

Upper Coquetdale Life

2011/12

The Church of England

in the Parish of Upper Coquetdale:

Alnham

Alwinton Holystone

Rothbury Hepple Thropton



Welcome to Upper Coquetdale Life

It gives me great pleasure to introduce this year's annual review of the life of the Anglican Parish of Upper Coquetdale. Having arrived so late in the year, my own recollections of 2011 have been largely dominated by finding my way round the valley of the River Coquet, both the parts that are 'Upper' and 'not Upper', as well as out and over to Alnham (or is that over and out?).

Two things strike a newcomer to these parts; the beauty of the landscape and friendliness of the inhabitants. I am certain both qualities influence for good the way we live here, the way we work together as a community and the way we draw others into the warmth of our fellowship.

I am indebted to all who have made me feel so welcome and given me so much encouragement as I made the move from Windsor to come and settle here. A lot has happened this last year and for me particular highlights of the end of 2011 would have to be my Induction and Installation (and subsequent party in the Jubilee Hall), the solemnity of the Remembrance commemorations in November, when Rothbury stood still, then the fun and festivities up and down the valley for the Christmas celebrations. First impressions for me then? There is so much potential in these parts for good and for growth and I very much look forward to sharing it all with you in the years ahead.

I commend the following account of our parish life to you; it indicates the astonishing breadth and variety of activities undertaken by everyone but it can only hint at the true richness of the warmth and generosity of those who live here and who love and support the life and work of the Church in this place.

Michael Boag, Rector

Keeping the show on the road...

2011 was a year of change and celebration for the Parish of Upper Coquetdale, bringing an end to the interregnum and establishing the Parochial Church Council for Upper Coquetdale and three District Church Councils (Rothbury, Hepple and Thropton; Alwinton and Holystone; and Alnham). Our new incumbent The Reverend Michael Boag was Instituted and Inducted as Rector in All Saints

on 18 October 2011. There is a new optimism and confidence in the parish as we work together to help deliver God's purpose here.

On 5 July we celebrated The Reverend Dr Rosie Stacy's ordination as Priest at St Michael and All Angels Alwinton and gave thanks for The Reverend Peter Lear's time with us on 24 July at All Saints. The Reverend Michael Boag's Institution and Induction by the Bishop of Newcastle and Archdeacon of Lindisfarne was a joyful and inspiring service at All Saints with a guard of honour provided by the Cubs and Scouts, followed by a reception in the Jubilee Hall. Another highlight of the year was a service led by The Reverend Professor Peter Galloway OBE, our Patron's representative. The service was meant to coincide with our annual Brinkburn pilgrimage but in the event was held at All Saints. All of these services and many others have been enhanced by beautiful music, which is becoming a hallmark of the parish.

Our task as members of the PCC and DCCs is to look after church finance, property, and to work closely with the incumbent. The formal annual reports prepared by the PCC and DCC Secretaries are in all of the churches.

They give details of the main business undertaken in 2011, particularly relating to the changes in governance and the appointment of the Rector. Minutes of meetings are also publicly available. There is an enormous amount of other work being undertaken in the Parish and *Upper Coquetdale Life* pays credit to some of that.

We would like to thank all of our clergy, including our retired priests; the Area Dean and Archdeacon of Lindisfarne; and also the



very large number of people who contribute to the life of the churches, whether by dusting and hoovering, cleaning silver, washing linen, arranging flowers, doing basic DIY jobs, performing administrative tasks, helping with events for children and young people, organising special services, providing the singing and the music: the list could go on and on. Our heartfelt thanks are due to you all.

We hope that what you read here may inspire you, whether you are a regular churchgoer or not, to enjoy and support your churches, help maintain them physically or financially. Each church is open every day and is well worth a visit!

Liz Kerry, PCC Secretary

Our six churches

All Saints, Rothbury

Services have been well attended throughout the year with an average Sunday attendance of around seventy. We have held seventeen Funerals/Memorial Services, celebrated eight Weddings/Blessings of Marriage and seven Baptisms. The musical life of the whole valley has been enhanced by the participation the Coquetdale Chamber Choir at major festivals and other important occasions.

Fabric: There have been no major problems with the fabric of the church throughout the year with the exception of a winter storm damaging a small number of slates. General maintenance work has taken place in the form of repainting various areas in most need. Many thanks go to Mr Fred Seymour and Mr Ken Branson for kindly carrying this work out for us. Thanks to the generosity of an anonymous parishioner the Notice board is to be completely refurbished. A professional sound engineer was brought in to sort out the problems we were having with the sound system, a microphone was replaced and the balance reset. The net result was excellent sound quality in time for the new Rector's Institution and no further problems since. Heating is an ongoing concern with an old and inefficient boiler. We are indebted to Mr Ken Branson who constantly monitors the situation to ensure the church is warm enough for all our needs. Improving energy efficiency in both the

heating and lighting of the church is one of our priorities and an ongoing project. There has been no regular demand for lifts to services and events this year but it should be stressed that if anyone would like, or knows of anyone else, who would like to avail themselves of this service, please let one of the wardens know so that arrangements can be made.

The Parish Council has accepted responsibility for the trees in the churchyard though there was not enough money left in their 2011 budget to carry out the remedial work urgently needed to four of the trees. The Parish Council have agreed to fund a three year programme of tree management in the two closed graveyards with a five yearly review thereafter. We hope this work can commence in 2012. The Parish Council also accepts responsibility for the clock chiming mechanism which underwent repairs in 2011. (A further fault or failure of the original repair has since occurred and further work will be necessary.)

Thanks also to those who help to keep the Parish Hall running smoothly, Wendy Richardson, Gill Wheeler, Margaret Blanshard and Ken Branson, and Ann Dick.

Ken Howey, Dave Medd, Jackie Muckle and Ros Maudslay

Christ Church, Hepple

There have been twenty-nine celebrations of Holy Communion at Christ Church during 2011 with an average attendance holding up at around seventeen. The Book of Common Prayer service on the first Sunday of the month has continued to be popular, as have the Christmas and Easter Day services of Holy Communion.

