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# LINK

The magazine for the Diocese of Newcastle

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# Welcoming pilgrims to Holy Island

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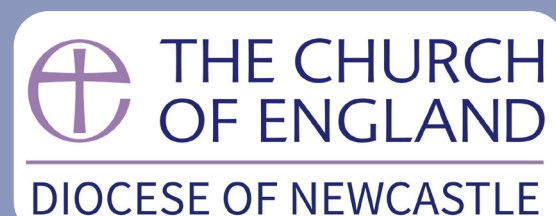
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# A message from Bishop Helen-Ann



The Rt Revd Dr Helen-Ann Hartley

It's perhaps with a sigh of relief that we find ourselves in Ordinary Time again in our Lectionary. One thing I value immensely about our common life is our sharing in the times and seasons of the Church year. As the seasons move more deeply into summer it's noticeable how green again everything looks.

Of course we also notice how out of season ongoing weather-related issues are. Changes in our climate are present and real and require our attention and advocacy. Amidst the green, there are a couple of days of white that occur at the end of May: Corpus Christi (where we give thanks for the Institution of the Eucharist) and the feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary to Elizabeth.

Very soon after these days, we gather to celebrate our Deanery Development work in the Cathedral, and our readings for that service will be those of the Visitation. In my recent address to our Diocesan Synod, I spoke about three

words: Seeking, Sharing, Sending which are my invitation and gift to us as a Diocese. These words formed part of my own discernment to be your Bishop and I believe they offer us rich opportunity to guide our growth as a Diocese in God's grace and mercy. I hope that we will be able to situate our Deanery Development work in relation to a forthcoming "Season of Seeking" (within Seeking, Sharing, Sending) and in doing so we draw on the themes of the Visitation of Mary and Elizabeth:

- **hopefulness** in what God is doing, and has promised to do, in our current circumstances.
- **honesty** where we face uncertainty in discernment, or even fear about whether what God is doing will be born in our lifetimes.
- **collaboration** with others (like Mary with Elizabeth) to help remind one another that it is God's work we are inviting one another to participate with.
- **awareness** that we are sent not only for collaboration but, like Mary, to bring blessing to those (like Elizabeth) we share joy with (this

might include sharing gifts).

■ **joy** in knowing that the paradoxical wisdom of God in Mary and Jesus (foolishness to the world) is a prompt for us to articulate faith that emphasises God's power and wisdom in every circumstance of human need. Faith is trust and action. Faith means to say "amen" (so be it) to the word, the command, and the promises of God.

While the prayer after communion invites us to recognise the presence of Christ among us in the Eucharist, we must remember that the presence of Christ is discovered not only in the Eucharist. He is met in others, and he asks us to serve him in others.

Mary's service for Elizabeth by her visit remains a kind of model for the Christian who wishes to meet Christ in daily life. Less about what I want and more about what God wants of us with the encouragement of the Holy Spirit and the constant cry for justice and mercy.

**Bishop Helen-Ann**





**Bishop Mark and Bishop Helen-Ann with New Zealand Archbishop (Emeritus) Sir David Moxon and the Bishop of Hull, Eleanor Sanderson (previously Asst. Bishop of Wellington)**

## A warm welcome to international visitors on Holy Island

**B**ishop Helen-Ann and Bishop Mark were delighted to welcome a group of pilgrims from New Zealand and the US to Holy Island on 8 May.

They were on Lindisfarne for a Bishop's Leadership Team meeting and arranged to meet the pilgrims, who were accompanied by New Zealand Archbishop

(Emeritus) Sir David Moxon and the Bishop of Hull, Eleanor Sanderson (previously Asst. Bishop of Wellington).

They attended Eucharist at **St Mary's Church, Holy Island**, as part of a three-week tour of sacred sites across the UK and Ireland. While in the North East, they also travelled to Whitby and **Durham Cathedral**.





# St Nicholas Gala Dinner raises over £30,000 for community initiatives



The Dean of Newcastle with guests Ranju Shukla and Dr Hari Shukla (as featured in Luxe magazine)



**B**ishop Helen-Ann and the Very Revd Lee Batson, Dean of Newcastle, were among 220 guests treated to a spectacular Gala Dinner at Newcastle Cathedral on Thursday 25 April.

