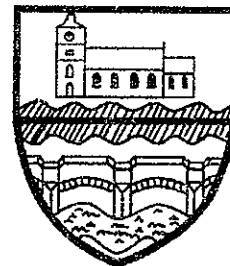


# Haydon News

The Friends of Haydon Bridge thank the Advertisers for their continued support



March 1995 / 2

IN THIS ISSUE: Editor threatened. The January Floods. Drugs Debate continues. Editor takes issue with writer. Drinkers speak out. Reaching 40 - the real facts. The sad confession of a deceitful child. Lycanthropic Doctor's carpet fetish. A Spring Ceilidh and much more.

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Crossword Competition inside

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&  
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## TIME FOR CHECKUPS

Spring will soon be here so why not call the garage advertisers and have your car checked out following the rough treatment by winter weather and driving. Roofs may have lost slates or tiles during the gales - ring the advertisers to arrange for a quick checkout. Have you had an M.O.T. of your own bodywork? - if not, phone the Health Centre.

**PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE**

## HAYDON BRIDGE FISH & CHIP SHOP

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Wednesday	11.30 - 1.30	5.00 - 9.00
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Lunch - Wednesday to Sunday

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Fine Wines and a comfortable Restaurant

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Your Hosts Ian and Angela Clyde

**EDITORIAL**

When I walked around the Village in early February I was told that there was going to be a lynching - mine. The cause being that many of you thought the Crossword was impossible to do however quite a few readers did get down to the last two or three answers. In the event, no complete and correct entry was received. There is no truth in the rumour that I pocket the money when there is no winner.

Many thanks to all of you who have said that you like the new style and presentation.

Thanks also to the critics for your views, where possible I will endeavour to accommodate some of your suggestions.

On the last day of January, a Tuesday, I was feeling smug and contented after completing my deadline for the February issue of The Haydon News, which by then had been printed, copied and given to the distribution points. It had poured with rain overnight, not having much to do it was not until about 3pm that I ventured out.

As soon as I started driving away from my elevated position it was apparent that all was not well down in the valley. From the Lees farm on my right to the Spa on my left I could see the extent of the flooding. The football pitch seemed to be flooded to about six feet and the water extended up to the A69 embankment. The bottom section of Martins Close was awash as was Brigwood.

Apparently some three inches of rain had fallen in the Northern Pennines in the previous 24 hours. The High School meteorological station had recorded 1.5 inches on the Tuesday and some 10 inches over December and January. The rapid overnight thaw melting the snow in the hills, together with the waterlogged land caused most rivers in the area to burst their banks and cause flooding not seen for about fifty years.

My first port of call was the Pharmacy to collect a bottle for my sore throat. Peter Robertson the Chemist apologised for his state of dress, being kitted out with complete waterproofs and wellies, he was on his way home to rescue the cat from his low lying house in Pandon.

Water was already lapping house doors there with garages flooded.

One Pandon couple had the foresight to move their caravan up to Heugh House Lane otherwise it could have ended up at Tynemouth.

Leaving the shop I walked down the subway ramp to cross under the road, a hasty retreat from there was necessary as some 18 inches of water was flowing.

Crossing the Old Bridge I joined the other people watching the gushing torrent below our feet. One could see the severity of the flooding up at Brigwood, Basil Young's Workshop was also awash as was the riverside footpath leading from the Anchor Yard eastward. Remembering my own doubts about the safety of the Old Bridge I quickly continued walking southward and collected my mid-week shopping from the SPAR.

The Anchor lights were on so I popped into the Riverside Bar where awld Sid was rabbiting on with Mary, Manager Michael and anyone else who would listen. Pleading 'Emergency Situation' Sid bought me a Bacardi and Coke and asked me to join them.

In years, Sid is not really old but we humour him by pretending that he is, for his part sometimes he pretends to be deaf and humours us. On this wet day he had his tale to tell.