Harvest Songs of Praise was held for a second year running with around forty-five people attending, followed by a highly successful auction of produce and a pooled supper. We were also pleased to host a United Churches service and hope to be part of the programme again in 2012.

We offer our sympathy to the families of four people closely associated with Hepple who have died this year and celebrate one wedding.

Fabric: Routine maintenance work undertaken in 2011 included grass cutting and strimming the churchyard and verge, moss treatment of paths, clearing gutters, emergency repairs to the roof



and PAT/fire extinguisher testing. Much of this was done free of charge and we are very grateful for that support.

The condition of the church roof and the extent of damp penetration seriously deteriorated following another very severe winter in 2010/11. A further detailed survey by the Church Architect in July 2011 (including opening up a section of the roof) concluded that the roof now needed to be entirely re-slatted in addition to drainage work. Following discussions with English Heritage a new scheme was drawn up and approved by the DCC. This received initial approval

from English Heritage in December 2011. The application was for a grant of £31,700 towards costs of £48,000 with the balance from church funds (£3,000) and local fundraising and donations (£13,000). At the year end, all of the local contribution had been raised thanks to the enormous generosity and hard work of our supporters. Other work such as external paintwork, repairs to the churchyard wall, damp around the disused heating ducts, the need to test the lightening protection and lack of a church nameboard will be tackled in due course but for the moment the roof and associated work is the priority.

Generosity has been very evident inside the church as well as outside this year, from making a stand for the paschal candle, donating flowers for festivals, gifts in memory of loved ones, to the beautiful new white chasuble, burse and veil designed and made - including the lacework - by Isobel Robinson, which was blessed on 18 December and used for the first time on Christmas Day. Our most sincere thanks are due for all of these and to the many other people who help to keep Christ Church alive and part of our community.

Liz Kerry, Warden

St Andrew, Thropton

Sunday morning services continue to be held on the second and fourth Sundays of the month with an average attendance of around twelve. At the first of these the Book of Common Prayer is used. The running of the church is supported by the church cleaners and flower arrangers and Mrs Robinson who writes out the list of readers at St Andrew's.

Fabric: The Quinquennial Inspection Report identified a need to repair and reinstate roof slates and bellcote shingles; check and clear rainwater goods; and redecorate the gable bargeboard. Other work such as tests on the electrical installation, including portable appliances, has been carried out.

The most pressing and costly work concerns the windows, where the Report recommended repair to the present windows. However, the DCC agreed last year that UPVC replacement windows to match the other three would be better. The DCC agreed that, subject to the views of the Diocese about using PVC frames, estimates would be sought for the replacement of the problem frames and cracked glass with a view to the necessary work being undertaken. It has also been agreed, after seeking professional advice, that a crack in the west stained glass window should be left alone as colour matching would be very difficult and as it is covered by plain glass, the window continues to give protection against the weather.

Two further items are carried forward from last year: replacing the old kneelers (possibly by engaging local needlework enthusiasts) and painting at least the white parts of the woodwork inside the church.

Gordon Marsden, Warden

St Mary the Virgin, Holystone

The pattern of services at Holystone remains unaltered with attendance averaging around twenty. Once a month, the Holy Communion Service welcomes the Sunday Club children who now meet at Priory Farm, Holystone, thanks to Kate Waddington.

Locally produced jam and marmalade, as well as Fairtrade products, continue to sell well and are appreciated by the steady stream of visitors who come to Holystone.

The next project is to install a new lighting system; the 'wheel' lights are to be replaced with 'globe' lights offering a warmer glow. The old sycamore has been thoroughly pollarded and should remain safe for many more years.

Helen Holmes and Marion Farndale, Wardens

St Michael and All Angels, Alnham

Over the year we have been privileged to see our congregation numbers rising to around thirteen regulars and there is a positive feeling running through our little church. There has been a number of special events in addition to our monthly services, which have attracted more people to worship with us. Our biggest service of the year by far was our Christmas Eve carol service; when the church was full to bursting, with families from all around sharing in the Christmas spirit!

There were two weddings in Alnham this year; one for a couple from Gateshead who visited, fell in love with the church and chose it for their wedding, with the reception being held in the village too. The second wedding was between two of our friends in the village; lovely to be able to celebrate our neighbours' special day with them.

Fabric: Our fabric work has mostly been at roof level this year, where slipped stone roofing slabs have been repositioned and gutters cleared. Internally, the plasterwork is drying out and the church always has fresh flowers. Comments in the visitors' book from the many visitors and walkers pay tribute to the beauty and peace of the church.

Despite being on the far reaches of the parish, it is great to be able to report all these good things happening in our church; we may be a long way out but the spirit of God is working in our corner of the world too, in a truly wonderful way.

Sarah Smith and Steve Clark, Wardens

St Michael and All Angels, Alwinton

There have been three baptisms, one wedding and three funerals including a memorial service for Guy Renwick in St Michael's, Alwinton. Our average Sunday attendance is around twenty-five.

Fabric: Our insurance covered the cost of repairing the snow damaged guttering suffered in the winter of 2010/11. Work on the internal decoration remains in the planning stage but oil has been applied to the external surfaces of the church doors. Rentokil Limited carried out woodworm treatment of the central and rear under floor areas and regular grass cutting



has been carried out by Neil Smith. Julia Stott has continued to organise a rota of very effective volunteer cleaners throughout the year. A very special thanks to everyone who has helped out with jobs that go on quietly in the background, to keep the church a pleasant and welcoming place to worship and visit. We need this much appreciated help on a continuing basis. There is a whole range of jobs both in the church and churchyard and administrative tasks that many people have done throughout the year, such as cleaning, flower arranging, tea and coffee making, clearing snow and ice, churchyard gardening and so on. We thank you all. We also thank those who give their time to help with services, fundraising, concerts and who play the organ. Visitors have commented upon how good it is to see that the church is cared for and love to hear the organ being played. Well done, everyone, including those carrying out any tasks we have failed to mention.

