlguiding and to be amongst the crowd of mostly women. We carried out some Skill Builders all about travel, this allowed us to think about where in the world we would travel and how we would get there. This was great fun and got us all super excited about nearer the summer and going on holiday. We also looked at UMA all about Climate, we created some art work, understanding what happens under the sea. We even cooked our own tea using cans. Division Bivvy is a night under the stars. The girls build their own shelters and sleep (not much) under the stars for the night. We managed to stay dry.

The Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations took place at Swinhoe Farm in Belford. We ended with a special lighting of the beacon and sang songs whilst toasting smores. The girls went home with party bags and cakes. This was an amazing and memorable day to remember and to be part of.

We had a chance to go paddle boarding in the sea, the girls got kitted out in wet suits and got their boards and headed for the sea. Before they got wet they had a lesson on how to use a board and stand up. The girls went into the sea, it was freezing, but they laughed and giggled the whole time. It was great fun. We ended the summer term with a trip to the beach. The girls loved making sandcastles and played rounders. The girls stayed later to make their promises on the top of the dunes.

We began the Autumn Term learning first aid. We learnt all about seizures, shock, sprains and much more. They were very practical and hands on sessions so that they could gain some knowledge in case they needed it when at Rangers or at school. The girl had a chance to volunteer in the Great North Run at one of the water station. We were given a stretch of the course to give out water. We sang, shouted and encouraged all the runners. It was an amazing day, very proud of all the runners we even recognised some of them.

In Parliament week we had a mock debate, voted for what we wanted to do next half term, we wrote speeches and tried to persuade each other what would be best.

We took time to reflect on our Patron the Queen. Our notice boards were updated with photographs of when she was a Guide and Ranger as well as fabric drawings that some of the girls did for the Jubilee. The girl learnt about her history in guiding.

It was an extremely busy time for the Rangers, as some had exams but others managed to take part in the Remembrance Parade in Morpeth representing Girlguiding by carrying our flags on parade and taking part in the 2 minutes silence.

As we got closer to Christmas it was busier as we made ceramic baubles and decorations. We held a Christingle in the Church and even had a surprise visit from santa. The girls planned and held a Christmas market with their own stalls of refreshments, toys and books. They even donated what was left to a school which allowed them to give them out to some disadvantaged families in time for Christmas.

We ended our very busy year with a visit to the Odeon to sit, relax and enjoy Matilda the musical, the girl sang their hearts out.

What a busy year we had. Roll on 2023! *Many more adventures to come.*

## 4th Morpeth Rainbows Report for 2022

We started with a bang as we made underwater fireworks in bottles and Catherine wheels using Skittles. They loved to watch the colours run into each other.

The celebrations began with Chinese New Year, the year of the Tiger. The girls were very excited to make a Tiger mask.

Beds were all set up and waiting for the girls for their sleepover. We started the evening designing their placemats to use during mealtimes. We had popcorn and smores during our movie, then brushed our teeth. All girls were fast asleep. The next day we had a fun animal day full of crafts, mini olympics and a hobby horse race. The girls all went home tired but happy with their goodie bags.

We went to visit Emily Davison's statue in the flower park as it was International Women's Day. The girls learnt why her statue was in the park and all about her.

The next few months were busy with promise parties, seed bombs for the garden, badge work, crafts and litter picking. We talked about recycling and what we can do to help the environment. The girls created animals out of recycled materials. We had a seahorse, fish and a giraffe.

The Rainbows joined us for the day at our Division camp. What a fun-filled day. They had a tour of our camp site, completed crafts, joined in games, had a picnic and sang camp songs with a lighting of the special jubilee beacon. They also took part in the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations took place at Swinhoe Farm in Belford.

We ended the summer term with a sunny trip to the beach. We had a sandcastle, our newest Rainbows making their promise and played games. It was a lovely way to end such a busy term.

We started the Autumn term working with the hear me out pack we learnt about ourselves, adventures and days and nights away. We spent time thinking about our best moments in Rainbows and what we would like to do in the future both at unit and region level. The girls came up with some great ideas. We also carried out the skill builder mend a friend introducing the girls to first aid and what to do in an emergency.

