

July 2025

60 pence

Faith in the Moor



News, Views, and Articles of Interest



This
month's
theme:

'Music'



and don't miss Alston Live Fri 18th & Sat 19th July

“Memories are Made of This...”



Certain sounds, songs or tunes can bring back vivid memories. A song can play on the radio and it will take you back to a specific moment in time. If you are a couple, perhaps you have an “Our Tune”, which will bring back certain specific memories. Or, maybe, there’s a hymn or song that used to be sung in your childhood in Sunday School that can take you right back in time. Prokofiev’s “Peter and the Wolf” will take me magically back to sitting cross-legged in assembly on the wooden floor of my infants’ school.

The Dementia UK website says: *“For people with dementia—even those who have lost their ability to communicate or are at the end of their life—music can be a powerful way to trigger positive feelings and connect with other people...”*

Robert Delaunay— **“Rythme No. 1
(Mural for the Salon des Tuileries)”** (1938)

Museum of Modern Art, Paris

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Robert_Delaunay,_1938,_Rythme_n%C2%B01,_Decoration_for_the_Salon_des_Tuileries,_oil_on_canvas,_Mus%C3%A9e_d%27Art_Moderne_de_la_ville_de_Paris.jpg

Music can trigger memories and emotions in a person with dementia.”

We are all encouraged right now to create our own Music Memory Playlists that could be played back to us if ever we suffer from dementia. What music or sounds will you put into your Memory Bank?

How would you paint a sound? How might you visualise music? What does a piece of jazz music **look** like? How do you paint a rhythm or the sound of a drum beat? How do you depict the flow of a theme or motif as it repeats itself through a concerto? How do you paint the harmonies and melodiousness (or discord and dissonance)? I guess that's what artist Robert Delauney was trying to do in this mural.

This will probably be my last article for "Faith in the Moor". This summer I retire, or as we say in Methodism, I will be "sitting down". I have been the Methodist Minister covering Alston since about the time we were coming out of Covid. It has been wonderful to make lots of new friends, and I take with me a lot of memories. I'll certainly remember times spent in the Chat Room; times sharing in services including the one after the passing of Queen Elizabeth; and Christmas carol services in the Town Hall... And I will remember walking to church on a Sunday morning listening to the Church bells ringing from St Augustine's.

So... Thanks for the memories! *Rev. Dave Milner*

Electronic Music

It's been some time since I first spoke to Tom Pepin about his interest in electronic music – a subject about which I was very ignorant – and I'd been wanting to ask him to write something about it for us ever since. This month's theme was the perfect opportunity. This is what he told me:

"Growing up with a professional musician and concert pianist as a Mum to guide and teach and with two grand pianos always in the house, it's hardly surprising that I had an interest in music from an early age! Add to that both parents involved in worship, taking us to church regularly, where the pleasure of singing uplifting music in such a setting led me to become a choirboy throughout my childhood and early teens, learning and singing for the congregation and even on TV. I learned to play the trumpet too. All that has created the musical man I am today."

Nevertheless, Tom didn't choose music as a profession, instead taking art and ultimately Graphic Design, then going on to specialise in architecture until a life-changing accident restricted his options. Music had been an important part of his life throughout and he had always wanted to find an outlet for his creative talents

but wasn't sure how. Tom says, "Modern technology has provided that accessibility, especially after my accident. The tech has its own specific challenges, as you'd expect, but it feels like it's more of a level playing field again."

"The first real foray into the technological world from behind the microphone instead of in front was working as recording engineer for Charlemagne Music and my Mum and brother's CDs. There I had to learn the complete process: starting from nothing, recording live sessions, editing if necessary and final mastering and compression of audio so that it plays consistently on numerous devices. Each of these aspects is a profession in itself, so I had to learn the basics for all of them. From my perspective though one aspect was essentially lacking: the creative process in musical composition – probably what all musicians dream of at some time. The skills I learned as a recording engineer have proved invaluable now that I am starting to create original works of my own."

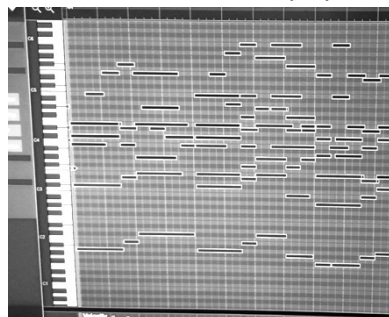
"But what kind of music? Given the synthetic nature inherent in the tech the logical choice was some sort of pop or dance music, but although I listen to synth music regularly, it doesn't really lend itself to being creatively tuneful; it's more about rhythm than melody. Also the golden age of EDM [electronic dance music] being in the 80s and 90s, it was difficult to think of bringing anything new in that field. So something else, classical with an orchestral palette sounded more inviting, but was that too adventurous?



To be honest I've struggled less with inspiration itself {at least in my head it sounds amazing!} than with the application and getting it "pen to paper" so to speak. For me that has been the real challenge. You soon learn that the right tools are crucial, otherwise your music doesn't sound convincing. Sample libraries are required – copyright-free recorded audio of real instruments (not to be confused with "sampling" which refers to using audio excerpts of someone's original works which are copyrighted). You've probably heard music using these digital orchestra samples without even realising it. Many smaller budget productions on TV apparently use this process instead of hiring a full orchestra, to reduce costs. You could compose an epic orchestral score but if it's played back with poorly recorded instruments the resulting sound is truly awful. Decent sample libraries, where each instrument has been painstakingly recorded, are essential. Add to that a computer powerful enough to cope with the software and as many instruments as you want to channel, and you're good to go. So how's it done? A real instrument is played in a recording studio, one note at a time – not one single note but all the varying ways you can play that single note.

