# The Benefice of Mitford and Hebron Newsletter October 2025

#### Dear Friends

Welcome to the fourth of our quarterly Newsletters. We hope you will find this issue both interesting and informative.

We would like to make the editions as relevant and 'newsy' as possible. We want to ensure as far as it is possible that you, the recipients are kept up to date with all the church activities and associated events.

We would therefore be grateful to receive articles about the activities of your Church group/activities, what you are doing, plans for the future, help needed etc. You could also include photographs. The Newsletter is issued once a quarter, so lots of time for you to pen an article. The next Newsletter will be issued early in the New Year, so perhaps this can be one of your New Year resolutions.

#### Mighty Oaks

If you have been out and about recently you will have noticed that as well as leaves starting to fall from the trees and carpet the ground, there is a surplus of acorns littering the woodland paths. This year's bumper crop is mainly due to a phenomenon called a 'mast year.' Warm dry spring conditions, as we experienced this year, are perfect for pollination of oak flowers, producing more acorns. Some years there are very few but other times, like this autumn, we get an acorn bonanza and as we know 'mighty oaks from little acorns grow.'



However, we know that not all these acorns will be fruitful, and our surroundings will not turn into vast oak forests. Some will sprout and some will be collected by a passing dog walker, to take home to plant and nurture. Others will be carried by birds and animals to more fertile locations.

Jesus and his followers were attuned to the countryside and the changing seasons and rhythms of farming and nature. As such many lessons from parables are illustrated by a reference to the natural world. We too are challenged to be inspired and to learn from nature, as in acorn.

Perhaps we are called to be like the tree loving dog walker, the birds and animals, to pick up an acorn as a symbol of God's love and care and to take this with us. To carry this with us to show and share God's love with others, to plant our acorn in their lives and to entrust the growth to God.

Next time you come across an acorn, pop it in your pocket to remind you to take God with you, wherever you go and be prepared to plant it in someone's life.

# Mitford, Hebron, Longhorsley and Upper Wansbeck Church Services

# OCTOBER 2025

|  |             | ,  |                                |
|--|-------------|--|--------------------------------|
|  | 10:00-11:00 | Holy Communion   | St. Mary Magdalene, Mitford    |
| Sunday 5 <sup>th</sup>                               | 10:00-11:00 | Holy Communion   | St. Helen's, Longhorsley       |
| October<br>(First Sunday)                            | 10:30-11:30 | Holy Communion   | St. Andrew's, Hartburn         |
| (i iist suilday)                                     | 10:30-11:30 | Family Service   | St. Andrew's, Bolam            |
|  | 15:00-17:00 | Choral Evensong (Sharp<br>Festival)  | St. Andrew's, Hartburn         |
|  | 10:00-11:00 | All Age Worship  | St. Mary Magdalene, Mitford    |
| Sunday 12 <sup>th</sup><br>October                   | 10:00-11:00 | Morning Prayer   | St. Helen's, Longhorsley       |
| (Second Sunday)                                      | 10:30-11:30 | Holy Communion   | St. Mary Magdalene, Whalton    |
|  | 16:00-17:00 | Messy Church   | St. Helen's, Longhorsley       |
| Wednesday 15 <sup>th</sup><br>October                | 09:30-10:30 | Morning Prayer and<br>Coffee   | St. Giles, Netherwitton        |
| Sunday 19 <sup>th</sup><br>October<br>(Third Sunday) | 10:00-11:00 | Holy Communion   | St. Cuthbert's, Hebron         |
| Sunday 19 <sup>th</sup><br>October (con)             | 10:30-11:30 | Holy Communion joint<br>service with Longhorsley<br>and Harvest Festival with<br>the Roost | St. Giles, Netherwitton        |
|  | 10:30-11:30 | Celtic Morning Prayer  | St. Mary Magdalene, Whalton    |
|  | 16:00-17:00 | Story Time Church  | St. Mary Magdalene, Mitford    |
| Thursday 23 <sup>rd</sup><br>October                 | 14:00-15:00 | Anna Chaplaincy  | St. Cuthbert's, Hebron         |
|  | 10:00-11:00 | BCP Morning Prayer   | St. Mary Magdalene, Mitford    |
| Sunday 26 <sup>th</sup><br>October                   | 10:00-11:00 | Café Church  | Mitford Village Hall, Fontside |
| (Fourth Sunday)                                      | 10:00-11:00 | Morning Prayer   | St. Helen's, Longhorsley       |
|  | 10:30-11:30 | Holy Communion   | St. Andrew's, Bolam            |

# Please note some changes to the usual schedule:

Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> October – **NO EVENSONG AT HEBRON.** Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> October – MESSY CHURCH starting at St. Helen's Longhorsley

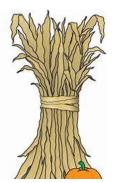
Service types may be subject to change according to minister availability.

