ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 24TH APRIL 2016

1. OPENING DEVOTIONS

These were led by the Minister Revd Ron Forster who also acted as Chairman. He welcomed 48 members to the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from: Ken and Gillian Irvine, Mary Kelly, Karin Jackson, Adele Elkin, Elizabeth Rowlands, Sarah Cleverley, Maddie Cleverley, Moria Mann, Cynthia Lilburn, Julie Vermaas, Donald Dixon, Linda Glascott, Margery Tate, Jean Elliott, Jean Tait, Robert Hudson, Anne Crombie, Irene Thompson.

3. AOB

There were no items notified.

4. NEWS OF FRIENDS AND FAMILIES

The deaths of Betty Lowes, Eric Ross and Robert Harbinson in 2015 were recorded. And between January and March 2016 the deaths of Margaret Johnstone, Marjory Ross, Donald Scott and Arnold Lilburn were recorded. Thanks were given for their lives and witness.

News was exchanged about Eve Short, Elizabeth Rowlands, Ossie Dennis and Archie Burns. All these members and their families were remembered in prayer.

5. MINUTES OF THE LAST AGM HELD ON 26th APRIL 2015

The minutes of the last AGM held on 26th April 2015 were agreed and signed.

6. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

7. REPORTS

The Chairman thanked Stephanie Robson for her work in collating the reports received from each organisation named below and appearing in the AGM booklet. Questions were invited for each report.

Church Secretary's Report	No comments.
Minister's Report	No comments.
Managers' Report	The Clerk reported that there is some stonework in the north transept needing attention. The work to install secondary glazing in the Church is complete. The Ladies Coffee Club were thanked for their donation of a new microwave and pepper pots. A new church website is up and running. If anyone has any comments or items to include please get in touch with Andrew Hamnett. Chris Hills was thanked for the work which he did on the previous website. Neil Robson has given a year's notice; he wishes to step down from being Property Manager. Susan Sanderson will be stepping down as Hall Lettings Officer in October. The Clerk thanked all the Managers for their work during the year.
Social Convenor's Report	No comments.
Junior Church and Cradle Roll Report	Shirley Forster, who is one of the Junior Church Leaders, is leaving next year. Sue Elliott called for people to consider being a Junior Church Leader.
Bible Fellowship Group Report	No comments.
SGURC Music Groups Report	No comments.
Country Dance Club Report	No comments.
Ladies Coffee Club Report	No comments.
Lunchtime Concerts Report	No comments.
Tea Time Talks Report	No comments.
Wednesday Badminton	No comments.

Thursday Morning Badminton	No comments.
Thursday Evening Badminton	No comments.
Morpeth and Mitford Asylum Seekers Support Group	No comments.
Christian Aid Representative Report	No comments.
Afternoon Bowls Club	No comments.
Evening Bowls Club	No comments.
4th Morpeth St George's Rainbows, Brownies and Guides	No comments.
Morpeth Baden Powell Scout Group	No comments.
St George's Community Players	No comments.

The annual reports were formally agreed by the meeting.

8. TREASURER'S REPORT

Thanks were expressed to David for the work that he does as treasurer.

The accounts were formally agreed by the meeting.

9. GENERAL MATTERS

There were no general matters.

10. APPOINTMENTS

These are listed below. The names of Elders to be re inducted were proposed by the Chairman, having been endorsed at the Elders Meeting, and were accepted and carried by the meeting.

Appointment	Officer
Elders	Resignation: Ossie Dennis Re inducted for a further term: Patricia Gatherum Penny Oxley
Church Secretary	Teresa Benkhabeb-House
Treasurer	David Calcraft
Clerk to Managers	Andrew Hamnett
Social Convenor	Gillian Irvine
Catering Team	Joan Cooper, Stephanie Robson, Patricia Gatherum and Sarah Cleverley
Gift Aid Secretary	Linda Glascott
Freewill Offering	Linda Glascott
Property Manager	Neil Robson
Stewarding Rota	Andy and Sarah Cleverley
Hall Lettings Officers	Susan Sanderson and Patricia Gatherum
Heating Officers	Robin Cooper, Andy Cleverley, George Brown
Liaison Rep to Managers	Rotating amongst Elders
Auditor	Jim Miller
Junior Church Leader	Sue Elliott
Crèche Organisers – ad hoc basis	Patricia Gatherum and Margaret Brock
Sunday Tea and Coffee Rota	Laurence and Teresa Benkhabeb-House
Flower Committee Convenor	Dorothy Luke
Orchestra Co-ordinator	Shirley Forster
Transport Officer	Vivien Bennett
Organists	Ken Irvine and Andrew Hamnett
Newsletter Editor	Stephanie Robson
Church Fair Organisers	Lorna Anderson and Patricia Gatherum
Health and Safety Consultant	Ken Anderson
Christian Aid	Margaret Johnson

Commitment for Life	Sarah Cleverley
Prayer Handbook	Sarah Cleverley
Housekeepers	Joan Cooper, Sarah Cleverley and Mary Kelly

11. A.O.B.

1. Bequest Group

The Bequest Group have put together a proposal for an extension at the rear of the Church. A special Church Meeting will be called to look at plans, together with an artist's impression of the building. There will be an opportunity to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the proposal at the meeting, and the Bequest Group – Revd Ron Forster, Joan Cooper, Patricia Gatherum, Sue Elliott and Andrew Hamnett – will be available to answer questions.

2. Church Weekend 2017

There is to be a Church Weekend from 5th to 7th May 2017 at The Windermere Centre, Windermere, Cumbria. Further details to follow later in the year.

3. Local Mission and Ministry Review (LMMR)

In 2006 the URC General Assembly introduced the Local Mission and Ministry Review (LMMR), a process designed to assist congregations and ministers to review and appraise their church-life, mission and ministry opportunities and priorities. St George's is being reviewed during 2016. A team of four local (to the Northern Synod) people have been appointed to carry out the LMMR of St George's. They attended a Church service on 3rd April (the Morpeth Gathering Service). There will be an opportunity for members to meet with the team on 6th July. Documents relating to St George's have been sent to the team. These include the Pastorate Profile, the latest set of financial accounts and the most recent Quinquennial Property Survey.

4. A vote of thanks

Revd Stuart Brock thanked Revd Ron Forster for his work over the last year, his ministry to St George's and to the community in and around Morpeth.

There being no further business the meeting closed with prayer at 12.50pm.

Date of next meeting: to be arranged

Signed…….. Chairman

Signed…… Secretary

Date……..

CHURCH SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR 2016

At 31st December 2016 the Annual Return to Synod showed our membership to be 114. There were nine losses during the year, which was made up of seven deaths, and two members who transferred to another Church.

The deaths were recorded of Marjory Ross, Margaret Johnstone, Arnold Lilburn, Donald Scott, Minnie Dickey, Eve Short and June Auld. The death of David Scales, an adherent of St George's, was also recorded. Thanks were given for their lives and witness.

Peter and Bridget Rowbottom transferred to Morpeth Methodist Church. And David Gunn, an associate member, transferred to Longframlington URC.

We welcomed Cleland Sudlow who transferred to St George's.

Junior Church has seven children who regularly attend; their ages range from 4 to 15. During the year there were two infant baptisms: Ted William Pritchard and Eleanor Eve Matthews.

There are 116 children across all age groups in the uniformed organisations i.e. Rainbows, Brownies, Guides and Baden Powell Cubs and Scouts.

The number of serving Elders is 16. At last year's AGM both Penny Oxley and Patricia Gatherum were re inducted.