The inaugural St Nicholas Gala Dinner, named after the Cathedral's generous patron saint, raised over £30,000 to support the life of the Cathedral, including its Lantern Initiative community work. It was organised and hosted by the Newcastle Cathedral Trust, a charitable organisation established in 1981 to support

fundraising initiatives through members' business expertise.

The event brought together figures from the North East business, civic and faith communities for an evening of glorious music from the Cathedral Choir and an enchanting performance by stilt performers and jugglers, Calvos, as well as cuisine from Boldon Farmhouse Pantry, and a live auction.

The Dean said: "In my brief time at the Cathedral, I have been amazed at our work with the

street community, those recovering from addiction and survivors of abuse. We also offer musical opportunities to those who come from some of the less advantaged parts of the city – all underpinned by our rhythm of daily prayer and worship.

"The Gala Dinner has helped to ensure that this vital work can continue and be developed further in the coming years. I am grateful to the Cathedral Trust and members of the Cathedral team for all their work in making this evening happen."

North East companies who supported the Gala Dinner include Mincoffs Solicitors, Muckle LLP, Houltts Ltd, Naylor's Gavin Black, Ryder Architecture, Fenwick, and headline sponsors Ecclesiastical Insurance.

The event proved such a success that a second Gala Dinner is already confirmed to be held by the Newcastle Cathedral Trust on 1 May 2025.

For further details and to find how to reserve a table, please contact: [events@newcastlecathedral.org.uk](mailto:events@newcastlecathedral.org.uk).





# Bishop 'privileged' to walk with bereaved dads on suicide awareness mission



**B**ishop Helen-Ann was privileged to join *3 Dads Walking* as they embarked on a mission to raise money for PAPYRUS Prevention of Young Suicide.

Andy Airey, Mike Palmer and Tim Owen passed through Newcastle on their *500-mile Walk of Hope*, at the end of April.

The three fathers have all lost daughters to suicide and were walking from Stirling in Scotland, to Norwich, over 25 days, from 17 April to 11 May.

The trio's venture raised money for the charity PAPYRUS Prevention of Young Suicide, which has

opened a new office in Newcastle.

The city's Millennium Bridge was lit up in the charity's colours as they passed through, while Bishop Helen-Ann was among those who joined them on the local stretch of their route, which included Wooler, Longhorsley and Gosforth.

Suicide is the biggest killer of young people aged 35 and under in the UK.

Bishop Helen-Ann said: "It was a huge privilege to walk with *3 Dads Walking*. Thank you Andy, Mike and Tim for enabling me to share part of your journey and to learn from you all. Truly inspiring."

PAPYRUS Prevention of Young Suicide was founded in 1997 by a group of bereaved parents, who had each lost a child to suicide.

PAPYRUS wants to support, equip, influence and engage with communities across the UK, through training, awareness raising and policy change, to reduce the number of young suicides and to enable life.

Visit the *3 Dads Walking* website [here](#).

To donate click [here](#).

Visit the PAPYRUS website [here](#).



# Church school pupil places Sycamore Gap seedling at Chelsea Flower Show with Dame Judi Dench

**A** pupil from a church school in Newcastle Diocese has taken a seedling from Sycamore Gap to the Chelsea Flower Show, where she placed it on public display with Dame Judi Dench.

Seven-year-old Charlotte Crowe attends Henshaw Church of England Primary, the closest school to the famous site on Hadrian's Wall, where the iconic sycamore tree was inexplicably felled last September.

Charlotte attended the Chelsea Flower Show in London on Monday (20 May), taking with her a precious seedling grown from seeds collected from the Sycamore Gap tree. It was placed in the Trust's beautiful plant-filled wildlife garden, prior to the show's public opening.

The seedling is from a small collection of seeds and buds from the Sycamore Gap tree which are being propagated at the National Trust's Plant Conversation Centre in Devon. It will return there following the show and will be quarantined before re-joining the other seedlings as they continue to grow.

The honour was bestowed upon Charlotte after she won a competition at her school, where pupils were invited to draw a picture of the tree and write a poem about what it meant to them.



**Dame Judi Dench and school competition winner Charlotte Crowe place the Sycamore Gap seedling in The Octavia Hill Garden at Chelsea Flower Show** Pictures: ©National Trust Images James Dobson

There was a national outpouring of shock and distress following last September's incident, and it was clear how much the tree, which had stood for around 200 years, meant to many people, including Charlotte and Dame Judi, who is passionate about trees.

