



THE HAYDON NEWS

**FEBRUARY
2001**

Published by The Friends Of Haydon Bridge

Hello everyone

I had the beginning of this editorial already in my mind's eye – I would mention the beautiful weather we have had of late; the bright sunshine and blue skies, and go on optimistically to discuss the pleasurable sights and sounds of springtime, which was obviously almost upon us (snowdrops, cuckoos, lambs – all that stuff) – and then just as I sat at the keyboard, I heard the wind beginning to rise, looked out of the window to see whirling snowflakes and realised that winter hadn't actually thrown in the towel yet! As usual, I should have known better!

I should really begin by, first and foremost, wishing all our readers and advertisers (slightly belatedly) a "guid New Year". The "slightly belated" part is due to the lack, because of a misunderstanding, of any editorial in the January issue. Sorry! Or, (whisper it) maybe no-one noticed? Don't answer that!

Talking about not noticing things, not one single entry was received for "Kris's Kwiz Korner" – on page 10 of the last issue – despite the fact that a prize of £10 was offered for the first correct entry!

To end with, some really good news.

On the Church Page, the success of the Methodist Church in clearing the daunting debt taken on through the demolition and reconstruction of the Chapel is fittingly described and recognised. I know that I, along with all our readers, would wish to add very sincere congratulations on this remarkable achievement. Well done!

Charles Thomas, Chairman
The Friends of Haydon Bridge

*Notes from the Parish Council Meeting held at the Community Centre (Haydon Bridge)
Thursday 22nd February 2001 at 7.30pm.*

Present were: 8 Councillors (apologies from 1), the Parish Clerk and 6 members of the Public.

be done which had not been agreed to' and that she would clarify the situation.

Public Participation: Concerns were raised by residents of Church Street regarding the proposed works and starting date for the HERS project. Letters had been received indicating that there were to be works carried out which had not been agreed to at any meeting.

She assured the residents that they would not have to pay anything towards the undergrounding of their electricity supplies.

Cllr. Philp also raised one or two other matters regarding the scheme.

In particular, residents stated that Traffic Calming areas were not needed as they felt that rather than contribute to road safety children, and others, might look upon these areas as safe places to cross the road ie. pedestrian crossings which they are not. Concerns were also expressed about the parking bays, 'bulges' in the pavement to accommodate these and the access into Church Street from the A69.

The wall at the corner of Church Street / A69 is now only to be painted as the Highways Agency (Leeds) says that the stone facing would not be permitted.

The designs of the centre two panels of the fence at the Old Bridge have to be submitted to the Highways Agency for their approval so until this is given the work cannot go ahead.

Electric cabling which currently is overhead is being laid underground as part of the scheme. Presumably all this work will be done BEFORE work starts on the road?

A month or so back everything seemed to be going along well with people looking forward to the work commencing. These concerns are worrying.

There was some understanding that residents having underground cabling laid to their dwellings were having to contribute 50% of the Electricity Board's costs! Surely this was not the case?

Heslop's Yard Mr Heslop, who was present, queried the Parish Council's response to the latest planning application submitted. Pre-empting the discussion which would come during the formal part of the Parish Council meeting, he wondered why permission might be denied for building

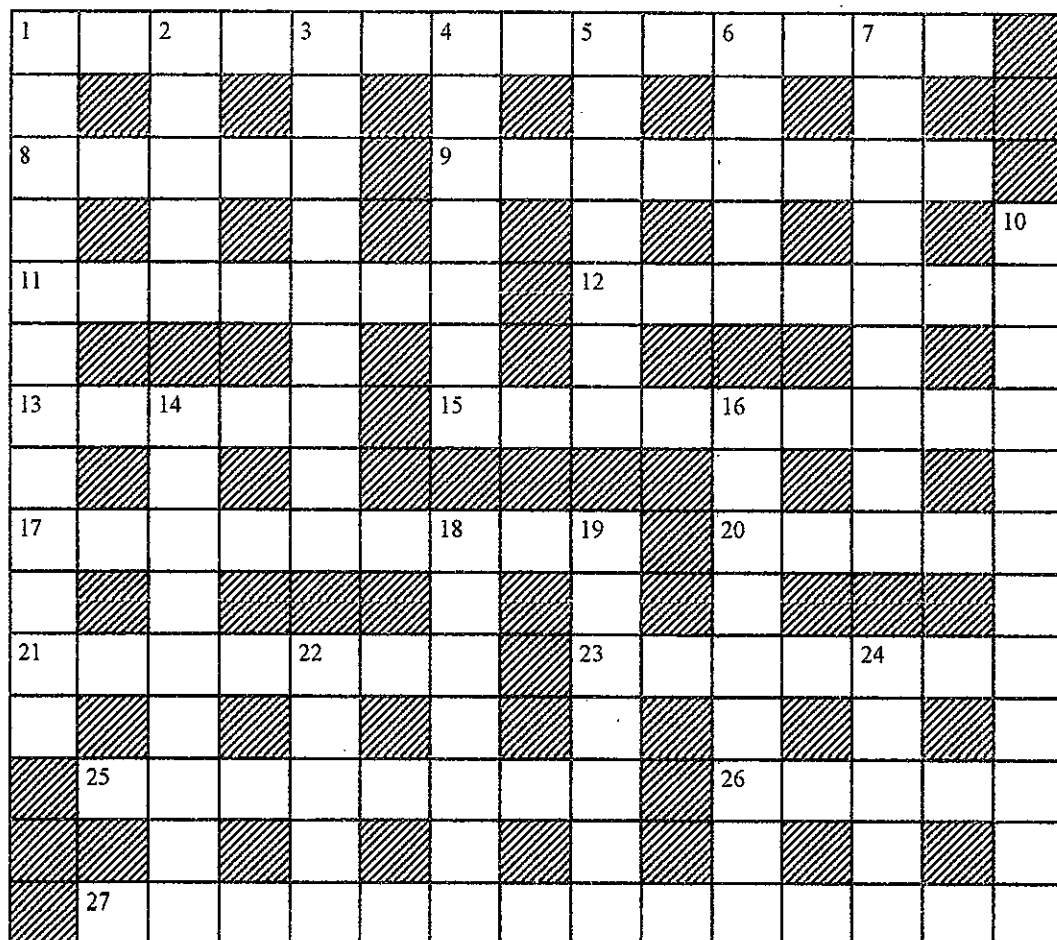
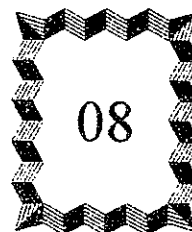
Cllr. Philp said that she would raise all of these concerns with the various bodies dealing with the scheme tomorrow (Friday 23rd). The Architect had said that '*nothing would*

(Continued on page 11)

The £10 Crossword

NAME:

ADDRESS:

Entries to be received by the Editor on or before MONDAY 19th March

Best of luck

(Please hand in your entry to the Post Office in Haydon Bridge or by post to:
The Editor, Wheelsteads, Woodhall Mill, Haydon Bridge, NE47 6AS)

