



The Teesdale Worm

Magazine of the Darlington and Teesdale Circuit

Issue 20 - November / December 2022



“Well, it’s all about the children i’nnit?” Said the Dad as he forks out five hundred pounds for the Playstation for the kids’ bedrooms for Christmas.

Part of me thought “Well, the words are about right, but the sentiment is way off.” I didn’t mention it to him, this being the season of good will and him being a about a foot taller than I am!

It is all about The Child, no-one else. The shepherds, the angels, the wise men, even Mary and Joseph all play bit-parts in the greatest story ever told.

It’s too easy to pass this off as “for the kids”, this is an excuse used by adults who don’t want to sound too much like Scrooge, yet refuse to engage with the impact of the God who engages with all people, adults as well as children.

And a little Child will lead them. Isaiah 11:6

Even Mary, who is highly favoured Luke 1:30, and John the Baptist, the forerunner who was described by Jesus as the greatest man who ever lived Matt. 11:11, pale into very little against the Child who is God made Man. Even in His weak and vulnerable form, all around Him must bow the knee.

This year, as you see the Nativities, watch the children sing the songs and wear tea-towels on their heads, remember, it isn’t only for kids to enjoy, it is for us, the children of the living God, to engage with this Child and celebrate Him, the One long promised by the prophets the little Child who will lead us.

My prayer this year is that you will of course enjoy the children, but receive the blessing of the Child who is God, about whom we make all of this extra effort and through this season be a blessing to all whom you meet this Christmas.

“Well, it’s all about The Child i’nnit?”

A thoughtful Advent, a Happy Christmas and a Blessed New Year.

Graham



Methodist Women in Britain



Methodist Women in Britain is a movement within the Methodist Church, led by a group of volunteers and funded by donations, which aims to connect women with an interest in creative spirituality and a passion for global social justice. We hold day conferences and residential events, produce printed and online resources and engage in social justice campaigns. MWiB is about more than Methodism, more than women and more than Britain — we have strong links with the World Church, and are part of the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women.

Dates for your diaries

Advent Service:

Tuesday 13th December, Newton Aycliffe Methodist Church, Neville Parade, Newton Aycliffe DL5 5DH.
2-4pm, coffee and mince pies on arrival.

Friday 3rd March: World Day of Prayer

Please look out for and support an event near you.

Minsteracres Overnighter Friday/Saturday 10-11 March

Facilitator Mrs. June Anderson, Theme 'A Line of Women'. Early booking advisable.

For more information, please contact Hazel Neasham: haze56@outlook.com / Tel: 07397 173 097



Deadline for items for the January / February issue is: Friday, 6th January
Please send to admin@dandtcircuit.org.uk or
Circuit Office, c/o Elm Ridge Methodist Church, Carmel Road South, Darlington. DL3 8DJ
Thank you!

News from Harrowgate Hill

Like many others we were all shocked at the news of the death of Queen Elizabeth II and decided we would like to do something to enable our congregation to express their feelings. A book of condolences was made available for all to write something and the 1st and 3rd Darlington Girls Brigades all wrote a prayer. These were then uploaded on to the Royal Family website by Brian Simpson.

Our coffee mornings on the 1st and 3rd Saturdays of the month from 10am to 11.30am, are continuing to be well attended and it's encouraging to see the fellowship growing. On October 15th we had our usual Birthday coffee morning but this was then followed by a soup/pie/peas lunch for Church funds. Our December coffee morning on 1st December will have a Christmas theme to it with extra tables selling various items to buy. We are also arranging to have an afternoon tea on 26th November the proceeds of which will be sent to Christian Aid.

Our Carol Service this year will be on 18th December 10:30am and this will also be a Parade Service. Christmas Eve we will be having a Service at 9:15pm and on Christmas Day we will be having a joint Service at Haughton Methodist Church at 9:30am.

*Blessings
Harrowgate Hill Stewards*

Barton

A Fashion Show will be held in the village hall on Sat Nov 19th at 2pm proceeds for Barton Chapel.

Tickets are £3 and there will be a raffle. Products for sale are Wallis, Next, Monsoon and M&S

A Coffee Morning Fundraiser in the Chapel on Sat Dec 3rd at 10am

My dad used to talk about “out” Christians. He reckoned there were three types of “out” Christians.