2016 was again a busy year in the life of St George's URC. I haven't read them but I have no doubt that the following reports paint a picture of a vibrant, active and lively Church. A Church endeavouring to be a witness to God's love, to serve and nourish its members, and to be a place of welcome and hospitality to the local community and those from further afield. Enjoy the read!

Teresa Benkhabeb-House
Church Secretary

MINISTERS REPORT

Minister's Reflections

The Annual Report is a look back over the year just gone, what we did, what we achieved, it lauds what went well, there is perhaps some reflection about what did not go so well. Perhaps those who write particular reports made their own private confession and about what went wrong and what should have been done differently. There is fact in the financial accounts and the listing of events and meetings.

Some people may feel that as a church community we should do more strategic thinking about mission and discipleship. Certainly, within the Northern Synod of the United Reformed Church over recent months and coming months there is thinking being done about the way forward.

My own strategy about my ministry in these parts over the years has been to encourage those ideas I thought were good, helpful and progressive which came from people within the fellowship. I have been glad to have many ideas from people here in St George's. What did I do when I thought the ideas were not so good, would not work or could be divisive? Well! I will let those who felt discouraged and even disregarded, make their comments at this point.

That withstanding we use the Annual Report to look forward with hope and honesty. Do we need a vision and mission statement? Some churches spend a great deal of time working at such. But it can be like the bronzed serpent on the pole which was helpful and healing when the children of Israel were searching for the way forward in the desert [Numbers 20:4-9]. It later became an idol what was worshipped [2 Kings 18: 1-8] which King Hezekiah destroyed. Now Hezekiah clearly had his own agenda, but it was an agenda that arose from being aware of what was needed to keep the faith and move the community forward.

Recently I attended the funeral of Milburn Douglas, who was a previous Mayor of Castle Morpeth. Quite a character. I got there early to be sure of getting a place in the pews, and so had to time to ponder. I looked through the service sheet and saw that the Bible passage was Romans 12:9-18, a reading not often used in the funeral service. However I thought this is really a mission statement for the Church. We need look no further. 23 instructions, guidelines, statements, call them what you will, for church life together. Marks of Missions. Qualities of the True Christian.

> *Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with brotherly and sisterly affection; take delight in honouring one another. Never flag in zeal, be aglow with the Spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in your hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints, practice hospitality.*
>
> *Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; never be conceited. Repay no one evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends upon you, live peaceably with all.*

Thank you to all the elders, managers, stewards, office holders, members and friends who have played their positive part, however big or small, in 2016 and in the many years before.

Thank you doers, door openers and don't-stand-stillers, kindly worders and cheerful smilers, getter outers and putter awayers, writers and balancers, supporters and sorters, drivers and arrangers, creators and innovators, launderers and rememberers, sitters and knitters, dancers and singers, carers and bakers and shakers and jam makers and note takers and music makers and picture takers and pray-ers and players and sayers and stayers and candlestick makers.

Ron

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MANAGERS

2016 – 2017

The managers have had a busy year, and have had four meetings as well as other meetings with outside parties.

Church Property: The managers have approved the suggestion that the vestry toilet be modified to permit access from the back staircase. At the moment there are no ladies' facilities easily accessible from the Horsley Room and this probably accounts at least in part for the under-use of this room. Initially quotations were obtained on the basis that the Property Manager would manage the project, but the managers are now of the view that the project should be managed professionally and Robin Cooper is seeking further quotations with this in mind.

The secondary glazing project in the sanctuary is now completed; this is a major project that is part of a long-term scheme to make the sanctuary warmer and more welcoming, especially in the winter months. The managers were also supportive of the installation of secondary glazing in the hall upstairs, but further examination has revealed that the window frames are in poor condition and the intention is now to replace the frames as well as to install double glazing. Heating itself remains expensive and there is the need to recognise that some of the heating installation is now showing distinct signs of age.

The Quinquennial survey was completed in the course of the year: this has identified both short-term problems such as rising damp in the front and back of the church building and wood-rot in the cellar and tower. There are also longer-term problems such as the decay in stonework at the front of the church owing to the heavy traffic in Bridge Street and Dark Lane. The Property Manager is attending to the most immediate problems as quickly as possible, but the building is basically very sound; like all old buildings, however, it requires continual care and attention. We raise a considerable sum each year at the Annual Gift Day and we will need to continue this for the foreseeable future.

The Landscape Consultants employed by the Environment Agency are not showing a great turn of speed in dealing with the fairly minor matters that remain in the Church Garden. Agreement has been reached to add a strip of turf on the east side of the garden and re-plant the Silver Birch tree that had to be removed to facilitate access during wall construction. The Clerk writes to the consultants periodically and receives encouraging answers, but would appreciate some activity as well! In the meantime, the Clerk is very grateful to all who help in the Garden, particularly George, Karin, Jared, Margaret, Joan and others who give their time generously and freely.

Minor items of repair in the year include repairs to the church roof, a leaking window, electrical repairs, inspection of fire equipment, re-decoration of the back-entrance hallway, updating of the church notice boards, re-wiring of the lantern in the vestibule area, and provision of wooden handles to help access to the pulpit and daïs. A new ramp has been constructed to allow access by wheel chairs to the daïs as well as allowing the piano to be moved for concerts. This has been mainly handled by the Elders.

The lift remains a slight worry: Robin Cooper has worked closely with Stannah lifts to try to identify the cause of a recurrent problem whereby the lift does not stop on the upper levels to permit ingress or egress. This may be due to low usage at certain times in the week and running the lift up and down once whilst unoccupied appears to help considerably.

The managers have decided that with the retirement of the Minister, the large amount of music currently stored in the Manse will need to be moved into the church. After some consideration, the managers have agreed that a cabinet should be installed in the Horsley Room to hold all the music owned by the church as well as other related documentation. This is now in hand. The Clerk would want to place on record his appreciation of the hard work of Neil Robson the Property Manager.

Housekeeping: The managers are very grateful to all who help in the kitchen area: we have been replacing worn out equipment over the year, but we also recognise that this is a work continually in progress and we have been greatly aided by contributions from the Ladies' Coffee Club for such items as a microwave cooker and new condiment holders. Sharon has continued to give good service as our cleaner and the managers would want to thank Joan Cooper, Sarah Cleverley and Mary Kelly for their help as well as the many others who have done stints in the kitchen.

Social Activities: The church has a vigorous programme of social activities bringing many into the building who would otherwise not visit us. In addition to regular activities such as the lunchtime concerts, tea-time talks, and the many activities of the Ladies Coffee club, we have a new venture, the Knit and Natter Club, set up by Joan Cooper that meets weekly in the Drysdale Room for relaxed social interaction and knitting lessons and advice for the novices. The Clerk is immensely grateful to Gillian Irvine for her tireless work in helping to organise many of these activities; without her enthusiasm many would not take place.

Stewarding: There have been concerns raised in the course of the year about whether we can sustain the number of stewards that we have used in the past for services. There are welcome new faces as stewards, and the managers are extremely grateful to all who act in this important role, but we have also asked that the management of services be carefully examined to see whether we can make do with somewhat fewer stewards on Sunday morning. Some care will be necessary here: recently two reprobates appeared in the church one Sunday morning asking for money, and consideration will need to be given to safety as well. The Clerk would want to put on record his great appreciation for the work of Andy and Sarah Cleverley in organising the stewarding register.

Hall Bookings: This year saw Susan Sanderson step down as hall-lettings manager and the managers are most grateful both for the work that she did and to Joann Evans, who has generously stepped forward to fulfil this important role. A major change this year has been the realisation by the URC that the various Synod Trusts, which had been rather blithely assuming that local churches were legally entitled to hire rooms out without any reference to the Trust bodies themselves, had never actually taken steps to formalise this position in law.