ACROSS

DOWN

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Holiday on water. (8,6) | 1. & 5 down Sage ruins a blind case in French campaign against Cathars. (12,7) |
| 8. Where there's fire, according to song. (5) | 2. Swedish port. (5) |
| 9. Scour some vehicles for documents. (8) | 3. Cox was once. (3,6) |
| 11. e.g. Crail. Frozen among the high peaks. (7) | 4. Striven for opposite order. (7) |
| 12. Rio. Trap for point of departure. (7) | 5. See 1 down. |
| 13. Without navigational aid. (2,3) | 6. Female appears in Babylonian city. Escort. (5) |
| 15. Scottish islands. (9) | 7. Environs. (9) |
| 17. Ensuing O.U. debate concealed nothing. (9) | 10. Recognise Gracie's alley dweller's pet. (3,6,3) |
| 20. Nosey? (5) | 14. Siam dough made in E. African city. (9) |
| 21. Lumpy? (7) | 16. 1 & 5 down region of France. (9) |
| 23. Coarse (7) | 18. Home entrance. (3,4) |
| 25. Old song about a group of trees. (3,5) | 19. Harsh sound. (7) |
| 26. Architectural style. (5) | 22. Pork, lamb but not beef? (3,2) |
| 27. Not conscious being away when aristocrat visited. (3,3,3,5) | 24. Greek island. (5) |

HISTORICAL NOTES OF HAYDON BRIDGE: by Dennis Telford

ON THE MARTIN TRAIL – part 4

John Martin (1789 – 1854) Newcastle – London – Isle of Man (1803 – 1854)

From this point on the 'Martin Trail' I can be accused of failing to do justice to the youngest son John's life and work.

After all, how can I portray the sense of drama and imagination contained in John's paintings without the colour, light and shade that is so important to them. For that experience I recommend that you visit the Laing Art Gallery in Newcastle where, on the first floor, there is a permanent exhibition of his work. Or at the very least look at the pictures in, *"The Art of John Martin" by W. Feaver*. For further information on John's life and the history of his paintings I recommend, *"John Martin – His Life and Work" by Thomas Balston*. Both books are available through our village Library.

Fourteen year old John Martin found exciting new subjects for his talent in 19th century Newcastle. He memorised the many signboards outside the taverns in the town and then returned home to draw them.

He wasn't so enthusiastic about his apprenticeship with Leonard Wilson the coach builder.

John longed to 'practice the higher mysteries of the art of heraldry' but was subject to twelve hours a day of virtual slavery and was 'disgusted at the drudgery'. John walked away from Wilson's workshops after one year and spent his increased leisure time 'drawing the sky through his bedroom window' with materials purchased with one shilling Fenwick, his father, had given him.

This passion continued throughout his life and we are told that until his last days in London, John would be on his balcony working if there were 'good clouds and a good moon' and in 1849 he painted 'a lovely night (he) saw twenty years ago'.

Breaking his seven year indentures was a serious affair and as John had feared, the Parish Beadle was soon

to knock on the Martin's door at Whitecross, which stood on the site of Newgate Street and present him with a warrant to attend the Guildhall to answer the charge.

It says much for the character of the young Martin that he defended himself successfully, in front of the Alderman and Wilson and had his indentures returned, having clearly turned the tables on his accusers. Hardly the actions of a timid and nervous youngster as he described himself at Haydon Bridge.

John continued to practice his art. *"I roamed the hills at daybreak exulting in the sublime grandeur of the surrounding beauties of nature, watching the effects of light and shade and trying to imprint those beautiful images indelibly upon my memory which upon my return home I endeavoured to retrace on paper"*

Fenwick agreed to pay for tuition for John with an Italian, Boniface Musso, who had gained some fame in Newcastle as an art teacher. John and Musso became great friends and when Fenwick could no longer find the money to continue his son's tuition Musso undertook it free of charge.

For over a year, John developed his skill alongside Musso and supported himself by painting portraits 'receiving as much as seven shillings each for them'

It was about this time that John developed an interest in design and architecture. It was to become an obsession which almost equalled his commitment to art and influenced the detail in many of his later paintings.

In 1805 John drew a plan to illustrate his brother William's invention for improving the transport of coal by rail from the pit mouth to the screen.

It isn't clear whether John Martin ever returned to Haydon Bridge

when the family lived in Newcastle. There is one clue however, which suggests he may have done.

In 1970, when I first took my interest in the Martin family seriously, I became aware of an oil painting in the archives of the Laing Art Gallery which was attributed to John. It had been in the possession of W. S. Walton of Allendale and shows John Shaftoe's Free Grammar School and Alms Houses. The view is from Hill Loaning or what is now Geoff Duffy's field above Smith's Terrace.

A certain amount of artistic licence has been used in the portrayal of the hills to the west of our village, but in the foreground the Alms Houses (Shaftoe Terrace) have changed little in the intervening years. It is unlikely that they could have been painted so accurately simply from memory.

An exciting find for me for two reasons. Research suggests that the painting was completed before 1806 and if it is a genuine Martin then it is the earliest known. More importantly, for those of us interested in the history of our village, it must be one of the earliest views of Haydon Bridge. Whoever painted it.

In 1806 Musso left for London to join his son Charles and the young Martin was filled with excitement and anticipation when he was invited to join them. He must have needed all his powers of persuasion to convince Fenwick and especially Isabella who had grave misgivings, to allow him to board a Newcastle Collier on its journey to the capital.

During the journey John was robbed of all his loose change by a fellow passenger but he did manage to retain 'a portrait of Musso and a landscape' as examples of his work.

The seventeen year old's early months in London living with the Musso's were one of desperation. The work he had been promised did-

n't materialise and he wandered the city looking for employment without success. The valley of the Tyne must have seemed a million miles away but his *'only saviour in this regard was a dear memory of scenes from Northumberland rock and fell which he drew from memory and hawked about London until he finally managed to dispose of some of them'*

In spite of his early problems there's no indication that John was ever tempted to return to Northumberland. He was at perhaps the lowest ebb of his fortunes but had the utmost faith in his own ability and this saw him through. *"Under all circumstances I entertained the belief that I should some day be rich and independent. I never mistrusted myself or despaired of better fortune. My hope of success buoying me up even when I was starving"*

John's determination shown in a time of adversity was a typical characteristic of many a Northumbrian!

After a time the Musso's prospects improved and as a consequence so did John Martin's. During the day he worked long hours for Musso's son Charles, designing and painting on china. He then sat up until the early hours of the morning studying perspective and architecture.

In 1809 John married. His bride was Susan Garrett of Crondall, Hampshire, a frequent visitor to the Musso home. John was nineteen and Susan nine years older.

John and Susan's first child, Fenwick, was born in 1810 and he was followed in 1812 by a daughter Isabella.

1813 was a sad year for the Martin family. John's father, Fenwick, mother Isabella, Grandmother Ann Thompson and his first son, Fenwick, all died. His second son, John, was born this year but died an infant. In 1814 a third son, Alfred, was born.

It was just over two years since John had started painting in oils and yet he had had six of his paintings hung at the Royal Academy.

Already one of Haydon Bridge's most remarkable sons?

John Martin's first work painted for exhibition in 1812 was *'Sadak in Search of the Waters of Oblivion'* Painted in an imaginative and dramatic style. Nature's towering flat rocks, deep forbidding gorge and swirling river overshadowing Sadak's human form.