First the “in and outs”. They would attend church occasionally, or swap one church for another on a regular basis.

Second - the “down and outs”. Nothing about church suited them. The sermons were too long (or short), the choice of songs wrong, etc.

Lastly and thankfully there were the “out and outs”, giving their all to serve Jesus.

My mam also had her views, summed up by her poem.

“Some go to church just for a walk.
Others go to laugh and talk.
Some go just to sleep and nod,
But a few go to learn of God.”

*Bill Bartle
Barnard Castle*

The Pathway Methodist Church

Our MacMillan Coffee Morning



Along with two other Middleton venues that week, we held our MacMillan Coffee Morning on Friday September 30th and raised £260.

Rev John Howard led our afternoon Harvest Festival Service on October 2nd. It was followed by afternoon tea.

We took a boot-full of produce to The Foodbank at The Well, West Auckland, along with a cheque for over £150. They were deeply grateful for these contributions. They indicated the continuing need, also, for personal hygiene items, both male and female, and household bits and bobs. The West Auckland Foodbank also supplies parcels when needed to UTASS in Middleton. Foodbank collections go periodically from baskets at The Pathway, The Coop, and UTASS.

Our Harvest Festival



Future Events:

Sunday November 27th 10.30am Worship including Toy Service

Once again, we are collecting new toys for the Salvation Army to distribute to needy families this Christmas.

If you feel able to help please bring these along before, or to, the service above so they can be delivered ASAP after the service. Monetary donations are also welcomed as this can be used to fill any gaps (or to help provide batteries!)

Ian Tallentire



Our baby and toddler group continues to flourish with 20 families attending regularly.

At the end of October we enjoyed welcoming older brothers and sisters to one of our sessions. Everyone had lots of fun decorating pumpkin cookies.

In December we are looking forward to a series of events when families and the community can celebrate Christmas together.

Christmas Lego Church



Carols and Christingles



Community Advent Windows



Hunting for Jesus Pebbles



Haughton

There are lots of things happening here at Haughton during November and December

Our WAVE Church (We are all valued equally) is going very well, this is on the fourth Sunday of each Month at 3pm. On Sunday 20th November, Bernice Hardie is coming up from London, she will be at our morning service and will give a talk to us about WAVE and how it came about, please come along if you would like to learn more. For more information on WAVE you are welcome to contact Rev Brian Hutton or Cath Warden.

Our church and café are in the process of gaining recognition to be Dementia Friendly, we are hosting a Dementia Friendly awareness evening on 23rd November from 6.30-8pm and everyone is welcome, refreshments will be served afterwards, again if you are interested please do come along.

We are not having a Christmas Fair this year, but doing what we did last year, stalls will be up in our café area from 11th of November through to 16th December, when we will be hosting 'Carols on the Green,' and some of the band from the Salvation Army will be playing, this was a great success last year.

On the 1st December we are having a seasonal evening of entertainment, performed by Steve Collinson and Carol Birkbeck, compaired by Fiona Collinson. We can promise this will be a full on entertaining evening, tickets are £4 and can be obtained from Ann Thubron on 07966 002 606 or from the café at Haughton on Tuesday or Fridays; proceeds will be split between St. Andrews foodbank and the Air Ambulance. Refreshments will be served after the concert.

On a more serious note we all know that foodbanks have seen a massive increase of people needing them, Haughton ladies from craft and chat have been knitting hats, etc., to be distributed to the food banks, this is going to be an ongoing venture throughout the winter months.

Ecumenically there is a lot of other activity being planned to help the local community, we are all working with the local councillors to see what we can do to help.

Haughton Stewards



'May you find strength, comfort and peace in the promises of God.'

Sometimes the bravest thing to do is face your fears and confront your uncertainty, placing them in God's hands. In all that you are going through, may you remember that God's promises remain true.'

#niteblessing

A word of Testimony

In a previous church, before we moved to Barnard Castle, it was common for anybody who had a word of testimony to be given space to speak. As this is not the case in Methodist churches, I seek permission to write one occasionally in the Teesdale Worm.

This one concerns another lady as much as myself, but as the Lord used me to help her we are both pleased to pass it on.