This has led both to the need for churches actually to agree to take on the role of hiring agents (which represents no real change) but also means that churches need to ensure that their hiring agreements are consistent with current legal practice (a very different affair). Joann has worked immensely hard to re-write our hiring agreement, and we are extremely grateful for her doing this and for ensuring that the hiring process remains under tight control. Joann has also had to deal with occasional miscreants who leave rooms untidy and dirty; again a plea: if you do hire a room in the church, please leave it as you would like to find it.

Website: The church website, www.stgeorgesurcmorpeth.org is now a year old. There are about 100 different people using it each week and some 200+ 'hits' on the site. The Clerk would welcome feedback on the site and also welcome any news that members of the church would like to put onto the site. Please send all suggestions to the Clerk.

Andrew Hamnett

LETTINGS MANAGERS REPORT-

St George's URC 2016/17

I took over from Susan in summer last year, and it has been a steep learning curve managing not just the church's diary but my own time too. However, to the best of my knowledge all is going well. A new Hire agreement has been written with the assistance of the management team as the previous document was in need of review, and this will be sent to those who use the hall on a regular basis and to any new users. I have had some difficulty managing the invoicing part of the role, and am working with the users to set up a more efficient way of doing this.

Joann Evans

SOCIAL CONVENORS REPORT 2016

The Members and Friends of St Georges continue to actively organise and support activities which raise the profile of our church in the Community. Many events are detailed in other reports and a huge 'thank you' to all involved.

January fund raising began with the Managers' Coffee Morning which got things off to a good start. This was closely followed by a cafe style evening including supper with the singing group 'Just 4 Men'. This proved extremely enjoyable and raised £383.
In April we organised and hosted a fund raising concert for Deborah Snowdon, a Morpeth student at present studying harp at Edinburgh University. This was to raise money to buy a full size harp to enable her to continue her studies. Including a donation of £250 from Morpeth Lions, we were able to present Deborah with a cheque for over £1,100. Thank you to all who made this possible.
In May the Plant Sale was a sell out attracting enthusiastic amateur gardeners from around the district and bringing in £1074, an amazing amount.

In July a Strawberry Tea, with entertainment arranged by Shirley, was intended to be a 'free' event but donations amounted to £421.

The Annual Charity Card Sale went extremely well and attracted some new Charities to our Church.
This event never raises a large amount but it helps local groups to advertise and sell their cards and gifts.

In November Ernie 'moothie ' Gordon asked if we would host his final public appearance at St Georges. We organised a cheese and wine evening and along with fellow folk musicians Ernie gave a memorable heart warming performance since which he has played at numerous other concerts. You can't keep a good man down.

In 2016 we did not have our usual Christmas Concert by the Mid Northumberland Chorus but they will return in June 2017.

Once again the Northumberland Theatre Company made use of our premises for their productions attracting full houses on both occasions.

The Book and Jigsaw Library continues to be very popular and raised £225 during 2016.
Greetings cards for all occasions raised £443 during the year almost double last years amount.

Once again, my thanks to all for your help and support. ***Gillian Irvine***

JUNIOR CHURCH REPORT 2016

Junior Church has undergone a few changes in 2016. For the first two terms of the year we continued pretty much as usual, occasionally having 5 children attending but more frequently only two, Joshua and Martin. A meeting involving parents and children took place to try to cover all eventualities, with Mums offering help and support.

In September a new Junior Church leader joined us, Barbara Pringle, with Barbara came her twin granddaughters, Molly and Heidi. We now regularly have 4 to 6 and sometimes 7 children attending Junior Church. As the age groups now stretch from 4 years to 15 years we are trying to stretch ourselves to give proper time and suitable material for both upper and lower age groups.

One thing that definitely unites all the children is food; they all enjoy our baking days which are usually in conjunction with Junior Church doing tea and coffee after the service. The congregation seems to enjoy our handiwork too.

We know we will be losing Shirley in the summer which will take us back to only 3 leaders again. I'd like everyone to think carefully and prayerfully about this situation. If you think you'd liked to join us then please come and talk to me.

I'd like to thank our children and young people for their attendance, their fun and enthusiasm. Thanks to the parents for their support. Thank you to the congregation for continued support and backing. Thank you many times over to my wonderful team, Janet Johnson, Barbara Pringle and of course Shirley Forster whose loss we shall feel very keenly. ***Sue Elliott. Lead Junior Church Leader***

MIDWEEK SERVICE REPORT 2016

In 2016 a proposal was made and agreed upon to extend these services from once a month to every Wednesday. We now have a short, 30 minute, service at 12.30 every Wednesday unless there is a midweek concert. Church doors are open from 12 midday, tea, coffee and biscuits are available before the service starts.

These services are much appreciated by those attending. We have a fairly regular group of 5 to 8 folk, sometimes more. Occasionally visitors have come into the Church to look around; sometimes they have stayed for the service.
The services have been lead by a variety of Church members, ministers and lay preachers. This allows for a fresh and quite different way of worshipping as different people will employ different types of structure of service. Sometimes it becomes a bit of a discussion group, sometimes it is more traditional but it always has something to offer, even if it is just a quiet time in the middle of the week. A time to reconnect with God perhaps.
I write up the Rota for the service leaders so I'm always looking for new people to come along and try us out and perhaps decide to lead to lead a service now and then.

My thanks to Andrew Hamnett for playing piano for these services as often as he can. I do find having music for the hymns really does help.

Thanks to ministers Ron, Suzanne and Stuart, to lay preachers Margery and Carol, to Janet Colonel and Teresa Benkabeb-House for all taking midweek services in 2016.

Why not pop in some Wednesday and try us out. ALL ARE WELCOME

Sue Elliott

CRECHE REPORT

Although a crèche is not routinely provided since it is not often needed, it will be put on whenever there are young children or babies in church.

CRADLE ROLL REPORT 2016

We only had two baptisms in 2016, Ted William Pritchard in January and Eleanor Eve Matthews in July. I am hopeful of possibly a small increase in the numbers of baptism this year. We wait to see.

Our Cradle Roll services continue at Palm Sunday, Pentecost, Harvest and Nativity and are usually well attended. We have one child who was baptised at St. George's, as a baby, in 2006. Louise still looks forward to her cradle Roll service invitations and is now old enough to come along without parents or big sisters. She has a friend who wasn't baptised in our Church but who loves to come along with her to our Cradle Roll Services, their favourite is definitely Nativity. Louise says this is when Christmas starts for her.

Our Cradle Roll sheets have now run out of spaces. I am in the process of having a new sheet made then it will be framed and hung up beside the other three. My thanks to Robin Cooper for printing out the names and putting them onto the sheets when required.

Of course this year will see some big changes as Ron and Shirley are leaving us. I really would like these services to continue and hope that someone from the congregation will come forward to help in the planning and the presenting of these special and important services.

Thank you to Christine Oakes for playing piano for Cradle Roll services, now you're in Christine you'll not get out in a hurry! A very special and massive thank you to Ron and Shirley, especially Shirley. We have worked together so well on all these services since we started them many years ago. Your contribution has been huge and your loss will be felt so keenly, in particular by me.

Thank You both ***Sue***

BIBLE FELLOWSHIP REPORT 2017

The Bible Fellowship has continued to meet fortnightly on a Wednesday morning. As well as meeting in the home of Margery Tate we have enjoyed the hospitality of Carol Reed (Margery's neighbour and Church Warden at St. Aidans), Christine Richardson and Ace Oldroyd (from St. Roberts).

We are currently taking a closer look at the Lord's Prayer using Tom Wright's book The Lord and His Prayer as a basis for discussion. This has encouraged us to discover new insights and deeper meaning in the prayer as we have looked at it phrase by phrase.