Martins Close was built just before the War and 12 year old Sid Thompson moved there from Victoria Terrace in 1939, he has lived in the same house since. This was the third or fourth occasion he has experienced bad flooding. He recalled that in 1986 it was worse as the ducks were then swimming in the Anchor Yard - today the Yard was dry. Others said today was worse, 1955 was also bad.

Whilst Sid was enjoying a rare lunch time tippie the phone at The Anchor rang at about 2pm, it was the Police asking if Sid was safe. They had found the house empty and were worried about his welfare. Sid returned home at the request of the Police and they carried all of his electrical and portable articles upstairs for him as they also thought he was old. They then fully sandbagged around the doors of the house to protect against the river water.

The Police suggested he go to a place of safety as the flooded river was by then lapping around the house. Clutching his little dog Sandy, Sid returned to the place from whence he came. Which is where I met him later.

Meanwhile other Martins Close residents were sharing trucks and rushing to Tynedale Park to fill up sandbags to seal their homes from the relentlessly rising river. It was hard work, not without a touch of irony, for as they struggled with their weighty sandbags the workmen fitting new porches to the houses carried on working.

Back in the Anchor no praise could have been more generously uttered than the words Sid used in letting us all know how helpful and proficient the Police had been.

Michael kept disappearing into the flooded cellar where the water had now reached the third step. Even in the bar one could hear the eerie metallic sounds of empty beer barrels gently colliding with one another as they sparred for new positions in the rising Tyne waters.

Without warning there was a deafening cacophony of sound and chest pounding vibrations, some thought the place was about to float off to Hexham and suggested that the anchor be ripped off the fireplace wall and 'hoyed oot' into the river. Sandy thought a bit of barking and jumping up and down like a dervish was in order, he promptly piddled on the floor in fright. Looking out of the east side windows we were nearly blinded by powerful halogen searchlights from above the village. Circling aloft were not one, but two ugly helicopters, thrashing rotors causing myriads of rainfilled whirlpools in the air.

After checking flood levels and shooting the views for upcoming TV news bulletins both pilots adjusted the feathering of their blades and like disgruntled pterodactyls they roared off into the gloomy dusk. The waters were already receding.

Sid was unmoved by all the fuss 'Seen it aal befower' said he, 'but them coppers were bluddy marvellous and ya can put that in tha Haydon News'

So I did                      Mitch

NEXT ISSUE OF HAYDON NEWS

APRIL 1995

ALL COPY TO THE EDITOR  
S.B. MITCHELL  
HIGH BRINDLES  
HEUGH HOUSE LANE

or alternatively hand in at the  
POST OFFICE

BY 20 MARCH PLEASE

Readers Letters and Viewpoints - collated by the Editor

Thank You to all of the Villagers who sent me their best wishes during my recent stay in Hospital. I am feeling much better now due to the excellent care I received.

Raymond Mc Vay

I am organising a Ceilidh details of which are shown in the notice below. This dance will be a fun night with a varied programme of dances and will appeal to anyone young or old, beginners and those with more experience. We have a superb local band and caller, possibly a guest spot (not confirmed yet) and a raffle. Proceeds from the Ceilidh will go to the Community Centre to help with the kitchen modernisation. There will not be a bar so please bring your own drinks.

Valerie Bell

Haydon Bridge  
Community Association

**A SPRING CEILIDH**

Community Centre - Ratcliffe Road

Saturday 18 March 1995  
7.30 - 11.30pm  
with  
**BLAME THE DOG**  
Ceilidh Band

Tickets £3.50 Concessions £1.50  
(includes supper) Available from:  
Valerie Bell 684705  
Iris Waugh 688837

**PLEASE BRINK YOUR OWN  
DRINKS**

**MUSIC AT HENSHAW**

**The Cestrian Wind Quintet**

will be performing a concert of light classical Music at the  
W.I. Hall Henshaw  
on Friday March 10th at 7.30 pm

