

Ponteland Methodist Church Cornerstone



November 2023

MINISTER'S LETTER

An Appreciation

Welcome to the November edition of Cornerstone. I hope you enjoy reading it. I hope you find it informative and useful. I hope it makes you think about your walk with God and life within our Church community.

It takes a lot of work to put this monthly production together, from everyone who contributes, from Viv who proofreads and corrects, and from Andy who sorts out the layout and production. On your behalf I thank each and every person involved in making Cornerstone become a reality.

But Cornerstone isn't unique, it's a great example of the Church at work: Open Door, Bible Study, Prayer Meeting, BB/GA, Toddler Group, Women Together, Men's Forum, Meanders, Home groups, Church fayres, coffee mornings, one-off events and concerts, Pizza Friday, Bouncy Church, and of course Sunday Worship – none of this would happen without the time, effort and energy of multiple people... truly the Church in action!

Then there are those who hold roles and/or attend meetings: stewards, pastoral visitors, members of property and finance, treasurer, safeguarding officer, property stewards, health and safety officer, members of Care and Share, pastoral secretary, Church Council secretary, bookings secretary, members of Church Council, our caretaker, the Church leadership team, those who lead prayers or do readings, welcomers at the door, those who serve refreshments, the AV team, our wonderful musicians.... (I apologise if I've forgotten anyone!)

I am so grateful to everyone who contributes to the life of our Church community in any way. From the bottom of my heart, thank you for all that you do. I hope we all appreciate one another, thank one another, and remember to act kindly towards one another should mistakes be made or things not be as we might hope; we're all doing our best!

We are the Church in action. We are the body of Christ. And I am forever grateful.

God Bless.



JORDAN CROSSING

Zigi was watching over his younger siblings playing by the river when he saw a crowd of strangers coming across the eastern slopes towards the Jordan. Not just the frequent caravan of traders or (God forbid!) slavers, but a moving mass of folk, thousands of them, with an armed troop of skirmishers ahead of them.

Alarmed, he sent his little brothers and sisters back to his parents' tented encampment with a warning to prepare to pack up and move away again; their flocks and herds had pretty well exhausted the local foraging area anyway, and better grazing would suit. As for Zigi, he could not tear himself away until he knew whether this invading horde would or could cross the swollen waters of the Jordan. He guessed they were making for Jericho. News of the terrible things that had happened to the Moabites at the hands of these descendants of Abraham had reached the region and folk trembled. Time for nomads to make use of their freedom to move.

Checking to see that there was something to eat in the shrubs and trees of the area, Zigi found himself a secure place to stay out of sight but to be able to watch how these invading tribes would cross the river.

In the course of the next few days, he observed how these strangers organized themselves. It was not just a raiding party or even an army, but a huge number of people, men, women and children, highly disciplined too. They pitched their tents in tribal groups and had a portable worship centre served by robed priests and subsidiary religious servants. They had flocks and herds of cattle, sheep and goats properly tended by shepherds and herdsmen; this was a moving settlement seeking land to occupy and rule. News of their ferocity and unmovable desire to sweep away all who occupied the land of Canaan had gone before them. This was danger and destruction for all ahead of their progress.

Zigi, a youth of pastoralists, recognised both the organisation and the threat to all other settlers on the land from the river to the Great Sea, an invasion that would transform the land. Zigi's people must move on quickly to new pastures well away from the Canaanite settlements. But curiosity held him in his obser-

vation post. How would this enormous community cross the river? The wet season's rains had not failed, the Jordan was in spate, twenty or thirty yards of deep water.

Amazed, he saw priests bring to the water's brim on long carrying poles a large glittering box, evidently of great and reverent



importance to them. As they put their first steps into the river bed, the waters suddenly fell away to left and to right of them, upstream and down. The river bed dried out under the sun and showed up all the way across, with large stones exposed and loose. Horrified, but fascinated, Zigi saw over the course of the day the

whole gathering, with their ceremonial box, passing over the exposed land.