The originality of the work led to the description *'Martinesque'* a term which is still used today.

'Sadak' was sold for fifty guineas. John's dedication was beginning to pay off although he wasn't *'set free from the chains of debt'* until the success of his painting *'The Fall of Babylon'* which he sold in 1819 for four hundred guineas.

John and Susan had a further five children. Zenobia, Leopold Charles, William (who died as an infant), Charles and their last child, Jessie, who was born in 1825.

There seems little doubt that by this time John was committed to a life in London and Land Ends Farm at Haydon Bridge was probably far from his thoughts. After all, his six children who had survived had all been born in the south of England and his connections with the Tyne Valley were reduced to a few distant relatives.

There is of course a strong case for believing that his paintings were influenced by his early memories. The skies of rural Northumberland, the beauty of the Allen Gorge flowing below Staward Pele and as John described it *'the splendid prospect from the waterworks bank on the road to Benwell village near Newcastle'*. I have viewed this 'prospect' recently. A considerable amount of John Martin's imagination is required to call it 'splendid' in 2001!

John Martin's true delight with his new surroundings appears to have been the one thing which he was unable to find at Haydon Bridge. Cultured companions of *'refined nature'*

He had been introduced to a higher social circle by the Musso's and he

entered into the capital's society life with great gusto.

The Martins' *"evenings at home"* each Tuesday were legendary and attracted an impressive guest list. John Martin the country boy from Haydon Bridge was now spending much of his leisure time with men of *'talent and reputation'* Authors, artists, religious leaders and even Royalty. Charles Dickens, Sir Walter Scott, Earl Grey, Sir Robert Peel and the Archbishop of Canterbury were among his many friends. He entertained H.R.H. Prince Albert, Joseph Bonaparte the ex-king of Spain and Prince Louis Bonaparte afterwards Napoleon III.

The one connection with the North East that John shared with his companions was his renditions of the song *"The Fair Maid of Wallington"*

In 1822 the first exhibition at the Northumberland Institution included John's painting *'Macbeth'* Perhaps his best known work *'Belshazzars Feast'* was painted at this time and caused great public excitement. John was developing a new skill however, that of an engraver.

In 1824 John had a setback which had an interesting conclusion. The considerable amount of money that he had saved was lost due to a banking fraud. The guilty partner Henry Fauntleroy was sentenced to death and a crowd of 100,000 watched his execution. He was the last forger to be hanged in England.

By 1827 the majority of John's time was spent developing plans for engineering projects and engraving his own paintings. (He was paid £2,000 to illustrate the works of Milton). So much so that during the next five years he exhibited only three paintings. One of these *'The Fall of Nineveh'* was shown at the Northern Academy of Arts, Newcastle. In 1830 this painting was exhibited in Brussels following which John Martin was knighted by the King of the Belgians. He was also honoured by Tsar Nicholas I of Russia, Louis Phillipe of France and Frederick William of Russia.

For much of the last twenty five years of his life John became increasingly involved in the design of numerous schemes for improving the City of London and the River Thames. Visionary ideas which had great merit but sadly never implemented during his lifetime.

John returned to Newcastle in 1828 to visit his brother William. They had a common interest as inventors and subsequently John published a number of pamphlets outlining his proposals.

It is interesting that in 1834 John designed a roof over an aqueduct to support a railway. Twelve years later Stephenson's High level Bridge was built of similar construction over a road across the Tyne. It was claimed by William Martin that Stephenson had stolen his design.

John's obsession with his engineering projects appears to have had a serious effect upon his finances. The great prosperity he had known during the early 1830's had become a financial crisis by 1837. The sale of his engravings which provided an annual income of £1842 in 1830 amounted to only £146 in 1837 and his family commitments were still substantial. A wife Susan, five of his own children still living at home along with Jonathan's son Richard. His sister Ann and her daughter. Jonathan in Bedlam, Richard and his daughter and William in Newcastle. They all made demands on John's income and savings.

For a while John lived in 'misery and poverty' and was severely depressed. *"I have earned £20,000 in a few years and I am now without a penny"* His fortunes improved considerably however with Queen Victoria's Coronation in 1838. His painting of the event brought Martin's name to the attention of the rich and famous once more and his paint-

ings and engravings began to provide a substantial income again.

In 1841 John Martin exhibited a water colour at the Royal Academy. *'Valley of the Tyne - My Native Country From Near Henshaw'*

Is this evidence of maybe a final excursion to the place of his birth? If so his mode of transport would be quite different to that which was used to move the family and their chattels to Newcastle back in 1803. The earlier journey would probably be by horse and cart or carriage, his return undoubtedly by steam train, the line to Haydon Bridge having been opened in 1836.

By coincidence, the new Library and Newsroom was being built at the south east end of Walton Place (now Church Street) in 1841. Maybe it caught John's eye for some time later he wrote to the secretary and offered copies of his paintings so that they could be hung in his native village. (See my historical notes in issue 08 of the *Haydon News* of September 2000).

John Martin's final paintings *'The Last Judgement'*, *'The Great Day of His Wrath'* and *'The Plains of Heaven'* were completed during the final three years of his life. Seven days before he died they were exhibited at the Victoria Rooms in Grey Street, Newcastle.

In 1872, 18 years after John's death, the *'Judgement'* paintings were exhibited at Hexham. It was reported that *'it is the custom of the owner not to exhibit these treasure in any town under 30,000 population, but the inhabitants of Hexham have been singularly favoured because Martin was born among them'*

Since 1849 John had paid annual visits to the Isle of Man, staying with Thomas Wilson who was the leading

draper in Douglas. Wilson had married Susan Martin's sister and they also had a Haydon Bridge connection. The Wilsons' son had married Maria Alice Thompson, the daughter of Isabella Martin's brother Richard Thompson who was born in Northumberland in 1758.

In the Wilsons' house on the 12th of November 1853, John Martin suffered a paralytic seizure which deprived him of his speech and the use of his right hand.

On the 26th of December he signed his last Will with a cross 'John Martin, his mark'

John was nursed by his eldest daughter Isabella as his strength and will to live faded.

On 17th February 1854 at half past six in the morning, John Martin died and was buried at Kirk Braddon Cemetery.

"A mighty spirit - a son of genius - Martin the Greatest of British Artists in no more....."

(Isle of Man 'Herald')

The quite remarkable family trail I have followed over the last four issues of the *Haydon News*, ends with John Martin's death and concludes a story which surely provides ample opportunity for those who see benefits for our village in the development of tourism.

In this respect, February 2004 will be a significant anniversary!

And finally:

The marble slab which covers the vault in Kirk Braddon Cemetery is inscribed:

"IN MEMORY OF JOHN MARTIN, HISTORICAL PAINTER; BORN AT HAYDON BRIDGE, 19TH JULY 1789; DIED AT DOUGLAS, ISLE OF MAN, 17TH FEBRUARY 1854"

REFERENCES:

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| Historical Notes of Haydon Bridge and District. | - | William Lee (1876) |
| Reminiscences of John Martin K.L. | - | Leopold Charles Martin (1889) |
| John Martin Painter. | - | Mary L. Pendered (1923) |
| The Life of Jonathan Martin. | - | Thomas Balston (1945) |
| John Martin. | - | Thomas Balston (1947) |
| The Art of John Martin. | - | William Feaver (1975) |
| Shaftoe Trust School and John Shaftoe Charity. | - | L.C. Coombes (1981) |

CORRESPONDENCE

On 20th January 2001 the Haydonian Social Club organised a Quiz Night and Social Evening.