We said goodbye to some of our older girls receiving their pot of gold card and badge before walking up the rainbow to Brownies. Have a great time and enjoy.

During this term, there was plenty of opportunity to Take Action. We had the chance to help out at a local school and farm to plant some trees as part of our commitment to help tackle climate change.

Girls took part in the Harvest Parade in the Church and we learnt all about harvest and where food comes from. The girls helped to add to the fundraising total by attending the Children in Need disco.

As we got closer to Christmas we were very busy, we painted ceramic baubles, attended the Division Christmas craft day and we held a Christingle in the Church with a surprise visit from santa. We ended our very busy year with a visit to the Odeon to watch Matilda the musical.

*What a busy year roll on 2023!*

Thank you to our leaders who help to make this all possible. To the congregation and Elders of St George's for all their support. We are able to give the girls some amazing opportunities to help the girls and young women find their voice and build skills and confidence.

Liz, Amy, Anne, Charlotte, Eilish, Fiona, Glynis and Megan  
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We meet in St George's Church Hall on a Tuesday evening:

4th Morpeth Rainbows 5.00 pm – 6.00 pm

4th Morpeth Guides 7.00 pm – 8.30 pm

Morpeth Rangers 7.00 pm – 9.00 pm

## **ST. GEORGE'S COMMUNITY PLAYERS**

Our post-Covid recovery continues although we are still suffering some after effects. Our ticket sales haven't yet quite returned to pre-Covid levels, this does seem to be the pattern with other amateur dramatic groups and the professional theatre has also had to weather a slow return to normal. This does give us hope for the future. We have also, for the last two plays, changed the way we sell tickets, using an online site ticket source. This may also be a reason for the decline, we are monitoring the situation. All that said the future is still bright.

Last year we presented Ladies Day in March and Enchanted April in November and have just completed this year's March production of Summer End. A play by Eric Chappell who is known for TV series Only When I Laugh, Duty Free and, most famously, Rising Damp.

Summer End, a comedy/drama murder mystery, set in a retirement home has been very well received by our audiences whose numbers were swelled by tickets bought at the door on the nights.

Both Enchanted April and Summer End were hit by illness of actors. In the former, Joann Evans had to drop out due to ill health; her role was taken on by Sharon Saint Lamont who was directing the play in her directorial debut. Sharon did an amazing job in coping with taking on an acting part while directing. This March we were supposed to present The Importance of Being Earnest, directed by Elizabeth Blanchard, however there were problems with casting so Summer End was found which called for a change of director; Hugo Davison stepped into this role but was in the play. This was Hugo's directorial debut. During rehearsals we were again struck by ill health, Elizabeth Blanchard was playing Mrs Lang the matron/manager of the home but illness meant she had to drop out. Joann Evans who was initially going to be prompt for this play took on the role just under three weeks from the first night. Jo coped wonderfully well and this was much appreciated by our audiences and all of us cast members.

We will be offering a Patron's night, entertainment which is a free to our patrons, in July.

If anyone is interested in becoming a patron please speak to me.

If anyone would like to join us, again please speak to me. It's not just acting and directing, stage building, set design, Front of House, prompt and props all go to make a performance. We are a team. You as audience also contribute; your reactions and applause lift the actors.

Thank you for supporting St. George's Community Players, one of the oldest drama groups in our area. Your support will help us to continue into the future.

**Sue Rutherford  
Chairman**

## **St George' Cradle Roll**

Things are very quiet as regards Cradle Roll

We have had no baptisms since November 2021.

There are none in the offing at present.

As far as our special Cradle Roll services for our baptised young ones and their families are concerned Julian and I made the decision to stop these for a while at least. We found that the only people we could depend on coming were Margaret Johnson's two granddaughters, aged 12 and 10 years and if they weren't available Julian and I were left sitting looking at each other with lots of biscuits and cakes, especially at Pentecost which is when we decided to stop for the time being. I know my twin nieces would come but the first few years at school seem to bring many birthday parties particularly on Sundays.

Cradle Roll services were always very special to me and will always hold a special place in my heart but sometimes one needs to stand back and make difficult decisions.

I leave this with God. The future may see these services return or perhaps we'll be shown a different way to go.

**Sue Rutherford  
Cradle Roll Secretary**