The group is enriched by having members from different church backgrounds and we value the insights, knowledge and experience which each member brings to our discussions.

Each session ends with a prayer and the Grace.

If anyone would like to find out more, please contact Margery on O1670 515049 or speak to Janet Colonel, Christine Richardson, Joy White, or Pat Clow.

2017 SGURC ORCHESTRA AND BAND REPORT

'6 instruments.. saxophone and bassoon lend a bit of substance to the melodic flutes and violins. One pencil between us. Hauxley Chapel full. Great expectations of a really good sing. A more Thomas Hardy experience I have never had. Our little band of trusty players providing the accompaniment in our own rustic style. The country voices lifting in enthusiasm the ageless carols we all know and love. We praised God and Jesus and ate mince pies and drank mulled wine in a country village hall, all happy, all warm and all fulfilled. ***Ace Oldroyd writing about a SGURC outing December 2016***

SO IT'S Annual report time AND WHAT HAVE WE DONE. ANOTHER YEAR OVER. A NEW ONE JUST BEGUN!! What will prompt you to remember good times shared or persuade you to join in future?

Here are some lists

Places and events played over the last year

January 2016
Country dance club
Morning Worship with Orchestra
Practicing and performing Widdrington URC 'The Hoedown Revisited'
February 2016
Country dance club
Morning Worship with Orchestra
Practicing for Women's world Day of prayer
Christian Aid Ceilidh for Jesmond St George's Church
March 2016
Country dance club
Women's world Day of prayer
2 services at Bavington
Singing at the funeral of Rose Reeve ,(one of our members) in Durham

April 2016
Morpeth Gathering Morning Worship with Orchestra
Birthday ceilidh at St James Church hall
May 2016
Bavington service
Country dance club
Morning Worship with Orchestra 'The Man on the Horse' musical by Rose Reeve
North Road Methodist Church Durham
June 2016 Morning Worship with Orchestra
Bavington service and garden party
July 2016
Morning Worship with Orchestra
Ceilidh for Moderators retirement St Margaret's South Shields
STRAWBERRY TEA band AT ST GEORGES CHURCH and appeared on Morpeth News TV!!
August 2016
Wedding ceilidh at Widdrington farm Weekly play along sessions SGURC and friends from Cobweb orchestra raising Money for St George's
September 2016
Country dance club
Morning Worship with Orchestra
St James URC Newcastle service for the Induction of New moderator
October 2016
Christian Aid ceilidh // Country dance club Morning Worship with Orchestra
Crusader rehearsals involve lots of us
Haddaway Hadrian entertainment involves lots of us
November 2016
Country dance club
Morning Worship with Orchestra
"CRUSADER - the story of Ellen Wilkinson and the town of Jarrow " by Rose Reeve involves many of us
December 2016
Ceilidh for Northumberland Wildlife Trust Volunteers
Christmas carol Service at Hauxley Methodist Chapel
Nativity Service at Methodist Church with Orchestra
January 2017
Country dance club
Morning Worship with Orchestra
Service at Hauxley Methodist Chapel
February 2017
Country dance club
Morning Worship with Orchestra
Practices for Women's World day of Prayer
March 2017
Women's World day of Prayer
Country dance club
Morning Worship with Orchestra
Birthday Ceilidh at the Riverside for one of our dancers. And plenty more in the diary to come!!!

Money raised

SGURC Band has directly raised £475 for Christian Aid from donations for playing Ceilidhs this year, and another £300 for St George's church from other ceilidhs and the Play along sessions. Along with singers actors and caterers from St George's and their friends we helped raise £1300 for St George's Church via The Strawberry tea and Haddaway Hadrian.

We pass donations on as soon as we get them, so this tally is not exact! But it is all handed over! We receive no payments or expenses ourselves for playing, except for eating the occasional buffet when we descend like locusts!!

People!!

How many of these folk do you know? They have all played with SGURC at St Georges this year; Ace Adrian Becky Christine Dermot Gill A Gillian H Hilary H Hilary P Jenny Janet Joan John Joyce M Linda Mark Martin Penny Peter F Peter L Susan Ron Ruth Sheila Shirley Stuart Teresa Zoe, with Jared, Andrew and Ken. Some dip in now and then, some play only ceilidhs or only services, some for just about everything. They come from St George's, St Roberts, the Methodist Church, churches further afield, and no church, plus we rope in anyone at all who is willing, to act and sing in our entertainments, and people from across the synod for synod events. A few players from outside the church circle have been roped in after joining our summer play along sessions. Rose Reeve, a friend of the Forster's from our Sunderland days died in March 2016, after 18 years travelling from Durham to play with us, and writing music for us from arrangements of international music for Women's World Day of Prayer to the full scale musical creations, 'Columba', 'According to John' and 'Mary Hollon' performed by SGURC and friends and 'Crusader' recently performed for a second run by St George's Players.

Instruments Accordion bassoon cahoun cello clarinet euphonium flute guitar horn keyboard mouth organ Northumbrian pipes piano recorders saxophone singing tambourine trombone tuba ukulele viola violin have all made an appearance !!

If you can play kumbayah on whatever you've got .. come and join us!!!

Music The Orchestra library built up over 20 plus years of playing for dances, services, and entertainments currently takes up several metres of shelving in the manse, and will shortly be installed in one of the rooms at Church. We probably have about 1000 items of hymn music, folk dances, and other short pieces.

Country Dance club

It continues to meet monthly except in summer and is attracting a wide range of people from Morpeth and further afield. We have young children to grandparents, and people hobbling on 2 left feet to folklore experts among the crowd. Jared keeps us all together explaining and calling the dances, and there is always fun and chat and all that exercise!! For £1.50. Like the SGURC band dancers come from St George's, local churches, and people from near and far who have no church connection come along and find a warm welcome into the wider life of St George's. The Country Dance club keeps proper accounts – see below.

What next I've been 'organiser of SGURG a long time and many people have asked me 'what will happen to SGURC when you leave St George's.' I don't know!! I'll have left. Though I do hope I will sneak back and play now and then. I joined the church orchestra 18 years ago as a beginner violin player among highly skilled teenagers and just a few adults, using hand written parts, and the telephone. Now we have a mostly mature adult group, from beginners to teachers, do everything by computer programs, email and a website!! Who knows where it will go next!! We will probably never compete with the lunch time concert performers and music festival prize winners, but we can not be beaten on enthusiasm

WE are not just any old community band, there are plenty of those. WE are St George's United Reformed Church band, ready to welcome and include anyone interested, whatever their skill level, in playing for events mostly closely related to the life of St George's, whether that is worship within St George's, supporting small rural churches, events bringing folk into St G's or taking us out into the community around us. SGURC will indeed grow and change. Folk are eager to continue and develop our music and beginning to take over various bits and pieces of the 'organising' I do. Maybe there will be different people to contact for different things, may be different kinds of events and music will emerge.

When I started out in the Sunday orchestra all those years ago we never dreamed of a ceilidh band, or adult beginners joining in, of shy retiring types performing in church socials, of providing music for rural church services, of playing for moderators inductions and mayors ceilidhs, of presenting full scale musicals like Mary Hollon. Often organising things has been like herding cats, but I have had such a lot of fun and learned such a lot with this wonderful group, been to places, and events, and made music I wouldn't have thought possible, from 2 leading a service for 4 worshippers, to a band of 14 and a hall packed with dancers, to Mozart in a tent by the Wansbeck! Thankyou one and all!!!

So please support and encourage SGURC, players are really encouraged by the folk who come after each service or ceilidh to say how much they enjoyed the playing. Let them know what kind of music and events you would like to happen in the life of at St George's. What will SGURC do next?