Jacky Bickmore and Clare Friend, Wardens

Flowers

The flowers in all the churches in the valley continue to arouse admiration, not just for their attractiveness but for the ways the dedicated teams of arrangers produce displays so suited to each special occasion or church festival. In all the churches in the parish the arrangements for Christmas, Easter and harvest can be counted on to enhance the special nature of these services. A great deal of planning and hard work goes on on the part of the 'flower

ladies'. The parishioners who enjoy them week by week are extremely grateful for their dedication and for the generosity of those who provide such beautiful flowers and foliage. At least the seasons of Lent and Advent give a chance for the arrangers to have a rest from their labours!

All the stops were pulled for the superlative floral decorations at The Reverend Michael Boag's Institution in All Saints. The Rothbury team also continues to provide flowers for the Brinkburn Summer Music Festival. More members of all the flower-arranging teams are always welcome.

Parish Hall, Rothbury

It has been a good year for the parish hall in Rothbury. The insulation grant enabled purchase and installation of loft insulation, pipe lagging was fitted in the lavatories, new thermal curtains were hung in the upstairs room with the remainder of the grant and various donations. Fuel saving is a priority and we continue to encourage evening users to switch off the heating before locking up as they leave.

The paintwork from the dado rail downwards has been refurbished. A new lock was fitted with named key-holders to meet insurance requirements. Bookings have risen, some examples being Rothbury Parish Council, the Burial Committee, Brownies, painting courses for dementia sufferers and local vets' First Aid training courses. Overnight stays have included Sunday Schools and pilgrims. Resulting income means the hall is self-supporting and not a drain on Church finances. Church users therefore should plan meetings well in advance to avoid disappointment!

All the work carried out has been by volunteers, including cleaning, and our grateful thanks to them all, as their support is vital and ensures the continuing success of the hall.

Wendy Richardson

Supporting children, young people and families Harbottle Church of England (VA) First School

Our school has continued to benefit from its close relationship with the church. We have a full complement of Foundation governors, all

of whom are very dedicated and play a very active, supportive role in the school. As well as helping with strategic decisions relating to budget and school development, many come into school every week to work in various ways with the children. The Head Teacher is a trustee on the Diocesan Education Board and so the school and Upper Coquetdale parish are involved in strategic work beyond the valley.

This year, the school has continued to be involved in church services including Christingle, Harvest, Pentecost, and Mothering Sunday. Although the churches at Alwinton and Holystone are unfortunately not within reach for regular worship there as a school, the children are taken to church each year for an Ascension Day service as well as other visits. A pilgrimage is planned for the Year 3 and 4 children to the Lady's Well. Many of our children also attend the Monthly Family Services and Sunday Club.

We are grateful to The Reverend Trudy Gray for regular leading school collective worship and for her support in many RE lessons.

The school has also been pleased to host PCC/DCC meetings this year, which reinforces the school's vision to be a visible Christian community and part of the Upper Coquetdale Parish.

We are now getting excited as we prepare for the visit of Archbishop John Sentamu in March.

The Reverend Sue Joyner, Head Teacher

Dr Thomlinson's Middle School

One of our aims this year has been to establish better links between the school and Church. It was decided to hold some workshops based on special themes during the year. These took place after school and proved to be most successful with some wonderful displays appearing in All Saints, which were much admired by the congregation and visitors. The group of adults, led by The Reverend Trudy Gray, thoroughly enjoyed the children's refreshing outlook and the children made very short work of the home-made traybakes!

During the Autumn Term we invited the Year 5 pupils to spend a morning in church. They were divided into small groups and showed around the church; the focus being for them to become more aware of how the altar, organ, pulpit, bells, font, candles and

vestments are used in worship. We found we had a few budding bell-ringers and possibly a future organist.

In October some pupils were able to visit Westminster Abbey, a memorable experience for them as those who have been before will know, and in November the Year 8 children travelled to Durham and had a memorable introduction to its world-renowned medieval Cathedral.

At the end of the school year the young people ready to move on to High School attend the Leavers Service held in Newcastle Cathedral with children from other Church of England schools in Northumberland; a chance to say farewell to the old and to look forward to moving on to the new.

Margaret Tasker-Brown, Governor

Children's Ministry Group

A coordinated approach to children's work has been attempted, with resources being used throughout the parish, involving many willing helpers. The Children's

Ministry Group has taken over the work of the Children's Society, organising the Christingle service at All Saints and the Box Collection. A very jovial atmosphere was experienced as a team of helpers made Christingles and counted the money from the collection boxes.

Work began with the Thinking Day Service, attended by 120 and very well received. We followed this success by planning Mothering Sunday services where children were involved leading the prayers and distributing posies. A special service and family picnic for Pentecost was held



at Alnham, where the band played music, while twenty-six children danced down the aisle waving ribbons.

New display boards in All Saints have made a tremendous difference to the appearance of the children's work displayed for Pentecost, Harvest and Advent.

A recent visit to All Saints by children from Rothbury First School is testament to what we are trying to achieve such as familiarising the children with the buildings and the variety of activities that take place in them including the work of organists, bell ringers and flower arrangers, to help them see church as part of the community in which they live.

Workshops were held in Dr Thomlinson's during Lent and Advent and an Easter Craft Workshop on Easter Eve, allowed children to participate in a range of activities including making an Easter Garden, God's eyes with lollipop sticks, icing Easter biscuits and storytelling to name just a few.

Carol Milburn

Holystone Sunday Club

The Sunday Club was started to give parents the opportunity to attend the service without their young children, who went instead to Alwinton Vicarage for an hour of fun based on a religious theme. We started in May 1991 with twelve children. Since then the numbers have fluctuated greatly from a low of five (with only two or none actually attending) to our present roll of eight, often with friends who come to join in. When The Reverend Judy Glover left the parish, we were very kindly offered room at the home of the Waddington family; so we moved our venue to Holystone.