He hastened off under cover of darkness to join his moving family and did not stay to see them reassemble on Canaan soil, or to proceed inland to destroy the walled city of Jericho and slaughter practically every living man, woman and child in it. Nor did he see men who had evidently been told off to shift twelve blocks of stone from the exposed river bed and pile them into a beacon or memorial in the ravine centre.

Joshua 3₁₀ to 4₉

A comment: A friend, born a Jew in Manchester but now Christian, explained to me recently that he held the massacre of the indigenous tribes in Biblical time in the Holy Land to have been truly ordained of God, being under the Old Dispensation. I replied that the finest Jew I ever heard of had declared "Love your enemies, do good to those who spitefully use you".

What do you think, bearing in mind today's Middle East news?

John M Gill

BRAND NEW MULTI-FAITH PRAYER ROOM OPENS AT NEWCASTLE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Newcastle International Airport has unveiled a brand-new multi-faith prayer room and quiet space. The newly refurbished area which is located inside the terminal near security, offers a dedicated space for passengers and airport employees who want to



engage in prayer, meditation or find a quiet space. The multi-faith prayer room is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week and has comfortable seating, prayer mats, religious texts and other resources.

Senior management from Newcastle International Airport, the Airport

Chaplains and faith leaders from across the North East Region gathered to mark the official opening of the Chapel this week. Guests included:

- The Bishop of Newcastle, Rt Revd Dr Helen-Ann Hartley
- Rabbi Aaron Lipsey - Chair of Newcastle Council of Faiths
- Rev Canon Christine Brown - St Mary the Virgin, Ponteland
- Imam Mohammad Roziur Rahman
- Paul Southgate - Chair of Northumbrian Industrial Mission
- Andy Lie - Ecumenical and Inter-faith Officer URC
- Cllr Mehrban Sadiq
- Mrs Christine Armstrong, Mr Chris Horton and Mr Craig McManus - members of the Chaplaincy Management Support Group.

Nick Jones, Chief Executive Officer at Newcastle International Airport, said: "We are delighted to open our brand-new multi-faith prayer room and quiet space. We welcome and value our employees' and passengers' differences, and the newly refurbished space reflects our dedication to create an inclusive culture for all.

"The Airport Chaplaincy has provided passengers and employ-

ees with compassionate, independent and confidential listening for 26 years, and we hope this space offers everyone a place of sanctuary and calm amidst the bustling airport atmosphere.”

Fiona Usher, Chaplain Team Leader at Newcastle International Airport, said: “The Chaplaincy team at Newcastle International Airport are grateful to the Airport for its investment into the multi-faith prayer room and quiet space.

“This space has always been well received by passengers, with many leaving messages of gratitude. One passenger wrote: 'From a self-professed anxious traveller, the room was a calming and grounding influence. Without the Chaplaincy's gentle reassurance, the whole experience would have been much more difficult.'

“We believe this newly-refurbished space will provide passengers and employees with a place to find peace, strength and recharge, and we hope to see many more faces embracing this sanctuary during their journey or working day.”

North East England has a rich history of diverse faiths and beliefs, with an average of 55% of the North East population identifying with a religion, according to data revealed by the 2021 Census.

Airport Chaplains are members of the International Association of Civil Aviation Chaplains (IACAC), a professional organisation of Chaplains in the civil aviation industry. At more than a hundred airports around the world, Airport Chaplains support travelers and employees of all faiths and no faiths with spiritual care and guidance.