#### THOUGHT FROM THE VICAR

#### **Thought for the Season**

Autumn is a season that never fails to catch our attention. The fields are gathered in, the trees turn to gold and crimson, and the air carries that unmistakable crispness which reminds us that summer has passed. Nature seems to offer us a final burst of colour and abundance before the quiet of winter. For the church, this is the season of harvest – a time to pause, to give thanks, and to remember that all we have comes from the generosity of God.





Harvest invites us not only to gratitude but also to generosity. When the land produces in abundance, the natural response is to share. The Bible reminds us that the edges of the field were to be left for the poor and the stranger, and that God's blessings are never meant to be hoarded. Jesus himself taught us that when we give freely – whether food, friendship, or forgiveness – we mirror the boundless generosity of God.

As autumn deepens, our gaze naturally turns towards **Remembrance**. Just as harvest reminds us of the gifts we enjoy today, so Remembrance calls us to

honour those who gave of themselves – in conflict, in service, and in sacrifice – so that we might know peace and freedom. It is a season of sober gratitude, but also of shared responsibility: to build a future marked by compassion, justice, and reconciliation. In remembering the past, we are invited to live generously in the present.

From there, the journey of the year carries us towards **Advent and Christmas**. The story of Christ's birth is, at its heart, a story of generosity and sharing; God giving his very self in the gift of his Son, born among us in humility and love. Christmas reminds us that the greatest abundance is not measured in harvest stores or festive tables, but in the light of hope and love that Christ brings into the world.

So, this autumn, as the days grow shorter, we are invited to see the thread that runs through these seasons: thanksgiving, generosity, remembrance, and hope. From the harvest fields to the poppy fields, and on to the manger in Bethlehem, we trace a story of God's goodness and our calling to share it. May we be people who not only give thanks with our words, but who live generously with our lives – so that others may glimpse God's abundance through us

Elaine

#### **PARISH NEWS**

# **Helen McCabe - Authorised Lay Minister**

We are delighted to share that **Helen McCabe** is now an Authorised Lay Minster.

'Authorised Lay Ministers (ALMs) are lay individuals identified by their parish as having specific gift s and a calling to serve in leadership roles. They work collaboratively with clergy and other ministry teams to nurture and grow their local church communities.'

This is an exciting step in her faith journey, and we are thrilled to support her as she explores this important ministry within our church.

Please hold Helen in your **prayers** as she embarks on this journey of learning and service. Her dedication and commitment to serving God in this way are truly inspiring, and we encourage everyone to support and welcome her as she begins to take on these responsibilities.

We look forward to seeing Helen grow in confidence and faith, and we are excited to witness the ways in which she will contribute to our worship and outreach. Her ministry will be a blessing not only to our congregation but also to the wider community as she brings her gifts and passion to share God's love with others.

# **Introducing Elodie**

For those of you wondering, Elodie is pronounced like 'Melody', but without the 'M'. I moved to

Northumberland five years ago after finishing University, and I now live in the beautiful village of Rothbury in the Coquet Valley. My hobbies include boardgames, journaling and crafts. You'll always find me with a cup of tea.

I took on the role as Benefice Administrator from the lovely Sadie at the start of August, and it has been a real joy so far. Everyone has been so warm and welcoming. As well as taking on the Administrator role, I've also taken on Safeguarding throughout the Benefices. This means that when someone needs a DBS check, some extra training or has concerns about the wellbeing of someone vulnerable; I will be there to help and support however I can.

I've been doing Safeguarding for a while. For four years, I've been the Safeguarding Lead for the Roost Community, a charity based in Netherwitton that is committed to nurturing wellbeing and spirituality in young people throughout Northumberland. So whilst I know firsthand how intimidating Safeguarding can be, I also encourage everyone

that Safeguarding can also be an extension of hospitality. It's more than just ticking boxes, it's about nurturing safe places by inviting in a spirit of protection.