The proceeds were donated to the Marie Curie Cancer Care for use in the Tynedale area.

The event raised the magnificent sum of £212 for this very worthy cause.

Congratulations. Well done to all concerned.

Audrey Redman

DANCE CLUB NEWS

Nothing much to report.

Thanks to Iris for being so thoughtful in cancelling the dance so early on Monday 5th February. Most folks were snowbound anyway.

February must be a good month to be born as several members have birthdays.

Four people came to our dance on 12th February from Hexham. Not altogether strangers and we hope they become regular attenders.

At last we have a light at the rear of the Community Centre, a great help for parking these dark nights.

I mentioned before about the audio system playing up. The club have come to the conclusion that it is past its best, therefore we are going to have one or two Friday night dances to raise some money for new players etc. With a bit of luck we should get a grant to help pay some of the cost.

Jim Biggs

CARPET BOWLS CLUB

Win! Win! Twice in a month!!!

A number of matches have taken place since the last edition of the *Haydon News*. We battled hard in the game at Catton but the home side were just a little too good for us on the night. However, after another disappointing result against Alledale, a team who we beat earlier in the season, we played host to Throckley at the Community Centre.

This was just a short while before Christmas and the festive spirit was beginning. Santa had come early to Haydon Bridge to give us a gift of demolishing a Throckley team who would not have enjoyed their trip back down the A69 after that result. Haydon Bridge were far too good for the visitors on the night and deserved to win by doubling Throckley's score.

After the match, all the Haydon Bridge players were so delighted that Jean Oliver wrote and asked if we could be entered to play in the recent World Championships, that have taken place on television. However, we were denied entry because they were frightened of us!

To hide our disappointment of this T.V. turndown, the club played host to Corbridge, in another home match. Early in the game, Haydon Bridge, a team full of confidence, took the lead by a wide margin with the 'A' and the 'B' team scoring 10 points each in their first games. The 'C' and 'D' teams kept up the high scoring. Corbridge, who defeated Haydon Bridge in November are no push-over, and clawed their way back into the game. The hosts, however, held on and deservedly won the game 69 - 64. A lovely supper and evening was had by all.

We would like to welcome a new member. Geoff Marshall, wearing red and white pyjamas, arrived at a club night in January. Geoff enjoyed himself, and so could you.

We are still in need of new members and if you're interested, just come along to the club nights at the Community Centre on Thursday nights at 7.00pm

Best wishes for the New Year.

White Jack.

Hello from California!

As a former resident of Lipwood Well Farm, I was beside myself with delight when I chanced upon your web site. What a trip down memory lane.

I was actually looking for the *Newcastle Chronicle* when I saw your link on some search page and simply had to look.

I reside these days close to the city of San Francisco, California and do not get many chances to visit the old country. I was actually born in High Farm which is close to Wallsend, moving to Haydon Bridge in the 70's and working at Langley Castle when it was an entertainment centre.

I can't remember how many nights I got to be Long John Silver, or Forsooth or even the Mad Professor...

I'd love to hear a few words from you about the old hometown if you get the chance.

Regards

Dal Burns dburns@tibinc.com

ANSWERS TO JANUARY'S KWIK KWIZ

- | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| 1. SEVILLE | 8. GEORGE CLOONEY | 15. TOM JONES |
| 2. IAN MACLEOD | 9. KEN LIVINGSTONE | 16. ADMINISTRATIVE |
| 3. BAD MOON RISING | 10. GEORGE MICHAEL | 17. AFFAIRS |
| 4. WARSAW | 11. DRAG RACING | 18. DAILY MIRROR |
| 5. BEWITCHED | 12. IRELAND | 19. PETER, PAUL & MARY |
| 6. SAAB (SCANIA) | 13. SCANDAL | 20. CATALAN |
| 7. AIRBUS | 14. LORD NELSON | 20. 'ALLO, 'ALLO. |

"Haydon"
39 Ivson Road
Darwen
Lancashire BB3 0EN

2nd February 2001

Haydon Bridge United F.C.

Northern Alliance League – Division 2

The season so far

Dear Editor

I have followed Dennis Telford's story of the Martin Family with great interest. There is a distinct probability that Fenwick Martin, the father of the family, was the one who was christened at Whitfield, where the entry in the Parish Register of the 5th November 1774 reads:

*"Fenwick, the son of William Martin
of Black Ouston, christened."*

This supposition would be reinforced by the fact that Fenwick called his first son William. The traditional naming pattern of those times was to call the eldest son after his paternal grandfather. Fenwick had, at least, an older brother William and a younger sister Mary. The parents were William Martin, who had married Mary Lowes, at Whitfield, on the 22nd May 1734.

Alistair Burrowes queried the whereabouts of Pasture Well. This was on the footpath which leads from the west end of Haydon Bridge, across the railway, then past the cricket field and up to Peel Well.

Yours sincerely

William Veitch

Date	Team		Result
Aug	A Walker Stack	D	3-3
"	A Ashington Colliers	L	0-1
"	A Newcastle BT	L	0-2
"	A Otterburn	L	2-3
Sep	H Wallsend United	L	3-5
"	H Wallington	L	0-2
"	A Benwell Blues	L	1-3
"	H Stobhill Rangers	W	7-1
Oct	H University of Northumbria	L	1-7
"	A Forest Hall	W	1-0
"	A University of Northumbria	L	1-5
Nov	A Horden Athletic	W	5-4
Jan	A Shankhouse BW	W	1-2
Feb	A Stobhill Rangers	W	2-4

If you want to follow the news about your team in this, and any other football league, go into:

www.footballnews.co.uk

The following two poems were passed to the *Rumney* household at 12 Ratcliffe Road by *Harold Humble* who now lives in Australia but who used to live on Ratcliffe Road years ago. He still has a relative living in the village.