Each note is recorded as you ascend the scale, then combined and mapped across a keyboard's entire range for you to play, as on a synthesizer. Choose an instrument preset and suddenly your piano keyboard becomes a choir, or string quartet, or whatever. A PC with a connected usb keyboard and some of those sound libraries on your hard-drive is essentially the same concept. Just bigger! Once you're in the software, add the instrument's own quirks, those variations in how you can play it – its 'dynamics'. These, together with the volume control, can produce a fairly convincing facsimile of the real instrument. The skill comes in learning the individual characteristics of each instrument. The software helps you to a certain degree, but you need to gain at least a rudimentary understanding of playing each instrument – no small task!"

"So that's where I'm at – still learning and immensely enjoying every moment and starting to feel like I'm getting somewhere. If I had a wish I would've liked my Mum, the professional, to hear my compositions. Sadly, my setup was only in its infancy when she died, but perhaps she's listening in in spirit. I am, after all, trying to channel my inner-Mum!"



An example of Tom's music is available via the link below. Tom would be interested to hear your comments. <https://youtu.be/Coayde1avps>

Tom Pepin (as told to Lizzie Smith)

Come, Let Us Sing

One of the joys of corporate worship is the opportunities it gives us to sing hymns. Some of these we sing regularly, while others, often the best-loved ones such as our Christmas carols, are sung less frequently because they can only be used at very specific times of the Christian year.

For some of us, the hymns can be significant for their words. Other hymns might be memorable more because of their tunes; as a musician, I am perhaps naturally inclined to finding that hymns reach me through their accompanying music. Maybe the most powerful hymns are those where both factors apply and the strength and beauty of the texts are reinforced by having exactly the right tune to accompany their words.

There is an art in achieving this. The Elizabethan composer, William Byrd, was once asked about how he approached writing settings for church music. He replied that he spent time praying over the texts. 'When one meditates upon the sacred words,' he said, 'the right notes seem to suggest themselves quite spontaneously.' And there is no doubt that a tune that has been specially written for a hymn is likely to support the text more than an existing one that has been simply fitted to it.

There are many hymns that have both powerful lyrics and beautiful music, some of which we sing quite often, and of course we all have our favourites. I thought that, in this article, I might consider three hymns that are less frequently sung and that work well because of the beauty of their language and accompaniments.

A hymn I first came across in *The Methodist Hymn Book* is a translation of Martin Luther's metrical version of Psalm 130, *Out of the depths I cry to Thee*. The psalm is a penitential one that we don't hear very often, as the subject of its text limits its use to particular liturgical periods. The tune, *St. Martin*, is a gentle, lilting one that has almost the quality of a lament, making it perfect to accompany words both of penance and hope; care, though, has to be taken by organist and congregation alike not to slow it down and turn it into a dirge!

An interesting contrast is the Roman Catholic hymn, Father Faber's *Faith of our fathers*, which speaks of the persecution of the Catholic Church in England in the post-Reformation period. The tune has a defiant, martial air about it, expressing through the music the solidarity and bravery of English Catholics in the face of the proscribing of their faith in the years following the Reformation. However, if we broaden the expression 'Faith of our fathers' to mean Christianity in general, it is a hymn that most Christians would find meant a great deal to them. The history of the Christian Church in our islands has been characterised by persecution, as witness the Counter-Reformation, the difficulties experienced by our Quaker brethren; not forgetting the occasion when John Wesley preached at Newcastle Quayside and the clergy at St. Nicholas' Cathedral arranged for his audience to throw rotten fruit at him; or the High Anglican priests who, during the 19th Century Ritualist Controversy were dismissed from their posts, fined or imprisoned and in one case, hounded to his death by conservative evangelical elements within the Church of England - all because of their sincere convictions about the rightness of their Catholic liturgical practices.

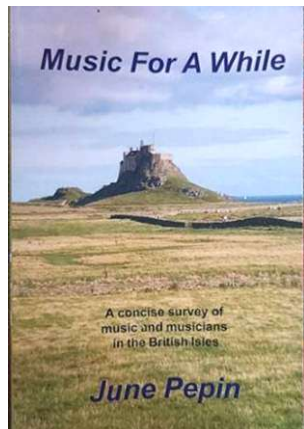
Another hymn that I don't hear often is Charles Wesley's *Jesu, Lover of my soul*, a prayer to Our Lord for his protection amid the struggles of life, which the lyrics depict as a 'storm'. For me, the hymn is always at its most powerful when it is sung to Welsh composer Joseph Parry's magnificent tune *Aberystwyth*; the poignancy of the almost despairing words is underlined by what feels like a cry of anguish in the accompaniment towards the end of each verse.

Music has played a vital role in the coming together of the world's different branches of the Christian Church through the ecumenical movement, as we have shared one another's widely varying hymn-repertoires. My own nephew, himself a professional musician, has always said that '**Music is the Voice of God**'. As a church musician of nearly fifty years' standing, I would echo that sentiment and say that it is never more evident than in the singing of our hymns!

Richard Pattison

The Soothing and Healing Power of Music

Music for a While was the title of June Pepin's concise survey of music and musicians, published in 2005. The title is part of a quotation from the composer Henry Purcell's (1659–1695) musical drama *Oedipus* - '*Music for a while shall all your cares beguile*'. Music as therapy and its powerful effect resulting in healing



and wellbeing is a divine gift, a sacrament. In the last months of her life June experienced short-term memory loss but her life of music, as accompanist, teaching, composing, as solo pianist and recitalist with her duo piano partner Joan Ryall meant that she never fully lost touch, to entertain.

