

Ponteland Methodist Church Cornerstone



September 2022

MINISTER'S LETTER

Welcome to September which seems to come round quicker every year! Over the next 12 months our Church will focus on three main areas:

Welcome – what does it mean to be a welcoming Church? How can we improve on what we already do well? Over the next twelve months we'll be thinking about these questions. This might mean changes to the outside and inside of the building (notice boards, signage, posters etc.), and thinking about how we welcome people on a Sunday, and to our weekly activities. No matter how friendly we think we might be, there's always room for improvement in this area.

Loneliness – we know that this is an issue for some people in our community. Together with our Anglican friends we're asking whether there is anything the Church can do to respond to this need? We don't have any firm proposals yet, but feel this is an area we need to think further about. If you have any ideas you'd like to share then please get in touch.

Bouncy Church – I hope you're aware by now that Bouncy Church will be held on the first Sunday of the month starting on September 4th. During each event there will be two opportunities for worship. At 9:30 there will be a 20 minute service aimed at older children and families. At 10:30 there will be a more traditional service that will last for around 30 minutes. Breakfast and refreshments will be served from 9am to approximately 10:45 and will not be served after the 10:30 service. If you're planning to come to the 10:30 service then why not come for 10:00 and have breakfast and refreshments before you worship! Our evening worship will be unaffected on these days.

A reminder that other regular meetings will restart (or continue) this month: Worship, Open Door, Prayer Meeting, Home and Bible study groups, Boys' Brigade with Girls' Association, Toddler Group, Men's Forum, Women Together, Meanders.... I especially want to highlight our Monday prayer meeting at 4pm in the Church lounge. If you can't join us then why not pray wherever you are? Pray especially for our Church activities and for God's leading over the coming year.

God Bless,



WELCOME TO PONTELAND METHODIST CHURCH

If you are new to worshipping with us....welcome! We're glad to have you as part of our family and would really like to get to know you more. If you would like to find out about the fellowship and social activities connected to PMC, or if you would just like to be on our mailing list to receive regular information, then please give your details to one of the stewards on duty on a Sunday. Alternatively, please contact Jona directly at revjsewell@gmail.com or on 01661 822057.

Rev Jona Sewell

ALL ARE WELCOME?

I came across this notice at the door of a village church in Lincolnshire. It originates from Coventry Cathedral, but had been slightly amended to fit the more rural setting. How would you respond if you read this on entering a church?

Bev

Welcome to our church

We extend a special welcome to those who are single, married, divorced, widowed, gay, confused, filthy rich, comfortable or poor.

We extend a special welcome to wailing babies and excited toddlers.

We welcome you whether you can sing like Pavarotti or just growl quietly to yourself. You're welcome here if you're "just browsing", just woken up or just got out of prison. We don't care if you're more Christian than the Archbishop of Canterbury, or haven't been to church since Christmas 10 years ago.

We extend a special welcome to those who are over 60 but not grown up yet, and to teenagers who are growing up too fast. We welcome keep-fit mums, football dads, starving artists, tree-huggers, latte-sippers, vegetarians, junk-food eaters. We welcome those who are in recovery or still addicted. We welcome you if you are having problems, are down in the dumps or don't like "organised religion". (*We're not that keen on it either!*)

We offer a welcome to those who think the earth is flat, work too hard, don't work, can't spell, or are here because granny is visiting and wanted to come to the church.

We welcome those who are inked, pierced, both or neither. We offer a special welcome to those who could use a prayer right now, had religion shoved down their throats as kids or got lost in the area and wound up here by mistake. We welcome pilgrims, tourists, seekers, doubters.....and you!

OUR VISIT TO THE LOCAL NATIONAL GARDEN SCHEME VENUE, COLCOTES MOOR GARDEN – JULY 2022

After the heat wave during the week 18th July the day of our visit dawned with lovely fluffy clouds, and intermittent sunny spells. It was the most perfect day to visit this garden.

We drove there in a fleet of cars and were welcomed in the courtyard by Mr Ron Bowey, who gave us a brief account of the story behind this amazing venture. Ron, and his wife Louise,

had purchased the farmhouse and land in 2010. His amazing vision to create this garden was assisted by landscape gardener/architect Ros Southern, of Southern Green. The absolutely stunning result is one charming themed garden room leading on to another. Eventually, wooded areas give way to open beautifully-landscaped grassland, and to the surprise of a lake, with



an inviting bridge leading to a tiny island. Interesting artworks enhanced our passage throughout.