We start with a Bible story, have a short discussion then an activity, the result of which we bring into church, towards the end of the service to share with the congregation and which is then displayed in the church afterwards.

These are some of the things we have done: in March we read the parable of the sowing of the seeds. We then planted tomato seeds. The following month the seedlings were potted on and finally, in May they were sold in church in aid of Christian Aid. We also designed a Christmas quiz which was distributed with the news letter. We worked on a theme of 'All things bright and beautiful'

because it was a lovely day. We set out to see how many bright and beautiful things we could find.

Many thanks to the Waddingtons for the use of their house and to Gail, Sarah and Kate who have all helped. Without them we could not have carried on. Children from the age of three are welcome and, of course, younger ones as long as there is a Mum or Dad to stay with them.

Jackie Bickmore

Children at Alnham

Last Easter we held an Easter Egg hunt in the churchyard attended by all the local children, who then came in for the service.

Later in the year we had a Pentecost Picnic and the children all came wearing home-made crowns and took a noisy part in the service with percussion instruments and rousing songs.

Both these events were very well attended by children and their parents.

Sarah Smith

Rothbury and Coquetdale Youth Project

Rothbury, Thropton and Hepple DCC continues to be represented on the Management Committee of the Youth Project and to offer support. The three years of finance from The Big Lottery Fund makes the project secure for a while but future funding is always a concern. The Project Leader is Stuart Athey and a new half-time Youth Support Worker, Micky Froud, has been appointed.

A funding requirement is active work on democracy; youth workers and young people have attended two meetings of Rothbury Parish Council. At the second meeting youth member Ian Russell presented and spoke to his paper about setting up a skateboard park. Ian is giving information at a project fundraising coffee morning in the Jubilee Hall. They have visits planned to Westminster and to the European Parliament in Brussels.

During the year there were residential visits to Wooler Youth Hostel, Greenhead, Kielder and the Allendale Outdoor Centre; good links with the Alnwick Gallery Youth Project including a possible involvement with young people in Longframlington and Swarland; visits to sports centres, Lightwater Valley and ten pin bowling; a

young driver awareness course with police, fire and ambulance services; the new Year 8 transition to High School sessions at Dr Thomlinson's School have continued with thirty to forty attending. Community links have included work with the music festival, Coquetdale Round Table, and a tidy of the village green and school bank for the Parish Council. There is to be an annual achievement award and plaque in memory of Tony Sandford who died in July; he set up the project and was Chairman for many years.

Jeff Reynolds

Parents' Drop-In

Gail Johnston and Sarah Husband started the Drop-in in September after their experiences as mothers living up the valley, having to take their children to Beavers and Rainbows in Rothbury on Tuesday evenings between 5.00 pm and 6.30 pm. There is nowhere to go once you have dropped off your child and have an hour to while away; it is too short a time to go back up the valley and especially in winter there is nowhere to wait once you have been round the Co-op! Sometimes mums have other children in tow so the pub is not an option either.

The Parish Hall provided a local sanctuary and the facilities to make a cup of tea, sit down out of the weather and have a chat with other parents. Emails were sent out to all parents of local groups and feedback was that it was a really good idea. Members of the Mothers' Union were approached and kindly agreed to be part of a staffing rota. However, it was used by just a handful of parents, until it was moved to the church after half term whereby attendance stopped completely. It is not known whether this was due to the change in location, or whether parents were just getting smarter in their lift-sharing arrangements and no longer needed this service. In the end we are happy to have given this scheme a chance to work even if it proved to be unwanted.

Sarah Husband and Gail Johnston

Upper Coquetdale Mothers' Union

Looking back over the year we have once more enjoyed an extremely interesting, varied and busy one. We have had some excellent talks continuing our voyages around the world; including

to Cambodia learning of its geography and history from Trudy, as well as to Zambia where our former Diocesan president told us how M.U. is a way of life for women there empowering them to do so much now and to plan for the future. February saw us travelling with Peter Hindle and U.N.I.C.E.F. in an attempt to seek a solution to feeding the world's hungry.

Liesbeth Langford's talk on her childhood under the German occupation of Holland was extremely interesting and uplifting and our own Margy Tasker Brown's talk on the school year provided light relief.

We enjoyed a visit to the Northumbria Community at Acton House Farm, where we had a tour of the mother house, lunch and a stroll around the gardens and a talk about the community. The sun shone on us again for our summer outing to the Battlesteads at work and for lunch and then on to the Heritage centre at Bellingham. A quiet day at Alnmouth Friary was also appreciated. Our attendance at the general meeting at Edinburgh in the Usher Hall and at Alnwick Deanery day which included a most interesting visit to the Lifeboat station at Amble, were both enjoyable occasions.

We have given our support to Mothers' Day ethical gifts scheme, organised afternoon teas in May for the Mothers' Union literacy project and enjoyed our sponsored walk in aid of A.F.I.A; we have sent shoeboxes of goodies to soldiers in Afghanistan and Christmas ones to the People's Kitchen in Newcastle, have knitted hats and scarves, blankets and garments for the premature baby unit at Wansbeck Hospital and sent emergency bags to local hospitals.

Most of all we enjoy each other's company at Mothers'



Union, doing things together and our time to reflect. We do welcome new members and would be very happy to have you join us. We meet in the Parish Hall on the third Monday of the month.

Val Telfer

Making Music – singing, playing and ringing

The King's School comes to Alnham

At Alnham we are extremely lucky to have forged a strong link with The King's School, Tynemouth. The school owns the old school in Alnham and for many years has used it for Duke of Edinburgh Award training and other outdoor activities with their young people. In the last few years the school choir has come to Alnham for weekends of intensive rehearsal and when they come they use the church because of its fantastic acoustics. As a finale to their weekends they always sing a service for us, usually led by the school chaplain. To hear our church filled with the beautiful voices of these young people is a spine tingling experience, which can bring tears to the eyes of more than this church warden! This year the choir joined us for an Easter celebration, a harvest service and a carol service.