Shirley shirl@the4stars.force9.co.uk https://sites.google.com/site/sgurcband/

The moderators leaving do ceilidh July 2016

Nativity Service Morpeth Methodist Church

The Strawberry tea

A proper 'barn dance' Widdrington Wedding

Low Hauxley Methodist Chapel Afternoon service

Worship at St George's

Country Dance Club

LADIES COFFEE CLUB 2016/17

This has been yet another happy year for the St. George's Ladies Coffee Club. Paid–up membership presently stands at 29. Our membership tends to fluctuate for a variety of reasons – frailty, illness and bereavement being among them. We are happy to welcome back one member who has returned after a family bereavement.

In September we opened our new session with an interesting talk by Michael Metcalf who regaled us with some interesting and amusing episodes in his unexpected "Life in Show Business".

October saw the Club participating again in the Autumn Fair, where their responsibilities ranged from the Home Baking, and Jams and Preserves stalls to providing refreshments from the kitchen. Both selling and catering teams were their usual skilled and professional selves. Many thanks to all who participated, including the enthusiastic bakers and jam and preserve makers. Later that same month, Dorothy Brownlee came to enlarge our understanding of history, by sharing what she had learned about the hospital ship the HMHS Rohilla which foundered off the north-east coast only metres from shore. Several lifeboats were sent to assist and many brave folk risked their lives trying to rescue the passengers, many of whom were wounded soldiers. Much of her information had come from family reminiscences as her uncle had been one of those assisting in the doomed rescue attempt.

In November, Wendy Stafford returned, this time to enlighten us about the "Origins of our Christmas Celebrations". There were many surprises as well as a raffle for some original Christmas decorations.
Our Christmas Lunch at the Morpeth Golf Club proved a most enjoyable meal. The food was delicious and well presented. The jokes in the crackers had unfortunately not improved. Later in December, our annual Christmas Coffee Morning took place. The floral decorations that had been created for the occasion, supervised by the flower committee, were as popular as ever.

2017 started with a visit in January by Maureen Cairns. Her subject was "Isabella Bird - a Victorian Explorer". Isabella came from the North- East and had inherited wanderlust with a vengeance. We learned about her travels in Europe, Asia, especially along the Silk Route and in North America. She travelled to numerous parts of the world at a time when it was frowned upon by society. Many a modern woman traveller would hesitate to venture to some of these places even now.

February should have brought us a visit from Kay Howe. However, Kay was unable to attend and her husband, Steve, came in her stead. Steve is a long-serving officer with the Northumbrian Police and spoke on "Northumbria Police and the Community". Later in the month the Annual Domino Drive and Supper took place with the participants showing their usual appreciation for the cuisine and the fun and companionship that the occasion provides. Many thanks to the catering team and Jared Johnson.

March will bring Kate McDonald who will talk to us about "Hats, Handbags and Handcuffs". Hopefully there will be some samples to try on.
April will bring the AGM where we will make decisions on how to spend our funds. Last years funds were spent on a variety of items which enhanced the smooth running of the kitchen and various social events. These included some new pepper shakers, a more up to date microwave, and the refreshments for our 2016 AGM. We were able, also to make a contribution to church funds of £1200.

In May, we will finish the session with our Spring Luncheon, as soon as we decide where to go.

A very big thank you for all the continued support, in so many practical ways for our many events. The ongoing friendship is greatly appreciated. I wish to thank Sarah for her 'above and beyond the call of duty' assistance which has enabled the smooth running of the club this year.

Suzanne Hamnett (Co-ordinator)

KNITTER, NATTER, CRAFT AND CHATTER COFFEE GROUP

A few Church members and friends expressed an interest to start a group based on drinking coffee or tea, knitting and nattering, that was open to all.

We decided on every Wednesday morning from 10 – 12 midday in the Drysdale room.

We aim to enjoy each others company whilst sharing projects for Church or charity, or working on our own projects. Since September our numbers have grown, we have regulars and folk who come when they can, usually averaging 12 – 15 members per week, both men and women. There is always a pleasant hum of conversation on all subjects. Help with projects from the more experienced and pleasure when an item is finished. One member has learnt to knit; others have taken up a past hobby again. We enjoyed the hosts of Angels being made then packed. There was a deep discussion on wing designs and suitable colours!

New members are welcome and equally those who just wish to call in for coffee and a chat.

Joan Cooper – co-ordinator.

9/2/2017

ANNUAL REPORT 2016 – LUNCHTIME CONCERTS

There were nine Lunchtime Concerts in 2016 with audience numbers increasing to an average attendance of 110.

Whilst continuing to encourage youthful local talent we have had a number of requests to perform from professional musicians. This is resulting in an even more varied programme with all musical tastes catered for.

Highlights this year have once again included visits by five Royal Northern Sinfonia players, the Virtuoso Jazz Trio (by popular request), Graeme Danby and Valerie Reid of English National Opera, concert pianist Nicholas Nowicki and students of KEVI who perform for us just before their final music exams at school.

The number of sponsors remains the same as last year at 35 but many more of our audience are taking advantage of the special offer price of 4 tickets for £10.

Sale of Teas and coffees averaged £25 per concert with in region of £200+ also going to church funds. Complimentary drinks, mulled wine, shortbread and mince pies were served at the December Concert.

We continue to be extremely grateful to the volunteers, Joyce Calcraft, Pat Hills, Sheila Faulke, Margaret Johnson, Barbara Gunn and Stephanie Robson who man the coffee station and admissions. Also to Brian Priestley for his excellent critiques for the Morpeth Herald.

Thank you also to the strong men who assist each month to put the piano on the dais.

Gillian and Ken Irvine

Da Vinci Quartet - Royal Northern' Sinfonia Musicians

Virtuoso Jazz Trio

TEA TIME TALKS

2016 was the 8th year of these talks. They are still clearly popular, with approx. 30-45 folk coming along on a fairly regular basis to hear speakers on a wide variety of topics.

Our thanks to everyone involved in this venture, whether as paying audience, caterers, kitchen staff, table-clearers or speakers. Without your continued support we would be unable to continue. Entry is by donation of around £2 - £3 (for which you also get the best-value cream tea in Morpeth!) and this year your generosity has allowed the organisers to Gift Aid donations of £25 to Henry Dancer Days and £800 to church funds.

You may also be interested to know that in the time we have been organising these talks, we have donated, in total, £4565 (cash) to church funds, £560 (equipment) to church and £235 to various charitable organisations

For further details of this year's schedule of talks, cost of a "season ticket" for all 8 talks, or to volunteer to give us a talk, please contact Jared on 01670 514610 or jared-marg@hotmail.com.

Margaret Johnson, Jared Johnson & Christine Richardson,

31/01/17

EVENING BADMINTON

We play on Thursday evening at 7.30 pm. We have about 10 regular players from a wide age range, from teenagers upwards. We continue throughout the year but occasionally have to cancel when too many folk are on holiday or unwell. It is definitely a fun evening enjoyed by all, so if you, or anyone you know, can already play and would like to join us, please let me know (01670 514610 or jared-marg@hotmail.com).
We only charge £1 for each session, which usually lasts until around 9 – 9.30pm.

Margaret Johnson 30/01/17

WEDNESDAY MORNING BADMINTON CLUB

We continue to meet every Wednesday morning at 9.30 until about 11 and as in the last few years we have continued playing during the summer months. This year we did not have our usual two week break in November as the Community Players did not need to put up the stage for their production of Crusader.

There are usually six to eight players who come regularly each week which allows for a short rest between games and to catch up on news, holidays and photographs! In the last year, we have started to go for a coffee after playing and have been sampling a number of the coffee shops in Morpeth.