Tickets at the door £3.50  
Concessions £2.50

Little Shop of  
**HORRORS**

Musical Play  
by  
Menken & Ashman

Wed 15th to Sat 18th March  
Starting 7.30pm at the High School  
Tickets £3 & £1 Children/ Concessions  
Tel:634-422

Even Haydon Bridge is moving closer to the new century writes G.A.Ratcliffe suggesting that a more contemporaneous typeface be used in the mast head of the Haydon News. The reader is saddened by the fact that it has been changed, in their opinion, to a bad example of pseudo Gothic. The Editor can assure the reader that some fifty typefaces were assessed before deciding on the English Towne font now used. In not selecting a modern or trendy style it was necessary to take into account that our logo is synonymous with a classical coat of arms, a more august typeface is therefore appropriate. Things can, of course, be changed in the future. Some suggestions were also made and have been passed to the Friends of Haydon Bridge for consideration.

Saddened were the drinking folk concerning the 'Do not drink and drive' campaign held over Christmas and New Year. Quite rightly they point out that we have strict drink driving laws which enable one to have a number of drinks and yet remain within the law. Rural publicans are having a bleak enough time in this prolonged recession without law abiding folk being deterred from driving to their otherwise inaccessible pubs. Most individuals go out and have a couple of drinks to relax and be happy, within the legal limits this is their



lawful right. Moderate quantities of alcohol makes most folk happy and cheerful, they do not drink it for the purpose of impairing driving. Perhaps more research should be done to make an alcohol that has the impairment factor removed - wouldn't going off to rural pubs be fun again?

Editors note - I must make it quite clear that the views expressed here are not referring to driving DRUNK.

John Regan was also sad and came out in support of Dr High's December letter which proposed, for debate:

**DRUGS OF ADDICTION BE MADE AVAILABLE FREE  
TO USERS FROM DOCTORS UNDER THE NHS**

The reader had prepared a comprehensive and well presented preamble concerning drug barons, prohibition, the cost to society of the illicit drug trade etc to support the proposal. He concluded:

'Against this background, Dr High's views ..... seemed eminently sensible. I was saddened to read the letter making fun at Dr High's views as it illustrates the unthinking prejudice and demonstrates the modus operandi of those who would rather try to bury a problem than to face it courageously and tackle it with logical thought. People, such as the writer, will delay a real solution to the drug problem for many decades and maybe too long.'

Sorry John but I must take issue with you.

The Outrageous and Daft viewpoint last month was a sketch of what could happen if Dr High's proposal (as shown above) were to be accepted as it stands.. The writer did go on to say that the Doctor's letter may have been more palatable had the word free not been used. The article placed both cigarettes and alcohol, which are possibly more dangerous than some 'soft' drugs, into the debating arena. The viewpoint was also light hearted observation against freebies on the NHS, and at yet more proposed wasting (?) of taxpayers money. As wide public debate is what the Doctor calls for I do think that it is unfair of you to attack the (wrongly perceived) motives of the author(s) solely because they decided to enter the debate with wry comment against the proposal.

A debate of only like minded views is no debate at all.

Whilst we may disagree with other people's opinions we should all respect their right to express them. During my tenure of the Editor's chair I shall ensure that within reason, all points of view can be freely expressed in these columns.

# HAYDON NEWS

## PARISH COUNCIL PICKINGS 23 February 1995

10 Councillors present: no public participation.

Despite misgivings in some quarters and some opposition, the Council decided to make a grant of £500 to the Community Youth organisation. The decisive argument for those in favour was the belief that if this and other services provided by the Community Education Department were once lost, they would never be recovered, even under a more benign local council expenditure régime. It would help, of course, if the Youth Club were more enthusiastically supported by those it is designed to benefit.

Several Consultation meetings are in the pipeline.

The Stublick opencast proposal is to be considered at a Public Meeting to be held in the Community Centre at 3.30 pm on Tuesday 14th March.

Parish Councillors are going to meetings about the National Park's plans and also Bridleways Open to All Traffic.

