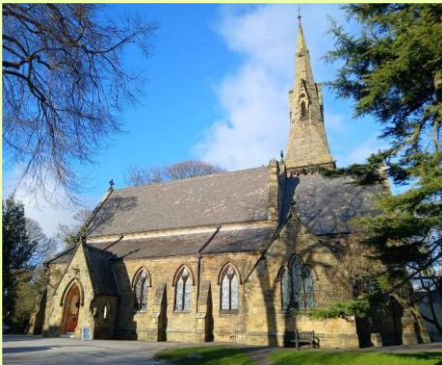


Spire Newsletter

FREE



NEWS FROM THE PARISHES OF
GREAT AYTON WITH EASBY &
NEWTON UNDER ROSEBERRY

ISSUE NO.12:

JULY AND AUGUST 2026



CHRIST CHURCH AT 150 – Our 150th Birthday Celebration

Celia Elliott says that she and everyone enjoyed a fun-filled afternoon of celebration for our 150th birthday on Wednesday 20 May, as you can see from these photos. The children from Marwood School sang beautifully for us and brought happy smiles to all our faces. Rev Sarah led us through an interactive service on our big screen and also involved the children from Marwood and uniformed organisations in a practical demonstration of house building! She took her cue from the parable of the wise man who built his house on rock, and the foolish man who built his house on



sand. When the rain, floods and wind came, the house on sand fell down, but the house built on rock stood firm. To demonstrate the strong foundation needed to build a house or church, Rev Sarah had volunteers making a house of cards, a house built with sand, and a house made with cocktail sticks and jelly babies with hilarious results! It was huge fun to watch and helped us see that our church's strong foundation is not simply in the building itself, but in the people who make up the church.

The short service was followed by a bring-your-own picnic in the church hall where free tea, coffee and squash was served, and the birthday cake (right) which had been ceremoniously cut in church (left) was distributed. There was a really happy atmosphere with many families with young children as well as regular worshippers.

Happy Birthday Christ Church!



Three ladies, whose birthdays fell in the same week, helped Rev Sarah cut the 150th cake.



FROM OUR VICAR:

Dear Friends and Neighbours As I write this there seems to have been a failure to load 'Summer' - it's a bit overcast and far from 'Flaming June'. That has not stopped it being a busy time in the parishes and much activity. In May we kicked off Christ Church's **150th birthday** celebrations with a Family service and picnic (inside the hall due to the weather) but it was sunny smiles all round. Do join in the other events leading up to our Thanksgiving Service on the **Sunday 14th March 2027**, when Bishop Barry will be coming to take the service on the 150th anniversary of the building's consecration.

The day before the service and picnic in May we held the **Memorial Service** for Squadron Leader G. Morley Fidler. You can read more about that in this edition and in other places; it's an amazing and poignant story that took us to a funeral in France and a Memorial 86 years after his tragic death. There are no living descendants from the Fidler family, although some distant family was traced and they attended the Memorial, alongside The Lord-

Lieutenant, dignitaries and RAF personnel. Some may ask why a funeral and service after so long when no friends or family are around to come? The presence of a parish church in every community is a sign that God is present in every community, that the church has something to offer and say in the face of death and bereavement, regardless of the length of time. In a service led by a Christian Minister (whether in Church, graveside or Crematoria) we are doing many things in that service including

- We proclaim Christ's resurrection, testifying to God's victory over death by Jesus rising from the dead that first Easter Day. This points to eternal life and a future bodily resurrection.
- The deceased is commended to God and committed to his loving care.
- It provides a sacred space to grieve surrounded by friends, family and the wider community; providing hope and comfort through prayer, Bible readings and music reminding the bereaved of God's never-ending love and presence with them.