You'll find me in the Stable Room Mondays and Wednesdays, and I work from home on Tuesdays to save the environment. Please do pop in for a chat, a cup of tea and a biscuit with me. Feel free to bring your pups - I have doggy biscuits too!

# **Serving in Our Church Community**



Our church thrives because of the many ways people offer their gifts and talents — and there's a role for everyone. As we look ahead to the busy season, we are excited to invite more members of our community to get involved.

We are currently seeking **creative directors** — people who can use their
artistic and imaginative skills to help
others engage with worship in new and
inspiring ways. This could be in our
weekly services or as part of our work
with children and families. **Elaine** would
especially welcome volunteers to join

the schools team ahead of Christmas. Our *Experience Christmas* events will take place across **Longhorsley, Tritlington, and Whalton Schools**.

We are also looking for someone to **manage and maintain a rota for our team of welcomers** at both Mitford and Hebron. If you have a couple of hours to spare every other month, please speak to **Janice Robinson** about this important role.

Our **welcome and hospitality team** is always eager to welcome new members. There are many ways to get involved, from greeting visitors to helping with refreshments. If you would like to contribute to this vital ministry, please speak to **Wendy Laverick**.



#### Cafe Church

# Breakfast

Do you love the smell of fresh coffee the sizzle of bacon, or the simple joy sharing breakfast with others? Join ( team of Breakfast Coordinators and help create a warm, welcoming café style atmosphere at Café Church!

speak to Elaine or Ian Lane

Get involved

# COULD YOU BE OUR

**Volunteer Creative Director** 



We're looking for someone (or a team!) to help bring creativity, colour, and hands-on artistry into our worship — especially in Cafe Church.

Love art, craft, or creative expression? Want to help others explore faith through creativity?

Join us in shaping a playful, imaginative space for worship using art and craft.

Materials & budget provided — bring your ideas and passion! Interested? Chat with Elaine or drop her an email! revelainejones@gmail.com

# Pastoral Team Training Day & Commissioning Service

We are delighted to announce a Pastoral Team Training Day on Saturday 11th October from 10am to 12 noon in the Stable Room at Mitford. This important gathering is open to all members of our pastoral visiting team as well as those who are part of the Anna Chaplains. In fact, anyone who holds a pastoral role within the life of our church is warmly invited to attend.



The morning will focus on equipping and supporting those who care for others, as part of our ongoing commitment to safeguarding and accountability. We also want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the remarkable dedication shown by those who quietly and faithfully provide pastoral care to members of our church and wider community.

As a way of celebrating and affirming this ministry, there will be a public commissioning of our pastoral team during the Harvest Service on Sunday 12th October at 10am in Mitford Church. This will be a joyful occasion to give thanks for their service and to pray for God's blessing on their work.

If you are uncertain whether this training is relevant to you, please don't hesitate to speak with **Dick Quinby** or **Janice Robinson**, who will be glad to advise.

# Café Church at Mitford Village Hall

Looking for a relaxed and welcoming way to explore faith? Join us for Café Church, held on the fourth Sunday of every month at 10am in Mitford Village Hall, Font Side.

Come as you are and enjoy a leisurely breakfast served throughout the morning — from fresh coffee to a bacon sandwich. Café Church is all about creating space to



connect: whether you prefer quiet moments of reflection, lively discussion on the questions that shape life and faith, or hands-on creative activities, there's something here for you.

It's informal, inclusive, and open to everyone — a chance to gather as community, share conversation, and discover faith in a fresh way.

This year our theme is *Animals and Art*. Throughout the Bible, animals play an important role in God's story—sometimes as symbols, sometimes as companions, and sometimes as part of the lessons God teaches His people. From the dove of peace and hope after the flood, to the lamb that points us towards Jesus, animals help us see God's truth in fresh and creative ways.

Alongside exploring these stories, we will use artwork—how artists across the centuries have imagined and depicted these creatures, and what that can reveal to us about faith, creation, and God's character. Together, we'll reflect, create, and share as we discover how animals in the Bible can inspire both our understanding of God's Word and our own artistic expressions.

We hope this mix of Scripture and creativity will encourage you to see the familiar in new ways, and to join in the adventure of exploring faith through *animals and art*.

#### Be Part of the Café Church Team

Café Church is all about community — and that includes the team who make it happen each month! We'd love for you to get involved.

There are lots of ways to help: maybe you enjoy cooking and could lend a hand with breakfast, or perhaps you're creative and would like to design activities for others to enjoy. We're also looking for friendly *table hosts* — people who can gently guide conversations, making sure everyone has the chance to share and feel part of the discussion.