There is also a meeting about the 'Village Appraisal' at the Community Centre on 27th March.

More A69 road-works are in prospect - this time, perhaps, to be welcomed. Northumberland County Council are to put up 'gateway' signs at both entrances to the village. It is understood that narrow centre islands with bollards will be placed in the areas near the bridge end and Martins Close bus-stop to prevent overtaking as vehicles approach or leave the bridge. It is hoped that these measures will reduce the average speed at which the 30 mph limit is disregarded.

The question of "VE-day" 50th anniversary celebrations on May 8th was discussed. No plans were made as Councillors wish to hear your views. Please contact one of the Parish Councillors and let them know your standpoint (for me at 18½ VE-day meant that any fighting I had to do would be against the Japanese: luckily it never came to that).

JPR

Editors Note  
If you have interest please try and attend the meetings as shown above.

## PUBLIC MEETING 8 February 1995

There were 35 people present which was quite good considering that the over 60's had a meeting as had the Chapel.

### Bowling Green

Marion Howard took the chair and explained the Tynedale 'Local Plan'. It deals with all manner of ideas - housing - recreation - industry etc. We, as a village, are to find out which amenities we are short of. Messrs Maud and Mercer of Tynedale were also present. They spoke of the need for recreational facilities for young and old, we have badminton courts, cricket pitch, football pitch, but no bowling green.

It is understood that funds in the region of £55,00 could be found to build a natural grass bowling green which would also incur annual maintenance costs. A synthetic green would cost about the same but with lower maintenance costs. The provision of a bowling green had to be a joint activity of both Parish and District Councils.

The meeting agreed that a green was needed and a working group was established: Mrs Douthwaite, Mrs Garrow, Mr Heslop, Mrs Heslop, Mr Lockhart, Mr Stead with Mr and Mrs Howard representing the Council.

The first activity of the group will be to identify a site. Strothers Close, adjacent to football pitch, old tennis courts, old coal yard (Mr Duffy's land) were four suggestions, but there may be others. Mr Borthwick of the Football Committee invited the working group to attend their next meeting on March 6.

Many people left at this point.

Continued on page 5

### A PLEA FOR BODEES

On Saturday March 11th at 10am

Help is needed to clear up the debris from the north side and picnic areas of the river following the floods.

Ray McVay will be organising things.

Bring your gloves.

Bags will be provided.

## BY-PASS GROUP

As we approach 'Spring' the By-Pass Group intend to do the same - Spring into action! But we do not know quite which way to jump as we have tried all manner of ideas and need some new approaches - has anyone any new ideas? If you have please come along to our meeting - first Wednesday of every month in Church Hall at 7.30.

We are also needing helpers to continue our village enhancement efforts. One lady has agreed to adopt the heather-bed, but needs some help.

The cemetery although greatly improved will need to be maintained and major efforts are needed at the shrub-bed - any helpers see me so we can plan some work days.

We are now taking nominations for the fair money any deserving causes can apply - as last year if there are more than two suggestions it will be voted for by all fair participants.

Eileen Charlton

## Suckers

Before Marriage the Lady  
is presented with  
Black Magic

After Marriage She  
is given  
Black Bullets

### DID YOU KNOW ?

That in 1991 the employment status of Haydon Bridge's population was:

Full time employment	32.6%
Part time employment	11.2%
Self employed	12.7%
Training Schemes	0.9%
Looking for a job	3.4%
Total	60.8%
Inactive	39.2%
29% of households had no car	
47.8% had 1 car and 22.4% 2 cars.	

Extracted from Official Census Figures

## Food for thought

Is Life nature's way of  
keeping meat fresh ?