Colour and perfume all played their part in this delightful garden, so near both the airport and a main road but absolutely peaceful and tranquil – without a sound apart from an occasional water feature.

Our party of 27, drawn from both Women Together and friends from our churches, then enjoyed tea and a homemade cake, sitting outdoors at little tables sporting pretty cloths. Each had a vase of flowers. These were gifted to our party on leaving. Our hosts were enormously welcoming and friendly, and we all enjoyed a truly very special visit.

In 2021 the National Garden Scheme donated over £3,000,000 to beneficiaries, providing critical support to nursing and health charities following a year of crisis.

They support a number of horticultural as well as many national charities, including Marie Curie, MacMillan, Hospice UK, The Queen's Nursing Institute and Parkinsons UK.

A visit to Coldcotes is highly recommended!

Jean Tweedie



On Tuesday 5th July 1st Ponteland Boys' Brigade & Girls' Association held their annual awards presentation night.

The evening started with a very special message from our Brigade President, Rev Dez Johnston. He sent via a video link from his home in Glasgow congratulating the boys on achieving their awards and encouraging them in everything they do at BB.

All the boys were able to attend the presentation, supported by family, friends and members of Ponteland Methodist Church. The young people were all presented with their achievement awards, and a boy from each section was selected to receive the 'Best Boy' award. This year the Gordon Bullous Memorial Trophy was presented to Ben Phillips, the youngest member of our Company.

We were also able to present two of our Senior boys, Aidan Sewell and Owen Miller, with their President's Badges. This is the first of the major awards the boys can gain, and now sets them off on the journey to complete their Queen's Award.

Our achievement award programme is based on the activity zones of Boys' Brigade, which are, Get Active, Get into the Bible, Get Creative, Get Learning, Get Adventurous and Get Involved. This programme is delivered weekly by our dedicated team of leaders and helpers.

It is fair to say that we are a small company, in need of some new members. In March this year we changed over from a BB Company working with boys only to a BB Company with a Girls' Association. As yet, we do not have any girls who have joined BB/GA, but we are actively recruiting in all our age groups. Please, if you know of any young person who would like to come along, just get in touch with me or any of our leaders, we have spaces available in each of the sections. There are flyers available in the entrance and foyer of our Church, with all our contact details.

We also have opportunities for adult volunteers to join us and help deliver our programme, so if you know someone who would like to become involved, we would be delighted to hear from them.

BB/GA starts up again for the 2022/23 session on Tuesday 13th September, with the Anchors starting at 6.00 pm for an hour, and the older sections starting at 7.15 pm until 8.30 pm.

Les Dodd

THE DIVINE DANCE

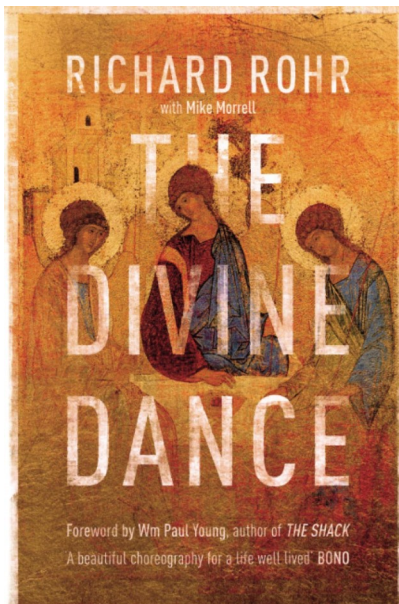
Several weeks ago when Jona was preaching on the subject of the Trinity, he recommended a book entitled *The Divine Dance* by Richard Rohr. Captivated by Jona's sermon and fascinated by the title of the book, I purchased it.

Now I would like to endorse that recommendation. It is truly a delightful book and worth every moment of reading. It is

straightforward yet profound, sketching (I quote) a beautiful choreography of a life well lived. We are so aptly invited by one of its critics to 'stand under the waterfall of God's infinite mercy and know that we are loved'.

The Divine Dance is available on Kindle or can be purchased from Amazon. Do please get a copy and let us all share the day-to-day conscious engagement of dwelling in the trinity of God's love.