Pooley Bridge

*The waters were silent in old Pooley Bridge,
As I walked up the hill and gazed from the ridge,
Then they all flooded back those old memories of mine,
Of when we went camping with the Scouts there one time.*

*I think it was fifty or fifty-one,
But whatever the date it was lots of fun,
Old Bob Campbell was the Scout Master there,
He was one great man with plenty of flare.*

*The time he gave to the Scouts was unreal,
He worked very hard and with plenty of zeal,
There was never a bad word ever said about Bob,
And no-one was better at doing the job.*

*We'd go off on walks across the old bridge,
With Alex and Dave and the rest of the kids,
When one day a ram took a liking to Dave,*

*Who took off like lightning straight for the fence,
And a dive through the hole was his only defence,
Dave made it OK with a little to spare,
As the ram looked on with murderous eyes,
And a hole in the fence was three times the size.*

*An old barn by the camp was haunted said they,
That night we had fun as the ghost Bob did play,
He was howling and hooting, made a dreadful noise,
And a great time was had by all of the boys.*

*But then it's all over far too soon,
Watson's truck arrives the next afternoon.
We took down the tents and packed them away,
And the camping was over for another day.*

*But with Bert, Dick and Allan, I had a good time,
And Roy, Cliff and Michael, all good friends of mine,
I just hope they remember the good times we had,
And the good people that helped make our lives just so glad.*

*And would it not be just great, to have one last little ramble,
With all of our mates and our old friend, Bob Campbell.*

(Continued on page 10)

Plankey Mills

*It was beautiful and peaceful, up there in Plankey Mills,
We'd take the bus to Langley, and walk down through the hills.
The trees grew tall and mighty, as the river flowed below.
We'd stroll along to the big deep pool, and for a swim we'd go.
Then dive in from the rocks above, into the waters cool,
We'd dive and swim, and shout and scream, and really act the fool.
Then jump up on the swing bridge, and swing it to and fro,
Until a grown-up gave a shout, "Don't dare do that no more".*

*It's up in the forest, it was a steep ascent,
We'd puff and gasp and blow a lot, until our hearts content.
Then throw ourselves upon the ground, and drink our sarsaparilla,
You want to go and climb those hills, "there's nothing like it fella".*

*The air smelt so much different, from any place I've been,
Cool and crisp, fresh and brisk, beautiful and clean.
And birds well, there were many, and deer quite a few,
And one old goat, no-one could catch, as up on those hills he flew.*

*And then we all went camping, with school or with the Scouts,
It brings back all those memories, and that's what life's about.
Just sitting around the camp fire, to sing a song or two,
And next day we'd go walking, up tracks we never knew.*

*Yes, I tramped around the forest, until I knew it all.
Even to the lily pond, few others can recall.
Or to the two old hermits' huts high up in the hills,
On to the little wishing well, with all its dills and frills.*

*But now the years have passed away, the huts have all but gone,
And those tracks that I did wander, have tall trees growing on.
Now it's over forty years, since I walked along those tracks,
But really things have not changed much, I'm glad that I went back.
For the air is still so crisp and cool, high up in those hills,
And there's no smell just quite like it, here in Plankey Mills.*

Harold Humble – Australia

the shaftoe charities

Almshouse Charity of John Shaftoe

Reg. No. 506598

Shaftoe Terrace, Haydon Bridge, Hexham, Northumberland, NE47 6BW

Clerk to the Governors: J P Richardson, MA LLB FCIS.

One of the Almshouses has fallen vacant. If you would like to be considered for occupation of this cottage, please obtain an Application Form from the Post Office in Haydon Bridge.

To be eligible to apply you must:

- (i) Live in Haydon Parish,
- (ii) Be over 60 years old,
- (iii) Be "in need". Usually this means that you should have an income small enough to qualify for Income Support. The Application Form asks questions about your financial circumstances.

At Langley's W.I's Open Meeting in February members were pleasantly surprised to be almost out-numbered by men. This was in no small part due to the reputation of the speaker – George Byerley of Welton Hall, Stamfordham and the theme of his talk and slide show "Traction Engines"

Mr Byerley – a retired farmer and self-taught Agricultural Engineer – told members of how his fascination at a young age with anything mechanical, led to a life long passion. He and his brothers pioneered Combine Harvesters in the Tyne Valley and built up the farm workshop to become a major part of the business. Over the years they re-built vintage equipment some of which was sold on – others were shown on the Rally Circuit.

As well as re-building machinery, Mr Byerley has several inventions to his name, the most recent being the Byerley Roadmaker which won the Silver Medal at the Highland Show. Several of these have been sold to the Ministry of Defence and also to local estates.

Judging by the question and answer session which ensued, the audience thoroughly enjoyed the evening.

Myra Bowen

Applicants will be interviewed by a small panel of Trustees. It is hoped that maintenance work will be finished in time to allow occupation to begin by or before Easter.

The Form should be returned to the Shaftoe Office as soon as it is completed. You will be advised by letter when the interviews will take place.

**J P Richardson – Clerk to the Trustees
Almshouse Charity of John Shaftoe.**

(Continued from page 3)

two nice detached dwellings on the land but not for 10 flats which he thought were not suited to the area.

If there were going to be problems then he would be 'ready for battle'

There being nothing else raised by the public the formal Parish Council meeting continued.

Innerhaugh: There are still concerns over this development relating to flooding, access on to the A69, sewage disposal and the line of the footpath. These still need to be addressed.

The Strother Close access to the A69 was again raised. If the planners felt that the new development's access was satisfactory then surely this one was! After all, it was planned.

Highways & Bypass: Nothing further to add to that already communicated regarding the Bypass.

Cllr. Gilhespy raised concerns over parking and general car movement as pupils are dropped off / collected at the First School. Perhaps a layby could be constructed to ease the problem? Perhaps the H&E Executive should look at this. In any case a letter would be sent to the County Council.

Rubbish on the A69. Utter disgrace is how the situation was described. What with the present cabling work and general attitude towards littering, what can be done? Is it a case of education? By whom?

Also the growing number of signs advertising village facilities. One sympathises with the businesses concerned but the signs do tend to make the approach to the village look rather shabby.

Cllr. Charlton reminded those present that the annual Spring Clean was coming up and here was the ideal opportunity for the people of the village to do something positive towards cleaning up the area. Many volunteers needed. She also indicated a change to the date which was shown in the last edition of the *Haydon News*. This is now to be Saturday 7th April meeting at the riverside at 10.00am and not Sunday 1st April.

Planning Applications: Heslop's Yard. Two detached dwellings not 10 flats. PC supports this application.

Extension to pavilion at Low Hall Park. PC supports this.

Innerhaugh: 48 dwellings with some minor modifications to house plots.

Middle Lipwood Farm: Plans to convert this listed building into 5 dwellings have been submitted. The PC made no comment particularly as access to the A69 again was raised. This would compound the problems created by the Innerhaugh development.

A.O.B. Spa Well footpath. Unlikely to be reinstated along previous route although an alternative might be provided providing funding was found. The Straker family would have to be consulted of course before anything was done.

A list of problems areas relating to **dropped kerb access** for wheelchair uses and others of limited mobility was submitted to the PC for its attention. Perhaps a map of the village should be drawn up so that all areas could be identified more readily.

RADS



BEYOND THE VIEW Addressing Mental Health In Rural Areas

The village's clergy have been asked to let people know about a morning "Health Forum" at the Ratcliffe Road Community Centre on **Thursday 15th March from 10.00am till 12.30pm.**

One of the organising bodies is the **Rural Stress Initiative**, which is helping farmers and others in rural areas to face the present economic crisis. There will be presentations about primary care and healthier living developments, with workshops on mentally healthy villages.

There are leaflets about this Forum around the village.

Solution to crossword (07) - Jan.

8 entries were received.
There were 4 correct submitted by:

Dennis Telford
Denis Bell
Mrs A. Phillips
Susan Stephenson

TINY TOTS

From Birth to 3 years.

The sessions, run on Tuesday and Thursday mornings, from 9.30 to 11.30 at St. Cuthbert's Church Hall, aim to provide a friendly environment where parents / carers can meet, have a coffee and chat, whilst the children play and have fun.

Cost: £1 for the first child, 50p for each additional child.