If you live in either of the parishes you can request me or Jon to take a service for your loved one, either in church or at one of the local crematorium chapels. You don't have to have been coming to church, you don't have to have all the bible answers, you or the deceased does not need to have been baptised. If you have questions about death, funerals, what happens and what the options are, or you just want to think about getting some plans in place so you family knows your wishes, why not come along to our **GraveTalk Café on Friday 7th August at 2pm in Christ Church Coffee Lounge**. The Church of England has been helping people think about these big questions for centuries. *GraveTalk* is a café space, organised by a local church, where people can talk about these big questions. The conversation is helped along by *GraveTalk* conversation cards. Events are held across the country, and people of all ages have gathered to talk and share their thoughts about death, dying and funerals helped by the local ministers, Funeral Directors and others. *GraveTalk* is a café – so there is always tea and cake. No need to book and please in the meantime call us to see if we can help, or pray or be a listening ear. We are here to support families in times of joy and in times of grief and everywhere in between.

Blessings - Sarah



“FROM CELEBRITY TO HERO”

That's how Ian Pearce of Great Ayton History Society described Morley Fidler in his interesting and evocative address at Morley's service of remembrance, as he led us from Morley's customary looping-the-loop over our village on his return for leave through to his final flight and death in northern France on 19th May 1940, only to be found still in the cockpit of his Hawker Hurricane fighter plane and only firmly identified by DNA in recent years.

And Rev Sarah, in her sermon, reminded us that 86 years ago a son of this village and a precious child of God, who had been brought to our church by his parents in 1912 and baptised in the font by the then vicar of this parish, lost his life in the defence of freedom and in the hope of peace for all. In interview to Tyne Tees, Sarah said: “Squadron Leader Fidler, alongside so many others, answered the call, served with honour, and gave his life in the service of his nation. I just thought we needed to do something to remember a life lost, but also to remember the shape of this country, which has been made by those communities changed forever by loss of life: children not born, families not happening. He walked these streets. He was baptised in this church. It's really important that we honour him, and that we honour all those who died, whether it was last week or 86 years ago.”



G.M.Fidler is remembered on our church window below our familiar horizon of hills.



Squadron Leader Fidler was buried with full military honours in France at the Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery, Longueval (left), whilst, at the same time, he was being remembered at Christ Church (below).

The service was attended by representatives from RAF Leeming's 607 Squadron and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, Lord-Lieutenant of North Yorkshire Johanna Ropner, as well as pupils from Marwood Infant School and members of the village.



NEWS FROM ST OSWALD'S



Christine Stinson gives us good news from St. Oswald's!

We have been successful in securing a grant to cover the full cost of the work replacing the damaged plaster in the Chancel. The work was completed by Historic Plasterers Ltd. from Northallerton, and the grant was given by Yorkshire Historic Churches Trust. We are very grateful to this organisation for their financial support. Currently the plaster is drying and when completely dry we will paint it to match the existing plaster.



John Stinson, who contributed the article in our last edition about St. Oswald's yew trees, now tells us about some local birds.

ECO CHURCH CONNECTIONS

Although the Christian links between our three local churches have been the foundation of our connections, there are others which link us closely together, the obvious one being the main road, A173. However, there is an even more valuable one that incorporates most aspects of our Eco Church agendas and activities. This connection is the natural, wildlife green corridor of Cliff Ridge and Newton Woods. We share this important wildlife corridor that links our two parishes together and which supports numerous forms of living things. The area also supports us in developing healthy lifestyles in terms of our physical health and mindfulness.

Supporting the needs of all in our woodland are two organisations, the North York Moors National Park and the National Trust. In particular the National Trust designates the greatest proportion of volunteer hours in maintaining footpaths, reducing bracken areas, planting hedge rows, as well as erecting, maintaining and checking 80 bird boxes in Newton and Cliff Ridge woodland.



This nuthatch's nest is made up entirely of oak leaves

The boxes are checked every two weeks from the first week in April until June. It takes about four and a half hours to carry out each check. Last year about 80% of boxes were occupied mostly with blue tits and great tits although there were also boxes with nuthatches and marsh tits. In total we counted over 500 chicks, the largest number in a box being 14 blue tit chicks!

All the recorded data is forwarded annually to the British Trust for Ornithology and the RSPB to add to data from across the country in order to assess the health of the nation's bird population.