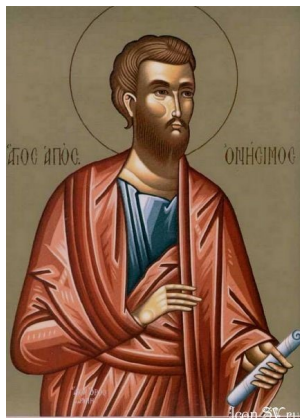
Isobel Hindle



A MEMOIR FROM GAIUS ATTELIUS, PREFECT

In the summer before the burning of Rome, 514 years from the Founding of the City, Nero being Emperor, I sailed from Ostia in a grain ship. We were in ballast, bound for Miletus, from where I intended to travel overland to take up my new post as Prefect of Laodicaea.

The voyage was quite uneventful, boring even, so during the long days I often took a stroll from the poop deck among the motley throng of deck passengers forward. I discovered that among the deck passengers was a young lad I noticed being very helpful to his fellow passengers, especially to the elderly and the sick, even to the women, and this distinguished him from the common herd. They were calling him Onesimus.



It so happened that my own personal servant was unwell for some days, so I asked the purser to get Onesimus to come and see me, intending to ask the lad to take my attendant's place and look after my needs until Gestus recovered.

He was brought to me: I could see that he was neither Greek nor Roman – a young man with a broad face, high cheekbones, snub nose and wiry black hair.

"Where do you come from?" I asked him. "I'm a courier from Rome, Sir, travelling to Colossi with letters to deliver" was his an-

swer.

"You're no Roman, nor Phrygian, either, by the looks of you. Much further north, I'd say!" "True, your honour. I am a Scythian by birth, but came to Colossi as a child."

"Have you ever been a personal servant to a gentleman?" I said, remembering the way in which he had been tending those deck passengers so well. "Yes" he replied, "I have been looking after Paulus, a Roman citizen, for some months, and it is his letters I have to take to the East". So I took him on and he served me well for part of the voyage.

As I did not yet know Laodicaea well, I assumed that Onesimus would have some idea about the nature of the people I was going to administer and he did, indeed, prove to be very useful in

describing the area and the tribes that lived in those districts of Asia, although he was himself from one of the nomadic tribes that roamed the districts north and east of the Black Sea.

As he attended to me, I came to suspect that there was something irregular about his presence on the ship, and one day I challenged him. "Are you a free man?" I asked him directly.

"Paulus told me that when I had come to know the truth about the Lord whom I love and worship, I should be made free. I do believe the truth about Jesus, who is the Son of God, so I have been freed from all my sins," he declared.

"You must be one of those Christians!" I exclaimed. "I have heard good and bad reports about them. I've noticed how helpful and caring you have been towards your fellow deck-passengers, and you have served me cheerfully and well. Is that anything to do with this religion you confess?"

"Yes, indeed Master. I was a sinner indeed before I came to know the Lord through his disciples in Rome. I confess that I am slave to a citizen of Colossi, sold in childhood at the market in Rostov by my own stepfather, and I stowed away on a westward-bound ship to escape from bondage.

"When I heard the truth about Jesus of Nazareth, who died for all sinners and for me, and who rose again from the dead to bring us to God, I received in myself His Holy Spirit. My sins, which were great, have been taken away, and I am a new man! I am free in my soul, whatever I may be in the body."

"You realise that I could turn you over to the captain of this ship, who would put you in irons until you could be sent back to your master for punishment. Do you know what we do to runaway slaves?"

"Yes, Sir, I know that if my master Philemon pleases, he can have me beaten mercilessly or imprisoned for years, or even crucified; but because I am committed to Christ, I am prepared to endure anything necessary to show that I am really a new man.

"I must make reparation for all I did in deserting my duty to Philemon of Colossi. That is I why I agreed to carry these letters back to him and to the church that meets in his city. Not law, but conscience, is sending me back to take whatever is coming to me.

"My father-in-God, Paulus, has told me that Philemon is indeed also one of the Brotherhood and like any loving father he has

written to explain things. But, for good or ill, I must repay the robbery I committed by running away from the man that owned me, and defrauding him. The Lord Jesus Himself suffered death for the life of the world, so that I and you, too, Sir, could be free from death and destruction!"

"You're too useful to me here, Onesimus, for me to turn you over to the authorities. I trust your word that you will go back to your master and face the consequences. You are a very brave man indeed, and the power of faith that you are showing would be commendable in a free Roman, let alone a Scythian slave."