Newcastle International Airport has a team of three chaplains on site. Located near the security entrance, the multi-faith prayer room and quiet space is open to all. Find out more here: www.newcastleairport.com/preparing-for-travel/at-theairport/airport-facilities/

For more information, please contact:

Kate Hall, Marketing and Communications Manager, Newcastle Airport. Email: khall@newcastleinternational.co.uk
Phone: 07808 572 932



MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT CHAIR

Dear Sisters and Brothers, It has been a great privilege to serve the Newcastle upon Tyne District as your Chair for these past nine years. God has been graciously guiding and providing me with the resource to fulfil what has been required. However, now I feel the Lord's wisdom is moving me on. This is a relentless and

demanding role and I feel it's time to ask to step back and allow someone else to serve this wonderful District and its faithful people of God. I have met with Revd Dr Jonathan Hustler as Secretary of the Conference and the District Leadership Team and have asked to curtail from August 2024. A process to appoint my successor will begin soon and the Spring Synod 2024 will hopefully receive a nominated name to consider. Yours in Christ Jesus,

Rev Dr Stephen Lindridge

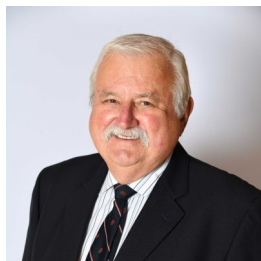
LEO OSBORN

All are very welcome to the **Revd Leo Osborn's Thanksgiving Service** at **5.30pm in Newcastle Cathedral on Fri 10th November**. If you plan to attend please can you let Diane Whitfield know by October 31st. This is in order that we have some idea of numbers for the Cathedral seating and catering afterwards. You can contact Diane by Tel. 0191 4901626 or email admin@newcastlemethodistdistrict.org This will be a great help and we appreciate your time. We continue to hold Charlotte and family in our prayers. Yours in Christ,

Rev Dr Stephen Lindridge

ALAN VARLEY

We are sorry to hear about the sudden death of Alan Varley. He was a very active member of Ponteland society and had served as Mayor.



FAIRTRADE UPDATE

Many thanks to everyone who ordered Christmas cards to support the work of Transform Trade, the charity which campaigns for fair trading practices.

If you missed my deadline, cards can still be ordered directly at <https://store-transform-trade.org>

Since Traidcraft plc ceased trading I've been challenged to find alternative ways of buying products which put the producers and the environment before profit. Many items or brands previously stocked by Traidcraft can be found at Ethical Superstore

(<https://www.ethicalsuperstore.com>)... although of course I must point out that "other ethical retail outlets are available!"

Maybe it's a measure of the success of Fairtrade pioneers like Traidcraft that there are now so many alternatives for sourcing goods that we can buy with a clear conscience.

Also available from Ethical Superstore, or from Transform Trade directly, is a range of the popular "Gifts for Life." So, if yummy Zaytoun Medjoul dates, comfy bamboo socks, or heavenly Divine chocolates still don't hit the mark for a present for that distant relative, maybe a "Gift for Life" will.

Thanks again for your ongoing support.

Bev





BETTY NESBIT

Betty was born on 15 May 1927 to Hugh Blair and Wilhelmina Mary Lightfoot in Shilbottle; when she was three years old the family moved to North Road, Ponteland and she started school on the green in front of St Mary's Church, before moving to Newcastle five years later. During the war her father's school was evacuated to Cumberland, returning to Newcastle when the

war ended. Her father became headmaster, Betty and her mum went to the family farm near Wooler and she attended school there, before returning to Gosforth. She attended Agricultural College to study farming, doing her practical training in Ayrshire.

Betty's father died in 1946 and she became the breadwinner, working in the Civil Service, joining the young conservatives to get out and meet people, notably Jean Clough and her husband Basil. She met John in the Gosforth Assembly and after dancing together he walked her home before walking back to Kenton. After a month of phone calls she finally accepted to go out with him, had a lovely evening and was hooked. A fairytale followed of wonderful friends, lovely houses, travel, amazing holidays and a loving family.

She joined the WI in 1967 and always said it was the best thing she ever did apart from marrying John; it gave her self-confidence, with public speaking for example.

John was always very keen on his bowls and eventually got Betty into it, though she was not very enamoured at first, but grew to love it. They were both Presidents at Ponteland and Betty said the Bowling Club was a God-send when her dear John passed away in 2005.