One Wednesday lunch time this Summer, I was browsing through a charity shop in Barnard Castle after a stint doing coffee morning duty in our church. I was startled to overhear a desperate phone call behind me. It was Margaret who had just been doing coffee morning with me and was trying in vain to contact a church key holder to explain that she had left her coat containing her house keys in church. It just so happened that day that I had taken a church key from home (which I rarely did) and was able to lend her it so she could retrieve her coat and keys. We both praised the Lord as she returned it, as it was He who had sent us into the same charity shop.

It is just one more 'incident' that shows that the Lord is always with us, ready to help.

*Jean Bartle
Barnard Castle*

(If anybody else has any 'incidents' that you would like to share - we would love to hear them! - Ed)



Exhibition of Palestinian Art
Prints of work by the artists
Nisreen Al-Azzeh & Malak Mattar
The Friends Hub, 6 Skinnergate, Darlington DL3 7NB
Monday 14th November – Sunday 20th
10am - 4pm

WINTER 2022 PLAN NO: 233	DECEMBER					JANUARY					FEBRUARY			
	4th	11th	18th	24th	25th	1st	8th	15th	22nd	29th	5th	12th	19th	26th
B. Castle 10:30am	G. Cutler HC	D. Coggrave	Carol Service OA	G. Cutler 9pm	G. Cutler 10am	A. Coustick	G. Cutler Cov/HC	Lorne Tallentire	K. George	J. Selley	G. Cutler HC	J. Howard	Ian Tallentire	P. Collins
Barton 10:30am	@ Parish Church	J. Bower HC	Carol Service @Parish Church	n/a	@ Hurworth	No Service	P. Collins	G. Cutler Cov / HC	C. Nurse T	S. Sutcliffe	@ Parish Church	A. Coustick HC	K. George	B. Simpson
Cockerton 10:30am	C. Roberts HC	J. Collins	C. Roberts Carole Service	n/a	C. Roberts 10am	No Service	J. Bower HC	B. Simpson	OA	B. Carter	P. Law	P. Martin Guild Sunday	C. Roberts Cov/HC	J. Howard
Elm Ridge 10:30am	J. Howard HC	R. Pinkney	J. Howard Carol Service	J. Howard 5pm R. Andrew 11:30pm	J. Howard 10am	J. Bower	J. Howard Cov/HC	P. Clarke	P. Collins	B. Simpson	J. Howard	R. Pinkney	J. Howard HC	OA
Haughton 10:30am	K. George	P. Collins	B. Hutton Carol Service	J. Bower HC 9pm	B. Carter 9:30am	No Service	R. Pinkney	P. Law	S. Sutcliffe	B. Hutton Cov / HC	C. Nurse T	J. Selley	S. Sleightholme	B. Hutton HC
3pm			WAVE							WAVE				WAVE
H. Hill 10:30am	C. Nurse T	S. Sutcliffe	B. Simpson CS + P	B. Hutton HC / 9:15pm	@ Haughton	No Service	B. Hutton Cov / HC	J. Selley	J. Collins	A. Coustick	Rev. J. Heap CA	B. Hutton HC	B. Simpson	Ian Tallentire
Hurworth 10am	B. Hutton AAW / P	A. Coustick AAW / HC	S. Sutcliffe Carol Service	n/a	B. Hutton 10am	No Service	J. Collins AAW	D. Coggrave AAW	B. Hutton Cov / HC	Ian Tallentire AAW	K. George AAW	S. Sutcliffe AAW	B. Hutton HC	OA AAW
Staindrop 10:30am	B. Simpson	-	G. Cutler	n/a	@ Barnard Castle	No Service	-	A. Coustick	G. Cutler Cov / HC	Lorne Tallentire	OA	-	J. Collins	G. Cutler HC
6pm		G. Cutler Carol Service					P. Collins					B. Simpson		
The Pathway 10:30am		G. Cutler HC	Lowson	J. Howard 11:30pm	I. Tallentire Cafe	No Service		S. Sleightholme	A. Coustick	G. Cutler UTCT		S. Walton	G. Cutler HC	J. Collins
2:30pm	AT J. Tarn						G. Cutler Cov / HC / AT				L. Tallentire AT			
The Well 10:30am	G. Bright	B. Hutton HC	S. Sleightholme	n/a	G. Bright	No Service	J. Selley	B. Hutton Cov / HC	J. Bower	G. Bright	P. Collins	Ian Tallentire	R. Andrew HC	G. Bright
Telephone Service 9am	S. Walton	R. Pinkney	Ian Tallentire	n/a	M. Bagnall	M. Bagnall	A. Coustick	S. Walton	Lorne Tallentire	J. Collins	M. Bagnall	J. Howard	J. Selley	M. Bagnall
Media Service	B. Hutton	J. Bower	G. Cutler	n/a	R. Andrew	TEAM	G. Cutler	A. Coustick	Ian Tallentire	B. Hutton	J. Howard	J. Bower	G. Cutler	Ian Tallentire