Charlotte's winning poem talks about the "mindful, famous, historical, magnificent tree." Speaking after winning the competition, she said: "I am so happy that scientists are trying to grow the tree back as it means a lot to our school. I was surprised I had won the competition and am excited to go to London because I have never been before."

Henshaw C.E Primary School's Executive Head Teacher, Michael Glenton, who accompanied Charlotte to the show along with her parents, said: "The children and staff of Henshaw Primary School are thrilled to be working with the National Trust to remember this iconic landmark and continue to celebrate its importance to our local community. The tree is the logo for our two federated schools (together with Greenhead Church of England Primary), and we will continue to ensure this important symbol of our community endures."

## Charlotte's poem

**I went to see Hadrian's Wall  
and I saw a tree.  
It was a mindful tree.  
It was a mindful, famous tree.  
It was a mindful, famous,  
historical tree.  
It was a mindful, famous,  
historical, magnificent tree.  
It was a mindful, famous, historical,  
magnificent, welcoming tree.  
I really hope sycamore gap grows back  
When I go and see the tree it brings  
back lots of memories**

Known as the Octavia Hill Garden by Blue Diamond, The National Trust's garden is named after the organisation's pioneering founder Octavia Hill (1838-1912).

The National Trust, working together with Northumberland National Park, Historic England and the Hadrian's Wall Partnership, is planning a range of initiatives in the coming months which will include work with local schools, tree planting projects and artistic interpretations.





# Flower Festival will bring an infusion of colour to Hexham Abbey

**A** flower festival will take place at Hexham Abbey this summer as part of its 1,350th anniversary celebrations this year.

The celebrations got underway early in 2024 with the spectacular Festival of Flame and *Stars for Eternity* exhibitions in February.

The *Northern Saints Flower Festival* will take place from 25-28 July. It will include dozens of colourful displays with local flower clubs showcasing their floral masterpieces.

Each flower display will tell a story, drawing inspiration from the lives of the northern saints. They will take visitors through the ages with interactive workshops and demonstrations.

It's set to be a wonderful infusion of colour – as it was back in February when the *Festival of Flame* illuminated the Abbey both inside and out, with the installation including both candles and music. *Stars for Eternity* saw 5,000 origami stars suspended



ed high above the Abbey's old choir stalls, with each star representing someone special from

past or present, nominated by local people. For more information [click here](#).

## By Tara Russell Children and Youth Team Leader

One of the delights of our work in 2024 is the sheer volume of amazing research that is being published by national charities and institutions. Research like *Translating God*, which has shown that young people believe in a higher power that is powerful, kind, loving, caring and good. You would be hard pressed to find a better description of the God that we follow!

And yet, fewer young people identify as Christian (40% drop), and even fewer consider themselves to be part of a church. So how can this kind of discovery help us as we seek to serve our local communities and follow God's leading?

For many of us, the activities we have been leading for years are struggling with lack of volunteers and resources, and less engagement from children and young people. But we still want to reach out.

The Children and Youth team provides opportunities for anyone who is doing children and

From your children, youth  
and families team



🔍 Seeking ❤️ Sharing 📩 Sending

youth work, or would like to find out more, to take part in some training. It is free of charge, our greatest desire is to give you what you need to serve your local community in ways that will be fun, creative and life-giving for you and those you work with/for.

Sue, our Youth Adviser, has devised a couple of sessions as an introduction to volunteering with young people, that can be delivered locally. We would love to bring it to you, perhaps your deanery would benefit from the sessions?

Our major training offering this year is the *Youthscape Essentials* course. *Youthscape* is a national Christian youth work charity that provides training, research and resources. Our first course will run in Morpeth, is open to anyone who currently volunteers, has volunteered in the past or would like to think about volunteering in the future. The course will cover subjects such as building rapport with young people, growing up digital, facilitating a session and working with others as a team. It will run for 10 sessions on Thursday evenings, 7pm – 9pm, and the dates are: 27 June, 4, 18, 25 July, 1 August, 12, 19, 26 September, 3, 10 October.

Wouldn't it be amazing if our parishes felt confident, empowered, equipped and enthusiastic about serving the children and young people in their communities? Together we can make that a reality.