We now have a yearly subscription of £5 and pay £2 a session. The money from this is donated to church funds and this year the group donated £572.20 to the church.

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 (February 2017)

THURSDAY MORNING BADMINTON

Our biggest problem is that we are all turning older! This has meant that we have had extended periods of low attendance due to damaged shoulders, falls, replacement knees etc etc. It has been good to see the recent return of Louise Bell from such knee surgery. Small attendances do, of course, result in a smaller contribution to church funds - £85 down on our 2015 donation.
We can, however, all seem to still exercise the muscles responsible for raising coffee mugs to our lips and those which operate our mouths as we regularly put the world to right – and this past year we have never been short of subject material!
Holidays and "grandchildren-sitting" also affect numbers from time-to-time, so we really could do with a few more members to make the Club rather more viable, so if you have played in the past and fancy taking it up again in a very friendly and sociable group, please contact either Margaret or Jared Johnson on 01670 514610 or jared-marg@hotmail.com *Jared Johnson*

01/01/17

Morpeth and Mitford Churches Together Refugee Support Group

Agm report 2017

It is thirteen years since the formation of this ecumenical support group which was formed to help charities relieving the plight of asylum seekers in the Newcastle area. Since then St.George's URC has been an active member both in collecting food, clothing, bedding and money, and being part of a team of seven persons delivering carloads of goods to two charities in the city.
This year regular deliveries have been made to the West End Refugee Service at St Phillip's Vicarage and in particular, large amounts of bedding have been given recently by persons downsizing their accommodation.
Gifts of food are now delivered to The Justice and Peace Centre situated in the premises of the Centre for the Deaf in Newcastle. About 108 of the destitute are fed with a good meal daily and small bags of basics given out together with every day support (over 500 other homeless are befriended). Our food is deposited in the church vestibule on Sundays. Other goods can be placed in the garage at Wellway Court on notice to J. Wight.
Since the tremendous influx of refugees into Europe in 2016 and the increasing number of British residents needing help to feed their families, the attitude to asylum seekers is perhaps less sympathetic than in the past Nevertheless the numbers of destitute persons seeking the help of the two charities we support steadily increases. They also assist families, who have been given permission to remain, to set up home. The bedding, towels and small household goods which we have donated have therefore, been well received.

Joint Organisers J. Wight, S. Cleverley, M. Illingworth (St. Roberts RCC)

CHRISTIAN AID

Christian Aid has several fund-raising events through the year. The first was our Spring Evening, held at the Methodist Church in March, when we had a speaker to tell us about one of the many areas being helped by Christian Aid. The speaker was preceded by a meal based on the food eaten in the country we were hearing about. The evening raised £480.
Our next event was Christian Aid Week in May, when the house-to-house collection raised £6415.
St George's volunteers collected £2007 of that, so many thanks to all our collectors. The week also had Plant and Book stalls in the Market Place on the Saturday morning that raised a further £247.
The Street Collection in September raised an addition £733, so thank you again to all our collectors for that.
The other regular social event apart from the Spring Evening is our Christian Aid Ceilidh which is held in October, and makes use of our St George's Ceilidh Band and is held in the same way as our regular Country Dance Club in our church hall, but includes a bar and raffle - this raised £302.
Throughout the year St George's made a number of donations, including money raised by the Ceilidh Band, money donated to the Fruit & Veg. Stall, profits made from Christmas cards and the Fair Trade Stall, and our Christmas collections. Altogether, these raised a further £885.
In November we also sent £180 to the Haiti Hurricane Disaster Appeal – sent direct to Christian Aid.
In total, the churches in Morpeth raised £11,189 for Christian Aid in 2016, sent via the Christian Aid Committee. However, this does not include the £1700 raised by the Forsters, as they did the great North run in September, and money for that goes direct to Christian Aid.
So many thanks to all our collectors and donators and very special thanks to Ron and Shirley.

Margaret Johnson 31/01/17 (Christian Aid Committee member for St George's)

AFTERNOON BOWLS CLUB

We play every Wednesday afternoon from 2 – 4pm for 8 months of the year (from September to April). We have had a number of new members joining over the past year so we now have a total of 27 members. Up to 16 folk can play at the same time and we have 3 games each session, so we occasionally get a small number of folk having to sit out for the odd game. Fortunately we rarely (if ever!) get all our members turning up on the same day, so usually everyone is playing (or, at worst, sitting out for only 1 game). It has been good to see Jean Elliott back on a regular basis after some prolonged periods of absence on medical grounds.

Once a year the Evening Bowls Club joins us for the George Elliott Trophy competition, where everyone is put into teams of 3 (mixed evening and afternoon bowlers). The afternoon bowler on the winning team this year was Joanna Ridley, who teamed up with Ted Le Grice and Chris Hills from the Evening Bowls Club.

This year we introduced an Annual Subscription of £10 in addition to the Weekly subscription of only £1. If you are interested in joining us, please get in touch with me on 01670 514610 or email me at jared-marg@hotmail.com

Margaret Johnson

30/01/17

ST GEORGE'S EVENING BOWLS CLUB 2016

The Evening Bowls Club continues to have a healthy bank balance (see above) with an overall balance of just over £632 at the end of 2016. This allowed us to pass the sum of £600 to the St. George's church funds. The associated Equipment Account retains a similarly healthy balance of minimally above £1500.

At the end of 2016, the Club had 21 members though unfortunately some are now unable to attend regularly. We were pleased to welcome new members, Sandra Iddon and John Leithead. We played most of our internal Club Competitions – four-ball pairs (2015/16 season) won by Frank Walker and Margaret Shipley; singles won by Alan Hyde; two-ball pairs won by Chris Hills and Bob Hill; and four-ball pairs (2016/17 season) won by Richard Tweddell and Bob Hill. However, numbers attending our evening sessions are sometimes relatively low and it was for this reason that the Triples Competition planned for late autumn, had to be postponed (possibly cancelled) due to lack of numbers. The George Elliott Competition (when we join up with our compatriots of the afternoon group) was won by Ted Le Grice, Joanne Ridley and Chris Hills. During the year, we played our regular quota of matches which though competitive, are always 'friendlies'. These were against Storey Park (home – won 46/35); Robert Stuart Memorial (home – won 44/32); Warkworth (away – won 49/39); Forest Hall (home – lost 18/65); Robert Stuart Memorial (away – won 43/37); Alnwick St. James (home – lost 44/58); Warkworth (home – won 45/26); Bomarsund (home – won 45/25); Forest Hall (home – won 45/37); and Alnwick St. James (away – lost 28/61).

Chris Hills

RAINBOWS ANNUAL REPORT 2016

We have had another busy fun packed year in 4th St George's Rainbows.
In the spring term we took part in the Ring Pull Challenge. This involved finding out about life in The Philippines, and supporting the Philippines Community Fund (PCF) in their work. The Rainbows collected ring pulls from cans and the plastic labels from drinks bottles for the charity. These are used to produce goods that can be sold to earn money rather than Philippine children searching for saleable rubbish on the dump. The girls learned about life in the Philippines and developed their skills of teamwork, communication and awareness of the wider world. They all achieved their ring pull badge at the end of the project

Single Zip wallet, made with 220 ring pulls

In February we opened our Daffodil Cafe where the girls enjoyed making, serving and eating pancakes on Shrove Tuesday.
Throughout the term we enjoyed partaking in a range of craft and activities for Mother's Day and Easter.

In the Summer Term we concentrated on completing our Roundabout Healthy Badge with activities including having a Healthy Pizza Parlour, Yoga Night and Hula Hooping with Hoopstars.
We also visited Forest School at Hepscott Private Nursery where the girls enjoyed toasting Marshmallows, den building and hunting for fairy houses in the woods.