For further information contact

Genevieve Stone on: **01 434 684 537** or call in at one of the sessions.

PLAYGROUP

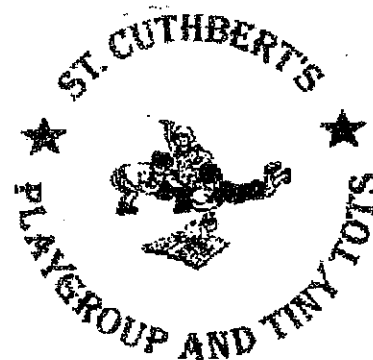
From 2 years 6 months

Playgroup currently runs on Monday and Friday mornings from 9.15 to 11.45. Each session provides your child with the opportunity to learn through play and to experience a wide range of activities. Children learn, through play, to communicate effectively and happily, at their own pace, with other children and adults. Playgroup is run by a qualified Nursery Nurse Teacher plus assistants.

Cost: £3 per session.

For further information contact Helen Easby on: **01 434 674 371** or call in at one of the sessions.

St Cuthbert's Playgroup is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.



£10 winner out of the hat:

Mrs A Phillips

S	H	A	R	P	E	C	O	W	P	E	R
T	E	O	W	U	A	O					
B	A	S	S	P	R	I	N	T	I	S	S
R	O	P	L	L	S	S					
T	A	I	P	E	I	L	E	A	K	A	G
C				N	I	Y	G	R			
S	T	R	O	N	G	M	A	N	H	E	S
			U			M			T		
	F	A	R	M	A	T	R	I	L	O	G
O	M	F	R	N						A	
P	R	O	U	D	O	N	E	F	R	I	E
S	T	I	V	U	N	K					
S	T	O	U	T	B	O	O	T	S	D	I
E	A	L	R	E	I	E					
R	O	L	L	E	R	I	D	E	A	L	S

EDITORIAL POLICY OF THE HAYDON NEWS

The editorial policy of the *Haydon News* is ultimately the responsibility of the Committee of the 'Friends of Haydon Bridge', although day-to-day responsibility is delegated to the Editorial Committee of the *Haydon News*. Our intention is always to ensure that the content of the *Haydon News* is as fair and factually correct as possible. Any complaints concerning editorial policy should be addressed in writing to the Chairman of the 'Friends of Haydon Bridge', and will be considered by and receive a formal response from the Committee of the 'Friends of Haydon Bridge'. Complaints other than those made above will not be entertained.

The Editorial Committee reserves the right to decide which letters are to be published, and to alter or shorten letters when necessary. Anonymous letters will NOT be published. A nom-de-plume may be used provided that the Editorial Committee has been advised of the writer's name and address.

Charles Thomas, (Chairman)
South View, Heugh House Lane,
Haydon Bridge, NE47 6ND

COPY DEADLINE: All contributions to the *Haydon News* to reach the Editor no later than Monday 19th March.

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Fax: 01 434 600 599

Minicom: 01 434 607 202

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THE MEETING PLACE AT THE METHODIST CHURCH

Come and Join your friends for
Coffee and Refreshments on
Tuesdays and Thursdays 10am - 12 noon

FAX facilities

Warm welcome to all

HAYDON BRIDGE UNITED FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

HBUFA hold their monthly meeting on the first
Tuesday of every month at 7.30pm where representa-
tives of every football team in the village are invited
to attend.

This meeting is also open to members of the public.

**NEED HELP WITH
Tax Returns, Accounts, Book-keeping etc ?**

Ring

BASSETT HERRON & CO.
Chartered Accountants
3, Market Street, Hexham

Tel: 01 434 605 666

We Can Help YOU

Committee of the 'Friends of Haydon Bridge'

Charles Thomas (Chairman) Mike Parkin (Vice Chairman)

Elena Parkin

Alistair Bowen

'Mitch' Mitchell

Pauline Tulip

Sylvia Mitchell

Richard Snowdon

PLEASE SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL SHOPS. THEY NEED OUR CUSTOM TO SURVIVE.

'THE FRIENDS OF HAYDON BRIDGE'**Dates and Times of Meetings**

Committee Meetings are held at 8.00pm on the **MONDAY** following the fourth **THURSDAY** of each month.

Venue: The Community Centre, Haydon Bridge

Public Participation

Our invitation to members of the public to participate continues, but it must be remembered these are the monthly meetings of a constitutionally-based committee which are run on formal business lines (agenda, minutes, reports, etc). For this reason, public participation will in future be restricted to a maximum of the first 30 minutes of every meeting only. Items for discussion must be notified in writing to the Chair one week in advance of the meeting so that Committee members can be advised, enabling worthwhile discussion to take place. The Chair will then advise the person concerned of the right to attend.

After the allotted time we ask that you leave the meeting so that the Committee can continue with their formal agenda.

Charles Thomas, Chairman.

Tynedale Citizens Advice Bureau

We hold a free, confidential, independent advice and information session at:

The Health Centre, Haydon Bridge
on Monday afternoons
from 2.00pm until 4.00pm.

We can give you advice and information on:

Social Security Benefits	Money Problems
Consumer Rights	Problems at work
Relationship issues	Housing
Employment	Legal Proceedings

And much moretry us!

We can help you fill in forms, draft letters, negotiate by telephone or letter, and prepare Social Security reviews or appeals.

Ring the Health Centre (**01 434 684 216**) to make an appointment or, if required, to arrange for a home visit.

MUSIC and MOVEMENT

Calling all Mums! Did you know that there is a Music and Movement group running in Haydon Bridge?

We meet at the Methodist Church on Friday afternoons (1.10pm and 1.50pm) during term time.

This is a fun get-together for Mums and pre-school children alike which involves singing, instrument playing and movement with coffee and orange juice served afterwards.

Please contact **Susie Steven** on:

01 434 684 260 for further details.

ACHES and PAINS?

Do you or your pet suffer from aches or pains?

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For more information contact:

Iris Stafford Four Winds
Heugh House Lane
Haydon Bridge
NE47 6ND

Telephone / Fax: **01 434 688 014**

OUT AND ABOUT

METHODIST CHURCH HALL

Monday 2nd April at 2.00pm

The **Out and About Group** intend to hold an exhibition of work produced by the group and will be delighted to meet everyone who can spare the time to come along and see it.

Cream Teas and a Cake Stall will also be available.

PLEASE COME AND JOIN US

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WHIST DRIVES

Langley Village Hall

Fortnightly on Saturdays at 7pm.

50p entrance
(Everyone welcome)

CHURCHES WORKING TOGETHER

CHURCH PAGE

February/March 2001

CLERGY MESSAGE

from Father Leo Pyle

Lent and Let Live

We can build our ark, and float upon the waters; or we can take a chance and be lost. We can accept our life and its context; or deny it to our cost. A bit like the little dog tied behind the trap. We can trot along willingly, or be dragged. Reality is like that.

Reality is demanding. Gratification comes only upon response to the demands. And Jesus is a realist. He reads the evidence. He discerns his experience. And Jesus knows he must respond totally to life and the demands of life: to Father, neighbour, self, and the whole creation.