**Reaching 40**

When you reach this milestone of your life it may take some time to understand and adapt to what is, after all, the normal biological processes that are taking place within your body. In order to appreciate these perfectly natural and inevitable changes which are but part of the aging process I would but mention: minor aches and pains; gradual baldness; teeth and gum problems; bad breath; emotional instability and irrational outbursts; frequent lapses of memory; hearing and vision loss; bowel and intestine failure; rectal muscle deterioration; impotence; seizures; growths; prostate problems; greatly reduced limb function; massive coronary failure; death; and of course, painful haemorrhoidal swelling. All go to make up this new adventure we call 'middle age'

D. Barry

Deceiving those that trust us  
is more than a sin



**LANGLEY WI**

Members and guests of Langley W.I. were treated to an evening with a difference at their January meeting.

The speaker, Miss Dingbell - the original 'Bag Lady' - arrived with armfuls of black bin bags full of clothing.

Each item had a story to tell and as she donned various outfits, Miss Dingbell kept the audience amused with her humorous anecdotes and monologues.

Later in the month members met to discuss the resolutions to be put before the National Conference of the W.I.

M. Nagel

**Public Meeting - Village Appraisal** -Kate Duckham and Keda Norman of the Community Council for Northumberland were introduced. A number of questions were asked: Could the old railway track be opened up for walkers and mountain bikes; could a mini bus be provided to transport various groups; is funding available for tennis courts? On the latter it was suggested that as there are courts at the High School these could be used. Kate explained that to obtain Euro funding we must have a village appraisal in order to identify which facilities we have and what extra do we need. Facilities we have lost together with new ones for the future need to be identified. It was essential to take into account the requirements of the young, middle years and older groups

Funding is available also from Rural Development Commission, N.E. Local Grant, District and Parish Councils etc. It was agreed that a reference book detailing sources of funding will be provided in the library.

The cost of a Village Appraisal will be about £1200 of which half could be provided from the Rural Development Commission. Mrs Howard felt that a general questionnaire to residents would not be suitable as most people tend not to respond to these. Mr and Mrs Howard will contact individual groups direct.

E.G.

Kind words and support are needed by mothers from children of all ages, in particular those mothers separated from their offspring by distance or time. I ask all of you who have a mam who is not living closeby to make that extra effort to see, write or telephone her on Mothering Sunday. Likewise those of you who have had words with your mam there is no better time than now to patch things up. For divorced or separated couples with children never forget that your mam is still Grandma to the kids.

On Mothering Sunday  
above all other  
every child should dine with its mother

**Anecdote Corner** My sister Joyce was ten years old and four years - **grave deceit** my senior. Mam daily told us to come straight home from Shaftoe school using North Bank turning left to pass Peelwell farmhouse and on to Chesterwood. We were also told not to use the dene, or the field route to The Tofts.

We broke the rules one late summer and ended up at Tofts Farm where we turned right to inspect the out of bounds Haydon Church. Skinning over the stone stiles Joyce ran ahead giggling through the grave-stones daring me to follow. Very scared I shut my eyes and raced for the Church where my laughing sister was waiting. I stepped onto a grave where immediately the surface soil gave way dropping a terrified six year old nearly four feet through rotten wood and soil onto the skeletal remains. Petrified I clawed my way out and we didn't stop running until we reached Tofts Bank.

Crossing the fields westwards we stopped behind Blackhill and in the spring I washed the evidence from my hands, Joyce swore me to secrecy. At home tea was ready and we deceitfully chatted to mam and grandad until bed-time. Sleep did not come easy that night and my mam never did find out

The story has been a popular true after dinner anecdote of mine over the years. However -

About two years ago I took my six year old grandson, Simon, for a summer walk and, for the first time since the incident, decided to have a look into the old Haydon Church. Retracing my steps of long ago we reached the old grave. Sitting down on our haunches trying to read the ancient headstone inscription I started falling backwards, putting my hand out for stability my fingers touched cold metal.

Beneath the long grass and surrounding the grave was an ornamental rail four inches high, just the place to trip a fearful running child. My eyes trickled tears, Simon asked the six year old grandad why he was crying. Sadly, with choking voice, I replied 'Just having a bad dream Simon, just a bad dream.' He gently patted my back and said 'C'mon grandad lets go home, this place is creepy.'