Great tit chicks

Although these activities occur outside our church grounds they form an integral part of supporting our local churches Eco agendas and our collective response in supporting the wildlife of our planet. The next time you go for a climb to the summit of Roseberry or jogging or walking through the woodland take time to reflect and consider that you will be sharing your experiences with lots of our native species of wildlife.



withthenorth.org/pilgrim-places

ST. OSWALD'S, A PILGRIM PLACE

On Friday June 5th there was the launch of St. Oswald's as a Pilgrim Place, and, as such, an 'open church'. **The church will now be open each Friday, Saturday and Sunday.** So if you have never been inside St. Oswald's do pop along to Newton under Roseberry and have a look around the church and grounds. Inside the church are information displays relating to the history of the church and grounds and the biodiversity within the grounds. If you have been before, do come again and experience the peace and tranquillity of this beautiful little church hidden behind a busy main road.



ST. OSWALD'S DAY is on WEDNESDAY 5th AUGUST and there will be a service at 4pm in the church led by Rev Sarah.

The young Oswald, son of the pagan Ethelfrid, first king of a united Northumbria, fled to Iona for safety after his father's death in battle, where he was baptised a Christian. Later, as King of Northumbria from 634 until his death in 642, he did much to spread Christianity across Northumbria, giving the island of Lindisfarne to Aidan for his see. Bede considered him a saintly king, recounting his generosity to the poor and to strangers.

ST OSWALD'S DAY PICNIC WILL BE ON SUNDAY 2nd AUGUST, when also the wardens will be presented to the congregation.



CONGRATULATIONS MARWOOD : “OUTSTANDING”

WE'RE ALL VERY PROUD OF YOU!

Why?

*Our local school has reported its recent outstanding success.
Headteacher, Dorothy Walton, shared the good news with *Spire*.*

“Marwood Church of England Infant School is delighted to share the wonderful news that, following its recent SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) inspection, it has been selected by the inspection team as a case study to exemplify outstanding practice for others.

This recognition is a tremendous source of pride for the whole school community and reflects the dedication of staff, pupils, governors and families in living out the school’s Christian vision each day. The inspectors highlighted the nurturing, inclusive ethos and the way in which collective worship, values and relationships with the community are deeply embedded in school life.

Being chosen in this way is both an honour and an encouragement, and the school looks forward to continuing its journey of serving and inspiring others within our wider church family.”

Exciting TRANSFORMING TEESSIDE MISSION



Revs Sarah & Geoff, with Little Fishes Team members Carol, Helen and John, went to the launch of a Bible Society project supporting the churches across the Tees Valley, inviting people to have conversations about the Bible with the Christians they know. This launches with a Teesside wide advertising campaign in September. The Bible Society are committing £400,000 to this local project. You may remember the very successful weekend organised by the churches of Teesside in Stewart Park a couple of years ago.

Our benefice ministry team has asked Geoff to form a small working party to put together proposals on what we could do to equip ourselves as part of this amazing journey.



(Above) Rev Sarah presented *Ynes Clarke* with a bouquet of flowers on her retirement from over 10 years as our *Gift Aid Secretary*.

Also in the picture are husband John and treasurer Ken, who told everyone that, over her period in office, *Ynes* - with help from John on the computer - had recovered over £223,000 from the tax man for church funds!

What a great effort! THANK YOU, INES.

CONCERT AT CHRIST CHURCH
ON 5TH JULY at 3.00 pm

The Angrove Singers
invite you to
**A Miscellany of Melodies
with a Tea Party!**

Sunday 5th July 2026 3.00pm
Christ Church, Great Ayton



Musical Director: **Jeremy Harbottle**
Accompanist: **Jenny Hesford**

Tickets: £12 (Adult) £5 (U18/Student)
From Thompson's Hardware, choir members, ring Barbara
01642 941 732, or on the door (cash or cheque).

Please join us for complimentary tea, coffee
and cake in the Hall after the concert.



**Friday 7th August 2pm –
Christ Church Coffee Lounge**

What is GraveTalk?

For big questions about death, dying and funerals, talking can be invaluable. But how do you start those conversations, and with whom? There are a growing number of café spaces which bring people together to do just that – **GraveTalk**, launched through the Church of England.

It's not easy to think about your own funeral. Talking about death, dying and funerals raises big questions that we need to face at some point, but it's hard to talk to family and friends.