This way, Jesus treads the waters. This way he calms the waters. He makes the waters the means of salvation for all. This way the waters yield bountifully. Jesus calls it baptism, and he urges total immersion upon us all. We are meant to be - and made to be - totally involved: mind and body, heart and soul; nothing exempt in the whole of creation.

Hence our Lenten **almsgiving**, to remind us that we do not possess any person or place or thing. Everything is for sharing. All is on loan; and what we borrow should be returned unspoiled. Our **almsgiving** is return and sharing.

All is done in a context of **prayer**, of our relationship with God and ourselves and our neighbour and creation. Failure to pray is to miss the point, the high point of all living. The ecstasy of relationship, human and divine, natural and normal.

And that we may truly share and truly pray, we fast. We sacrifice not only food and drink, but time and energy and expertise. We die to live. The fasting person is sharp. The senses are alert and acute, and life is sweet.

A FULLY INTEGRATED SPIRITUALITY

And we know that total commitment to reality and life and love is all that makes sense. A fully integrated spirituality is all that makes sense. We cannot go about the task of 'saving our souls' while neglecting to save the neighbour and the neighbourhood. The rainbow reminds us that salvation is for the whole creation. So disaster zones are our business, the business of Lent.

Any form of prayer and fasting and almsgiving that ignores neighbour and neighbourhood with everything in it is pointless and frustrated and phoney. Any form of prayer that allows us to remain unaware of neighbour in need and neighbourhood plight has lost touch with reality and with God

AN INDEPENDENT SUPPLEMENT TO THE HAYDON NEWS



CHRISTIANS TOGETHER IN HAYDON BRIDGE

WHO AND WHERE

The names and phone numbers of the clergy who minister in Haydon Bridge

Rev David Perkins, with the Methodist congregation
39 Elvaston Road, Hexham 603.139

Father Leo Pyle, with St John's Catholic Church
St John's Presbytery, North Bank 684.265

Canon Vincent Ashwin, with St Cuthbert's C of E
The Vicarage, Station Yard 684.307

LENT TOGETHER IN HAYDON BRIDGE CHURCHES

courses led by 2 of the village's clergy

Tuesday nights, 7.30pm, beginning March 6th

David Perkins FAITH IN THE FIRE
the Methodist Church study/ cassette interviews
Ann Widdicombe, David Hope, Lionel Blue, Leslie Griffiths

Wednesday mornings 10.30 - 12.00, starting March 7th

Vincent Ashwin. at the Vicarage
JOURNEY ALONE - JOURNEY TOGETHER
Course on prayer, worship & daily living
based on study material by Angela Ashwin

Authentic experience of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, will be acutely aware of our neighbour's pain and our planet's spoliation, destruction and desecration. Authentic spirituality, authentic Lenten observance means active concern for all life, all people, all life forms. Lent is pro-life, new life, spring and renewal.

Lent, and let live.

METHODIST CHURCH SERVICES

Sunday Mar 4th *Refugee Sunday*

10.00 Mr W Huntsman

6.00 Choir/Prayer Group leading worship

Tue 6th 7.30pm Men's Christian Fellow's p

Wed. 7th 12.00, Lunch Club

2.00, Women's Own meeting

Sunday Mar 11th

10.00 Rev David Perkins Family Comm'n

2.30 Rev David Hasson at Henshaw

Sunday Mar 18th

8.30 Rev D Perkins Sacrament

10.00 Mr R Tipping

6.00 Revd Alan Currie

Tue 20th 7.30pm Men's Christian Fellow's p

Wed. 21st 2.00, Women's Own meeting

Sunday March 25th *Mothering Sunday*

10.00 Rev J Errington

6.00 Rev G Hall

April 1st

10.00 Mr D Matthews

6.00 Rev D Perkins Sacrament

£350,000 TRIUMPH

Haydon Bridge Methodist Church have paid all the bills for their new church centre. This is a tremendous achievement. The old church was closed on Easter Sunday 1996; it was in such a poor state of repair that the members decided to take a huge step of faith, and to plan a totally new building. Demolition of the old and the building of the new took two years. During that time services and meetings took place in the United Reformed Church near the level crossing.

On Easter Sunday 1998, the new church was opened. Thanks to a lot of hard work, the debt has been paid off well ahead of schedule.

The Church Leaders wish to thank the whole community for their support. This includes the Shaftoe Educational Trust, which contributed to the computer room, where people of Haydon Bridge can have Information Technology classes, etc.

The building is used by many groups, morning, afternoon and evening, on most days of the week - from lunch clubs for senior citizens, to music and movement for very small children, and regular 'Out and About' sessions for the disabled.

Congratulations to the Methodist Church.

CALENDAR FOR ST CUTHBERT'S CHURCH

Sunday 4th 1st Sunday of Lent

8.00 Holy Communion (Prayer Book)

10.30 All-Age Service - Revd Alan Currie.

Wed. 7th 9.45 Healing Service with HC.

Thu. 8th 7.30pm, Deanery Synod, Hex'm

Sunday 11th 2nd Sunday of Lent

10.30 Parish Communion

Tue 13th 7.30pm Pie/Pea Supper, & music

Sunday 18th 3rd Sunday of Lent

8.00 Holy Communion (Prayer Book)

10.30 Morning Prayer & Sermon (M Fry)

Sunday 25th Mothering Sunday

8.00 Holy Communion (Prayer Book)

10.30 All-Age Service of the Word.

Sunday April 1st Lent 5

10.30 Parish Communion

Please note that - because of Mothering Sunday - the pattern of services is different from usual on the last two Sundays above.

Lent programme at St Cuthbert's

1. There are two inter-church study groups each week, detailed over the page, on Tuesday evenings & Wednesday mornings.
2. Each Wednesday morning, there will be Holy Communion at 9.45 - a said 30-minute service.
3. Each Saturday night, the ancient night service of Compline will be said at 9.00pm. This 15-minute service is quiet and reflective; the Gospel for the next day will be read, with time to mull it over silently.

Churchyard wall repairs

The legal process of getting permission for repairs and alterations to the churchyard wall are going ahead. The vicar has the architect's plans. This is part of the scheme to tidy up the centre of the village (Church Street), funded by the *Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme (HERS)*.

☐ Meanwhile, we have applied for a Lottery grant for disabled access to the church; at present it is impossible to get wheelchairs into church, thus excluding the disabled from funerals, baptisms, etc.

☐ We also have detailed plans of work to be done on the tower steps - where the rain comes in and damages the wall at the back of the church. We shall have to approach the village for help with that.

SERVICES AT ST JOHN OF BEVERLEY CATHOLIC CHURCH

Mass each Sunday at 9.30am.

Mass at 11.0 at Haltwhistle each Sunday.

Mass on weekdays (except Mondays), at 10.00am, either at St John's or at Haltwhistle.

Women's World Day of Prayer

This year, the service is to be hosted by St John's. For over 50 years, this inter-church service has taken place world-wide on the first Friday of March, and pre-dates many ecumenical efforts. On Friday 2nd March at 2.00pm, Sister Dolores will be Haydon Bridge's speaker. Women from every church and none are invited to this.