His little caring hand led me silently through the gloomy yew tree passage to the sun not knowing that his great grandma, my mam, had died a few short weeks after her six year old son had broken the rules.

A. Resident

When your Young  
Who will wipe away the tears  
and soothe away all fears  
Your Mam

When your Grown  
Who will care for you whatever  
and be a friend forever  
Your Mother

Sylvia

# CHURCH NEWSLETTER

Number 32

An independent supplement to the Haydon News

MARCH 1995

## THE LENGTHENING DAYS

February has been a dismal month; a month of cold winds and rain. Nevertheless there is a hint of better things to come. Snowdrops are to be seen, gardens are beginning to come to life. In the early mornings the birds are singing as they prepare for the Spring. The days are lengthening. New life is promised.

The English word "Lent" means "Spring" and in the life of the Church it has some of the same characteristics as are to be found in nature. Lent is a time of austerity but it is also a time of looking forward to New Life and the message of Easter. In the Early Church Lent was observed only by those who were preparing for Baptism and Confirmation (at Easter) and by those who were being re-admitted into full communion having been excommunicated for an offence. By the 7th Century the Church had come to recognise the value of everyone keeping Lent as a period of fasting and penitence before the great feast of Easter. Originally the emphasis was on strict fasting. Only one meal a day was allowed and certain foods (e.g. meat, dairy products) were prohibited throughout the season. Today fasting tends to be a token "giving up" of something. The emphasis has shifted towards "doing more" and away from "giving up". We are encouraged to do more for charitable causes and to do more by way of worship, prayer, bible study etc. This is reflected in the programmes of most churches.

As the days lengthen we receive more light. If we devote extra time to prayer, reflection, and spiritual things we receive more light of a different kind. Our faith in Jesus Christ, the Light of the World, can be strengthened and renewed.

### Red Nose Day



FRIDAY MARCH 17

### DON'T LIE IN!

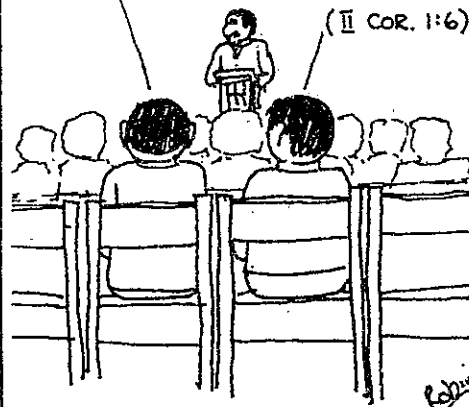
SUMMER TIME BEGINS  
March 26



DO YOU LEARN ANYTHING  
FROM HIS SERMONS?

YES -  
-PATIENT  
ENDURANCE!

(II COR. 1:6)



### CONFIRMATION

Preparation groups for those considering being confirmed will begin meeting in March. Groups are likely to include both adults and young people. If you are interested in joining a preparation group please contact the vicar as early as possible in March so that suitable arrangements can be made.

### BIBLE STUDY IN LENT

During Lent there will be a weekly Bible Study in the Church Hall. Everyone and anyone is welcome to join in. The study will be concerned with some topics in St. John's Gospel and the weekly programme will be as follows.

7.45 pm Assemble & Coffee  
8 pm A short talk on the topic followed by informal discussion or questions.  
9.15 pm Night Prayer  
9.30 finish.

The topics and their dates are:-  
Mon 6th March - The Word of God

Tue 14th March - The "I AM" sayings

Mon 20th March - The Passion

Mon 27th March - The Sacraments in St. John

Mon 3rd April - The Resurrection

### Mothers' Union

\* Wednesday 22nd March 7.30 pm  
Meeting in the Church Hall  
Theme: "Belonging"

Saturday 25th March 2.00 pm  
"Lady Day"  
Holy Communion followed by tea  
for members and visitors.