If this sounds like you, or you'd simply like to find out more, please chat to **Elaine, Ian Lane, or any of the Café Church team**. We'd be delighted to welcome you on board.

#### **Beautiful Local Art Prints for Sale in Aid of Church Funds**

We are delighted to share that the church has been gifted a series of stunning prints of original paintings by local artist Jane Norcross. Jane's work wonderfully captures the beauty of Mitford Church and other much-loved local landmarks, celebrating the charm and character of our village.

These prints are a unique opportunity to own a piece of artwork that reflects the place we call home. Each one is priced at £75, with all proceeds going directly to support church funds. They would make a beautiful addition to any home and also a very special gift.

The prints are available to view at the Vicarage, and if you would like to look at them more closely or purchase one, please speak to Elaine.

Do take a look at the photos below for a glimpse of Jane's beautiful work – though they are even more striking in person!





# Mitford Village Fayre - A Day to Remember!

On **Saturday 6th September**, Mitford came alive with the sights, sounds, and laughter of our annual **Village Fayre** – and what a wonderful day it was! Blessed with fine weather and a fantastic turnout, the Fayre once again proved to be a highlight in the village calendar, bringing together people of all ages for an afternoon and evening of fun, friendship, and community spirit.

The church was delighted to host the **tea tent**, and it proved to be a great success. Visitors were especially delighted to have their tea served in proper **china cups**, adding a special touch of elegance to the occasion. Our grateful thanks go to all who baked cakes, poured tea, and served so warmly throughout the afternoon.

Music was a real feature of the Fayre. The **Mitford Buskers** entertained the crowds with a lively set, and to everyone's delight our very own vicar, **Elaine**, took to the microphone and joined in the singing! Later, the unmistakable sounds of the **KEVI Steel Band** filled the air. Close your eyes and you could almost imagine yourself transported to the Caribbean! Their infectious rhythms soon had people up on their feet, dancing and clapping along.

As the afternoon turned into evening, the celebrations didn't stop. The band **Monkey Punch** kept the energy high with a fantastic performance, and the dancing continued well into the night. It was a joyful end to a day that captured the very best of Mitford's community spirit.

Events like the Village Fayre don't just happen on their own – they are made possible by the hard work and generosity of so many. So a **huge thank you** to everyone who helped set up,

baked, served refreshments, and worked behind the scenes to make the day such a resounding success.

The Fayre is more than just an event – it is a reminder of the importance of coming together, celebrating community, and creating happy memories to share. Roll on next year!





# A Message from Pam Walker

Dear All

It was a pleasure to take my last "official" service on August 24th, just as it has been a pleasure and honour to serve as lay minister for the last 7 years. Thank you to Bolam church for the bubbles and cake after the service. Thank you also for everyone who contributed to my gift vouchers, a lovely and generous gesture.

I am keeping my licence and will therefore still be seeing you when I take services. Thank You again for your kindness and generosity

Pam Walker

# **Sharp Festival**

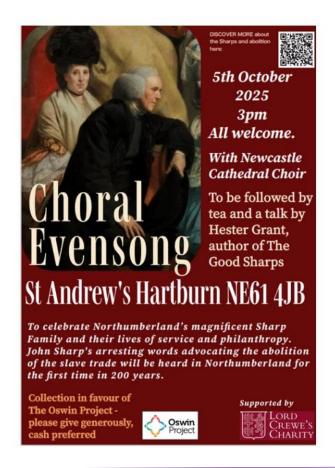
Two events will take place in October 2025 to celebrate Hartburn's association with the magnificent Sharp Family, born in Rothbury, who were leading lights in the Enlightenment. In Northumberland the family is now most famous for John Sharp's philanthropic activities at Bamburgh Castle, where he was a trustee of Lord Crewe's Charity. Probably the most famous sibling, however, was John's younger brother Granville, who is celebrated as the "father of abolition".