Tara Russell, Children and Youth Team Leader  
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Sue White, Youth Adviser  
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# Environment



By The Revd Tim Mayfield, Bishop's Advisor on the Environment



Tucking into a Plant Pioneers Vegetable Quarter Pounder, while celebrating the decision of Diocesan Synod on 11 May to back an ambitious Carbon Net Zero Action Plan.

## Eating for the planet

If McDonald's made all their burgers a 50:50 blend of beef and soy, it would save 50 million tonnes of greenhouse gases each year – equal to the emissions of Portugal.

This remarkable claim is taken from 'Not the End of the World', by leading data researcher Hannah Ritchie.

Ritchie continues: "We have looked at how much greenhouse gas emissions our food systems will emit over the next few decades if we keep eating as we are. The news is not good. We would blow right past our 1.5 and 2 degree targets."

Her solution: If we want to reduce our carbon footprint, we should eat a more plant-based

diet. This doesn't mean we have to go vegan. This got me thinking about plant-based foods. I headed for the freezers in our local Sainsbury's. I was amazed by the range on offer.

I piled a load of options in my basket (I've been to the local Aldi too) and recent lunch-times have seen me undergo a taste test. So here are...

### Tim's Top Tips...

**Plant Menu (Aldi) Ultimate No Beef Burgers.** Delicious – nice flavour and texture. And the 'High in Protein' promise really is true – it was hours before I needed to eat again.

**Plant Pioneers (Sainsbury's) Spicy Bean Quarter Pounders.** Packed with black turtle and haricot beans – lovely spicy flavour – nice breadcrumb coating.

**Richmond Meat-Free Quarter Pounders.** The real deal – juicy, wholesome and hefty.

**Veggie Menu (Aldi) BBQ Sweet Potato Burgers.** Nice – delicate, sweet flavour. Excellent eaten cold with a picnic on Coquet Cairn.

**Plant Pioneers (Sainsbury's) Vegetable Quarter Pounders.** Made with mixed vegetables, coated in breadcrumbs. Wholesome and nourishing.

### And one to avoid...

**Bird's Eye Green Cuisine Meat-Free Burgers.** Pasty, lacking in taste and (oddly enough) containing bony bits.

Lots of these plant-based burgers use pea protein. So, a parting shot from Hannah Ritchie: "Traditional agriculturalists draw on the miracle of peas. Most crops can't use nitrogen in its atmospheric form. Legumes are special because they can pull it out of the air and create usable nitrogen on their own."

There you go – no reason why not to explore a more plant-based diet... and lots of reasons for doing so. Enjoy!



# Organist completes first stage of 1,000-mile cycle ride for church project



Nigel arrives at St Thomas of Canterbury, Arbroath

**N**igel Brown, the Postill organist at St John's Church, Killingworth, has completed the first stage of a remarkable journey to raise vital funds for an ambitious fundraising project.

Nigel will cycle 1,000 miles across the UK in various stages this year, visiting nine other churches where Postill organs are present.

It's part of a huge fundraising campaign to raise £600,000 which would re-model the North side of the church - and help to restore the organ, constructed by the prolific organ builder Robert Postill in the 19th century, back to its former glory.

Setting off from his home in Morpeth on 25 April, Nigel commenced his cycling journey, facing the challenges of adverse weather and difficult terrain. Battling headwinds and hailstorms, his journey took him through picturesque landscapes and bustling cities.

At the end of his cycle, Nigel visited Arbroath to see the Postill organ in the welcoming St Thomas' of Canterbury (Catholic) church.

Looking ahead, Nigel plans to undertake further trips to visit churches with Postill organs, but this time will limit his rides to 50-60 miles a day to allow time to enjoy creation and to listen for the prompting of the Spirit to pray for the people and places he will pass.

On our website, Nigel, who has named him-



A chance for Nigel to play the Postill organ at St Thomas



Nigel's bike in Dunbar

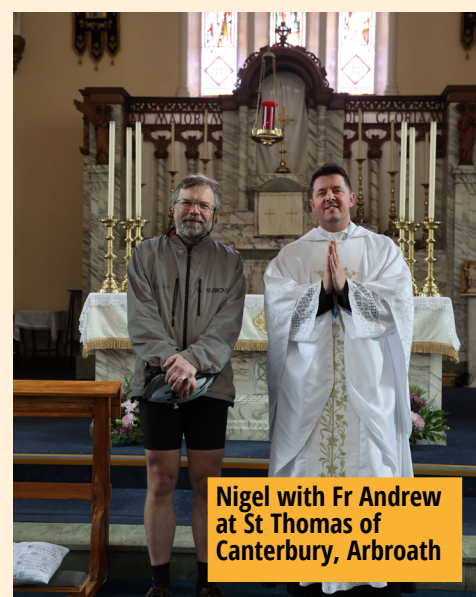
self the 'Pedal Powered Pilgrim', talks in-depth about the first stage of his journey. Read more about it [here](#).