They were both also very involved with the Ponteland Repertory Society from 1967 and as Betty got older she was invited to be President.

She was very proud of her son Graeme, daughter-in-law Monique and grandson Jimmy and when Caroline came into the family Betty was adamant that she "would not leave this earth without having cradled her first great-grandchild" and was

thrilled when Judith and Marlow arrived.
Betty wanted to be independent and stay in her own home and she did, right to the end, thanks to so many loving and caring people whom she considered as friends.

Graham Nesbit

SNAEFELL, ISLE OF MAN

A narrow, rickety train clatters up
the steep mountain slope, battling
elemental forces of wind and rain.
Only a few hardy sheep venture this far.
Snow Mountain claims its own right
to deliver a journey to remember.

At the top, whipped for our achievement
we struggle into a welcome from
its friendly cafe, where frothy chocolate
drinks warm our battered bodies.
Turnaround is quick to face the next
onslaught of curious visitors.

It was worth it for the view, more
panoramic than the big screen.
Real experience chills the fingers
but stirs the soul into glorious
wonder, keenly physical but
beautiful refreshment for the soul.

Enveloped in low cloud, moved
along by the wind, wide vistas
suddenly exposed, to enable
visions of sea and mountain.
Constantly changing but steady
in the solid forms of rocky ground.

Rosemary Gray

(Inspired by a visit to Snaefell Mountain which in Manx means
Snow Mountain)

CHURCH COUNCIL UPDATE

On 12th October our Church Council was held. For anyone interested the full minutes of the meeting along with all of the reports are available from our Church Council Secretary, Sue Kirtley, or from myself. Below are some of the main items discussed:

Bouncy Church

This is thriving with up to 18 families attending on any morning. This can make the Church very busy but we are delighted with how it's going and are thinking about how we build on this excellent work.

Pizza Friday

This informal event is slowly building momentum but gives a more relaxed atmosphere to get to know visitors and build relationships.

Finance

Last year we ran at a deficit of a little over £14,000 though this included the £7,000 spent on the sound reduction work done in the hall which was funded from Care and Share proceeds but is shown in the accounts. At 1st September our reserves stood at just over £77,000. Another deficit is forecast for the year to come with significant work on the boiler also needed. Whilst there is recognition of the current national cost of living people are encouraged to consider their giving and whether they feel able to give a little more. We are also looking at ways to reduce day-to-day expenditure and maximise other income (e.g. through room hire).

Church Chairs

The current chairs in the Church have served us well and are decades old. Unfortunately they aren't as practical as they could be as they are heavy and are not stackable. This means that it is considerable work to clear the church for Pizza Friday and rearrange for Bouncy Church; it also means that the Church itself isn't a room that is easy to hire out as users often require a more flexible space. A proposal was brought from the Church Leadership Team that the chairs are replaced with lighter stack-

able chairs to make our mission activities easier and to make the space easier to hire out; this would also help maximise our income. A decision was postponed until the next Church Council in February while we seek a clearer sense of our financial status and future.

Children's Worker

A proposal was brought to the meeting that we seek to appoint a part-time Children's Worker to work with us and build on the work of Bouncy Church, Pizza Fridays, Toddler Group and Boys' Brigade with Girls' Association. The cost of this would be in the region of £75,000 over three years; it is hoped that the role could be funded with the local Church, the circuit and the District each contributing a third. Our third could be funded through the Latham Bequest and its interest, this is a bequest set aside to facilitate the Church's mission work. A decision on this was postponed until the next Church Council in February while we seek a clearer sense of our financial status and future.

Forward Planning / Personal News

The Church Council also heard news from the September Circuit Meeting which received a proposal for the future shape and oversight of the Circuit when Deacon Maggie Patchett retires next summer. In this proposal, from September 2024 the minister at Ponteland would no longer be the superintendent, but would also be the minister of Milbourne and Scots Gap. This will be confirmed at the March Circuit Meeting after which we will share full details of how the Circuit will be structured from next summer.