"Sir, I have learned from Paulus that in Christ, the very fullness of God, there is no room for distinction between Greek and Jew, between the circumcised and the uncircumcised, or between barbarian, Scythian, slave or free Roman. There is only Christ: He is everything and in everything."

"This is high learning indeed and may be dangerously revolutionary," I confessed to the slave. "When I reach my prefecture, I will enquire further into this new faith."

Philemon

FAMILY FUN DAY

The Family Fun Day on Saturday 20th was a lovely time of seeing families joining us in the Church garden. The barbecued burgers and hot dogs were wonderful, there were lots of fun activities – hooking ducks, hoopla, stacking bricks, craft making, a bouncy castle, face painting – and a great opportunity to talk to families and invite them to Bouncy Church. In spite of a doubtful weather forecast the sun shone most of the time and it was only later as we packed up afterwards that the heavier rain came.

The idea of Bouncy Church was greeted with much enthusiasm and many promises to come to it. We hope that those promises are kept and that on Sunday, September 4th we will have the joy of welcoming the same families again and others too.

We also hope that you will join us and come along for a Bouncy Church continental breakfast. It is being served from 9 o'clock to 10.20, up to 10 minutes before the 10.30 morning service. All are welcome.

Isobel Hindle



Family Fun Day



STROLLING ON SATURDAY 6TH AUGUST

For our August stroll, the town of Newbiggin-by-the-Sea was chosen and it proved to be a delightful choice.

Many many years ago Newbiggin was the fourth most important port with London and Hull leading the line up, all extremely viable with Newbiggin at the end of some of the Northumbrian Corn Road as was Alnmouth.

Newbiggin had a delightful “a live” air about it with interesting shops including an amazing old-fashioned wool shop. Also several delightful cafes. Having visited Hexham recently and seen so many boarded-up and closed premises, it was just super to experience the buzz of a vibrant Main Street.

Having started our visit with a coffee stop at the museum, the party of 12 persons then set off to stroll along the esplanade which is beautifully laid out and spacious. Plenty of seats for those wishing to enjoy a sit-down and to admire the view and to watch the flow of people and dogs of every size.



A gentleman passing with an absolutely huge dog was very happy to pause and answer all our questions. It was a Newfoundland and was so gentle and friendly!! (I wanted to take him home.) This unique breed helps the RNLI with sea rescues as their webbed feet act as very efficient paddles and of course they are a very strong breed. We proceeded along the esplanade with a few pauses to

read various blue plaques and also the RNLI station was open offering a shop and a visit. Behind the station is the original “Rocket House”. Before more sophisticated communications, when the station received a distress call a rocket was fired and a maroon which was a detonated firework and the crew, hearing the “call”, would drop what they were doing and report for duty. All the residents too would turn out to go down to the shore to witness the activity. In Newbiggin the Rocket House - open to

view - is one of the oldest in the entire UK.

Approximately half-way along the promenade, it was decided to have a lunch break and of course we looked for a fish and chip restaurant which was the first choice for some and also alternatives for others. After our refreshment we then continued strolling and eventually heard with great excitement that dolphins were to be seen so most of us went up onto the headland and with patience we were eventually rewarded with a beautiful spectacle. Their movements are so graceful and the sighting did enhance our visit.



We didn't attempt to follow the art trail, but anyone considering a visit to Newbiggin could perhaps have time to follow it. It is truly spectacular and extremely interesting.

So when we made our departure I took a last glance round the bay at the golden sand—imported! The young couple beautifully modelled looking out to

sea, also St Bartholomew's Church on the headland. All looking their best in the sunshine and lovely to store these beautiful memories to dip into on a cold winter's day by the fireside.

Jean Tweedie

We thank God for another successful stroll in the sunshine. We are looking forward to Whitby and a stroll along the pier and maybe into Peasholm Park on 3 September. We are travelling by coach this time, meeting opposite St Mary's Church Hall at 9am and joining with other Meanders folk.

Rosemary Gray

BOUNCY CHURCH

As we come out of Covid we want to get going with some of the ideas we had well before Covid for becoming a more fruitful Church.

At its meeting on June 23 2022, Church Council approved the idea of having **Bouncy Church** on the **first Sunday of every month**. The idea came to Isobel one Sunday morning at a birthday party for our youngest grandson in Kirkwhelpington village hall. Our daughter-in-law had hired a Bouncy Castle and the children loved it. "Sunday morning at church needs to be as much fun as this," we agreed. Why not **Bouncy Church**?