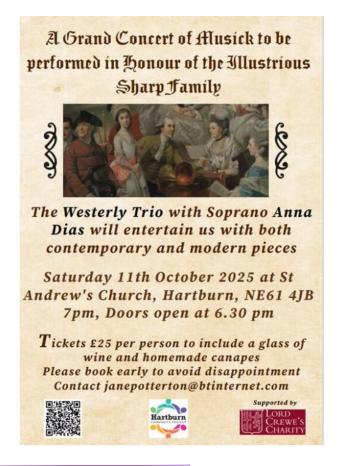
John Sharp DD was vicar in Hartburn between 1749 and his death in 1792. He was also a Prebendary Canon at Durham Cathedral, Archdeacon of Northumberland, and he became Perpetual Curate of Bamburgh on the death of his brother Thomas in 1773. John used his considerable influence in support of his brother Granville's work to abolish the slave trade, in particular through preaching and raising money for the cause. We will be celebrating that association using John Sharp's own words from an influential sermon he preached throughout the North East in 1787 and 1788.

Two events are planned: a choral evensong to be sung by Newcastle Cathedral Choir at St Andrew's, including John Sharp's arresting sermon on abolition, on Sunday 5th October 2025 at 3pm, to be followed by tea and a talk by author Hester Grant, who wrote the biography of the Sharp siblings: *The Good Sharps*. The collection will raise money for the Oswin Project, a cause that would have undoubtedly been championed by John Sharp.

The following Saturday, 11th October, there will be a concert at St Andrew's, inspired by the Sharp family's love of music making and love of 'society': the Sharp's were very sociable. We will be entertained by the Westerley Trio and soprano Anna Dias, with money raised for the Hartburn Community Project and St Andrew's.

Further information on the Sharps, abolition and Hartburn can be found <u>on our website</u> www.mitfordandwansbeckchurches.com





# **Community Church Worship**



# **Church Yard**

The Churchyard is a place of peace and tranquillity to all who visit it; but it requires considerable work throughout the year to keep it that way! It is always a pleasure to see people sitting in it and enjoying it.

We must be very grateful to Rich Addison and all his hard work in keeping the grass so well cut. We should also thank Stephen Attwood for his tree husbandry throughout the year. There has been much tree surgeon work needed after Storm Arwen. Sam Crowcroft has looked after us well and kept us safe but we have lost a

couple of trees considered to be dangerously unsafe.

Safety is a real priority in a churchyard with unlimited public access. We share the Churchyard with "a Labour" of moles and a massive network of tree roots which always vie to loosen Headstones! This year has been particularly tricky with a wet spring and a hot dry summer which has made many very unstable.

Headstones are tilt tested on an annual basis. Dangerous stones must be laid down, and slightly rocky ones are checked two or three times a year. We do use epoxy to repair headstones where appropriate or cement them in place if that is the best management. It is always worth noting that relatives are responsible for these repairs, but it is usually impossible to find them!

Thanks, are very much due to Roger Napper who is the Churchyard Registrar and keeps meticulous records of the Churchyard and its graves.

Churchyard care includes looking after the surrounding walls and removal of ivy from the neighbouring Manor House wall did cause damage to the lime mortar which has had to be restored. Malcolme Thompson once again demonstrated his masonry skills and with help from Tim Hatch and Rich Addison the wall is pristine once more.

There is now a Garden of Remembrance on the Vicarage side of the Churchyard which is filling with roses as folk remember loved ones; it has looked very pretty this year and there are still spaces.

Thanks, are also due to Andy Jones for his care of the Vicarage Garden which has never looked better than it does at present. He has also addressed the long-standing problem of the Vicarage hedge which has most definitely been cut down to size! The Vicarage Garden is now the venue for "The Woodland Toddlers" on a Tuesday morning; they could not meet in a better setting.

Thanks to everyone else who has helped to create the beautiful haven of our church gardens. We meet on a Thursday morning to look after them. If you feel that you would like to join the Churchyard team please talk with Dick Quinby on 07960702198

# **News from our School**

We're delighted to share the latest news from **Tritlington First School**, our local church school. Recently, we have welcomed **Wendy Laverick** as a JPCC-appointed governor. She will serve alongside Revd Elaine, Linda Fugill, parent governors, foundation governors, staff and Local Authority governors. We give thanks for the commitment of this whole team, who together support and guide the life of the school.



Our partnership with Tritlington continues to be a real joy. We have a strong working relationship and value the opportunities to share worship together — both in school and in church.

One highlight this term was a visit from **Valentina from Children in Distress**, who came to speak to children and parents about getting involved in the Christmas Shoebox Appeal. The children were inspired by the idea of becoming "Santa's little helpers" — bringing Jesus' light



into the world through acts of generosity and courageous advocacy. It was wonderful to see them reflect on what it means to "let their light shine" in practical ways.