To help with the Circuit's forward planning Jona and Helle have given notice that they are unlikely to seek another reinvitation beyond Jona's current appointment, which means they expect to leave in the summer of 2025. The Circuit would enter stationing to seek a replacement for Jona. One of the main reasons Jona and Helle have made this decision is because they wish to be a little closer to Darlington where Helle's job is based.

Jona

CRASTER AND DUNSTANBURGH

All Meanders walks used to be about 8–9 miles but more recently we have introduced 5-6 milers for those who find the shorter distance more suitable. One of these was on Saturday 14th October.

Nine of us went to Craster to start the walk. We were surprised that Northumberland County Council had put the car parking rate up to £8.50 which seemed rather excessive. However we paid and set off near the coast walking right around Dunstanburgh Castle. The castle dates back to 1314 but was besieged in the 1460s during the Wars of the Roses. Since then it has



been left to the elements leaving the picturesque ruin it is today. We continued northwards beside the golf course descending onto the beach at Embleton Bay. The beach was firm to walk on and further on we found a lovely spot to sit in the sunshine sheltered by the dunes to have our sandwich lunch. We watched the high waves and a few there ventured into the water for a swim – none of us!

After lunch we walked inland to Dunstan Steads following paths southwards; now higher up and still with distant views of the castle we made our way back to the car park. That was not all because we were told about an excellent little tea shop just outside Craster called The Stable Yard. The pots of tea were good and we were all tempted by the delicious homemade pastries. We were so lucky with the weather, making it altogether a very enjoyable day.

Alan Groves

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN PONTELAND
Monthly Prayers 2023
Always at 12.00

Monday 13th November St Mary's

Monday 11th December Ponteland Methodist Church

Meetings consist of a brief introduction and prayers from the different churches. Usually no more than 30 minutes.

Contact John Doherty 01661 821013

CHRISTMAS FAYRE

Care and Share and The Boys' Brigade would like to invite you to their Christmas fayre.

Saturday 2nd December, starting at 10:00 am

Lots of stalls for adults and children.

Festive refreshments available throughout the event.

Please tell your neighbours, family and friends.

Alison Bates

MEN'S FORUM
Thursday 7.30pm
PROGRAMME 2023

Nov 9 'Newcastles Around the World' - David Faulkner will be presenting 'Newcastles Around the World' which is partly a travelogue - with potted histories and photos of those Newcastle that take their name from Newcastle upon Tyne, with their own castles and stories. But it's also about the organisation called 'Newcastles of the World' which links them in friendship, and shares information and ideas through practical projects in the fields of tourism, culture, business, education and youth engagement. David was the organisation's coordinator and still edits their quarterly newsletter.

Dec 7 'Scams – Awareness and Prevention'. Chris Balfour - Age UK Northumberland.

Alan Groves

STATEMENT OF INTEREST

“Transforming lives through God’s love” - have you familiarised yourself with our new statement of intent yet? To help us think about what this means in reality, myself and Steve Small have been preaching a six-part series exploring this very thing. We have been very pleased and are very thankful for the kind and encouraging comments we have received from many people as we’ve explored this together. A brief recap:

“Blessed are..” in our first week we thought about what it means to be blessed, discovering that it means to be in tune with God. We also learned that to be blessed (in tune with God) we need to be willing to let go of our own lives and agendas and live humbly before and with God. This is a daily act which helps aid our own transformation as we discover the reality of God’s love for ourselves.

“I will worship” reminded us of the importance of worship in our own journey and formation, and in that of others. It is a means for the corporate body to come together and meet with our Creator. In worship our whole selves – body, mind and spirit – can encounter God’s transforming love as we pray, sing, hear the bible read, listen and discover together God’s ongoing story of yesterday, today and tomorrow; the story most fully revealed in Christ Jesus.