We finished our Summer Term off with an evening at Plessey Woods with 4th St. George's Brownies and Guides.

In the Autumn Term we completed our Roundabout season's badge. We learned about amazing bats and made our own cuddly one to take home, played Insect Cluedo, made edible sparklers and played an indoor snowball game. The girls thoroughly enjoyed our annual Glowstick Trail through the woods in November.

In December we visited Santa Express at Tanfield Railway and went to see Beauty and the Beast Pantomime at the Tyne Theatre, both events the girls loved. We finish our year with a joint Christmas Party with the Brownies, with disco, games and a visit from Santa Claus.

Our Unit continues to be popular with a long waiting list. We now have reached our maximum number of 15 girls. We could not manage to run our fun weekly sessions without the hard work from our Young Leaders Emma, Natalie and Alexandra (who is now working towards her Adult Leader Qualification).
Many thanks to Hayleigh Pearson my Assistant Leader for her hand work throughout the year.
I look forward to all the exciting adventures we will have during 2017.

Judith Leja, Leader

4th Morpeth (St George's) Brownies - 2016 Annual Report

The Brownie Unit ended the year in December 2015 with 30 Brownies and started January 2016 with 25 Brownies, 5 having left to join Guides. Brownie Leaders remain Linda and Sharon, Unit Helper Susan, regular Parent Helper Kate, Leader in Training Hannah and YL Megan.

You may remember from the Brownie report last year all the hard work that was put into the Philippine Project and our collection of ring pulls and labels to send to the Philippine Community Fund (PCF). To complete the project we had a Division Filipino Fun Day on Thinking Day in February 2016. The girls from all Sections in the Division visited various venues around Morpeth, in mixed groups of Rainbows, Brownies, Guides and members of the Senior Section, to carry out different Filipino related activities such as:

- Tinikling (Philippine Stick dance)
- Dump Scavenger Hunt/building shelters
- Performance Rehearsal – see below for mention of the 'flash mob', or if you were in Castle Square on that afternoon you would have been witness to much singing and dancing.
- Crafts: Icing biscuits to look like the Philippine flag and making a paper parol (lantern) – these lanterns were carried by the girls into the square at the start of the performance/flash mob.
- A Church service at St George's URC, led by The Reverend Alison Mills. 71,000 ring pulls were collected and sent to the PCF. The most ring pulls collected in our Brownie unit was by Scout Clarke who collected 4271 ring pulls and Anna Pratt collected 171 labels – well done to them.
- Following the church service we all left at intervals to culminate in a 'flash mob' in Castle Square where girls sang and danced Filipino style.

Of course, Guiding wouldn't be Guiding without badges and needless to say the girls who attended the Filipino Fun Day all received a badge. The Brownies also achieved many more badges throughout the year within the Unit, which were:

- Science Investigator – the girls made hovercrafts, windmills, researched famous scientists and looked at how animals have adapted to their changing environment. A Brownie dad who is an Anaesthetist came into the unit, in his 'greens', to talk about his work, including what germs are and how they are spread. He had some very interesting demonstrations one of which involved the Brownies using lots of coloured balls to represent germs.
- Stargazer Badge – we visited the Planetarium at the Centre for Life. We were also very lucky to have an expert Brownie Grandad who is a keen astronomer and was able to go with us to the top of Ha Hill on a very clear, very cold night in November, to look at the stars through telescopes.
- Swimmer & Swimmer Advanced badges were awarded.
- World Culture Badge – we had a Switzerland evening where Megan our YL talked about her recent trip to Switzerland with the Guides; needless to say there was lots of food to taste; we looked at women at work around the world; did crafts and sang songs from around the world – Edelweiss amongst others and we even had a go at some yodelling.

- Costa Rica Badge (Liz Kelly our Guide Leader was going to Costa Rica with Girlguiding – you may hear about it in the Guide report – and was fundraising so we did some challenges to earn a badge) – we made baby turtles (you may have seen these on the Brownie notice board) and Bolitas de Coco biscuits (made from coconut and condensed milk – and delicious they were too).
- Hostess Badge which culminated in a coffee evening/entertainment evening for Brownie parents.

We have some very keen swimmers amongst our Brownies so the year wouldn't be the same without entering into the Lions Swim. Two teams were entered (1 with 3 and 1 with 4 swimmers) who in total swam 179 lengths, raising a total of £208.82, half of which came back to the Unit. A big thank you to Susan our Unit Helper who swam on her birthday, that's dedication for you.

Brownies made eggs at Easter and once again decorated an Easter Tree which was taken down into the church.

We held a Diwali (Light) Festival night where girls learned what a Bindi was (a small dab of paint in the middle of the forehead); made candle holders; tasted some typical Indian sweets and some of the Guides came in to paint Henna patterns on the back of the Brownies hands and the girls were able to dress in Indian saris.

The girls had the opportunity to design a birthday card for Queen's 90th birthday and enter it into a competition which the Division were holding. Sylvie MacDonald, one of our Brownies, although not winning a prize in the competition, sent her card to the Queen and received the lovely replies below.

Our District (which includes all Units at St George's and St Roberts Churches) held a District event in Plessey Woods in July. After eating their picnic tea, orienteering of various abilities was the main theme, but girls also toasted marshmallows; built shelters and lit fires using flints and there was a camp fire. Needless to say there was a badge for those who attended.

Some other activities which a few Brownies took part in and which form part of their Promise, was the Remembrance Parade, Autumn Fare at Church and Church Parades – Harvest and Toy Services. We always enjoy being included in Church activities and it's important to us to be part of the wider St George's URC.

'Out of the hall' because of The Players is always a good excuse to arrange something for the girls away from the usual meeting place, so in November we visited Clip and Climb at Concordia, Cramlington. For those of you who don't know what this is, it is a series of very high climbing walls of varying designs, the girls wear harnesses and are literally clipped to a safety rope that enables them to climb all the way to the ceiling in most cases. I have attached an image which may give you an idea. They all had a great time and it can be recommended (mind you we Leaders didn't have a go…)

The year ended with the Brownies going to the Panto at the Tyne Theatre again this year with Rainbows and Guides to see Beauty and the Beast and we also made Christmas crafts. The very last session of the year was a Christmas Disco for Brownies and Rainbows and a very special visitor came this year, no other than Father Christmas - fantastic.

Last but not least we wanted to mention that thanks to one of our Brownies, Rosie Heaton, a donation was made on the Brownies behalf to provide a youngster in Zambia, (possibly Joseph as mentioned on the card we received – it is on the Brownie notice board for those who are interested) and his carer (his Gran) with a goat. This will give Joseph not only a friend to play with, but also a glass of fresh milk a day and will enable his Gran to sell milk at the market. What a lovely thought to end on.

From all the Leaders and helpers at Brownies:
Linda, Sharon, Susan, Hannah, Megan and Kate January 2017

4th Morpeth Guides 2016

In the New Year, we started the year by celebrating the 100th birthday of the Senior Section. They created a challenge called Mission Spectacular. One of the elements was to make a giant art attack of the Senior Section badge.

To continue with our Philippine challenge, that we started last year, we brought all our ring pulls together for Thinking Day. This helped local people create purses and jewellery. Thank you for helping us collect so many. We celebrated by taking part in the Filipino Fun Day. We had various activities in different halls around Morpeth and then we all came together to renew out Promise in St George's Church.

We had two teams of swimmers taking part in the annual Morpeth Lions sponsored swim, raising funds. The completed over 100 lengths per lane. They are looking to improve their score next year.

We were all invited to visit the Mayor in the Town Hall. We had a tour of the chambers and 6 girls were presented with their Baden Powell Challenge Award. This is the highest award a Guide can receive.