PLAN CODES

CS Carol Service
HC Holy Communion
PS Parade Service
Cov Covenant Service
OA Own Arrangement

T Transport needed
AT Afternoon Tea
UTCT Upper Teesdale
Churches Together
AAW All Age Worship

Preachers are expected to fulfil their own appointments or provide an accredited substitute and inform the Superintendent, the Circuit Office and the Church Steward(s) of the change.

A Christmas Story

Christmas recalls the story of travellers propelled by the unhurried rhythm of their animals:

'We three kings of Orient are
Bearing gifts we traverse afar,
Field and fountain, moor and mountain,
Following yonder star'.

Why did these wisemen undertake such a journey?

A tall astronomer, advisor to the Persian king, springs from his midnight vigil in the palace courtyard. "Casper, come! Look along the road I've sighted toward the constellation of the Jews." Casper peers into the blackness. "Do you see it? That brilliant star is new tonight! It must signify the birth of a mighty King."

A soft whistle escapes him as he spots it. "There it is!" He's talking rapidly now. "I've read ancient Hebrew scriptures which tell of this ruler's star." Rising, he announces, "We must see him. We must go!"

Traversing the caravan routes of Persia, Babylon, and Syria for 1,200 miles, they ford broad rivers, pass ancient cities, cross barren deserts. Three months they trek westward, day after day, "following yonder star."

In Jerusalem they inquire, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and are come to worship him." Worship? So the Babe is more than a king!

Now they follow the shining star till it rests over a simple Bethlehem home. At early dawn neighbours gather to watch the richly- robed travellers dismount. Joseph meets them at the door.

"We've come to see the child, the King." The wise men fall before the Babe, faces to the floor, royal counselors doing homage, worshipping the Christ child. Outside, their servants unload weighty chests from the camels and set gifts before the King. Heavy fragrances of frankincense and myrrh mingle to fill the room as one by one the boxes are opened.

A touch of the boy-child's tiny fingers, a final longing look, and the men rise to go. Camel bells soon fade in the brisk morning air.

We, too, travel at Christmas, visiting family and friends. Yet, like the wisemen, the most important journey we make these hectic holidays is to draw nigh to Jesus himself with the gift of our hearts.

(Taken from: <http://www.joyfulheart.com/christmas/xmastrav.htm>)



Harrowgate Hill Methodist Church

Lowson Street, Darlington, Co Durham DL3 0EY

Vanessa and Brian Simpson invite you to a

Tea or Coffee with Cake Afternoon



Saturday 26th November 2022
3.00pm

Suggested donation - £5.00
in aid of Christian Aid

Quiz

Home-made Goodies Stall

Bring and Buy Stall

tickets or other details - telephone 01325 - 264145

Haughton Methodist Church

You are invited to an

'Fun Seasonal Evening of Entertainment'

Presented to you by the brilliance of
Steve Collinson and Carol Birkbeck

Thursday, 1st December
7pm

Tickets £4

To include refreshments after the Concert

(Proceeds to be split between St Andrew food bank and the Air Ambulance)

Available from the Cafe or from Ann (01325 389884)



Elm Ridge



Christmas Fair

supporting MHA

10am until 12.30pm

Saturday 19th November

£2 entry per person includes
refreshments

Crafts, Cakes, Christmas
gifts

Elm Ridge Methodist Church Hall,
Carmel Road South, Darlington

Bric a brac



Crafts

CHRISTMAS FAYRE

Cakes

At

Gifts

COCKERTON METHODIST
CHURCH

On

Saturday November 12th

10 - 12.30pm

variety of stalls and
refreshments

Body Shop

Jewellery

Refreshments

Elm Ridge Methodist
Church hall and
gardens welcomes
you to our

Coffee Drop In

Monday 10am till 12

Except bank holidays

During the month of December, come along and
enjoy our freshly baked scones, cake, toasted
teacakes and other festive treats. Meet friends.
Join in a board game if you wish