Recently, an article in the Church Times considered music and autism. Anecdotal evidence suggests some composers, - Beethoven, Mozart and Bartok, for example, may have suffered from autism. Sarah Meyrick interviewed the writer John Harris who wrote

"Maybe I'm Amazed" – a personal account of life with his autistic son James and the life changing effect his profound interest in music had from the Beatles to Amy Winehouse and others. From an early age James has also been fascinated with church organs and their wonderful sound. It appears that both he and his dad are church crawlers, intrigued by the organs they find in them. The family walked Hadrian's Wall to raise money for a music charity, and James played the organ in one of the local churches. *Singing for Body and Soul* has been at the heart of the Reverend Ben Phillip's ministry as vicar of Goring in the Oxford diocese. His diverse congregation has discussed, at considerable length, the healing power of music and they enjoy singing together.

The soothing, healing power of music certainly makes life so enjoyable and fulfilling for millions, on into their last years. You may be interested to find out about www.playlistforlife.org.uk founded by Sally Magnusson. This charity encourages families to make '*A list of personally meaningful music which can help people living with dementia.*' and no doubt autism and other conditions too.



David Pepin

Gift, Wilderness, Spirit and Song

Alston Moor has developed a huge range of community activities over the years and one of the latest is the Alston community folk choir, led by the well-known musician, **James Gillespie**, and partner, Mairead Kerr. James is better known as one half of the Brothers Gillespie group, with younger brother Sam.

Now aged 40, James has led a very varied and spiritual life. Born in Fenham, Newcastle, to parents who were a professor and a poet who had met at uni through a shared love of geography, James moved to Wall when he was eight. The parents' aim was to give their city kids experience of the countryside and to try different schools. It was a great choice for James – having loved nature as a kid, the reality of walking out of the house and straight on to the fells “felt like a gift”.

But not everything was great at first. As a city kid in a new school he was bullied and lonely. Sitting alone round the back one day he was challenged by another pupil- “what are you doing here – are you ok”. “No” I said, “I have got no friends, and he said I am your friend.” And so he was, later joined by another, so life was much better.

By aged 13 James confided to his mum that he wanted to be a marine biologist. “My parents thought a career in the law would suit my argumentative nature.” At Queen Elizabeth School he formed his first band, The Flicks, who stayed together for a number of years, travelling in South America, then to Edinburgh for a year then, for some of them including James, on to Liverpool University. But the lifestyle took its toll on James' mental health and he had to withdraw and return home.

Subsequently his restless spirit drove him to explore some shamanic practices and Buddhism which became twin pillars of his life. His love of nature and camping out also helped him to rebalance. He says it is very grounding to be in nature, even in winter when he is to be found at his day job planting trees in Northumberland.



Although he loved singing and developed skills as a busker here and abroad, his natural humility held him back from developing the talent believing it to be ego-driven. But one day at a camp he was told “there is more ego in not singing.” An idea he embraced.

There followed a series of self-label albums by the Gillespie Brothers: *Songs from the Outlands* in 2015; then, after a tour, *The Fell* was released in 2018 again to good reviews. In 2022 with a pandemic Arts Council grant to upskill, came *The Merciful Road*. In between they released a collaborative album, *Hirondelle* (meaning swallow) in 2019 with other acoustic folk musicians including Sophie Renshaw. The Guardian reviewer called it an “elegant folk-classical journey”. For the past couple of years the band has been averaging 50 gigs a year and recently did seven shows in the Netherlands. James and Sam hope to release another folk album at the end of this year for which crowd-funding starts in September.

James met his partner Mairead through their love of music and having similar backgrounds in Newcastle and Cumbria. He is stepfather to two children and father of one. Spirituality is really important to him and to that end he and Sam have launched a week-long residential course on the Northumberland coast exploring the lives of early Celtic Christian Northumbrian saints. James has also been exploring wilderness rituals, last year spending four days fasting in wild places in Catalonia. He would like to invite others to undertake land-based rites of passage work. Young people in Alston in particular would benefit from local wilderness vigils, with time to sit and experience the beauty of our wonderful location, he says.

But back to the Alston community choir. Over the past few months its numbers have grown to 40 including very enthusiastic children. They meet most Monday evenings at the Cumberland to sing folk and traditional music. The sessions are open to all abilities and musical experience - £6 per session, £25 for 5. James and Mairead have great plans for the future: “We love to explore the diversity of folk music. We would like the group to meet regularly to sing and go deeper into the songs.” Over time he would welcome more opportunities for the choir to sing in the community, particularly at Christmas, and possibly travel to folk festivals.

Kathy Reeds

For more information see their website: www.thebrothersgillespie.com
<http://www.facebook.com/Alstonmoorfolkchoir>



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Community Life-blood



When Sarah Stamford moved into Alston, she was keen to get involved in the community. Three weeks later Lockdown happened, which put that community vision ‘on hold.’ As we emerged from Covid she found that ‘getting involved’ wasn’t as easy as she’d hoped, so now in her new job as volunteer Co-ordinator, she is trying to make it easier for others.

FitM: you are obviously community minded, but what was it about Alston Moor particularly that drew you in?

Sarah: it was partly practical, wanting to be near my parents in Northumberland, but we also wanted the kids to have a rural childhood. This area is unique; beautiful, small, yet at the heart of everything. Despite keenly felt loss of things like the Cottage Hospital, compared to anywhere else this small we are extraordinarily well-provided for.

That sounds very positive.

Yes, but there is still an element of risk; there’s a fragility in small numbers, be it hospital, school or voluntary groups. It all needs energy to keep it alive—acknowledging the risks and countering them motivates me.

What else do you find motivating about your new role?

So far, a large part of the job has been meeting people—some of them very ... interesting! There’s nowhere—and no one—else like it. There’s so many people doing so much stuff, from organising big public events, to quietly driving one person to an appointment.

What has been the main result of those meetings?