“Inspired by Scripture” encouraged each of us to take responsibility for our own walk with God through personal prayer, study and learning from scripture. We recognised that the Holy Spirit often reveals new things and can guide us as we reflect on the written word of God. We also thought about how the stories of “the word made flesh” (Jesus) are of paramount importance to our own growth and transformation.

In *“Everyone Welcome”* we were challenged to about how Jesus turned nobody away, everyone was welcomed by Him. We thought about how it’s easier to welcome people like us than those who might be different in some significant ways, and that welcome must be part of who we are because it’s part of who

God is. We thought about how welcome is not just about what we do on a Sunday at Church, but is also about an attitude we must have that will lead to an openness to all we meet. Welcome is a vital part of God's mission!

"Building for the future" made us think about how we lay ground-work today for what is to come tomorrow. We can all contribute to the future by contributing today – with our time, effort, finance and prayer. The story of the Widow's Mite revealed the importance of following the way of Jesus in living a sacrificial, and sometimes costly, life of giving; it's not always about how much we give, sometimes it's about how much it costs us. We can all contribute to the transformation of the Church and each other through what we give.

"All you need is love" reminded us of all the different times we are told to love in scripture: God, our neighbour, ourselves, each other and even our enemies. We thought about how love is sacrificial, unconditional, transformational and practical. Without love we are no more than a clanging symbol or ringing gong. Rooted in God's love all things are possible, because God is love.

To sum up, "Transforming lives through God's love" requires our own journey of transformation with God, as well as hoping to see it in others. It requires an openness on our part, a desire to worship and meet with God, a need to be responsible for some of our own learning, an open and welcoming attitude, a generosity with our resources, and a desire to be grounded in God's love.

Keep going, you're doing great!

Jona

ORDERING A PIZZA IN 2023

CALLER: Is this Pizza Hut?

GOOGLE: No sir, it's Google Pizza.

CALLER: I must have dialed a wrong number, sorry.

GOOGLE: No sir, Google bought Pizza Hut last month.

CALLER: OK. I would like to order a pizza.

GOOGLE: Do you want your usual, sir?

CALLER: My usual? You know me?

GOOGLE: According to our caller ID data sheet, the last 12 times you called you ordered an extra-large pizza with three cheeses, sausage, pepperoni, mushrooms and meatballs on a thick crust.

CALLER: Super! That's what I'll have.

GOOGLE: May I suggest that this time you order a pizza with ricotta, arugula, sun-dried tomatoes and olives on a gluten-free thin crust?

CALLER: What? I don't want a vegetarian pizza!

GOOGLE: Your cholesterol is not good, sir.

CALLER: How the hell do you know that?

GOOGLE: Well, we cross-referenced your home phone number with your medical records. We have the result of your blood tests for the last seven years.

CALLER: Okay, but I do not want your rotten vegetarian pizza! I already take medication for my cholesterol.

GOOGLE: Excuse me sir, but you have not taken your medication regularly. According to our database, you purchased only a box of 30 cholesterol tablets once at Lloyds Pharmacy, four months ago.

CALLER: I bought more from another Pharmacy.

GOOGLE: That doesn't show on your credit card statement.

CALLER: I paid in cash.

GOOGLE: But you did not withdraw enough cash according to your bank statement.

CALLER: I have other sources of cash.

GOOGLE: That doesn't show on your latest tax returns, unless you bought them using an undeclared income source, which is against the law!

CALLER: WHAT THE HELL!

GOOGLE: I'm sorry sir, we use such information only with the sole intention of helping you.

CALLER: Enough already! I'm sick to death of Google, Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and all the others. I'm going to an island without the internet, TV, where there is no phone service and no-one to watch me or spy on me.

GOOGLE: I understand sir, but you need to renew your passport first. It expired six weeks ago...

Welcome to the future!





**THE
OPEN DOOR**

We will be serving soup from Monday 6th November. This is an easy, tasty recipe for warming winter lunches.