What do we need?

Of course, a **Bouncy Castle in Church Hall**

Some other activities including crafts

Continental breakfast for everyone, so juice, chocolate, tea, coffee; cereals; croissants, petits pains au chocolat (must have these – yummy), toast, jam, honey, marmalade ...

A bible story for about 10 minutes

A 20-minute service in a quieter place for older siblings along with parents, grandparents etc. built around the same bible story

Morning service for other adults as the children are leaving; a slightly longer version of the 20-minute service ending shortly after 11.00.

The timings:

09.00 –10.20: Bouncing and other activities in Hall

09.00 –10.20: Continental Buffet Breakfast for everyone

Tables in Hall and Stobert Room

09.40 – 09.55ish: Bible story in Hall

09.40 – 10.00ish: Worship in Sanctuary

10.30 – 11.00ish: Worship in Sanctuary

Bouncy Church will start on **Sunday September 4th** and we look forward to welcoming you. **Cost?** Donate what you can, please.

Isobel and Peter Hindle



THE OPEN DOOR

Gluten-Free Brownie

75g unsalted butter
200g caster or granulated sugar
90g brown sugar
1 tsp vanilla extract
4 large eggs
80g cocoa powder
75g milk chocolate chips
Pinch sea salt



This gluten-free recipe was very popular at Open Door. Thank you to Margaret for passing it on to me. It may be gluten-free but I don't think it's low calorie.

Judith

Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan.

Grease an 8" square tin and line with greaseproof paper (overlap the tin on 2 sides for easy removal).

Melt the butter in a large bowl. Stir in the sugars and vanilla. The mixture should now resemble wet sand.

Whisk the eggs with a fork and stir into the mixture.

Sift the cocoa powder and gently fold into the mixture.

Stir in the salt and most of the chocolate chips (reserve a few).

Pour the mixture into the prepared tin and bake for 30-35 mins until it no longer wobbles in the middle.

Sprinkle the remaining chocolate chips on top, whilst still warm.

Lift on to the cooling rack. Cut into squares when cool.

GARDENING FOR SEPTEMBER 2022

After a shower of rain has left everything wet to the touch (writing on 24 August) it is a good time to write about "life as a dry-weather gardener". The press claimed that July was the driest for 87 years and have likened the dry summer to 1976. We were living just five miles south of Aberystwyth and took the caravan to meet up with dispersed friends from Brecon days at Lands End. In 1976 in the south-west farmers were feeding livestock with conserved grass in brown fields. In parts it may have been similar this year. My records show that we had 1.36 inches of rain in June, 1.85 in July and 1.2 so far in August following a drier than average spring. The problem has been that the rain has come in such small amounts that it has evaporated rather than wet the dry soil. I think I will have used the hosepipe more this year than any other since we moved to Ponteland 45 years ago. Day length is gradually shortening so we must now work on what plans we might have for the future. Most of our planters have survived the dry weather with regular watering but some crops planted in the vegetable area have not been so successful despite efforts to keep the soil moist. For our summer plantings to give way to colour for the winter and spring the first plantings have been made. I buy plug pansy plants and grow them on.

We have two different colours (66 of each) this year. They have



arrived but the shade from the vine protected them from scorch. All the bulbs for autumn planting are on order and should be planted in September, or at the latest in October (tulips last). These all go in pots/planters as the roots of shrubs and hedges are far too difficult to plant into now. We hope to have quite a selection for spring display starting with iris reticulata and crocus. We do have

snowdrops in the ground which happily appear each spring. I said I would report back on dwarf sweet peas in planters. We had a wonderful display for about a month in June. We did not pick the short-stemmed sweet peas and all of a sudden the flowers became pods and even with these removed the plants never recovered. Our sweet peas in the vegetable area have

been floriferous, no pollen beetle as there was no nearby oil seed rape this year and we are still picking plenty of flowers now. On the vegetable front there has been mixed success. Onions are small and all harvested. Potatoes planted on 14 April have cropped very well and are all harvested except one variety which is still growing well. Mange-tout were excellent, some early planted cabbages good, later planted cauliflowers virtually failed. All the first flowers on the runner beans did not pollinate so we only had the first picking on 22 August. I have another little experiment running. I planted seven runner bean plants in June into a large planter – they have reached over six feet and when the flowers started to drop, not pollinated, I began spraying them with water a week ago, pods are now setting and I hope to have edible size ones in the next three weeks.