Two strands have developed; led by the groups themselves. One is working with individual groups, some in crisis. Working out how to help them access funding and deal with change—new volunteers mean new ideas and ways of doing things, and change is always difficult. I’m also helping with fundraising, event-planning, technology and suchlike—we are not all on Facebook! The second strand is a collective project, bringing people together, finding ways to share effort rather than duplicate it, supporting local businesses when we meet. I am creating a community directory, print and online, to link needs and people. Hopefully a comprehensive guide; groups, charities, organisers and volunteers, a map and list of activities. It will include contact details people have specifically asked to be included, and the draft is going out soon

so they will have chance to amend before it goes public. It could be used in different ways, e.g., a group or event organiser can contact me and say ‘I need three volunteers to help set up between 9 and 12 on the 8th, and I can source them from contacts I’ve been given.

That sort of specific task sounds easy and appealing

Yes, it’s the ‘micro-volunteering’ model. Vital to those who want to be involved but can’t commit to every month, or to boundary-less roles. With no ‘nine to five’ jobs, economic pressures, multi-jobs and low wages people simply do not have regular free time. Asking people to ‘sign up’ can be overwhelming, as they don’t want to let people down. It’s about ‘psychological safety.’



That’s a new phrase to me—what does it mean?

People’s need to feel safe applies to volunteering too; if I understand the specific remit of a task, the boundaries to time and expectations, I can fit around it. Open-ended things can be scary. People are less likely to do something if they are uncertain what the outcome may be.

That sounds a bit like our churches learning to change roles to fit what people are free to do, not trying to change people to fit the roles! It is helping us. It’s not just the roles; groups don’t always advertise or communicate in effective ways. I can help, I can connect people.

Do you have support or training to help you?

I work under the Alston Moor Partnership, and the AMP Directors have been excellent in supporting my ideas and projects, and providing help and guidance to me in this role. I had a clear vision of how it could be from the beginning, but I have had lots of training days through the Cumbria Volunteers Service. Being ‘isolated’ up in Alston we tend to forget—or be forgotten by—central county bodies and resources. Part of my job is knowing what wider resources we have access to.

What are your hopes and dreams as you go on?

I want to show people how amazing this community is, and how they can get involved. When we moved here, we wanted to build our lives here—this was it. But you need a door opened somewhere—I started with the PTA and the

Panto. But not everyone has school age children, or likes being on stage! If you don't have a starting point, it is not easy to 'take the plunge.' I want to give people a choice of ways in. At interview I had started mapping out community organisations, groups and links, what we can share. But it has grown massively since then! And there's still more to discover, more people to link up with.

Are there any other challenges?

People know that volunteering is great for your mental health and for belonging—making friends etc. But like exercise, just knowing it's good for you doesn't make you do it. Sitting on your own with a screen is easier. Volunteering with people face to face is a great antidote to isolationism and being drawn into depressing conspiracies. Also, there's the admin, forms and regulations; it can seem like volunteering is work, another job in an already busy life. I am trying to emphasise the social side of meetings; how your volunteering makes you a happy human being in a thriving community. If you have a boring form to fill in, do it together, with cake!

Sarah and I met for this interview in one of our excellent local cafes. If you are a volunteer or group in need of help, contact Sarah, and share your part in this amazing community's life.

BNW

Sarah Stamford

Community Development Coordinator, Alston Moor Partnership

Tel: 01434 749134

Email: communitydev@alstonmoorpartnership.co.uk



A real 'buzz' between volunteers at the lunch Sarah hosted last month

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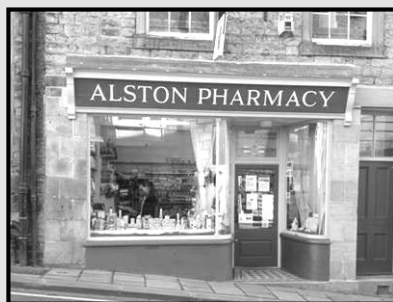
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5.00 pm Pennine Praise in The Hive, Nenthead

13th David Pepin

20th Rev. Alex Dunstan

27th Dean Lawson

Quaker Meeting for Worship



Quaker Meeting for Worship continues to take place every FOURTH SUNDAY of the month at 10.30 am, throughout the year

And SECOND WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH: 6.30—7.30 pm
14th MAY, 11th JUNE, 9th JULY, 13th AUGUST, 10th SEPTEMBER

Everyone most warmly welcome to join us for an hour of silent, reflective worship at these times.

Roman Catholic Mass



St Wulstan's, Kings Arms Lane, Alston, CA9 3JF

Mass every Saturday as usual at 6.00 pm

with confessions available from 5.30 pm

Ecumenical Service at Grisedale Croft

A relaxed, informal service, on Thursday 3rd July, 1.30 pm
and Thursday 31st July, 1.30pm (Holy Communion)

The Chat Room

Bottom of Front Street, next to Mad Hatters. Open all year for a safe space, a warm welcome, a cuppa, and a chat. Whether you need a moment's break from the weather or an hour of company and deeper conversation, the hosts are always pleased to see you.

Our normal opening hours are Monday to Friday, 10.00 am–12.00 pm,
But we are closed for holidays between 21st July and 4th August.