To help the Queen celebrate her 90th birthday, we had our own tea party outside, decorated biscuits and we all wore something red, white and blue. We designed Her Majesty a birthday card, which was entered into a competition at the Friends of Guiding coffee morning.

We joined with the Northumberland Scouts to take part in the bi-annual Marra Camp. Nearly 2000 Guides and Scouts took part in a weekend full of Wild West themed activities. We were easily recognised in our silver sparkly cowgirl hats.

The county organised a day in Morpeth Geocaching. We wandered around the town using GPS navigation devices looking for very small boxes using map co-ordinates. We managed to find 4!!

Had a brilliant day at Lightwater Valley for a day trip. The girls managed to get around all the rides. The 'Ultimate' rollercoaster was the favourite.

We have had nights in the park taking outdoor games to play with. Playing frisbee golf and who could get round a course on a space hopper the fastest! We have been outside to light fires so that we can cook smores (biscuits, chocolate and marshmallows and cooked our dampers we have made.

We joined with other Guides from Morpeth Division to take part in the Bivvy. We created a shelter in the woods from ground sheets, rope and pegs and spent the night. In the morning, we cooked our breakfast and went home for a shower!

Our summer ended with a District event at Plessey Woods. We took part in the orienteering course, building shelters, striking flints and toasting marshmallows where 3 girls made their promise.

After I visited Costa Rica in the summer, with a group of Senior Section members to take part in various service projects, we created a challenge for the girls. This included a quiz, Spanish dancing, making our own volcanoes erupt, clay turtles and a rainforest party.

We had a brilliant throwback evening. We practised knots, pioneering, sending semaphore messages, tried on old uniform and sang camp fire songs with Revd Alison Mills.

At St George's we take part in parade services throughout the year and serve refreshments afterwards. We will always bring cakes to sell as part of our fundraising. Thank you for your support.

We also took part in the Town's Remembrance parade.

On the run up to Christmas we were trying to see how many snow dogs we could see between us all. We managed to find 42 across the region.

We had our annual trip to the Panto at Tyne Theatre to see Beauty and the Beast.

The final challenge of the year for the girls was to create their own Christmas market. They decided which stalls they would like and created their own decorations, signage and invitations. Family and friends came to support the girls. They had a fantastic evening.

Thank you to all our helpers who give the girls some amazing experiences and to the congregation and Elders of St George's for all their support.

Liz and Amy

Mobile - 077 1448 1089
Email - liz.kelly@jcpce.com

4th Morpeth Guides
St George's Church Hall
Tuesday evening
7.00 pm – 8.30 pm

2016 was a year for the Senior Section to celebrate. They were celebrating their 100th birthday. It is brilliant to see the unit continuing to grow. There are so many opportunities for the girls. We have only scratched the surface.

In the New Year, 3 girls went off to attend the Peer Educators weekend. They were trained to lead fun and interactive sessions on important topics. Girls in the past have been asked what issues they want to talk about and create resources that are relevant to them. These girls are now able to go and run sessions to Brownies and Guides in our Division.

Six of the girls registered to do their Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award. With the help of the Baden Powell Scouts, they completed their expedition training. They practised putting up their tents and cooking outdoors. They have all successfully completed their expedition element. We currently have more girls signed up for their bronze and 3 for their silver.

Several girls have become Young Leaders and have gone out to Rainbow, Brownie and Guide units to help the leaders. They are an asset to the units and it is lovely to see the girls progress. These opportunities help to develop their skills in leadership, communication and team working.

They have joined in many joint activities such as Marra Camp, Geocaching, Lightwater Valley, Bivvy and parades. They also have their own programme to work towards. We currently have two girls working towards their Chief Guide Challenge, which we hope they will complete by Easter 2017.

Liz and Anne

Mobile - 077 1448 1089

Email - liz.kelly@jcpce.com

Morpeth Senior Section

St George's Church Hall

Tuesday evening

7.00 pm – 8.30 pm

MORPETH BP SCOUTS

Annual report 2016/2017

Morpeth Baden Powell Scouts continue to meet at St George's Church each Friday night. This past year has seen significant changes to the membership. This has been due to a large number of Senior scouts leaving school, following reaching 18years of age.

This has reduced the Senior section (15 to 18yrs) to 4, however an interest in boys and girls from the Boys Brigade has allowed a Beaver Colony (5 to 8 yrs) and a Scout Troop (11 to 15 yrs) to start, with vacancies for a Cub Pack (8 to 11 yrs) to start should there be an interest.

The support of Leaders has enabled a range of activities to take place during the past 12 months.

These have included:

Beach BBQ at Druridge Bay for the new scouts and leaders, also attended by the Senior Scouts who were leaving in the summer.
During the summer holidays a number of Senior scouts went to France for a holiday with Peter and Paul.
After the summer holidays our programme was set out to deliver the Beaver and Scout badges for investing all Beavers and Scouts with their uniforms, neckerchiefs, woggles and hats.

Beavers were awarded their Kitten badge and the Scouts their Scout shield badge.

An autumn camp was held at a camp site at Pigdon for the new Beavers and Scouts with camp fire and songs.
Beavers and Scouts took park in St Georges Harvest festival parade, the Toy service and the Remembrance parade in November.
A winter night hike from Craster to Embleton was an adventure for the Beavers and Scouts with a sleep over in Creighton Hall, Embleton.
The New Year commenced with a pantomime at the Theatre Royal and was fully enjoyed by the Beavers Scouts.
Our programme up to Easter continues to deliver the Beaver First Footprint badge and the Scouts 2nd Class badge by gaining skills such as opening ceremonies and flag break, National Anthem, knots and lashings, fire lighting, fire cooking, camp fire songs, road safety, country code,

Summer camps are planned for Beavers and Scouts, with support from parents and leaders to fund raise. This year will see a small group of Senior scouts achieve their Gold D of E award with an expedition in France during the summer holidays.

The Scout Group continues to be grateful and thank the Minister, Elders and congregation of St George's United Reform Church in allowing us to meet and deliver a Scout programme for the young people in and around Morpeth.

Stewart McKay Group Scout Master

St George's Community Players

Pip Appleby and Nancy Smith, two of our longstanding members, died this year; they will be sadly missed by the Players.

2016 was a busy and successful year for the Players, with two very different plays being performed, one in March and the other in November.

Happy Campers, a comedy set-in the Lake District, was performed in the round! This proved quite challenging for the producers, David Kiely and Brenda Joy, as well as the cast and the stage manager. However, they all worked hard to overcome any problems and the end result was very well received indeed.

Because 2016 was the 80th anniversary of the Jarrow March, Jared wanted to produce Crusader, the story of Ellen Wilkinson and the march, again. Written by Rose Reeve, it had been performed several years ago but sadly Rose died earlier this year, and the performance was a tribute to her great talent. A large cast was involved, bringing together actors, singers, dancers and musicians,

The Players have been involved in other events this year. These include a 'Coffee Bar Theatre' for our patrons, which Sue Elliott produced in memory of our dear friend and member, Doris Graham, who died last year.

We now have two social secretaries who have worked hard to keep members interested in the group by organising a variety of social events throughout the year.

We are constantly trying to attract new members, particularly younger people and were delighted that we had 4 young students appearing in Crusader and we hope that we will see them performing with us in the future.
Rehearsals are underway for the next production, a comedy,' Hello…Is There Any Body There?' Produced by David Swinton, the dates are 23 – 25 March. We do hope you will support us by coming to watch or perhaps becoming involved in the group? We would like to thank the church and Patricia Gatherum, our liaison elder, for their support during the past year.

Heather Robinson – Secretary