

CORBRIDGE MATTERS



December 2023 Issue 74

www.corbridge.ukpc.net

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Council Notes



I have written before about the importance of community and how fortunate we are to live in a village with such a strong community. Corbridge has an older than average population and was disproportionately affected by Covid but the community response to the pandemic was extraordinary. Many people came forward to volunteer for organised activity but most of the responses went unseen – people helping their friends, family and neighbours in any way they could.

My own family and I have experienced first-hand the love and care of our community in recent weeks after we suffered an unimaginable tragedy. Friends and neighbours have supported us in all sorts of ways - with some kind words in a note or a card, with a simple acknowledgement in the street or the post office or with a comforting pan of soup. It has been overwhelming, and we are so happy and privileged to live in a place like this. St. Andrew's Church, at the heart of our community, do so much to support people at times of great sorrow and of great joy. The support we have had from David Kennedy, Linda Hunter and their team has given us strength. Another organisation in our community I have recently had need to use is the Corbridge Medical Centre and my experience has been first class. Corbridge is large enough to benefit from these services but not so big that it has lost its sense of community.

Continuing the community theme, I am pleased that all four community houses bought by the Parish Council recently are now let. There was huge demand from over 200 people for these houses and all four have now been let to people with strong local connections. Riverside Housing are letting or selling the remaining 20 plus 'affordable' houses and they have confirmed to me that they are applying a local lettings policy. There can never be enough social housing in a place like Corbridge where house prices are so high but 15% of the houses in the new development are in this category. I secured a 50% grant from Northumberland County Council to buy the four houses for the Parish and they are now fully paid for and will provide a modest ongoing income stream for the Parish to support local projects.

As ever please contact me on 07779 983742 or nick.oliver24@outlook.com if I can help.

Nick Oliver
(Corbridge County Councillor)

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Cover photo: Former Town Hall / Sycamore Restaurant

I am delighted to report the completion of the restoration of the pavilion at Corchester Field. Our contractor, Andrew Robinson & Sons, has done a magnificent job. There is a difference between conventional building work - which is necessary and good in itself - and artisanship. The care, precision and dedication which Andrew and his team have shown throughout on this project is a fine example of the latter.

This is the type of community action I really believe in and, for the record, it's worth outlining some details of the restoration. The load-bearing roof timbers - being in reasonable condition - were retained and new boards were introduced where necessary. The existing Victorian slates were carefully removed and re-used although, due to the loss of some, the rear section is comprised of additional reclaimed slate. Similarly, reclaimed ridge tiles were purchased to match the originals. The external decorative cornice was completely rotten and has been replaced with newly fabricated softwood sections to the same design.

A highlight of the scheme is the introduction of structural Victorian cast iron pillars which give the pavilion the look of a bandstand. The pillars were obtained from a local architectural salvage supplier and, we understand, originated at the old Hexham Cattle Mart. The cast iron guttering has also been replaced and painted black to match. Internally, new seating has been constructed in brick with lime mortar and topped with thick slate sections reclaimed from an old snooker table. Who knew they'd end up there? Watch out for before and after photos in the next (February) edition of Corbridge Matters.

While the above is so positive, I'm disappointed to see vandalism and persistent littering at some of the Parish Council's other facilities. The play areas adjacent to the Parish Hall, at the Chains and at The Riggs have been subject to both. Can I ask all members of the public to be alert to these things. Deliberate vandalism of the new fencing at The Riggs has been a particular problem. If you see who is responsible please inform the police.

The preparation of the planning application for the Market Place scheme has been delayed due to the illness of a key team member but I hope to report on progress very soon.

I wish everyone all the best for the run up to Christmas.

William Clouston
(Corbridge Parish Council Chairman)

Corbridge Parish Council next meets at 7pm on Wednesday December 20 and January 24 in the Parish Hall, St Helen's Street, Corbridge.

**Clerk of the Council: Mrs Mandy Senior
07950 297634**



CHRISTMAS in CORBRIDGE



St Andrew's Church, Corbridge

Christmas Tree Festival 2023

Friday December 1st to Tuesday December 5th inclusive

Opening Times

| | | |
|----------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Friday | 1 st December | 9.30am to 6.30pm |
| Saturday | 2 nd December | 9.30am to 6.30pm |
| Sunday | 3 rd December | 11.30am to 5.00pm |
| Monday | 4 th December | 9.30am to 8.00pm |
| Tuesday | 5 th December | 9.30am to 5.00pm |

Twinkling Corbridge 2023

Village shops will be open for late night festive shopping on Monday December 4th when Hexham Brass & the Prudhoe Gleemen Choir will be among those performing in St Andrew's Church Yard.