Church of England services & events



Worship and Prayer in July

Sunday, 6th July (*1st Sunday in the month*):

9.30 am	Holy Communion (BCP)	Holy Paraclete, Kirkhaugh
11.00am	Sung Communion	St Augustine, Alston (& livestream)

Sunday, 13th July (*2nd Sunday in the month*):

9.30am	Morning Prayer	St John, Nenthead
11.00am	Sung Communion	St Augustine, Alston (& livestream)
**3.00pm	<u>"Furry Friends" Pet Service</u>	St Jude, Knaresdale

Sunday, 20th July (*3rd Sunday in the month*):

9.30am	Morning Prayer	St John, Nenthead
11.00am	Sung Communion	St Augustine, Alston (& livestream)
**3.00pm	<u>"Furry Friends" Pet Service</u>	St John, Garrigill
6.00pm	<u>Taizé Evensong (BCP)</u>	Holy Paraclete, Kirkhaugh

Sunday, 27th July (*4th Sunday in the month*):

9.30am	Holy Communion	St John, Nenthead
11.00am	Prayer & Praise	St Augustine, Alston (& livestream)
3.00pm	<u>Holy Communion</u>	Ss Mary & Patrick, Lambley

Regular Weekday services

Morning, Evening & Night Prayer

- Morning Prayer: Wed-Sat, 9am St Augustine's & on Zoom
- Evening Prayer: Wed, Thu & Sat, 5pm St Augustine's & on Zoom
Fridays, 6pm St John's, Nenthead
- Night Prayer: Fridays, 9pm Zoom

Informal Holy Communion

- Every Thursday, 12 noon Chat Room, Alston

Sunday services online

- Join us at 11am weekly on **Zoom** using the app – or, with an ordinary phone, dial 0203 051 2874. The **Meeting ID code** is **357 123 751**.
- Or find us on **YouTube** – youtube.com/@AlstonMoorParishChurches
- Download the orders of service from alstonmoorcofe.org.uk/worship and the notice sheet from alstonmoorcofe.org.uk/whatson

Prayer requests and virtual candles



If you would like someone to pray for or with you, phone Mark on 01434 382558 or email pray@alstonmoorcofe.org.uk

Light a candle at churchofengland.org/our-faith/light-candle or in any of our parish churches

Ways to support your parish churches financially

- ✓ Make a one-off donation at alstonmoorcofe.org.uk/donate
- ✓ Speak to a Churchwarden, a Treasurer or Mark about regular donations
- ✓ Join easyfundraising.org.uk and select your favourite church as your cause.

Thank you!



July dates for your Diary (subject to change)

Sun 20th, 10am-3pm **Coffee Shop**

Garrigill VH

Sat 26th, 10am

St Jude's Coffee Stop *Knaresdale w Kirkhaugh VH*

"Furry Friends" PET SERVICE

St Jude's Church, Knaresdale

SUNDAY, 13th JULY at 3.00 pm

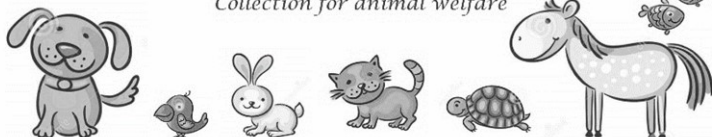
&

St John's Church, Garrigill

SUNDAY, 20th JULY at 3.00 pm



Collection for animal welfare



All creatures, great and small, most welcome

'A Reason to Come In' Revd Mark on the Radio, talking about secular music events enjoyed in our parish churches. Listen to the interview here: <https://3tynespodcast.substack.com/p/secular-music-in-churches>

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Alston Guides and Brownies Spring and Summer Fashion Show

The Guides have been working on their Take Action Theme Award for several months and this was completed with an eco-themed fashion show in May. The design brief was to create an outfit based on Reduce, Reuse and Recycle.

We invited the brownies to join in and they chose to design their own outfits, having them made up from second-hand materials and off-cuts by Brown Owl and Dee from the Repair Café. The guides decided to source their own outfits from charity shops, on-line second-hand stores and hand-outs from family and friends. We then enrolled the services of other willing volunteers to help with choreography, sound and photography.



The show was well-attended and a great success – we made £200.00 for Morgan’s Dog Rescue which we presented at a recent meeting. Our thanks go to everyone who supported us and contributed to the event.

Tricia Davies, Guide Leader

A Singing Culture

On Mondays the music room at Alston Moor Federation comes alive with the sound of music as After School Singing Club meets. 10 students from Years 3-9 meet weekly to practice new songs, bit parts and harmonies led by Mrs Hinkley and accompanied by Mr Percival on the guitar.

Across the federation there is a singing culture and Singing Club started 2 years ago after Sarah Hinkley, who teaches Music at Samuel King’s School, and Greg Percival, who teaches Years 5 and 6 at Alston Primary School, decided to share their musical talent and passion with the enthusiastic students.

When I visited Singing Club the children were practicing Counting Stars by One Republic. Mrs Hinkley reminded the group of the correct technique of singing from their diaphragms and Mr Percival, who played the guitar, made sure everyone came in at the right time. They sounded wonderful coming in at different times with their solos, harmonies and crescendos. At one point their voices sounded like surround sound. The students were involved with choosing the right dynamics for the song and came up with great ideas that made it sound better with every repetition.

The Singing Club has done various performances such as the school Easter Service at St Augustine, the school Christmas Fair and a performance of Christmas Carols at Grisedale Croft where they were rewarded with selection boxes!

When asked what the best thing is about Singing Club the students had a long list! On the list are being able to get together, building connections with each other, trying something new, being supportive of each other, showing off their talents and sharing musical tastes.

On the subject of musical taste the group have an eclectic appetite - ranging from Clean Bandit to Nirvana. Perhaps that will be a good segue for them into Samuel King's Rock Band Club!



Kim Deacon

A Lifetime of Music

In some countries in Northern Europe, there is a long-standing tradition of appointing a 'town organist'. If anybody could claim to hold such a position here on Alston Moor, it would be Sheila Bell, retired music-teacher, organist for our local Methodist Church and one of our organists at St. Augustine's.

Sheila grew up in a musical family. Her mother was a piano-teacher and organist, holding the qualification of Advanced Level Certificate in Music. Her father had a good bass voice, while her brother Jim was a singer, trained by Dr J. E. Hutchinson, who taught Kathleen Ferrier. Sheila's family held musical evenings in their home at Greenside, when her father would perform solos.