Our u3a Vegetable Gardening and Fruit Growing group enjoyed a very warm visit to “Go Local Food” Co-operative situated adjoining Halls of Heddon Nursery at Ovington. It has been there 10 years and one of our group members is a member of the co-



operative which receives a weekly crop share of chemically-free grown vegetables. To obtain a weekly share you need to join the co-operative and then agree to pay a monthly direct debit according to the size of the share you would like to collect weekly from the site. For more information contact

[“admin@golocalfoods.org.uk”](mailto:admin@golocalfoods.org.uk). A wide variety of crops are grown and some strawberries. Each member of the co-operative can have a say in the crops that are grown (and even the variety) at the Annual General meeting.

It is hedge cutting time. I am quite amazed at the growth of all the hedges over the last three to four months. My cousins are coming to cut and clear ours which go almost all the way around the perimeter of the garden. The Town Council will be very pleased with owners who have hedges, adjoining footpaths in particular, if they are adequately trimmed. Our roadside hawthorn hedge is not normally mechanically trimmed until after the leaves have fallen so that the trimmings can drop down into the bottom of the hedge.

Good gardening.

Syd Cowan

VILLAGE NEWS

Banking Services

Our MP, Guy Opperman, has launched a campaign to retain in-person banking facilities. He has had meetings with Barclays to persuade them to roll out their banking vans across Tynedale and Ponteland. He has also written to Lloyds, NatWest and HSBC to ask them to provide a similar service.

Previous NatWest building on Darras Road

In 2018 an application was made to change this building to provide a restaurant and two apartments. A recent application has been made to change this to provide treatment rooms, ref 22/01243/VARYCO .

Former Police Station

Plans were being made to change this building into a restaurant. There were a number of objections. Now there are signs on the building saying “offices to let”.

Athol House, Callerton Lane

Diggers have been seen on the site at last, clearing the land.

Waitrose Refurbishment

The carparking at Waitrose is much restricted owing to the fact that the store is about to undergo a major refit. This will last until November.

Ponteland Flower Show

This will be held on Saturday, 10th September in the Memorial Hall. There are no entry fees. Exhibits can be staged on Friday 9th from 7.00 until 9.00 pm and on Show day from 8.00 until 10.45 a.m. Show entry is free but donations are welcome (1.00 pm - 4.15 pm). Car Parking is managed by Parking Eye Ltd. Schedules are available in many locations and on line at www.pontelandflowershow.org.uk.

Jennifer Hardy

FAMILY NEWS

Margaret Ashford is celebrating a special birthday in September.

We congratulate **Alan and Pauline Groves** on their 60th Wedding Anniversary.

We pray for our friends who have been having health problems—**Joan Harrison, Marion Danby and Ann Scott.**

Thinking of all our young people who have just received their exam results. They have faced significant challenges completing their studies during the last two years. Every good wish for both their future study, and their career choices.

Prayers also go to both **Rosemary Gray** and **Pat Turner**, who have both had health concerns, and are in the throes of moving. We pray for both better health, and a smooth relocation, for them both.

Can we also pray for friends who have suffered recent family and close friend's bereavements?



Rosemary Brown

Thank you to everybody who came to my 80th birthday celebration. £550 was raised in donations for bowel cancer.

Preachers September

4th 9.30am Bouncy Church
10.30am Sewell
6.30pm at Westerhope

11th 10.00am Gray
6.30pm Sewell (S)

18th 10.00am Sewell (S)
6.30pm Lanyon

25th 10.00am Small
6.30pm Albans

Women Together

8 Sept – Dedication Service -
Advent Service – Rev Jona
Sewell & Bring & Buy

22 Sep – Keep Moving! – Jane
Harrington

Men's Forum

Thursday September 22nd 7.30pm

Pie and Pea Supper

with talk by Geoff Orrock
“A Bit of Light Work”

Please book your place with
Peter Michell 871885 or Geoff Lisle 822532

From The Editors

*Don't forget that copy for the October edition of Cornerstone should be with the editor by **Friday 23rd September 2022**. The editor's email address is andrew73anderson@gmail.com . The editorial committee is Andy Anderson, Jennifer Hardy, Jona Sewell and Viv Whyte.*