To support Nigel's mission in aid of the church and organ refurbishments, click [here](#).

There is also a separate fund for the organ restoration [here](#).



The Forth Bridge



Nigel with Fr Andrew at St Thomas of Canterbury, Arbroath



# Living the Lantern



Amy Outterside,  
Learning Officer

For centuries, Newcastle Cathedral's Lantern Tower served as a beacon for travellers on the River Tyne. Today, the Cathedral seeks to work with others to help build a brighter tomorrow.

**A**t the Cathedral, we are forging increasingly closer ties with schools, charities and artists. The result is a vibrant exhibition, events and schools' programme, which responds to the history and faith that inspired those who built and continue to use this building.

If you visited during May, you might have seen 'Sacred Spaces', an exhibition by local primary school children. This was borne out of a series of workshops with disadvantaged school children and young people within the boundaries of Newcastle Diocese. This project was funded by the St Hilda's Trust and enabled us to offer free workshops and travel to the Cathedral. Pupils responded creatively to the idea of making a stained-glass window to express what makes a place special.

An important part of the Cathedral's mission is to welcome school groups, particularly those that can least afford to visit. Schools face great financial pressures and activities such as school



Amy with a group of primary school children

trips are often the first to be cut from their budgets. However, learning outside the classroom is invaluable, providing new experiences, boosting confidence and fostering connections.

We continue to see an increasing number of new schools visiting and have importantly increased our numbers of returning schools,

becoming an annual destination. Pupils range from pre-school age to A-level, from faith based and secular schools with rising numbers of GCSE preparation visits. Groups explore a range of cross-curricular subjects and relish the chance to explore such a wonderful building. Object handling is a popular feature of workshops, with the medieval 'Hexham Bible' – usually kept under lock and key – being the star of the show.

The rest of 2024 looks set to be just as engaging. During summer, we're excited to present a lineup of heritage craft workshops for adults led by skilled ceramic and fused glass artists. Additionally, we're offering family-friendly fused glass workshops on Wednesday 24 July and Wednesday 28 August. Plus, on Tuesday 30 July, we'll host our second annual Archaeology Family Fun Day, displaying some of the finds from the building's 2020-21 redevelopment.

Visit our website for further events bringing the Cathedral's rich sacred heritage to the wider community: [newcastlecathedral.org.uk/whats-on](https://www.newcastlecathedral.org.uk/whats-on). For more information about school visits, please email: [amy.outterside@newcastlecathedral.org.uk](mailto:amy.outterside@newcastlecathedral.org.uk).



A school visit to the Cathedral



# Finding God in beauty, craft, camaraderie, intrigue, and creativity

By the Revd Nathanael Hayler  
Curate at the Coastline Churches,  
Northumberland.

**F**rom the East to West, the journey begun. Tucked in a beautiful bluebell forest on the border road of mid-Wales, the violet carpet became the daily welcome as I embarked on a remarkable week-long course.

A growing interest of mine is learning about local traditions and heritage crafts – for it was the rich social and religious heritage of Northumberland and the northern borderland that first drew me to explore this region, and later call it home. However, there is only so much reading one can do before the urge to have a go takes over. After careful research, I booked myself onto an intensive traditional Welsh stick chair course. An immersive week in the Welsh woodland, with no power tools or even electricity, to learn the heritage craft of making a Welsh stick chair out of (greenwood) ash.

Not much is written about this particular craft, only a couple of widely published books - one of which raises more questions about the stick chair than provides answers. There seems then, in my mind, something captivating about the elusiveness of these distinctive and rustic pieces of country furniture. From the wood used, to the shape and size, and their purpose and place, it seemed to me that the chair maker was indeed the artist; free from the bonds of convention and tied only to the limits of the imagination (probably wise to factor in some trigonometry too!).