Sarah Smith

Alwinton and Holystone Church Choir and Band

Another busy year for the band and choir! We were very pleased to take part in Rosie's ordination as priest. Our anthem was *How Beautiful upon the Mountains* – a musical setting by R A Smith (1780-1829) of the Old Testament reading from Isaiah 52, chosen by the preacher, The Reverend Canon Richard Bryant. We are very grateful to Richard Simmance for his skilful contribution as organist.

At Michael's Institution, we were again invited to participate in the occasion. Our role was to give an anthem after the end of the service. We chose *Honor to the Hills* as being thematically appropriate for one arriving from the milder climes of Windsor. A round of applause greeted the end of the anthem (allowable, as the service was over!), which we are happy to share with the Coquetdale Chamber Choir who sang the anthem in the service itself.

At Harvest we also did *Honor to the Hills*. Harvest Festival was just before Michael's service, leaving us insufficient time to practice a different piece, so we took advantage of the suitability of the work for the two occasions. The band contributed notably to the hymn *Paint Box*, a piece in steady blues tempo, and enhanced by a number of bluesy effects including syncopated rhythms and wah-wahs from muted cornet.

At Easter we sang and played two items. The first was an Anglo-Norman rondellus *Let Glad Voices*, performed originally, but not by us, as a liturgical dance. The second was *An Hymn for Easter Day*, by Joseph Stephenson, published in 1775.

Christmas rehearsals were not disrupted by snow and ice this time – a great relief. The carol service was held on the evening before Christmas Eve – closer to Christmas than has been customary – and some regular members were unable to take part. However, there were a lot of people visiting the valley for the holiday period, including lots of children, and the church was packed. They heard *Ya que hoy es Navidad*, a contemporary carol in traditional style by the Mexican folk singer Olivia Molina, a traditional Polish carol, *In Nightly Stillness*, with country-dance-like changes of tempo, and a stirring West Gallery Style anthem composed by John Geary in 1781 about the Three Wise Men.

My thanks, once again, to all singers and instrumentalists for their skill and commitment to making this wonderful music.

Graham Stacy

Organists

2011 was another busy year for the All Saints' organists with a number of special services, in addition to our regular Sunday mornings and evenings. The organ fund is increasing steadily but sales of the 2012 calendar did not go so well as those for 2011. We are grateful to all who take a turn on the All Saints' organists' rota; Bill Long, Keith Moodie, John Sheales, Alan Gidney, Colin Scott and, pianist, Elsie Brindley. Thanks, too, to Peter Robinson at Hepple and Thropton and John Casken for wherever, whenever he's needed. Further up the valley Kate Hazelwood has succeeded in improving the profile of the music at Alnham. There are now

regularly five hymns and she introduced Anthony Greening's *People's Mass* as the setting for the Sung Eucharist. Mary Thorne has been very keen to promote awareness of the organ music played before and after the services. She writes about this in the 'up the valley' Newsletter, and it is now printed, together with the hymns, on the weekly reading and notice sheets. The hope is that congregations will appreciate that the organ music has been chosen with as much care as the hymns, and will listen, at least to that played before the service!

Keith Moodie and Mary Thorne

Alwinton Church Summer Concerts

2011 marked another successful season of professional concerts with very good and enthusiastic audiences. The music ranged from jazz and traditional Northumbrian music (The Virtuoso Jazz Trio and The Bottle Bank Band) to a world-class piano recital by Kenneth Hamilton, and The Sage Gateshead collaborated by sending an ensemble from Northern Sinfonia as well as Northern Sinfonia Chorus. This latter concert included a solo flautist who, together with Sinfonia Chorus, gave the world premiere of *The Knight's Stone* written specially for the occasion by John Casken. The Bottle Bank Band held an afternoon workshop on the day of their concert attended by an encouraging number of young people, who seemed to get a great deal from it. Fundraising for the concerts included grants from Northumberland National Park, Northumberland County Council, Hugonin Family Trust, Hadrian Trust, Upper Coquet Resource Group, John Lewis and Barter Books. The premium raffle was supported by local businesses and was particularly successful in raising extra funds. A major purchase this year was the removable staging, which has enhanced immeasurably the experience for the audience by making the performers more visible. The Concerts Planning Team continues as before: John Casken (Chairman), Kate Hazelwood (Treasurer), and Graham Stacy (Secretary).

John Casken

Coquetdale Chamber Choir

There are currently twenty-four members of the valley Chamber Choir and we rehearse most Tuesdays in All Saints, Rothbury, in preparation for concerts and for major occasions in the church's year. These traditionally include music for Christmas and Good



Friday when they are joined for some of the pieces by members of churches from across the valley. On other occasions the Choir will play an important part in major services such as the Institution of our new Rector, the Introductory Service for The Reverend Trudy Gray, and the Farewell Service for The Reverend Peter Lear. The Choir has

also taken part in Holy Communion services in Rothbury and Alwinton, and will sing at other services in the valley in the future.

Under the direction of John Casken the Choir performs to a high standard a wide range of music from the Renaissance to the present day, as represented in last July's memorable concert in Brinkburn Priory. A notable achievement is the performance of challenging works by major contemporary composers, and currently the Choir is rehearsing a new work specially written for them by one of the Choir's members, Richard Simmance. Plans are now in place for another concert at Brinkburn in August 2012 and plans are also being made for future concerts and services of Evensong in the valley.

John Casken

(The choir would like to thank John for his incredibly hard work in getting the Chamber Choir off the ground and for propelling it to a

standard to which it would not have dreamed of aspiring when it first started. The challenge of preparing for public performance, both in services and at concerts, has meant a steep learning curve but the satisfaction of bringing it off provides great motivation. John Casken is always interested to hear from anyone wishing to be considered as a new member of this exciting group, tenors and basses in particular, and those interested should email him on: john@casken.myzen.co.uk).