The Christmas Tree Festival is open until 8pm (last entry) that night. Also see our acclaimed Corbridge Christmas Lights!

Christmas In Corbridge 2023

Corbridge twinkles even brighter at Christmas with the **St Andrew's Church Christmas Tree Festival** attracting several thousand visitors over five days. This year from Friday December 1st to Tuesday December 5th inclusive. There is a late night opening until 8pm (last entry) on the Monday with community carol singing inside the church at 5pm that day. The Middle School choir will then be singing in the church yard at 6pm followed by festive music in the same outside location from Hexham Brass and The Prudhoe Gleemen choir. See the poster on this page for details with further 'Notice Board' information on Pg 8 of this edition. Meanwhile Tynedale Hospice at Home is hosting a very special **Festive Charity Pop Up Shop** in the Corbridge Community Hub (former Methodist Church) in Princes Street. Good quality pre-loved clothing and nearly new toys will be on sale alongside Christmas cards, 2024 Diaries and refreshments, including homemade cakes. This event, in collaboration with the Corbridge Community Partnership, will be open from 10am to 4pm on Saturday December 2nd and from 1pm to 8pm on Monday December 4th. Santa will be making a special appearance at this Hub event between 11am and 3pm on the Saturday and 4pm to 8pm on the Monday and every child will get something to take home.



A Real Buzz

At Corbridge CofE First School

If you ask any of our wonderful pupils, they will tell you that every day we strive to be the best we can be. We have recently taken this to the next level by establishing a colony of 'be the best you can be bees!' Our children are able to help with the care of the bees in our specially tailored bee-keeping suits and we cannot wait to taste the first jar of honey. This is such a wonderful opportunity to learn about sustainability and where food comes from and - along with our allotment and chickens that were hatched this year - we have so much wonderful produce for the kitchen to use.

Our Nursery children love being outdoors. As a proud provider of Forest School, we have timetabled sessions for all of our children, including Nursery. The site has developed massively this year and we now have a mud kitchen, hammock area and tree swing along with the fire circle. We even managed to cook our very first batch of fire-top pizzas in our new oven. Everyone agreed they were delicious.

This year has brought significant sporting success for our children. Our Year 4s travelled to Morpeth to compete in the regional final for athletics. In June all of the children in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 travelled to Corbridge Cricket Club to compete against their friends from Broomhaugh First School in a friendly tournament. It was a glorious, sunny day and we saw some incredible batting and fielding skills on display. We have also attended skipping festivals and taken part in karate sessions in school - phew! One of the biggest events of the year is our STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) fortnight. Each class is immersed in a topic for two weeks, with classrooms transformed and costumes strongly encouraged. Nursery and Reception had the biggest shock: something big (really big) had managed to get in their classroom and make such a mess! The intrepid dinosaur explorers got straight on the case. Across EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage), they completed dinosaur maths (counting and problem solving), constructed volcanoes, made dinosaur fossil biscuits and even used chemistry to make fizzy dinosaur eggs that hatch in water. Year 1 travelled under the sea with the Octonauts, Year 2 designed a Formula 1 race car, Year 3 entered a Jedi training facility and Year 4 received their letters from Hogwarts and an urgent request to design a mandrake silencer. Throughout the week we were supported by families working in the STEM industry as well as Professor Brainstorm and Technology Tom. October was Black History Month and all of the children have been learning about the inspirational men and women throughout history who have changed the world for the better. Kema Kay took a break from touring, 'I, Daniel Blake' and popped in to conduct a forum theatre activity centred around racism. He left the children astonished after performing a rap for them in assembly about his experiences with discrimination and really brought their learning and discussions to life.

Music has been a huge priority for us this year. Our Nursery and Reception children have weekly singing sessions with Mr. Reed, a local musician. He is also teaching our Year 2 children to play the ukulele. In March we held our very first Spring Music Concert to showcase this talent and the children treated us to a performance of 'Three Little Birds' by Bob Marley, played on the ukulele and signed while singing using Makaton. We also have so many talented children who played guitar and violin on the stage. The newly established school choir also performed for the first time and loved it.

Looking ahead, we are busy scheduling the many wonderful activities that take place in the run-up to Christmas. The children will be singing at Charlotte Straker, taking part in the Christmas Tree Festival at St. Andrew's Church and also performing to families, both in school and at church. The Ministry Team are always such a wonderful support at this time and really help to make it a memorable and special period for us all.