### Good Report

Congratulations to Allendale Middle School who came out of their inspection in December with a good report. The report is available from the school for anyone who has an interest. In these days of financial stringency morale is difficult to maintain and teachers (as well as others) need our support and praise when it is deserved - so Well Done Allendale! KF.

### EVERY FRIDAY at the Methodist Chapel

6.30 - 7.30 Youth club for under  
10's  
7.45 - 8.45 Study Club for 11+

### HAYDON BRIDGE METHODIST CHAPEL SERVICES IN MARCH

#### 5th March

10.30 am Morning Service led by  
Mr. T Hindsley  
6 pm United evening service at  
St. Cuthbert's

#### 12th March

10.30 am Morning Service led by  
Rev David Perkins  
6 pm Evening Service led by Mr  
H Hedley



### SERVICES AT BELTINGHAM AND HENSHAW

1st March (Ash Wed) - at  
Henshaw  
9.30 am Holy Communion  
(BCP)

5th March - at Beltingham  
10 am Holy Communion (BCP)

12th March - at Henshaw  
9 am Holy Communion (BCP)  
6 pm Evensong

19th March - at Beltingham  
10 am Holy Communion (BCP)

26th March - at Henshaw  
10 am Mothering Sunday  
Service

2nd April - at Beltingham  
10 am Holy Communion (BCP)

### LENT BEGINS ON WED. 1st MARCH

#### 19th March

9 am Early Communion with Rev  
David Perkins followed by  
breakfast

10.30 am Morning Service led by  
Mr H Mitchell  
6 pm Evening Service led by Rev  
Trevor Staniforth

#### 26th March

10.30 am Morning Service led by  
Mr M Knowles  
6 pm Evening Service led by Rev  
David Perkins

### SERVICES AT THE PARISH CHURCH

1st March - Ash Wednesday  
7 pm Eucharist & Imposition of  
Ash

5th March - Lent 1  
8 am Holy Communion  
10.30 am Worship for All  
6 pm United Evensong

7th March - Tuesday  
10 am Holy Communion

12th March - Lent 2  
10.30 am Parish Eucharist

14th March - Tuesday  
10 am Holy Communion

19th March - Lent 3  
8 am Holy Communion  
10.30 am The Eucharist

21st March - Tuesday  
10 am Holy Communion

26th March - Mothering Sun.  
10.30 am Family Eucharist  
6 pm Choir Evensong

28th March - Tuesday  
10 am Holy Communion

2nd April - Lent 5  
8 am Holy Communion  
10.30 Worship for All

### INFORMATION

Vicar: Rev. Keith Fletcher  
Tel: 684307  
Asst. Priest: Rev. Gerry Price  
Tel: 609861

Both priests use answering  
machines when they are not in their  
office - simply leave your name and  
telephone number and they will get  
back to you.

Hall Bookings - Mrs Marshall  
Tel: 684454

# HEALTH CENTRE NEWS

**ACNE** In a recent edition of New Scientist an interesting point was made about teenage acne. Bearing in mind that we are high tech chimps, the author wondered about the mutual grooming behaviour which chimps show toward their mates and troop members and whether it has any parallel in humans. He suggested that mutual attention to spots and other skin blemishes might be the equivalent and that therefore teenagers who provide spot removal services for their closest friends are in fact engaging in a very ancient form of pair-bonding. I don't think that I have yet convinced myself that acne is good for anyone's love life, teenagers can feel quite devastated by spots.

Modern treatments, especially long-term low dose antibiotics, can bring about a huge improvement. We shall certainly have the greatest sympathy for anyone who needs help. Parents may like to take the lead in getting help for bashful teenagers.

**FUNDHOLDING** There is a proposal taking shape which would weld the whole of Tynedale into one enormous fundholding "Multi-fund". This would eliminate any suggestion of a two tier system. The organisation would effectively own Hexham hospital and be able to exert greater influence in its future re-development.