Sheila's mother bought her her first piano tutor-book, aimed specifically at young children, and she worked through this more-or-less by herself, with her mother listening in the kitchen, ready to lend a hand if Sheila needed it. At the age of nine, she enrolled at the Sherborne School of Music in Newcastle. She recalls going there on Saturdays and doing shopping for her mother afterwards. On Sundays, she attended her local Plymouth Brethren church with her brothers. This was run by her Aunt Mary, whose son played the harmonium. She also went to Sunday School at Greenside Methodist Church, where she joined the choir. This was a very musical church, and the choir gave concerts at which Sheila began playing duets with her mother.

The organist at Hexham Abbey at that time, Dr Hutchinson, taught Sheila the piano until Grade 8. Her progress towards the qualification of Licentiate of the Royal Academy of Music was interrupted when Dr Hutchinson unfortunately became too ill to teach any longer. However, he was also conductor of the Hexham Orpheus Choir, and one night, when their usual accompanist was unavailable for a concert, Dr Hutchinson asked Sheila if she might stand in. After doing so, sight-reading the music through the performance, Sheila became the accompanist for the choir.

Sheila first became involved with church music through playing for school assemblies, having achieved a Distinction for her music during her teacher-training. In 1962, she moved to Acomb, where her mother introduced her to the organ, and Sheila began to play at Acomb Methodist Church.

In 1964, after marrying Robert, Sheila moved to Alston. Following her move, she became an organist at Haltwhistle Methodist Church, while continuing to play for Hexham Orpheus Choir. She joined Penrith Singers, a memorable occasion with them being a performance of *The Dream of Gerontius* at the Royal Albert Hall. She also became organist at Garrigill Methodist Chapel and accompanist for the Alston Angeli, a highly skilled women's choir, sadly no longer performing.

Sheila took a temporary job teaching at Alston Primary School. On advertising private music lessons, she ended up with sixty pupils scattered around the Hexham area and the Eden Valley! 'I was hardly ever at home,' she told me.

Between these commitments and playing for ballet classes at Langwathby, Sheila found (unsurprisingly!) that she had to give up playing for Hexham Orpheus Choir. Her next teaching-post was at Nenthead Primary School, where the headmaster asked her to teach music and English, followed by her post at Alston Primary School, which she held until her retirement at sixty-five. She did not leave education, though, being then invited to teach the flute at Samuel King's School, which she did until her eighties.

Music has clearly been a huge part of Sheila's life and she has used her skills in many different capacities: as an organist for the Anglican churches on Alston Moor; helping with the education of Down's Syndrome children; accompanist for the Alston Drama Group, and working with the Alston Brownies when they were under Joan Walton's leadership. She also ran a children's choir in St. Paul's Methodist Church, who gave fund-raising concerts that enabled pianos to be bought for various local village halls. Music-lovers in Alston will, too, remember her performing with Pennine Parnassus and playing duets with June Pepin.

Sheila loves playing classical music and being involved with hymn-playing at church. She has always encouraged her own family musically and has found her music a tremendous support at difficult times in her life. I know how much her talents are appreciated in our community and how grateful we are for all she does for us.

Geoffrey Kennedy's hymn *Awake, awake to love and work* contains the lines, 'To give and give and give again What God hath given thee';

These are words that surely can be truly said of Sheila!

Richard Pattison



Last month, at Seb Weaver's funeral, his sister Roxana spoke movingly about his giving life, even in death, by organ donating.

Three people are alive and well now who would not have been without him. Organ donating is going down because, despite a person's own wishes, families are often reluctant to say 'yes' in the crisis of emergency wards. If you wish to give others a chance of life after you have died, please ensure your families know what you want.

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The Carillon Bells of St. Augustine's Parish Church

Whether you live in Alston itself or sometimes pass through on a Sunday morning you may have heard the sound of bells wafting from St Augustine's Parish Church, an imposing Victorian structure dubbed 'The Cathedral of the North', a step down from Alston Market Cross. This is the sound of the 'carillon', or a chime of ten bells which hang in the tower. These bells are surprisingly recent in history.

A chime of six bells, cast by Gillett and Johnston of Croydon, was installed and dedicated on the 4th December 1949 in memory of Henry and Jessie Walton, by their children.



One of these bells had previously been the Earl of Derwentwater's Dilston Castle Bell of 1714, presented with its clock to the Alston church by the Commissioners of Greenwich Hospital in 1767, put in the new church of 1770, recast in 1845 and now recast again for this occasion in 1949. The remaining four bells were installed in 1950 by public subscription in memory of Andrew Graham Stawart Steele, churchwarden from 1943 until his tragic murder in the Midland Bank on 13th September 1950.

The tower itself is not strong enough for the bells to be pealed in the traditional way, with ropes that would cause them to turn in their frames, so they are struck by clappers with cables attached directly to a metal keyboard, or 'clavier', in the ringing room below. This clavier is laid out as a single octave from C to C with an F sharp and a B flat ranged above.

The bells have been played in recent years by Alix Martin and Josephine Dickinson, recruited by Alix—who is much missed since ill-health kept her from playing—in 2016 during one of Mark and Bar's inspirational 'open days'. Josephine writes: In the nine years I have been playing them, I feel to have barely scraped the surface with these bells. Their primary function remains always to call the faithful to worship and to respond to Psalm 98 **'Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth'**. They evoke many moods,

as befit occasions such as weddings, funerals, baptisms, remembrances and coronations. See the links attached for examples of their range, and listen for them on the Saturday morning of Alston Live. The vast majority of the hymns sung at churches on the Moor can be arranged for these ten



bells, and the repertoire is ever-expanding. Please always **feel free to request a favourite tune or piece of music, and I'll do my best to include them.**

As for the experience of playing them, my aim, in every note, is to make the tower 'sing'. To do this, I put the full weight of my body into the levers as I play. It's similar to the 'arm weight' of piano playing as expounded by Tobias Matthay. The most technically difficult passages are those with fast repeated notes, and I'm working to improve that. It can be scary to think that my playing can be heard by so many people, but as soon as I start playing, I forget

this and become totally immersed in the music.