The Church of England has been helping people think about these questions for centuries. **GraveTalk** is a café space, organised by a local church, where people can talk about these big questions. The conversation is helped along by **GraveTalk** conversation cards – questions covering five key areas. People of all ages can gather in a gentle space to talk and share their thoughts about death, dying and funerals. **GraveTalk** is a café – so there is always tea and cake. Helped by local Funeral Directors and others we can gently open up conversations and answer questions – there are no daft questions! Often people have misconceptions or worry about funerals and perhaps we can help to take away the uncertainty and fear.

What happens at a GraveTalk event?

People arriving will be welcomed by the person running the event – it may be the vicar or someone else from the church – and then invited to sit at tables with three or four others. The **GraveTalk** cards will be on the tables, and each group picks a question and uses it to start a conversation. It doesn't matter if you only use one question, or work through all of them! The purpose is to talk and listen. Light refreshments are offered throughout the event, which lasts about an hour, or longer if needed.

Useful links and people to talk to

The Christian faith holds the hope that death is not the end. If this is something you'd like to talk about contact us to see how we can help. Both Rev Sarah and Rev Jon would say helping families in times of bereavement is an honour and never a problem or a burden – it is precious and a privilege to accompany families and friends during and after a loss of a loved one.

GraveTalk helps to begin conversations about death and dying, but if you need more help with grief and loss through trained bereavement counsellors, these are just a few organisations which offer support:

AtaLoss, Cruse, Care for the Family, NHS, Bereavement UK, Child Bereavement Charity.

Child Death Helpline – *there to listen to and support anyone affected by the death of a child*

Grief encounter – *which supports children who have lost someone they love*

SANDS – *Still Birth & Neonatal Death charity*

Winston's Wish – *a charity for bereaved children*

Robin Harmar and Ken Taylor give us an update on our SPIRE REPAIR

The Quinquennial inspection, completed in September 2023, highlighted that much of the pointing on the Spire was in need of remedial work. Following a full inspection by a firm of steeplejacks in 2024, the PCC took the decision to repoint the whole spire as far down as the tower. Taylor Hastwell from County Durham were selected to undertake the work, their CV having included work on Durham Cathedral. Specification for the work was provided by our architect Pearce Bottomley of Tadcaster.

At the time of writing most of the old mortar has been removed and a start has been made on repointing all the joints by just two Steeplejacks working from ropes fixed to the top of the spire. Each ladder currently in place on the spire is fixed to the spire using three bolts, two at the bottom and one at the top. These are then removed and filled on completion leaving no trace. One further ladder has now been fixed to enable work on the weathervane to be undertaken, hopefully later this month - something to watch out for! It is hoped the work will be completed by the end of June but of course that is very weather dependant.

The total cost of the work is £30,500. £9,000 was raised from the Gift Day in 2024 and we were fortunate to receive grants from the Yorkshire Historical Churches Trust, The Benefact Trust, The Jack Brunton Trust, The Garfield Weston Charitable Trust and the Archdeacon's Fund. We are very grateful for the support we have received from these bodies.



A NEW CHURCH? Where did the money come from?

Only a treasurer would think to ask this!

As a follow-up to the article about the birth of Christ Church in the last issue of *Spire*, Ken Taylor, our treasurer, found this interesting copy of Rev Ibbetson's appeal in 1866, showing (right) how successful he was in raising the required funds!

A Subscription for the Rebuilding and Enlargement

OF THE
PARISH CHURCH OF AYTON, IN CLEVELAND,
1866.

The ancient Parish Church in this Village was built, probably, 800 years ago, when the Population was not one tenth of its present number. For some time past there has been an increasing desire among the Poor to avail themselves of the Services of the Church; it therefore needs considerable enlargement, that it may accommodate the Inhabitants who wish to attend it. Many parts of it, through age and damp, are in a state of decay.

It was at first thought that a new Aisle on the North side, affording 80 additional sittings, together with the improvement of the present seats, would be a great benefit. This would have cost about £1100. or £1200.