If you would like to keep up with everything that is happening at school, our Twitter / X account is @CorbridgeFirst and we regularly update our school website.

Mrs Suzanne Hart, Executive Headteacher





Corbridge Table Tennis Club

New members are very welcome at Corbridge Table Tennis Club. From beginners to those with some experience. We meet at 7pm on Wednesday nights in the main hall at Corbridge Middle School. (Note: We will not be meeting on December 27th or January 3rd) It's a very friendly and sociable club with table tennis bats provided if you don't have one. If you are interested in coming along please contact Richard Rayfield on 01434 633092 or via email to: richard.rayfield@talktalk.net







St. Andrew's Church, Corbridge

Christmas Services 2023

Sunday 17th December

10:00am Holy Communion
4:00pm River at Christmas our informal gathering for all ages (45 mins.)
6:00pm Evening Prayer

Thursday 21st December

7:00pm Carols for AH in the Churchyard: Come and sing popular carols in the open air with Brass ensemble. (45 mins)

Christmas Eve

10:00am Parish Communion (with hymns)
2:00pm Crib Service: An invitation to families to participate in the wonderful Christmas Story portrayed through the crib characters in the wooden stable.
6:30pm Festival of Lessons and Carols with Candlelight.
11:00pm Midnight Communion

Christmas Day

8:00am Holy Communion
9:00am Holy Communion at Helton
10:00am All Age Family Communion

Corbridge Methodists

Thursday December 14 at 10am: Carol Service at St Andrew's Church.

Thursday October 26 at 10am: Service at St Andrew's Church.

Tynedale Christian Ministries

Welcome to our Christian Church at Corbridge Parish Hall.

Each Sunday 10:30 Coffee followed by 11:00 Service Ring 633532

Weekly House Groups

Follow us on Facebook – Tynedale Christian Ministries

NOTICE BOARD

All listings on this page and in the Parish Hall diary are subject to change.

St Andrew's Church Choir invites tenors and basses to join the choir for the Christmas Eve Carol Service. For further information please contact Colin Williams on 07798844789 or colin.williams46@outlook.com

Tea and Chat: This informal social gathering meets at 2pm on **Wednesdays December 13th, January 10th and 24th** and then continues in 2024 as usual on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month at the Corbridge Community Hub (former Methodist Church building) in Princes Street. All are welcome to come along, have homemade cake, tea or coffee and to join in the conversation.

Corbridge Film Nights: Films are shown in Corbridge Parish Hall. Doors open 7pm. Film starts 7:30pm. Please pay on the door (£5, cash only please) **Sunday December 17th: Winners.** 2022, Iran, 85 mins. Director Hassan Nazer. **Sunday January 21st: Broker.** 2022, South Korea, 129 mins. Director Hirokazu Kore-eda.

Corbridge Heritage Centre: Located at the Corbridge Community Hub (former Methodist Church building) in Princes Street. Open between 11am and 3pm on Saturday December 2nd and 10am to 8pm on **Monday December 4th.** Both to coincide with the Tynedale Hospice at Home Festive Charity Pop Up Shop on those two days in the Hub building and the St Andrew's Church Christmas Tree Festival. The Heritage Centre will subsequently open from 10am to 2pm on **Tuesday December 5th, Thursday December 7th and Saturday December 9th** before closing over the Christmas and New Year period. It will reopen on **Saturday January 6th** when winter hours will begin from 11am to 2pm on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. Walk down the alley to the left of the building and enter via the green door on the left at the end of that lane. A friendly team of local volunteers staff the centre and would be delighted to see you. Admission is free.



St. Andrew's Church Christmas Tree Festival 2023

Opening Times

Friday Dec 1st 9am - 6:30pm

Noon - 4pm Carol singers

4:30pm The Hex Pistols - vocal group

Saturday Dec 2nd 9:30am - 6:30pm

10am - 2pm Carol singers

3pm Community Carol Singing (to join in)

Sunday Dec 3rd 10am Parish Communion Service

11:30am Festival open until 5pm

12:15 - 1pm The Wildflowers - vocal group

1pm to 2:30pm 'Belles Up' Horns for Christmas

Carols and Christmas tunes arranged for French Horns

3pm Community Carol Singing (to join in)

Monday Dec 4th 9:30am - 8pm

Noon - 4pm Carol singers

5pm Community Carol Singing (to join in)

Tuesday Dec 5th 9:30am - 5pm

1pm - 3pm 'Christmas Bells' - duo Caroline Guirr (piano) and Helen Walker (Trumpet / French Horn) with a selection of jazzy and classical Christmas Music.