A big thank you to our Vicar, Mark Nash-Williams, for making all this possible, for granting permission for all the various projects of which the bells have been a part, and will be in the future, and for his generous support at all times. If any generous sponsor wishes to provide support to the Bells Development Fund (for future additional bells or upkeep of the tower) I'm sure Mark would be delighted to hear from you.

<https://bit.ly/3Ts8yAN>; <https://bit.ly/3G0qyze>
<https://bit.ly/3TwRFow>; <https://bit.ly/45nbkyA>

(with acknowledgements to 'St. Augustine of Canterbury Alston, A history of the parish church', a booklet available in the church containing information gathered by successive researchers, most recently John Hardy).

Josephine Dickinson

And you can hear the bells briefly here:

<https://3tynespodcast.substack.com/p/secular-music-in-churches>

News from St Jude's

Sorry I don't usually take on board the theme for the month, but this time it is Music and this is my first story, the church service was Songs of Praise.

It was a wonderful laid-back service with Mark sitting at the front whilst we took up the front pews. Willow played the organ and we sang and discussed our favourite hymns.

It was so good to sing remembered hymns that are not sung in many services, it was so friendly, some of us retired to the Kirkstyle for their lovely coffee, this has become a regular habit.

The report on the Coffee Stop is as usual very positive, Kim was unable to be there, but Wendi took up the challenge and with the support of our usual crew it ran smoothly.

Next month's Coffee Stop is July 28th, the day before we head off to Newcastle where in St Nicholas Cathedral, on the 29th, Andy will be ordained Deacon in the Anglican Church: We are so excited and proud of him, he has chosen this life with God's help. I know we will all support him and rejoice at the Lowbyer party organised for him.

It will be the turn of all the Churchwardens in our six churches to be sworn in at Hexham Abbey on the 25th June.

The next church service is the much-loved Pet Service on Sunday 13th July at 3pm hopefully outside in the sunshine. Bring whatever pet you have; all will be blessed by Mark. The July Coffee Stop is still the last Saturday which is 26th.

Knarsdale with Kirkhaugh Community Hall had their annual Big Breakfast, my goodness what a breakfast; everyone worked very hard to make it a success. Especially the Lodge who very kindly provided all the food, for which we are very grateful and send a big thank you.

Half way through the year already, hope to see you next month.

Stay safe and look after each other.

God Bless.

Irene Boyles

Pepin's Puzzles

Here are 12 music composers, surnames and forenames, in all directions.

Find them in the WORD SEARCH. 1. **BARTOK** 2. **BERKELEY** 3. **BRAHMS**

B	A	R	T	O	K	B	O	R	C	D	I	N
R	B	L	I	S	S	L					B	
A	A		E		B	E	R	K	E	L	E	Y
H	X		R	B		N		B			N	
M	G		E			N		E			J	R
S	E	N	N	A	H	O	J	R			A	E
	O	A	K	R		X		L		N	M	D
	R	B	C	T				I	T		I	N
T	G	L	U	H	E	C	T	O	R		N	A
	E	A	R	U			N	Z				X
	S	Z	B	R	I	T	T	E	N			E
		W	I	L	L	I	A	M				L
B	E	R	G	B	Y	R	D	L	C	N	R	A

4. **BLISS** 5. **BERLIOZ**
 6. **BIZET** 7. **BRITTEN**
 8. **BYRD** 9. **BRUCKNER**
 10. **BAX** 11. **BERG**
 12. **BORODIN**
 FORENAMES:
ARTHUR
HECTOR
GEORGES
ANTON
WILLIAM
ARNOLD
BENJAMIN
BELA
LENNOX
JOHANNES
ALBAN
ALEXANDER

The next puzzle is to link the correct forename with the composer's surname.

Then a puzzle to link each composer 1–12 with their correct country or city and year of birth. It's not easy; in fact, it's quite a challenge!

Example: JOHANNES BRAHMS Hamburg, Germany, 1833. Here are the dates and countries: A. 1543 Lincoln, B. 1803 France, C. 1824 Austria, D. 1833 Hamburg, Germany, E. 1833 Russia, F. 1838 France, G. 1881 Hungary, H. 1883 London, I. 1885 Vienna, J. 1891 Britain, K. 1903 Oxford, L. 1913 Lowestoft.

Column by column five quotations/titles are hidden in this grid.

Psalm 95	God's people	with the sound	play on
Born in song	That majesty	food of love	the Lord
The hills	O Come	have always	do admire?
If music	are alive	let us sing unto	of music
How shall I sing	be the	Which angels	been singing

Teresa Brewer's lyric, repeated with at least 8 misspells—can you find them?
 'All I want is loving you and music, musioc, music. All I want is lpving you and music,music,music. All I want is loving yoo and musoc, music, music. All I want is loving you and musdic, music, music.'

David Pepin

“Born in Song”

As for most Christians, praise through music has been an important part of my life. My grandmother had a pedal organ in her bungalow around which we used to gather. My mother, Nancy Mullard, loved music. She played the piano and sang solos as well as preaching while her brother, Rev Jim Ireland, founded the Alston Men's Fellowship Choir. I have loved singing all my life. Aged twelve, I was asked to join the choir at the Royal Naval Hospital Haslar in Gosport Hampshire which was one of Britain's leading Royal Naval Hospitals. The eighteenth-century Chapel of St Luke is a Grade II listed building. I enjoyed singing hymns there and was introduced to the words of the creed which I loved. Later I was in a Male Voice Choir in Warrington which met at Parr Hall, another Grade II listed building. Now, when I don't get out much, I enjoy the monthly services at Grisedale Croft where we use a special book of well-known hymns called 'Hymns we've always loved'. Most hymns are based on the Bible and the Bible itself is full of music including the Psalms, the hymn book and prayer book of the Bible. Look at Psalm 150 for some joyful praise! 'Methodism was born in song' in the words of the Preface to the 1933 Methodist Hymn Book recalling Charles Wesley's unparalleled output of hymns in the eighteenth century many of which we still sing.