Elm Ridge Methodist Church, Carmel Road South, Darlington
01325 282491

CHRISTMAS CAROL CONCERT

WITH COCKERTON PRIZE SILVER
BAND AND LADIES GROUP CHOIR

COCKERTON METHODIST CHURCH,
WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 7TH 7.30PM

REFRESHMENTS FOLLOWING

PROCEEDS TO COCKERTON PRIZE SILVER BAND &
1ST DARLINGTON GIRLS BRIGADE

A Series tracing The Pathway people from the Newbiggin beginnings to the present.



Part 4: John Wesley & his preachers continued even further!

Incomers from Derbyshire: Economic migration will always occur where industries and prosperity rise and fall in particular areas. One such significant migration was that of 14 families from a lead mining area in Derbyshire to Upper Teesdale around 1760. These included the Barkers, the Rawbottoms, the Smedleys, the Staleys, and the Redfearns. All became leadminers and farmers in Middleton and Upper Teesdale. At least the last two families became involved in the Methodist movement, and are still involved today. Samuel Redfearn moved into Forest. His great, great, great, great, great grand daughter is our local preacher - Sheila Walton.

John Wesley's Visits to Upper Teesdale: It has been calculated that John Wesley travelled a quarter of a million miles in the course of his ministry. Most of this was on horseback. Newbiggin chapel, and even more so, High House chapel in Weardale, seem to have become particularly favourite places for him to preach, usually in spring or summer to avoid the worst weather on the fells ('great mountains'). He regularly traverses Pikelaw between Newbiggin and Westgate in Weardale. Their route was probably similar to the narrow and exposed road, built later in the early nineteenth century by the mining companies, that we can still traverse today. Steele records a story of Wesley using a guide on his earlier trips. Unfortunately, the guide became very bogged down in the wet peat and had to be extracted with his horse!

Wesley preached either outside, weather permitting, or inside the meeting house. John did at one time have difficulty knowing the name of Newbiggin, and because this was the epicentre of the Teesdale ministry above Barnard Castle at that time, it is often referred to on the circuit plan and by John as just 'Teesdale'. According to John's journal, he visited Upper Teesdale 11 times; preaching in Upper Teesdale on 10 of those visits: Newbiggin – all 10; Cotharstone – 3 times; and Middleton - once. It is likely he travelled through Middleton at least 10 times, otherwise he would have to cross Wynch Bridge or ford the Tees! Why did he not preach there more often? Was it the opposition of the resident rectors? The persecution of a Methodist Meeting on Hude is recorded again around the time of Wesley's favourable, and only recorded preaching experience in Middleton, when the crowd received the word with 'gladness'. Or is it possible he did not record all preaching events in his journal?



The current route over Pikelaw had 5 gates until recently replaced by grids. It is now paralleled by the electric supply for Upper Teesdale, and is still a dangerous route in poor weather.



The original pulpit used by John Wesley as it was in Newbiggin Chapel. It is now in storage and hoped it will eventually be displayed at The Auckland Project Faith Museum opening in 2023.