Bell-ringing

By the end of 2010 the Rothbury Band was ringing Plain Bob Triples for services and the extra Christmas ringing and New Year all accomplished despite the snow. We were pleased to ring for weddings in April, May, June, July and August. The Band successfully completed four quarter peals each lasting around fifty minutes during the year with methods rung on six, seven and eight bells. On 18 October Plain Bob Minor, with Peter and Janice Henney ringing the two tenors, was rung before the Institution of The Reverend Michael Boag, as the Rector of Upper Coquetdale. On New Year's Day 2012 we modestly but successfully reverted to Plain Bob Minor in competition with the Rothbury Pipe Band.

The Annual Mary Dawson Dinner was held on the anniversary day of the dedication of the bells (17 April 1893), and on Sunday 11 December we were pleased to welcome the Rector as our guest for our pre-Christmas Dinner. Two days later the band turned out in force to give fifty Year 5 schoolchildren the chance to visit the Tower.

Unfortunately the chimes went wrong again in the autumn rendering the hour chime unusable until 28 November. By the end of the year the chimes had yet again gone a quarter of an hour out of synchronisation. Bands of ringers from as far away as Orkney, County Down, Exeter, Surrey, Lincolnshire and Wiltshire have visited and rung at All Saints and one group rang a quarter peal of Yorkshire Surprise Major on 17 July.

We are now planning to take up the Rector's challenge and ring a full peal on Friday 1 June at the start of The Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations.

Colin Wheeler, Tower Captain

Money matters

Christian Giving Schemes

Rothbury, Hepple and Thropton

The Giving Scheme ensures a known, regular income for the church. There are ninety-seven donors who are committed to regular donations. These payments may be monthly, quarterly or annually and are given by standing order or via envelopes on the collection plate. Approximately 90% of the donors have gift-aided their giving and, for every pound donated, this now brings in an extra 25p from the Government. Gift Aid does not cost the donors anything but they must be taxpayers as the Aid is a repayment from their income tax. Donations in the collection plate can also be gift-aided; these come from visitors, regular donors adding a little extra and from churchgoers who do not wish to commit themselves to a regular sum. There are also amounts given for specific purposes.

In 2011, £34,893.96 (£40,980.68 in 2010) was donated to the General Fund by regular givers, an average of £30 per month, though one-third of donors give £10 or less. A further £5,400.82 of one-off gift-aided donations were given via the collection plate, making a total of £40,294.78.

The Organ Fund received £1,380 in gift-aided donations, Hepple Fabric Fund £6,140 and special charity collections £351.63.

Gift Aid repaid by the Government came to £9,525.38 which was divided pro rata between the various funds. Claims to 6 April were based on 28p in the pound which then dropped to 25p in the pound. In 2010 gift aid was £12,225.72 partly due to claims for the whole year receiving 28p in the pound.

Adrienne Thunder, Planned Giving Secretary

Alwinton and Holystone

Planned Giving and Planned Giving with Gift Aid were down by approximately 9% in 2011, at £9,902. Tax reclaimed on gift-aided giving amounted to £3,895. Non gift-aided regular giving totalled £1,863. Thanks to John Charlewood for administering Gift Aid again.

Cathy Jenkins, Treasurer

Fund Raising Events

All Saints, Christ Church and St Andrew

As usual our fund raising efforts encompassed a wide range of events; some old favourites and some innovations that may become regulars. There is not space here to name everyone who has been concerned with organising, helping before and on the day, attended and spent money (it doesn't matter how much or how little), or cleared up afterwards. Often all of the above! Our grateful thanks to all concerned. 2011 was the last year of Gill Burn organising the Summer Fête; something she has done with great success for more years than we care to remember. Thank you, Gill. It would be nice for someone to come forward and take Gill's place but we suspect it will take a full committee to do it! Mention should also be made of anonymous benefactor who gifted us about £1,500 to replace our very old and well-used marquee with a nice bright white modern version. A big thank you, whoever you are, we will make good use of it. Our record this year is as follows:

	£
Pancake Party	90
Summer Fête	1,324
Lunch at Wreighburn	658
Chamber Choir Concert	387
Strawberry Tea	250
Criminal Lawyer Talk	125
Antiphon Concert	360
Wylam's Wine & Cheese	230
Northumbrian Evening	280
Christmas Bazaar/Raffle	1,664
<u>100 Club</u>	<u>1,075</u>
Total:	6,443

Well done, everyone.

Chris Macey

Social Committee, Rothbury

The Social Committee was formally wound up after the Summer Fair this year. Its activities, which over the last few years principally involved catering for the varied events in and around All Saints,

were combined with those of the Fund-Raising Committee, as the remits of the two committees had come more and more to overlap. Sincere thanks go to Mrs Gill Burn, the organiser of the committee and of the Summer Fair for many years. The final Summer Fête held under her auspices was extremely successful, making £1,324.

Social Events and Fund Raising, Alwinton and Holystone

We still have no official committee although a group did get together to put forward some fresh ideas which have gone to the DCC. The Curry Evening was hosted at Burradon Hall and with a very full house and successful night, we made £2,000.

The 200 Club continues to help towards grass cutting of the church yards (£870). The community are very good at taking tickets but it always takes a big push.

The garden fête was held on the wettest summer weekend and we had to quickly reassemble it all in the church. Although we were well down in numbers there was a very good atmosphere and we raised £860.

Quiz nights at The Star, Harbottle, continue to raise a very nice £270 and they are usually well supported.

A marathon of cake baking saw the Alwinton Show raise £1,000. Jam sales have raised an astonishing £2,400 – a huge thank you to Clare Friend for all her hard work.