Why a chair, you might ask? They've always caught my eye, particularly styles that are obviously handmade (usually given away by a slight wobble... back to that trigonometry). Their ordinariness in the home, but also the stories they hold as witness to daily life and work: 'Have nothing in your home that you do not know to be useful or believe to be



The Revd Nathanael Hayler with the completed chair

beautiful!' (William Morris). Without over-spiritualising a piece of furniture, chairs can be a symbol of hospitality, of ease and comfort, and an empty chair especially, of space ready to welcome.

It seemed right then that I was to satisfy my

growing interest and embrace this course which took me to the heartland of the chair's history, with the opportunity to learn by doing. With a full 7-day itinerary that would take each of us from tree to chair, it was a hard-working holiday to say the least.

*Continues on page 13*





The Revd Nathanael Hayler

*Continued from page 12*

There was a lot to process in such a short amount of time; with new tools, techniques, and equipment, it was no wonder why my hands and forearms were crying out within 48 hours. But for me, the physicality of the task was part of the experience. To engage my brain and body in a new way that felt alien and trying, but needed to happen as part of the process, became energising. For this was becoming the prologue of my chair's unique story.

In the shared silence of working and the monotonous motion of the shave-horse, I found myself thinking about words from the hymn 'Like A Mighty River Flowing'. A hymn littered with similes and metaphors telling how the wonder of creation speaks of God. How movement, nature, senses, silence and presence all draw us into the heart of God. Ultimately, how the beauty and awesomeness of God is all around us. Yes, I was making a chair – embracing the physical challenge, the complexities and intricacies of a craft – but in the process I was looking for beauty and seeking God.

The outdoor environment and the camaraderie of the group made the week even more memorable. There is something very countercultural about coming together as eight strangers to do something so totally new



Another view of the chair

and different, and then to leave again having shared such an extraordinary experience. I had taken the Penguin Modern Classics novel 'A Month in the Country' by J.L. Carr to keep me company in the evenings. As I finished the short story on the final night there felt a connection between what I'd read on these pages and what I had been living during the day. At the end of the novel, the protagonist muses on the fact that he may never return to that place or see the people he has met, but for a short moment in time something special had happened in that

place. For me that was in Presteigne's hidden bluebell forest.

I've returned home to Northumberland with a stunning Welsh stick chair that will move with me and stay with me for a lifetime but, even more, with an experience of finding God in beauty, craft, camaraderie, intrigue, and creativity – time and space to be an artist and author starting a new story. My interest has been satisfied beyond expectation.

From West to East, the journey continues.



# Newcastle Cathedral introduces Dementia Friends training



Over 50 Cathedral volunteers, staff and clergy have completed Dementia Friends training

**Over 50 staff, clergy and volunteers at Newcastle Cathedral have completed Dementia Friends training since its introduction in April this year. The national initiative by the Alzheimer's Society aims to provide compassionate assistance to visitors living with dementia – helping them to feel supported and improving their experience.**

Each person who completes the training receives a symbolic Dementia Friends badge to wear, which comprises a small blue forget-me-not flower, signifying their commitment to understanding dementia and assisting those living with it.

Ashley Bell, the Cathedral's Head of Development and Fundraising said: "At the time of writing, we have had 52 people complete the train-



ing. I am blown away by the response and we are well on our way to becoming a Dementia-Friendly cathedral, continuing our journey to be a place that welcomes and is accessible to all.

"Dementia affects around 900,000 people in the UK and many of us have first-hand experience with a loved one being affected. Being a Dementia Friend means learning a little more about how it affects people and some of the actions we can take to support people living with the condition."

In line with their commitment to inclusivity, the Cathedral team is working hard to extend a 'radical welcome' to its diverse range of visitors. All companies who hold events at the Cathedral are now asked to provide a personal assistant ticket option.

For the Cathedral's internal events and special services, attendees are asked if they require any additional assistance. Prior to their visit, necessary adjustments can be arranged to accommodate their needs.

For churches across the wider Diocese seeking to become part of the Dementia Friends scheme, several different training options are available, and the Alzheimer's Society can talk you through the options and find the best route for you. To find out more, visit: [www.dementiafriends.org.uk](http://www.dementiafriends.org.uk).