Looking ahead, the school's **annual Christingle Service** will be held at **Hebron Church on Wednesday 17th December at 9am**. Everyone is warmly invited to join us for this special celebration. The Christingle is always a much-loved occasion — and of course there's growing excitement about which member of staff will step into the famous giant inflatable orange Christingle suit this year!



# **ANNA CHAPLAINCY BLOG**

# **Anna Chaplaincy News**

The summer has gone and Autumn is upon us. Many of us will be reflecting on the change of season with a beauty all of its own, perhaps remembering times past when Harvest Celebrations were a large part of your life, in school, in church and especially in rural communities.

At Mitford and Hebron our harvest celebration will be on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> October with a harvest lunch in the Stable Room following the service, to which everyone is welcome – so please come and enjoy the fellowship and the joy of sharing a meal together.



We are resuming our trips to the Vue in Cramlington to see live screenings of Opera, Ballet and Films. Some of us enjoyed a trip to see the final "Downton Abbey" film recently which was good. These outings happen on a Sunday afternoon, and we

usually have a lunch beforehand – our favourite is the Snowy Owl at Cramlington.

Please let Mary or Janice know if you would like to be part of these outings. The next one is Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> October to see Royal Opera House production of Tosca.

Autumn is a time of slowing down for creation and for many of us we find ourselves slowing down because of advancing years, when it takes longer to accomplish our daily tasks.

However, in slowing down we are given the opportunity to notice more of God's presence in our lives and the world around us. We can find great beauty in the slow lanes of life as well as a new understanding of being useful in serving God. Indeed, slowing down will help us to listen more to others, reflect on God's goodness and faithfulness and focus on what is really important in life.

We need to remember that God's all age kingdom is not built through grand busy schemes or strategies

but by the obedient faithful sowing of seeds in all stages of our life, especially the slow lanes of that life.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the rhythm of the different seasons, thank you for the beauty of autumn and the changing colours.

We thank you for the autumn of our lives and the beauty of changing times.

God our heavenly Father, we thank you for your goodness and faithfulness we thank you for the kindness of others and the hope you give us in every season of our lives. Help us to be grateful for the moments of remembrance, the moments of present joy, for the people who walk with us in our lives and for your unfailing love.

Help us to always hold onto that gratitude, especially through the hard and dark times, and help us us always to share that hope with others.

In Jesus name Amen.

(A good read for Autumn days is a book called "Slowing Down" by Anne-Louise Critchlow – a book which explores how slowing down can be the key to deepening faith, relationships and sense of purpose.

With good wishes to you all. Janice & Mary

#### MISSION AND CHARITY

The Mission and Charity Group has been very active in the last few months, and we are grateful for the support we have received from so many people in the church.

In July we welcomed **Clare Pretty and Emma Pawsey** at the end of their **Hebron to Hebron** walk to Northumberland to support their amazing Norfolk charity of Hebron Housing which does so much to support and give real help to many with addiction problems. We heard about their new plans for

the future, and we were all very moved by Emma's talk. Their journey north and support from us helped them to raise over £3000.

We were hosts to a small group of refugees from WERS in August. They enjoyed lunch and an afternoon of activities, including a vigorous game of cricket, before leaving with a generous supply of toiletries, supplied by members of the congregation – thank you to all who donated.

We enjoyed the return of **Tina Malinka** in August who told us all about bats. The meeting was well attended, and soup went down very well! The night raised almost £200 which will be donated to support the **Oswin Project.** 



The Church has given much help to the Oswin Project where Pam Walker is the Chair and Fionna Sample CEO.

The church was well represented at another Charity evening at Manzils which was Rotary event but again raised important funds. Thank you for your kind support.

This month we met the CEO of Children in Distress. A collection after church raised £145. On Saturday October 25th we will meet to work on the Christmas shoe boxes which go such a long way to helping Children in Distress.

Thank you to everyone who has supported Mission & Charity in recent months.

# **Dick Quinby**

#### September 2025



The committee has once again put together an interesting and diverse programme and would love to welcome you along to their meetings. You are guaranteed a warm welcome, interesting speakers and fascinating facts and information. Please see below for further details.

Meetings, 7pm, every second Wednesday of the month.

8th October: The Ad Gefrin Distillery, Wooler—Prof Chris Ferguson.

The Village Hall, Fontside, Mitford, Northumberland, NE61 3PS.

Admission £3.00 per meeting or £20.00 for season membership.

Refreshments included.

Find us on:



at: The Mitford Historical Society