We took a white elephant stall to the Rothbury church Christmas Fayre at the Jubilee Hall and had a very successful morning raising £300. Huge thanks for all the effort everyone puts into all these fund-raising events.



Julia Stott

All Saints Card Stall

Support continues for the above, although suitable cards get more difficult to find. Bill Long keeps us supplied with Church Guides, photos, etc. We have, this year, purchased new Information Boards at a cost of £560 and a new flag at a cost of £48 from the proceeds of the stall.

Doris Howey

Christ Church, Hepple

2011 has been a busy year, with the focus on raising £13,000 to add to church funds of £3,000 already committed towards the £48,000 estimated cost of renewing the roof and drainage works at Christ Church. We have been overwhelmed by the generosity of local people who have dedicated collections at funerals and weddings to the appeal, written cheques, made donations and organised some amazing fundraising activities; in particular Afternoon Tea with Style, the Harvest Supper and Ceilidh, the Christmas Wine Tasting and catering for funeral teas. All these events pay tribute to two particular things, the outstanding cookery skills of Hepple ladies and the willingness of everybody, whether churchgoers or not, to support their local church. By the year end, with the formal response from English Heritage awaited, this target had been achieved. We hope to see the fruits of all this effort in a start on renewing the roof in 2012.

Liz Kerry

Parish overview of finances

The work of the church is funded entirely by the local community. We receive no external support or subsidy. We are responsible for the care of our six churches; for clergy costs through the 'parish share' and for all our running costs (including insurance and utilities). More details of income and expenditure are in the Annual Accounts of the three Districts and in the Parish Financial summary. Some highlights follow.

Over £97,000 was raised in 2011 towards our running costs. This was less than in 2010 primarily because of reductions in planned giving, which provides around half of our income compared with an

average across the diocese of two-thirds and three quarters nationally.

In addition to general fundraising exceeding £11,000 around £20,000 was raised for specific work to the fabric of our churches including £5,500 for Alwinton/Holystone, over £2,000 for the Organ Fund at All Saints (bringing the total to £5,700) and £13,000 for Hepple roof (total now £16,000). Together these give an indication that there is significant capacity for raising funds in the parish and much goodwill. In addition, there are special collections for nominated charities at Christmas, Easter and Harvest.

General Fund expenditure fell in 2011 but in all three districts remained significantly in excess of income, with a call on reserves to meet the shortfall of £5,600 in Alwinton/Holystone. In Rothbury/Hepple/Thropton the DCC decided to contain the deficit at £2,700 by paying just 70% of the parish share requested in 2011. This was a difficult decision for the DCC, which had always met its share in full previously. Discussions will continue with the Deanery and Diocese about the basis of the parish share calculations.

The other most significant expenditure items are insuring the churches (£8,200), heating, lighting and water (£10,000), repairs and maintenance (including churchyards), clergy expenses and parish administration.

Across the parish, expenditure is running significantly ahead of income and reserves are being depleted. On the basis of the diocesan experience there would appear to be significant scope to increase planned giving. It might be worth investigating whether there are economies to be gained from combining existing contracts (eg for insurance or utilities) or other ideas for managing our resources. What is clear is that there are some amazingly productive ideas for fundraising across the parish and sharing ideas might generate even more and help us to put our work in all parts of the parish on a firmer footing over the next few years.

Liz Kerry

Working together with other churches

Upper Coquetdale Churches Together (UCCT)

The committee met three times during the year. In one meeting we discussed whether, as Churches Together, we are doing what we set out to do and whether we could do more. UCCT continued to be busy in 2011, organising numerous events, activities and services, some regular and some on a one-off basis. The united evening services continued on the last Sunday of each month with the different churches of the valley as the venue and with members from each denomination preaching in turn. Prayer breakfasts on alternate first Saturdays of the month were held in Armstrong Hall. There were well-attended meetings each Wednesday in Lent and our usual walk of witness in Rothbury on Good Friday morning. There was no UCCT service in Brinkburn Priory in 2011, as it was found to clash with another event but the Harvest and Carol services in the Mart were as popular as ever.

At our AGM John Murray took over the chair from Sandra Bullock. The Bereavement Visiting Group, originally founded by UCCT, now functions independently but continues to receive our support (we provided them with a new banner) and is much appreciated. UCCT had an active presence at each of the shows in the valley with displays of church activities in our marquee and a member always on hand to chat to visitors. We now have a number of re-usable banners and large posters to publicize our regular activities and feel that this has helped to raise our profile.

A 'Faith and Life' course, led by The Reverend Alastair Macnaughton, which began in the autumn, is helping its participants to explore their Christian faith and its application in daily life.

'Over the Bridges' now functions independently (although the UCCT committee still receives regular reports) and goes from strength to strength, with printing now outsourced. Steve Kerry will be stepping down as editor and moves are afoot to find a replacement. We thank him very much for all his hard work in this role.

Other Ecumenical Activities

Besides our participation in UCCT, there are other activities which we share with members of other churches. There are the regular meetings held at the home of Elsie and Stuart Brindley (on the first Tuesday of every month at 7.30 pm at Hambury, Backcrofts) where people from all churches or none are welcome for a period of music, prayer and Bible reading based round the simple service of Compline. The Women's World Day of Prayer committee organises a service which is held in turn in each of the churches in Rothbury, on the first Friday in March each year. Each service is designed and written by the Christian women of one particular country – in 2011 it was Chile – raising understanding of the problems faced by

the citizens and more particularly Christians in different parts of the world. The same committee (more or less) also organises a day out for newly-arrived Newcastle University students from different parts of the world, to celebrate One World Day in October/November. They arrive by bus in Rothbury, feeling a little strange and awkward and depart six hours later after lunch, tea and hospitality, fizzing with enthusiasm. This event can only take place with the help of dozens of people in the valley who entertain the visitors, in the URC chapel for lunch and tea and in their own homes, or who put in a lot of work to cook for, serve and clear up after around seventy people. Despite the effort involved, the enjoyment of the day makes it all worthwhile. (More volunteer hosts/helpers always welcome - not everyone can be there every year).