# Sense of pride as historic lychgate is restored and rededicated



**The rededication of Longhirst lychgate**

*Picture: Morpeth News TV*

**A Victorian lychgate which was demolished following a road accident three years ago has been restored to its former glory.**

Built in 1885, the landmark has provided the entrance to St John's Church in Longhirst near Morpeth for 125 years.

But the community was devastated in 2021 when the historic structure collapsed, after a being struck by a pick-up truck.

Now, following three years of work behind the scenes and on site, the lychgate was rededicated on Sunday 5 May by the Archdeacon of Lindisfarne, the Venerable Catherine Sourbut Groves.

She said: "I am delighted to rededicate this historic lychgate following an accident back in 2021.

The whole lychgate collapsed and it has been quite a journey getting to this point again.

"It is a gateway, an entrance into this sacred space. It was built just a few years after the church, in 1885, and it's a real symbol of welcome as people come into the church.

"It's quite a landmark and there was a sense of loss and grief following the accident. Local people, as well as those who regularly worship at St John's are really delighted to see it restored and rededicated. It's a lovely day for the parish."

Chris Lediard, chairman of the Parochial Church Council at St John's, said there was dismay and amazement in the aftermath of the accident.

A bureaucratic process followed but despite a three-year delay, which included weather-related

and other unexpected disruptions, Mr Lediard said it was great to finally appoint contractors to carry out the restoration work.

He added: "Tiles for the roof had to be specially made, but when they were being delivered the lorry had an accident in which they got broken and had to be remade – so it all just takes time.

"Eventually it has been completed and the contractors have done a wonderful job. We are extremely proud of it."

Mr Lediard added that Northumberland County Council would be providing bollards to help direct traffic away from the lychgate to protect the structure.

Click [here](#) to watch a video of the rededication.



# Holy Trinity Jesmond marks centenary with tree planting project in Malawi

When Holy Trinity Church in Jesmond celebrated their centenary in 2022, a plan to mark it by planting 100 trees in the UK was hampered by bureaucracy. They took the project to Africa where a reforestation initiative is supporting communities. Here is the story behind the project.

By Ian Farrimond, Reader

In 2022 Holy Trinity Jesmond celebrated the centenary of the completion and consecration of the church building. To commemorate this, we wanted a long-term 'legacy' to ensure a lasting benefit. It was decided that we would look to plant 100 trees, one for each year since the church's consecration, around the North East.

This proved much harder than we imagined. Discussions with the City Council and other bodies behind community forests proved fruitless.

Then one of the church Mission Partners (MP) who had returned from Malawi in 2020 mentioned a project being run by SIM Malawi. They, with their partner KINDLE (Kids In Need Deserve Love and Encouragement) Orphan Outreach, had been involved with a Malawi government-backed scheme to plant Acacia trees in areas which had suffered deforestation.

The MP told us Acacia trees take about five years to mature and then become a source of nectar which bees turn into Acacia honey, important to the local economy, and that some of the villages were looking at the possibility of setting up bee hives to allow them to start collecting honey.

So instead of planting 100 trees in the north-east, we decided to support this work in Malawi to provide Acacia trees to help the local people.



Women and children of Elias village, one of the groups which took part in the Government-backed scheme with KINDLE

Money was raised from church members, including donations of pocket money from children, and over £1,000 was raised.

The project was set back in 2023 when cyclone Freddie struck, resulting in devastation to the already fragile infrastructure of the country.

However, this January, the project came to fruition and seedlings were planted in a number of locations around where KINDLE operated.

The director of KINDLE was delighted with the outcome and said the funds had enabled KINDLE to set up 24 'Reforestation Village Clubs,' each of which established its own nursery to cultivate trees from seed to seedlings. These Clubs impact around 600 families (probably over 2,500 people in all).

Acacias and a number of other indigenous tree species were planted. According to KIN-

DLE, the germination rates were so successful that more than 30,000 seedlings were planted in January this year! The newly planted seedlings are also covering an area of more than eight acres of ground that have been denuded of trees because of excessive deforestation.

The Director of KINDLE said: "We are very thankful to our supporters for making this happen. Our reforestation drive focuses much on the survival of the planted trees, hence our initiative branded 'Tree Parenting!'"

God took a boy's meal and shared it with thousands. He took the idea for a church legacy of 100 trees and turned that into thousands! As they say in Chichewa - the official language of Malawi - a worship chant heard regularly in churches across the country: 'Mulungu wabwino nthawi zonse ndi nthawi zonse Mulungu wabwino' (God is good all the time and all the time God is good!).