End of Year Youth Report

David Matthews, the churches' youth worker, has completed his first year here, and presented a report last month. Part of the year was spent in building links with other organizations in Haydon Bridge and Hexham [David works one or two days a week in Hexham.] He writes:

"I am currently working in 8 schools in the area, operating in a variety of ways: assemblies / Christian Unions / RE days / discussion groups / lunchtime concerts [David is very handy with the guitar, and there's a wide selection of modern Christian songs]."

"Most notably, Haydon Bridge High School have requested that I do whole weeks of assemblies ... Good relationships have been developed within the school, particularly with Ann Lambert, Jackie Quincy [head of 6th form] and Mike Fry, all of whom I meet on a regular basis."

"An interesting spin-off from this is that a number of students from the school have visited the church coffee mornings in their free lessons!"

"The result of the schools work is that approximately 2300 young people are reached with the Gospel each month. "I am currently working with Ann Lambert and the High School to develop a new youth club in the village within the new community centre; this is aimed at the 13+ age-group; we have recently applied for, and been successful with, a number of grants, to assist with carpeting, painting, kitchen equipment and seating. This will take place once a week initially to provide a relaxed and informal environment."

Plus ça change...

FEELING EXPANSIVE

When Bob High commissioned the Health Centre design in 1988 he had in mind a practice population of 2,000 patients with a single handed doctor. The number of practice staff was much smaller, as was the range of services and the burden of expectation.

We now have approximately 3,150 patients (and a few hundred more may arrive courtesy of the new houses expected in the area), more doctors, more staff, more services and greater expectations. In fact, we have run out of space and we must consider expanding the premises. It has even been suggested that we could move nearer the centre of the village but the difficulties involved might be insuperable.

The current view is that the building could be made L shaped by extending over the lawned area at the front. Clearly, the main accommodation for patients must remain on a single floor to facilitate access but a lower storey could easily fit where the lawn is.

The sorts of uses to which additional space could be put include: chiropodist's room, midwife's room, additional administration offices, additional consultation room, additional treatment room, physiotherapy space, bigger pram park, partitioning off the waiting room to give privacy at the reception desk and improved dispensary arrangements with separate hatch etc.

The health centre is a community resource and so we need to have the views of users. Please let us know what you think needs to be done to improve the centre, preferably in the next few weeks. Thank you.

EVEN MORE PRESCRIPTION CHANGES!

Hexham hospital has ceased to use co-proxamol (it used to be called Distalgesic). This is in line with a general health-service-wide move away from tablets that contain more than one ingredient.

There is no good evidence that co-proxamol is measurably better than ordinary paracetamol (to be called acetaminophen soon) for the treatment of pain. The second ingredient in co-proxamol, dextropropoxyphene, is a weak pain killer only. Accordingly we shall be following suit as soon as we can find two minutes to rub together to do it.

There are other mixed ingredient tablets for the treatment of pain; co-codamol and co-dydramol. In due course we shall cease to prescribe these too. The additional ingredients, codeine and dihydrocodeine respectively, can easily be prescribed separately if they are needed.

PERSONAL MEDICAL SERVICES (PMS) PILOTS

We're all taking flying lessons! - No, seriously - there is going to be a revolution (yet another one!) in the way local practices are arranged. In early 2001 four of the largest urban megapractices in Tynedale are becoming PMS pilot sites in what has come to be known as the first tranche of the third wave of pilots. As far as can be predicted there will be little detectable change from the patient's point of view but internally the mechanism by which the practice is run will change hugely. All of the remaining practices in Tynedale will (probably) enter the second tranche of the third wave in late 2001.

At the moment whole forests are being clear felled to prepare for the paper required to achieve this. The intention is that these changes should be "a good thing", certainly an improvement on that rebarbative fundholding nonsense. There should be scope for improvements in services and a reduction in the management burden - I'll believe that when I see it!

We'll keep you informed.

THANK YOU TOO

We are most grateful to The Railway and The Haydonian for offering to help raise funds for the defibrillator for the Health Centre.

STEROIDS USED LONG TERM

We think we've found all those on long term steroids in order to suggest to them that they should be on treatment to limit the bone loss that can be caused. However, if you are taking steroids long term and we have not yet discussed this subject with you please make an appointment as soon as possible. Thanks.

HERBALISM

Chemicals extracted from plants can be every bit as powerful as drugs made in factories. The most historically significant for medicine is probably digitalis which is extracted from foxgloves and has a powerful effect upon the heart.

I have been particularly impressed by reports from patients and from papers in the professional press about four products derived from plants:

St John's Wort - this is at least as effective as some of the conventional antidepressants used by doctors and has far fewer in the way of side effects. The minimum effective dose is 900 micrograms daily of hypericin (the active ingredient). As with any antidepressant it should be taken for a minimum of several months.

Saw Palmetto - a product derived from a palm that has been shown to have measurably beneficial effects on men with prostate problems.

Agnus Castus - a fruit, the extract of which has been shown to be an effective and well tolerated treatment for premenstrual symptoms. Of course, as a mere man, I must tread carefully here as there is a body of opinion that says that PMT doesn't exist...

Cannabis - numerous patients have reported beneficial effects from cannabis, either smoked or taken in food or drinks. As the weight of evidence for the benefits of cannabis is so overwhelming you might think that I would positively recommend it but I am sure you will understand when I say that "I couldn't possibly comment".

For those of a more carnivorous disposition - I have heard anecdotes concerning the merits of green lipped mussel extract and fish liver oils for the treatment of joint pain.

However, not all is rosy in the horticultural therapy department. There is a large number of reports of very serious and even fatal reactions to plant materials. Always discuss what you are taking and what you are planning to take with your pharmacist and/or a PROPERLY QUALIFIED herbalist first.

MY FIRST TOOTH

Since the dawn of time teething in infants has been associated with all manner of problems. Rashes, fits, diarrhoea, temperature, red cheeks, red ears, misery, crankiness, etc. etc. For a long time paediatricians have been repeating the mantra that "the only thing teething causes is teeth!"

Well, now it's official. A serious study has been made of the subject and has excluded all the usual symptoms that have been attributed to teething. There is no consistent link between symptoms and teething. So if your baby has symptoms that are a cause of concern to you we should be looking for the real cause and not just putting it down to teething.

BREAST FEEDING

Breast feeding is a very emotive subject. Some who could, don't want to. Some who are desperate to, can't. Those attending new mums must be very circumspect in how they phrase their advice lest they cause offence or unhappiness or self doubt in the mums.

The current general view is that "breast is best" if you can, though your baby will grow perfectly well if you can't or don't want to. Human breast milk is obviously purpose made for human babies at exactly the right temperature, it's free, it protects against infections, breast feeding contributes to mother/child bonding, breast feeding confers protection against breast cancer in the mother and Dad can play with the empties.

Now, a recent study has shown a tiny but measurable benefit in IQ for breast fed very premature babies. Might this also apply to all babies? We don't know yet.

JUST IN CASE YOU HADN'T NOTICED...

Doctor Michelle is pregnant and should give birth in April, providing that she and her baby have been reading the same textbook. She will be taking a very fashionable six months off and returning in mid September. We offer her our Very Best Wishes. Mary and I will be holding the fort with a locum lady doctor called Laura who lives in Hexham and whom I am sure will fit in well with the team.

Steve Ford.