But on further consideration, it is deemed desirable to rebuild the Church. This has been strongly recommended, by many competent to judge, as the most effectual and satisfactory plan. There is difficulty in combining the new work with the old: and it is desirable that the number of sittings should be in proportion to the population, which is now 1500. It will be seen that with this population there should be accommodation for nearly 500, which can only be obtained by rebuilding. The cost of this would be about £2800.

As it was found impossible to give the New Church the additional width needed, without interfering with several graves, and also rendering the foundations difficult and expensive; it was deemed desirable to obtain a New Site for the Church, as near as possible to the old Burial Ground. Captain Marwood has given a valuable piece of Land for the purpose. But the new roads and fence-walls, and other charges, will obviously add much to the above estimate.

An appeal is therefore made to the Landowners and Inhabitants, and to all others who are interested in the religious welfare of the Parish, for their aid and co-operation. It is felt, even by some of the poor, that while the Village is surrounded by Scenery so lovely and beautiful, the House of God ought to have a corresponding character, such as becomes its sacred purpose.

Subscriptions will be thankfully received by The Rev. J. Ibbetson, Rev. M. Rowntree, and the Churchwardens, Ayton; also, at the Darlington District Bank, and the National Provincial Bank, in Stokesley.

HIS GRACE THE LORD ARCHBISHOP OF YORK, £20.
THE VENERABLE ARCHDEACON CHURTON, £10.

£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.
Captain Marwood	300	0	Mr. Eldon	10	0	W. Whythead, Esq. York	2	0
He will also rebuild the Chancel. Estimated	200	0	H. L. Thornhill, Esq.	5	0	Mr. John Pringle, Sen.	2	0
Isaac Wilson, Esq.	500	0	Mrs. Volland, Hartlepool	5	0	Mr. S. Hunter	2	0
W. R. I. Hopkins, Esq.	100	0	T. Colling, Esq. Guisbro'	5	0	Mr. Kilvington	2	0
Charles Wynne Finch, Esq.	100	0	Rev. Canon Coates, Sowerby	5	0	Rev. C. Bailey, Marton	1	0
George Jackson, Esq.	100	0	R. Simpson, Esq. York	5	0	Mrs. Loy	1	0
A True Friend	100	0	C. Lowther, Esq. Bawtry	5	0	Mr. F. Sanderson, Stockton	1	0
Rev. J. Ibbetson	75	0	Mrs. Russell, Scarborough	5	0	Rev. I. R. Ellis	1	0
James Emerson, Esq.	50	0	R. Burrell, Esq. Durham	5	0	Mrs. Hustler, Acklam Hall	1	0
F. H. Ward Jackson, Esq.	50	0	The Misses Burrell, Do.	5	0	Miss Picketon, London	1	0
Liverpool	50	0	Rev. J. Cartwright, Do.	5	0	Mrs. Mathews, Do.	1	0
Rev. W. V. Harcourt	25	0	Hon. Colonel Duncombe	5	0	Mrs. Taylor, Whitby	1	0
Lord Feversham	25	0	Rev. Canon Hull, Easingcliffe	5	0	Mr. Ord, Guisbro'	1	0
Rev. W. Ward Jackson	25	0	Rev. T. Collins, Ainsrebo'	5	0	Two Friends at Yarn	1	0
Mrs. W. Simpson, York	25	0	J. W. Pense, Esq. M. P.	5	0	Mr. P. Donaldson	1	0
for a Memorial	25	0	Wm. Dunsby, Esq. Whitby	5	0	F. Clough, Esq. Easingwold	1	0
R. Ward Jackson, Esq.	21	0	Thomas Noton, Esq. London	5	0	The Misses Clough, Do.	2	0
Captain Pennyman	20	0	Rev. T. H. Dixon	5	0	Geo. Peirson, Esq. Ormsby	1	0
T. Husler, Esq.	20	0	J. R. Lee, Esq. Birmingham	5	0	Mrs. Hunton, Loftus	1	0
Dr. Ley	20	0	Mr. John Watson	5	0	A Friend, Thirsk	1	0
Leonard Armstrong, Esq.	20	0	The Misses Mello	5	0	Rev. E. Jowett, Do.	1	0
Anonymous	20	0	A Friend	5	0	Mr. Devey	1	0
Mr. John Hebron	20	0	Mr. John Stowepe	5	0	Mr. W. Wetherill	1	0
Rev. G. Nightingale	10	0	Miss E. Martin	5	0	Mr. P. Murray	1	0
Rev. H. J. Duncombe, Ship	10	0	Mr. W. Winn	5	0	Mrs. Biggins	1	0
Widow	10	0	Mrs. Carlen	5	0	Miss A. Watson	1	0
Captain Chaloner, R. N.	10	0	Miss Weatherill	5	0	Mr. W. E. Pratt	0	10
J. T. Wharton, Esq.	10	0	Mrs. Carry	5	0	Mrs. Dunning	0	10
C. F. Hutchinson, Esq.	10	0	Miss Jackson, Stokesley	5	0	Mr. G. Jaques, Stockton	0	10
Mrs. H. Simpson, York	10	0	Mr. Wm. Baskin, Do.	5	0	Mr. G. Bennington, Do.	0	10
Mrs. Fawell, Kessick	10	0	Mr. H. Fawcett, Do.	5	0	Mr. T. Parkinson, Do.	0	10
J. C. Hopkins, Esq. Eldon	10	0	Rev. G. Cator	5	0	Mr. W. Bowman, Leicester	0	10
Rev. M. Rowntree	10	0	R. R. Burgess, Esq. Do.	5	0	Mrs. J. Bowman, Do.	0	10
Miss Hunter	10	0	M. Gilbertson, Esq. Egham	3	0	Mr. John Bennison	0	10
Mr. Joseph Longstaff	10	0	Rev. F. H. Morgan	3	0	Mr. E. West, Kildale	0	10
Mr. John Pringle, Jun.	10	0	Mr. Ed. Barker and family	3	13	Mr. J. Bayne	0	10
Mr. James Milligan	10	0	Rev. F. Barke, Wharfedale	2	0	Mr. Watson	0	10
Mr. William Hauxwell	10	0	Mr. J. Thomson, Harrogate	2	0	Summs under 10s.	2	15
Mr. William Sanderson	10	0	A Friend	2	0			
			E. W. Cropper, Esq.	2	2			