Everyone, I believe, enjoys singing. Every time I visit Liisa we sing the chorus of the hymn 'At the cross' and I sing it the last thing at night holding a wooden cross.

At the cross, at the cross
Where I first saw the light,
And the burden of my heart rolled away,
It was there by faith I received my sight,
And now I am happy all the day!

It was through music that Liisa and I came to be friends with a Salvation Army Officer from Sweden. We were on holiday in Sweden with our grandchildren, Sebastian and Roxana. We came out of the swimming pool and were attracted by the fantastic sound of great hymn-singing. After we met Lillvor, the leader of the group, we invited her to come to England and some of you may have heard her wonderful, wonderful voice when she sang in our church. I am grateful for the musical skills of all the people on Alston Moor who lead worship week by week.

George Mullard

About 'Faith in the Moor'

This Magazine is a 'Churches Together' publication. It aims to share information useful to regular and occasional churchgoers, to the wider community, and to tourists and visitors. It reflects the life of the faith community in our corner of the North Pennines. Here people encourage, celebrate and debate their faith. The different Christian churches who create this magazine get along very well, and work together in a spirit of openness and mutual regard. Faith in the Moor



welcomes input in harmony with this open Christian Faith. Also, from those whose spirituality is not focussed on a particular religion, and those whose faith is in the Moor itself; its people, its uniqueness, its future. We support whatever enriches our community here.

Current team: JH = Jeanette Haslam, ME = Mary Elliot, ES = Lizzie Smith, MH = Madeleine Harris, RP = Richard Pattison, BNW = Bar Nash-Williams

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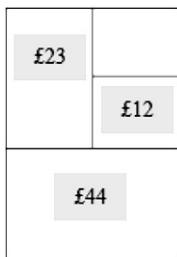
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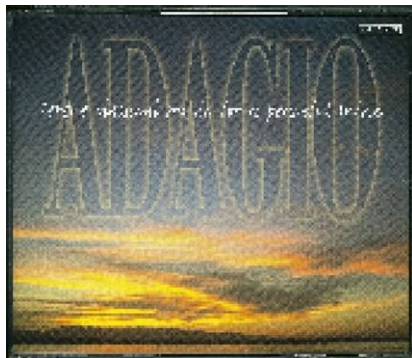
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'In a World Refusing to Harmonise'

Harmony enters unannounced to speak to us - to ease our minds - to raise our spirits and even heal us. Harmony enfolded in nature – in the delicacy of a harebell - the glossy buttercup - birdsong – the flowing river - a rich sunset - the night sky - itself - the stillness of a lake - the magnificence of the sea - the grandeur of mountains - the serenity of the forest – itself endlessly!
Nature the inspiration for enduring and uplifting musical composition:



The Pastoral Symphony: Ludvig von Beethoven [1770 – 1827] 'A homage to nature!' 'The pastoral landscapes and gentle rolling countryside were sources of solace and inspiration for Beethoven. His love for nature is well documented in his personal letters and journals. Phrases like, *"No man on earth can love the country as much as I do."*' Doug Howard.

The Lark ascending: Ralph Vaughan Williams [1872 – 1958] Inspired by a poem of the same name by Thomas Howard; Vaughan Williams has 'taken a literary idea on which to build his musical thought ... and has made the violin become both [the bird's](#) song and its flight'. Ursula, his wife.



La Mer : Claude Debussy [1862 – 1918] 'A glistening delicate orchestral work'. [Dr Justin Wildridge]

And **Oiseaux Exotiques**: Olivier Messiaen [1908 – 1992]: Three years in composition for piano and small orchestra and 16 minutes in duration contrasting 18 species of bird – a collection that Messiaen acknowledged could never exist together in nature as he includes The Indian robin, the red-whiskered bulbul bird of tropical Asia and the white-crested laughing thrush of the Himalayan foothills.

Harmony exists in certain spaces which visitors' words convey: 'a lovely space and atmosphere.' - 'beautiful, simple, so peaceful. Thank you' - 'a place of peace and reflection' A lone bench

might offer 'the still small voice of calm' – 'the dew of quietness' - on the back road above Nenthead perhaps? While humour courts infectious harmony whether in the moment or at a more formal gig, when we laugh at ourselves, life

and the world. In a world reluctant even refusing to harmonise we have an armoury: conversation – the soothing word – praise - encouragement – reassurance - compassion – listening - time given – time shared - affection - courtesy - consideration – and a cup of tea: our healing manuscript. Disharmony could make us yearn for uninterrupted harmony: “How long O Lord, my spirit cries before thy reign of peace? When sin before thy face shall fly and all corruption cease’, plaintive words added to ‘The Lark Ascending’ - author unknown. However continual harmony could mean indolence, an end to striving, leaving us unstimulated, inactive, unfulfilled - even ignored. There is a promise that our yearning, our striving will one day triumph in - ‘The silence of eternity’ [John Greenleaf Whittier].



MH

Before and After



You may remember an article about dry stone walling, by our friend Tim Jackson, featured in the ‘Stone’ issue of Faith in the Moor. When the Lambley Parish Council mentioned their concern over a section of the wall at the East end of the Churchyard, we remembered it too, and asked Tim if he’d look at it for us.

A packed lunch and a flask, a few hours of skilled attention, and hey presto, a new wall, already beginning to ‘weather in’ to match the rest. Thank you so much Tim.

It’s those ‘one off’ tasks just as much as weekly commitment to volunteer roles that help keep the church alive.



BNW