Judith

Cullen Skink

250g smoked haddock
400g potatoes, peeled and diced
1 medium onion, peeled and sliced
20g butter
250ml milk
300ml water
A few sprigs of parsley, chopped
Salt and pepper

Simmer the fish in the milk for 5 mins, until tender.
Drain, reserving the liquid. Flake the fish, discarding the skin and any bones.

Melt the butter in a saucepan and add the onion. Cook for 5 mins until translucent.

Add the potatoes and water. Bring to the boil. Simmer for 10 mins.

Add the fish, parsley and reserved milk and cook for a further 5 mins.

Season to taste.

Soup is Coming back!

**From Monday November 6th
soup will be available
at Open Door from 1pm to 4pm**



GARDENING FOR NOVEMBER, 2023

“Babet”, I believe, will have created chaos for thousands of homes and gardens from which it will take some time to recover. And it is raining again this morning (writing 25th October). We had a flood at the bottom of the garden not quite as deep as a few years ago when the storm was in the summer. The first frost of the autumn turned the runner beans brown and affected the



begonias. We think we have rescued the “corm-forming” begonias; we have lifted them into trays to dry out in the greenhouse before they are wrapped in newspaper, boxed and stored frost-free in the garage. Many are quite large and should provide more than one plant next year, splitting the corm after new growths before

planting. The gladioli have been lifted but have not formed as-good-as-usual new corms even though they flowered early, might need some new ones! The hyacinths got planted where some of the begonias came out but we still have some tulips to plant. November is a good month to plant tulips as they are less likely to be affected by tulipfire which makes the leaves curl and stunts the flower growth. We still have some colour left but have bought pansies to plant in some of the troughs that were occupied by the begonias.

November is a good month to plant new trees and shrubs as the soil is still warm enough for them to make some root growth and get well established before drier weather next year when they may need watering. Ensure that the planting hole is wide enough for roots to spread but only deep enough for the new plant to be set at a depth that it was in the container (except for clematis which should be planted deeper to avoid clematis wilt). If the new planting is taller than 2 feet ensure that it is staked to stop it rocking in the wind. Bob Brown writing in Which? Gardening says that if you are going to dig a hole for a new planting why dig another for bulbs. He suggests that a suitable plant might be Geranium “Rozanne” which could be surrounded by bulbs. It might be a little late for daffodils (perhaps Tete-à-Tete) but Bob’s preferred bulbs are Allium hollandicum “Purple Sensation”. This does all its growing before April and finishes with a flourish by flowering in May or June. Geranium “Rozanne” is late-appearing and will not

affect the alliums but will flower through 'til November.

I used peat-free tomato compost taken from bags to pot up tomatoes this year. Managing the watering was obviously not well achieved as we had the worst problems with blossom-end-rot that we have ever had – I wish now I had looked further for peat-based tomato grow bags. Retail Sales of peat are set to be banned in 2024, while professional growers will have to stop using it by the end of 2026. The previous original target dates had been 2020 and 2030. The situation is that many of the plants we buy as plugs, in small pots and six (or eight) packs will be growing in peat-based composts. We need to take the utmost care with the plants we buy to grow on or even to plant out with the composts we choose to work with. Peat-based composts are still available but buying now risks the deterioration of the nutrients within them before use next year. I have virtually no stocks of compost held over.



This leads me on to writing a little about mulching which, carried out in the autumn, is good for plants and the soil they grow in. It will suppress weeds and retain soil moisture next year when we get sometimes unexpected dry times like we had May – June this year when there was no rain

for a month. If you use an organic mulch it will rot down. Composted weed-free organic materials from your own garden (including mixed-in grass clippings), well-rotted horse manure or other farmyard materials can all be used. You can make your own, as long as it is well rotted or you buy bagged materials ensuring they are labelled “soil improver” or “soil conditioner”. Home-shredded prunings really need a year rotting (and heap turning). Products containing peat, multipurpose compost or even John Innes soil-based do not make good mulches. Spent mushroom compost and mineralised straw may also deter slugs. Finally do not forget to drain hose pipes and turn off water supplies to outdoor taps before we have more frost.