W. F. PRATT, PRINTER, STAMP OFFICE, MARKET PLACE, STOKESLEY.

OUR REGULAR CHURCH SERVICES

Note summer services in All Saints

Christ Church, Great Ayton

Sunday 8.00am Holy Communion (every Sunday)
9:15am Parish Communion (every Sunday)
4:00pm/4.30pm Café Church (2nd & 4th Sundays)

Monday 2:00pm Coffee Lounge Communion (1st Monday)
Tuesday 9:45am Little Fishes (not holidays)

All Saints, Great Ayton

Wednesday 10:00 Holy Communion (BCP) (summer months)
Sunday 6:00pm Taize worship (Jul 5, Aug 2, Sept 6)

St Oswald's, Newton under Roseberry

Sunday 11:00 Holy Communion with hymns (1st & 5th Sun)
11:00 All Age Service (3rd Sunday)

Our website address:

Note that the church is gradually moving our information from our former website to the national CoFE site. <https://www.achurchnearyou.com>

Our Facebook pages:

Christ Church, Great Ayton;
St Oswald's, Newton under Roseberry;
All Saints Church, Great Ayton;
Christ Church Choir, Great Ayton

Little Fishes has a Private Group on Facebook for parents and carers of pre-school children; you can request to join it.

The Adult Discipleship Group has a Private Group.

CONTACT DETAILS

Rev Sarah Cliff 07355 711010

sarah@christchurchgreatayton.onmicrosoft.com

For events and bookings:

Church Office: 01642 722665

gap01876@outlook.com

For Safeguarding issues:

Mary Mason 07788 643930

mary.mason@gmx.co.uk

Church website address:

<https://www.achurchnearyou.com>

THANK YOU to all who contributed articles to *Spire* this month and to Rodney Wildsmith, our photographer. The closing date for sending material to the editor, Stephen Whitehead, at stephen.whitehead1948@gmail.com for the next issue (September) will be 15th August. Have a lovely summer!