## LIKE A METAPHOR

Tim Hardy, formerly of the Religious Resources Centre, works from the home he shares with Ros, Anwen and Twinkle.



### Shiny clicky people

My old computer keyboard was weird and had seen better days - it had an odd, silicone cover that I think was designed to keep dust and dirt from settling between the keys and soften the feel of the keystrokes but which seemed to absorb and trap the grease from my fingertips and eventually make things look sticky and unpleasant. It had to go. So, I've splashed out and bought a fancy mechanical keyboard, which is a whole lot chunkier, and is taking a bit of getting used to - the keys are in a slightly different position, make a very loud clicking noise (almost as loud as my dad's old typewriter), and glow with a variety of colour effects which can be customised through the desktop app - it currently looks very pretty with different sets of keys in a variety of rainbow colours in an effort to help me stop pressing the wrong keys as I type.

It's been great fun trying to get things set up and looking the way I want them to and I've even had a go at recording a short macro to make the computer do what I want it to with a minimum of effort. Of course, all of this goes some way to explaining why it's taken far longer than usual to write this month's column.

My wife just got back from this year's On Fire Mission conference, where she had had a chance to explore both the charismatic and sacramental sides of her spiritual life, neither of which are foundational to the worshipping tradition of the church she works for. These were enriching experiences and provided a welcome opportunity to encounter God in ways that might not necessarily be part of her everyday work with the parish's young people and she's hoping to take some of what she's learned into her parish role.

I could have just plugged my new keyboard in and it would have done everything I needed it to - but that wouldn't have been any fun at all, and, writing this would have felt a bit more like it was work. Tomorrow, when I do start work with the loud, clicky keyboard set up, I hope some of the fun can be carried into the routine, and that we can all find ways to look for God in our ordinary lives that are more than 'just typing'.

## Volunteers' Week: 3-9 June 2024



The Christian Aid volunteer team at Greenbelt 2023, and right, Ian Bell, volunteer campaigner

*Pictures: Christian Aid*

### By Helen Cunningham



**V**olunteers across Newcastle Diocese ensured Christian Aid Week (12 to 18 May) was a big success this year. They knocked on doors, held collecting buckets, made tea, served big breakfasts, baked cakes, sold plants, held beetle drives, counted money, and – of course – tidied up afterwards! Thank you so much.

Volunteers are an instrumental part of Christian Aid and, for those who want a little bit more, whether it's fundraisers or festivals, classrooms or campaigns, there's something for everyone in the Christian Aid Volunteers' Team.

As part of Volunteers' Week 2024 – 3-9 June – Christian Aid is joining other organisations to celebrate 40 years of the movement, share stories of its volunteers and inspire people to sign up for a role.

Senior Volunteering Officer, Ian Hind, said supporters are the backbone of Christian Aid's mission to end poverty. He added: "Without their unwavering dedication and commitment, we simply couldn't make the impact we do.

"We have all kinds of roles from fundraising to helping at festivals and we'd be delighted to have more people sign up and be a part of something truly inspiring."

Christian Aid was founded in 1945 to give aid to refugees in Europe after World War Two. For nearly 80 years, the organisation has worked

alongside local partners to provide humanitarian relief and long-term development support to marginalised communities worldwide, while highlighting suffering, tackling injustice and championing people's rights.

While it is the official relief, development and advocacy agency of 41 sponsoring churches – all members of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland – Christian Aid works with people of all faiths and none, believing everyone is equal in the sight of God.

The volunteering team is made up of hundreds of people who offer their time in a variety of roles from speakers and teachers to campaigners and festival assistants.

Volunteer campaigner Ian Bell said: "My volunteering role has given me great experiences, meeting others, developing friendships, engaging with people from all walks of life, getting to know what they care about and who they are on a deeper level.

"In total I reckon I spend around two to six hours a week in my volunteering role; it's amazing to see where only a few hours a week can take you."

If you'd like to find out more about the variety of volunteer roles with Christian Aid, visit the website [here](https://www.christianaid.org) or email [volunteering@christian-aid.org](mailto:volunteering@christian-aid.org) with queries.

If you would like to book a volunteer speaker to come to your service or event, email [hello@christian-aid.org](mailto:hello@christian-aid.org) or call 020 7523 2493.