The proposal is sufficiently unusual to have attracted the attention of the Department of Health who might provide extra funds to get the project underway.

**NAVEL GAZING** There is an intense debate taking place within medicine about the future of the profession in all its various guises. General practice has changed hugely within recent years and there is every sign that it will continue to change in the years ahead. Radicals question the survival of a service resembling what we understand as general practice at present.

The body of knowledge and skills required to make a proper job of being a GP is increasing rapidly and is already beyond the ability of any one doctor to possess and use effectively. It is increasingly necessary to share skills within teams - hence the move to ever larger practices with many doctors and others - nurses, administrators, managers etc.

What are we supposed to be doing: Treating illness, preventing illness, promoting active health - as opposed to an absence of illness, providing technical body maintenance or a social service?

The Welsh Council of General Practitioners has recently compiled a list of "Qualities of a GP":

Person and Family centred - *concentrating on the patient in front of them and having regard to the family situation of that person.*

Core professional skill - *to acquire and maintain a body of professional knowledge and skill that is at least the equal of others.*

Confidentiality - *to keep absolutely secret that which one is told by a patient - there are very few situations in which this confidentiality should be questioned.*

Accessibility - *that patients should have access at all appropriate times to medical care and understand when their own doctor is available for consultation.*

Advocacy - *the doctor acts as the patient's advocate in the system of health care, gaining access for them to those services which are required.*

Trustworthiness - *doctors are usually described as trustworthy in polls of patients - we would lose this at our peril.*

*Tolerance of uncertainty - much of medicine is concerned with juggling partly understood risks and benefits and weighing probabilities - we tolerate the uncertainty of diagnosis or treatment with the intention of avoiding over investigation or over treatment.*

*Respect for the determinants of health - taking a balanced view of the causes of illness and health genetics, nutrition, environment, lifestyle factors, physical - psychological - social factors.*

**LIVING WILLS** People are increasingly able and willing to discuss their own deaths and their wishes for their treatment during the period leading to their death. Many fear being unable to voice their views when the time comes because of disease or loss of intellect. So far only one patient in the practice has drawn up a proper document - in consultation with their solicitor and myself - covering those things which they wish to be taken in to account when or if necessary.

The Terence Higgins Trust has drawn up an impressive model document which is worth reading through if you feel moved to consider taking steps to writing down your own thoughts on the issue.

We shall always try to obey those instructions which are made known to us in advance. Involving those close to you, as well as your solicitor and doctor, is desirable. Anyone wishing to discuss this issue is very welcome to do so.

**PARACETAMOL PLEASE!** *or how to make the doctor chew the carpet!* During the recent outbreak of coughs, colds, flu and chest infections I have again been struck by the number of people who attend complaining of pain - sore throat, headache, muscles and joint aches and pains - who have taken everything that money can buy at the chemist EXCEPT A PAINKILLER!

Paracetamol - the ordinary cheap plain version - is safe in the correct dosage, cheap and effective in reducing pain and temperature.

If anyone sees holes appearing in the surgery carpet or finds me baying at the moon one dark night then you will know that just one person too many has confessed to not taking a painkiller for a pain!

**THANK YOU** We are most grateful for people's continued generosity in making donations to the Haydon Bridge Health Centre Equipment Fund. Our next priority is either keep fit equipment or a new ECG (heart trace) machine.

**WHO TO SEE** Dr Mary and myself tend to view everyone as simply registered with the practice rather than with either one of us specially. We are completely happy to see anyone and for any patient to choose whom to see - different doctors for different conditions or even days of the week if necessary.

Having two doctors allows choice and that is what it's all about. We shall not get vexed when patients swap between us and want to reassure folk accordingly.

**BREAST FEEDING** We would always encourage women to consider breast feeding their babies if at all possible. Not everyone can manage to do so though and this can cause great distress and disappointment.

We were very impressed recently by a new mum who for good physical reasons was unable to feed from one breast and so is now feeding her baby from the other breast alone. WELL DONE!