Visit	John's words:
'Visit' 1 Came from Barnard Castle Probably travelled through Teesdale May 25 th /26 th 1752 , but no record of preaching . Went on to Weardale May 26 th .	'...to Barnard Castle. I was exceeding faint when we came in: however, the time being come, I went into the street, and would have preached; but the mob was so numerous and so loud, that it was not possible for many to hear. Nevertheless, I spoke on, and those who were near listened with huge attention. To prevent this, some of the rabble fetched the engine, and threw a good deal of water on the congregation; but not a drop fell on me.' 'We rode hence to Weardale.' (under thorn bush near Ireshopeburn)
Visit 2 Came from Weardale June 8 th 1761 Preached at 'Teesdale' June 9th Went on to Barnard Castle (June 10 th) via Swaledale (June 9 th)	'At noon I preached in Teesdale. Most of the men were leadminers, who a while ago were turned out of work for following 'this way'. By this means many of them got into far better work; and some time after their old master was glad to employ them again.'
Visit 3 Came from Barnard Castle May 8 th 1764 Preached at 'Teesdale' May 9th. Went on to Weardale May 9 th .	'About noon I preached to a large congregation in Teesdale, and to and to a still larger in Weardale in the evening. The next day after preaching at Prudhoe and Nafferton, I returned to Newcastle.'
Visit 4 Came from Brough via Barnard Castle July 1 st 1766 . Preached at 'Teesdale' July 2nd Went on to 'Weardale'.	'..and then rode on to Barnard Castle, and met the stewards of the societies, greatly increased since I was here before. At the love feast that followed, several spoke their experience with all simplicity. One poor mourner was set at liberty, and many greatly comforted. About noon I preached in Teesdale, and at Weardale at six in the evening.'
Visit 5 Came from Weardale May 29 th 1770 Preached at 'Teesdale' May 29th Went on to Swaledale May 29 th .	'On Tuesday 29 th and the following days, I took a little circuit through Weardale, Teesdale, and Swaledale.'
Visit 6 Came from Barnard Castle June 1 st 1772 Preached at 'New Orygan' June 2nd Went to Weardale June 2 nd , 3 rd & 4 th .	'Tuesday 2 nd . We rode to New-Orygan in Teesdale. The people were deeply attentive; but, I think, not deeply affected. From the top of the next enormous mountain, we had a view of Weardale. It is a lovely prospect. The green gently-rising meadows and fields, on both sides of the little river, clear as crystal, were sprinkled over with innumerable little houses; three in four of which (if not nine in ten) are sprung up since the Methodists came hither. Since that time, the beasts are turned into men, and the wilderness into a fruitful field.'
Visit 7 Came from Weardale June 11 th 1774 Preached at 'Teesdale' June 13th Went to Swaledale June 13 th .	'Mon. 13.- At eleven I preached in Teesdale, and at Swaledale in the evening.'
Visit 8 Came from Barnard Castle June 6 th 1776 Preached at 'Teesdale' June 7th Went to Weardale June 7 th .	'Thursday, 6. I preached at Darlington, and Barnard-castle; on Friday, in Teesdale, and Weardale. Here many rejoiced with joy unspeakable, and seemed determined never to rest till they had recovered that great salvation which they enjoyed some years ago.'
Visit 9 Came from Brough May 11 th 1779 Preached at 'Cuthburton' (Cotherstone) May 12 th Preached at 'Teesdale' May 12th Visited High Force May 12 th Went to 'Weardale' May 12 th	'Wed 12.- After preaching at Cuthburton and in Teesdale, I went a little out of my way, to see one of the wonders of nature. The river Tees rushes down between two rocks, and falls sixty feet perpendicular into a basin of water sixty feet deep. In the evening I preached to the lovely congregation in Weardale, and the next day went on to Newcastle.'
Visit 10 Came from Barnard Castle May 3 rd 1780 Preached at 'Cuthbedson' May 4th	'Thur 4.- About eight I preached to a serious congregation at Cuthbedson; and about one at Newbiggin, in Teesdale. We doubted how we should get over the next mountain, the famous Pikelow

Preached at Newbiggin May 4th Went to 'Weardale' May 4 th	(Pikelaw), after so long and heavy rains; but I scarce ever remember getting over it so well. We found the people in Weardale, as usual, some of the liveliest in the kingdom; knowing nothing, and desiring to know nothing, save Jesus Christ and him crucified.'
Visit 11 Came from Barnard Castle June 9 th 1784 Preached at 'Cutherston' June 10th Preached at 'Newbiggin' June 10th Preached at Weardale June 10 th Preached at Middleton June 11th Went on to Barnard Castle June 11 th .	'Thur. 10.- After preaching at five (in Barnard Castle) I took horse for the Dales, and about eight preached at Cutherston. Here I had the pleasure of seeing some of our brethren, who had been long at variance, cordially reconciled. Hence we rode through rain and wind to Newbiggin in Teesdale. Being but a poor horseman, and having a rough horse, I had just strength for my journey, and none to spare; but after resting a while, I preached without any weariness. Having then procured an easier horse, I rode over the great mountain into Weardale.' Fri 11.- About ten, riding through a village called Middleton, I was desired to preach there. So I began in the street without delay. A large number of people came together, and received the word with gladness. Afterwards, we rode at leisure to Barnard Castle.'