Good gardening in November.

Syd Cowan

VILLAGE NEWS

Cycling and Walking Route

The initial stretch between Callerton Lane and Rotary Way has been finished. The next phase from Rotary Way to Prestwick Road roundabout is due to start at the end of October. The ultimate aim is to make an easier connection between Ponteland and Callerton Parkway Metro. The scheme is part of a "Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan". I doubt many people will feel like walking to Callerton Parkway then going to work by Metro!

Ponteland Repertory Society – Preppies Youth Theatre

Ponteland Rep and Preppies Youth Theatre won at district level in North East Division of the National Operatic and Dramatic Awards. The win was for the production of "The Wizard of Oz". Their next production will be "Beauty and the Beast" in the Memorial Hall 17-19 November.

Northumberland Communities Together

Northumberland CC is reminding residents of support that can be offered (mentioned in October Cornerstone). The sum is to help the public with their mental health and well-being, rising costs and keeping warm. The Community Response Hub is open seven days a week 9am to 6pm. Tel 01670 620015

Newcastle Airport

Newcastle Airport has won an award of "Airport of the Year". Recently there is the addition of four new airlines, thirty new routes and twelve fresh destinations.

Old Airport Control Tower

The old air traffic control tower at the airport is to be demolished in November. It was built in 1966 when the new terminal was opened but when the new 45m tower was built in 2007, it was no longer needed. Plans to turn it into an airport police security lookout and then a public viewing area came and went so, due to it being condemned as a Health and Safety issue, it will be demolished.

Kirkwhelpington Quarry Plan

See Pont News and Views p6. More traffic in Ponteland!

Jennifer Hardy

FAMILY NEWS



Ponteland Special Constable Wins Award

A retired Policeman from Ponteland has won an award at the Northumbria Pride in Policing Awards.

Jon Gray retired in 2008 following a 30 year career in the Police but re-joined the force as a special constable and has now won Volunteer of the Year award. SC Gray has shown

great enthusiasm and commitment to the community through high-visibility foot patrols, intelligence-gathering and responding to incidents. Jon received his award from Chief Constable Vanessa Jardine.

Chief Constable Jardine said: "The officers, staff and volunteers who have been recognised at the Pride in Policing Awards epitomise exactly what we are all striving to achieve".



Congratulations to **Rachel Kirtley** on her promotion at York Hospital to a Band 6 Radiographer with a special interest in Paediatrics.

WOMEN TOGETHER AUTUMN PROGRAMME 2.00pm AT CHURCH



9 Nov – Michael Gatherer – Land Army – 07817 110 987

23 Nov – Film afternoon

7 Dec – Advent Service – in Church - Rev Jona Sewell

21 Dec – Informal Gathering - Stobert Room

Chris Cogan

**Preachers
November**

5th 9.00am Small (BC)
6.30pm Forrester
12th 10.00am Sewell
6.30pm Woolley
19th 10.00am Newman
6.30pm Sewell (S)
26th 10.00am Gray
6.30pm Coulthard

DATES in NOVEMBER

9th: 2pm Women Together
9th: 7.30pm Mens Forum
23rd: 2pm Women Together

**PONTELAND METHODIST
CHURCH**

CARE AND SHARE WITH THE BRIGADES

**Christmas
FAYRE**

**SATURDAY 2ND DECEMBER
10AM**

**CHILDREN AND ADULT
STALLS**

From The Editors

*Don't forget that copy for the December/January edition of Cornerstone should be with the editor by **Friday 24th November 2023**. The editor's email is andrew73anderson@gmail.com. The editorial committee is Andy Anderson, Jennifer Hardy, Jona Sewell and Viv Whyte.*