**Ros Maudslay, UCCT and WWDP/
OWW secretary**

Deanery Synod

Alnwick Deanery Synod brings together lay members and clergy from the Anglican churches in Alnwick Deanery, one of the largest in the Diocese of Newcastle. The volume of our own business and number of meetings relating to restructuring the parish and appointing a new Rector, had an inevitable impact on our ability to engage on a regular basis with the activities of Alnwick Deanery Synod in 2011. Discussion topics included deanery development, education, women in the episcopate and what motivates us in our faith. We hope to strengthen our involvement in 2012, not least by participating in a deanery training pilot.

We also record with great sadness the death of The Reverend Canon Janet Brearley, formerly Alnwick Area Dean, who helped us so much in the first year and a half of our interregnum and welcome her successor The Reverend Canon Jim Robertson.

Liz Kerry

Comings, goings and celebrations

At the beginning of July we welcomed Bishop Martin to The Reverend Dr Rosie Stacy's ordination as priest. This was a very joyous occasion celebrated with much music and song. Rosie's training for Anglican ministry also included an ecumenical dimension, as members of other churches in the valley supported her as part of a Local Ministry Group. Her ministry among us has been very warmly welcomed by everyone.

After seven years in Coquetdale, The Reverend Peter Lear and his wife Sandra retired to Thornton le Dale in Yorkshire at the end of July 2011. Peter arrived as a House for Duty Priest in 2004 and with Sandra soon became part of the fabric of the place. They worked tirelessly and selflessly for our community; Sandra was a driving force behind the Fund Raising Group and was both Chair and Secretary of the 'One World Week' and 'Women's World Day of Prayer' Group, not to mention being a driver of the Community Bus and, for a number of years a greatly valued Warden at All Saints. Her cake and jam making skills were legendary. They both shared a great passion for the choirs and music in the valley and Peter's final service was a magnificent, joyful tribute to this. We are thankful to them for their dedication to their ministry, for their guidance and

support, and for the laughter they brought. We wish them a long and happy retirement.

We were delighted when The Reverend Michael Boag was appointed as our new Rector, due to arrive in Rothbury in September and begin his ministry here on 18 October. Michael came to Upper Coquetdale having served at St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, for the last eight years. Originally from New Zealand, his background before ordination was in teaching and desktop publishing. In Windsor Michael had responsibility for the daily services in the Chapel and preparing for special occasions in his role as Succentor and, as Dean's Vicar, in exercising pastoral care for the Castle community and visitors. Before that he was a curate in the East Riding of Yorkshire, in the small market town of Howden, near Goole, where he co-founded the Howden Arts Festival.

The service of Institution and Induction was led by Bishop Martin and the Archdeacon of Lindisfarne and attended by The Reverend Professor Peter Galloway representing our Patron HM The Queen. All Saints church was full and the service went off impeccably, much to the relief of the twelve wardens of the parish, as we all welcomed Michael to what we hope will be a long and happy incumbency in Coquetdale.

We have been fortunate indeed to have had Jo Elcoat as our Parish Administrator for two years. Appointed in August 2009 when the Interregnum was already underway, Jo ensured that service schedules, rotas, and diaries were been managed effectively and kept up to date, diocesan returns completed, fees banked, supplies maintained and paid for and a whole host of other tasks which are essential to keeping the business of the parish running. We warmly congratulate Jo on winning a scholarship to undertake a PhD and thank her most sincerely for all she did to help us.

Lesley Hall was appointed as the new Parish Administrator in August 2011. Lesley has already proved herself a worthy successor to Jo and we are fortunate to be able to employ such an effective and committed person.

The Reverend Colin Scott, who takes services regularly in Thropton and Hepple, celebrated his eightieth birthday and fiftieth anniversary of ordination. Colin accompanies the Coquetdale

Chamber Choir with pin-sharp precision and in a way which gives the choir huge support and encouragement.

Gordon Marsden also celebrated his eightieth birthday and an active association with St Andrew's Church which goes back over forty years, twenty-seven of them as Warden. Congratulations to them both.

As we look forward into 2012, we know that two highly valued wardens will be standing down after many years of dedicated service to their churches. Clare Friend, warden at St Michael and All Angels Alwinton, has worked tirelessly, caring for the church and congregation, playing a full part in DCC, PCC and ecumenical activities, and famous for her jam and marmalade making which have raised thousands of pounds for church funds. Ken Howey, having served two consecutive terms as warden at All Saints this time round, is also standing down. Ken has rightly earned respect across the whole parish for his dedication to the work of the church here and for his vision. He has an exemplary attendance record at services and meetings and has taken particular responsibility for the fabric of All Saints, which is a credit to his care and love of the church.

Ken Howey writes "I will be standing down in 2012 after a second four-year term. I should like to take this opportunity to thank all other Wardens past and present for their help and support. Special thanks to Fred Seymour and Ken Branson for all their work, never having to be asked twice. To all members of the congregation and clergy for their kindness and help; it has been my pleasure to serve you. Thank you to Mary Raines for assisting with the Crucifers and Acolytes and her encouragement to them. Thank you also to Josie Gregory for doing all the duty lists for me. All Saints looks forward to exciting times with the new Rector and I wish my successor great times. Finally, my special thanks to Doris for all her help and support."

And finally...

The Parish of Upper Coquetdale is a very special place, set in a beautiful part of the world and inhabited by friendly and generous people.

Upper Coquetdale Life is just a snapshot of life here and covers only some of our activities.

Many thanks to all who have contributed to producing this booklet. We apologise for any omissions, we'll catch them next year!

We hope you have found something here which attracts your interest and we would love to see you at any of our events.

For more information, please contact:

The Reverend Michael Boag, 01669 620 482

or Lesley Hall, 07813 169861

Or look us up on our new website: www.coquetdaleanglican.org