Although the member records for Newbiggin show a very successful ministry, it is obvious from the journal that John Wesley had a particular affection for the Methodists in Weardale. In 1784 he writes in detail about the characters, the work, and the conversions there.

'Willy Ritson' and Wild Middleton: The author (Ian Tallentire) and his brother Lorne both trained as local preachers in the 1970s under tutor Miss Dorothy (Dolly) Redfearn; who along with her sister Ailie, ran the Forest Post Office and RAF weather station from the same farm (West Moor Riggs) that her forebears came to around 1760. She often spoke of the wildness of Middleton! This seemed a fairly foreign concept to Lorne and myself. Dolly said that the best thing about Middleton was the road out of it! Well, I've lived on one road out for 60 years, so maybe it was a compliment! I don't think so! They both were local preachers and eventually deliberately retired to Staindrop, not Middleton! Researching this series of articles, I now begin to appreciate her point of view, albeit one grounded in the past rather than the reality of the present! (I hope!). Our current local preacher, Sheila Walton, is niece of Dolly and Ailie and has lived in Middleton most of her life!

Willy Ritson (William Richardson) was leader of a Middleton based class for several years: "If there be a good Methodist, old Willy Ritson is one!". There is a story about him which does not really match with our sensibilities: The miners had arranged a cockfight in Middleton. Some of the cocks needed to be sent from Manor Gill mine above Newbiggin to Middleton. The miners asked Willy to take the bag, without telling him of the contents. Mid journey Willy discovered what he was carrying, and rather than participate in the setting up of such an evil enterprise, decided to ring the necks of the cocks. He duly delivered his load as promised!

The facts are that persecution of Methodists continued through the second half of the eighteenth century. There is an unsuccessful attempt to give Jacob Rowell a ducking, when brothers James and George Ainsley escort him into Middleton. The experience must not have deterred Jacob too much as in 1762 he is married to Elizabeth Simpson of Swaledale at St Mary's Church. Wesley has a favourable record of his only recorded preaching in Middleton in 1784, though other records suggest that regular preaching in Middleton had been withdrawn through this period owing to the adverse atmosphere. Later, a house near the site of where Middleton House is now, was being used for preaching. Steele records that two curates provide 20 gallons of ale to a group to entice them into 'zeal against innovation'. The preacher was dragged from the house and thrown over the wall. Another time a considerable quantity of water was pumped into the house.

Worm space means we need to cut short before the tide begins to turn in Middleton. A Christian family move into Middleton and the Methodist movement eventually begins to grow. Read the story next month in The Teesdale Worm!

Ian Tallentire

Two events relating to Israel Palestine

Conference “Peace Justice and Reconciliation”

With particular reference to Israel Palestine.

Guest Speakers:

Dn Angleena Kaiser. Methodist Mission Partner - Bethlehem

Rev Dr Nadia Nassar - Director of the Awareness Foundation

Workshop leaders: Rev Dr Inderjit Bhogal, Rev John. Howard



**Methodists for
World Mission**

Methodists for World Mission

Charity No.243221

Friday 9th to Sunday 11th December 2022

Venue: The Hayes Conference Centre Swanwick Derbyshire.

Places available with special offers of low cost

Contact Rev John Howard

john_d_howard@hotmail.com

A Ten Day visit to Israel Palestine.

“Living Christianity in the Holy Land.”

Wednesday January 18th to Monday January 30th

Run through the Methodist Liaison Office Jerusalem
supported by the Methodist Church Global Relationships
Team

Leader: Rev John Howard Former Mission Partner
Bethlehem.

This is an ideal opportunity for a visit to Bethlehem,
Jerusalem, Nazareth and other places in the Holy Land. It's
an experience that you will never forget!

For details contact:

john_d_howard@hotmail.com

Magazine of the Darlington and Teesdale Methodist Circuit

Registered Charity No: 1132005

Circuit Office c/o Elm Ridge Methodist Church, Carmel Road South, Darlington. DL3 8DJ

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