Refreshments will be served between 10am and 4pm



Corbridge Parish Hall December 2023

| Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat | Sun |
|---|--|----------------------------------|---|---|---|--|
| 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 16:00 - 17:30 Zumba Kids | 09:00 - 10:00 Zumba Class | 10:30 - 15:30 KSA Painters | 09:00 - 10:00 Zumba Class | 09:30 - 11:30 Corbridge Badminton | 10:00 - 14:00 Indoor Market | 10:00 - 14:30 Tynedale Christian Ministries |
| 19:00 - 22:00 Corbridge Bridge Club | 13:00 - 16:00 Corbridge Bridge Club - Chicago | 16:30 - 20:50 Private Booking | 10:30 - 12:30 Charlie's Choir | 13:30 - 14:30 Line Dancing & Spiral Pilates | 16:00 - 23:45 Big Night Out - CY/CS Fundraiser | |
| | 19:00 - 21:00 Corbridge Carpet Bowls Club | | 19:30 - 21:30 Piper Badminton | 17:00 - 19:00 Karate | | |
| | | | | 19:30 - 21:30 Private Booking | | |
| 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 13:00 - 16:00 Corbridge WI | 09:00 - 10:00 Zumba Class | 10:30 - 15:30 KSA Painters | 09:00 - 10:00 Zumba Class | 09:30 - 11:30 Corbridge Badminton | 19:30 - 21:30 Tynedale Country Dancing | 10:00 - 14:30 Tynedale Christian Ministries |
| 16:00 - 17:30 Zumba Kids | 13:00 - 16:00 Corbridge Bridge Club - Chicago | 16:30 - 20:50 Private Booking | 10:30 - 12:30 Charlie's Choir | 13:30 - 14:30 Line Dancing & Spiral Pilates | | |
| 19:00 - 22:00 Corbridge Bridge Club | 19:00 - 22:00 Corbridge Carpet Bowls Club | | 19:30 - 21:30 Piper Badminton | 17:00 - 19:00 Karate | | |
| | | | | | | |
| 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| 16:00 - 17:30 Zumba Kids | 09:00 - 10:00 Zumba Class | 10:30 - 15:30 KSA Painters | 09:00 - 10:00 Zumba Class | 09:30 - 11:30 Corbridge Badminton | 09:00 - 14:00 Children's Party | 10:00 - 14:30 Tynedale Christian Ministries |
| 19:00 - 22:00 Corbridge Bridge Club | 13:00 - 16:00 Corbridge Bridge Club - Chicago | 16:30 - 20:50 Private Booking | 10:30 - 12:30 Charlie's Choir | 13:30 - 14:30 Line Dancing & Spiral Pilates | | 18:30 - 22:00 Corbridge Film Nights |
| | 19:00 - 21:00 Corbridge Carpet Bowls Club | | 19:30 - 21:30 Piper Badminton | 17:00 - 19:00 Karate | | |
| | | | | | | |
| 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 19:00 - 22:00 Corbridge Bridge Club | 09:00 - 10:00 Zumba Class | 10:30 - 15:30 KSA Painters | 09:00 - 10:00 Zumba Class | | | 10:00 - 14:30 Tynedale Christian Ministries |
| | 13:00 - 16:00 Corbridge Bridge Club - Chicago | | 10:30 - 12:30 Charlie's Choir | | | |
| | 19:00 - 21:00 Corbridge Carpet Bowls Club | | 12:45 - 14:00 Guide Dog Puppy Class | | | |
| | | | 19:30 - 21:30 Piper Badminton | | | |



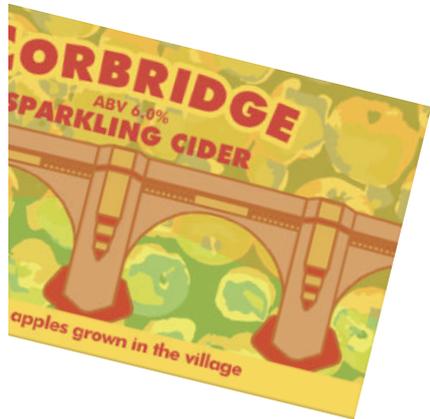
Corbridge Crush Hour

One of the sparkling highlights of the year is set to be a fruitful success for four Corbridge good causes. The 2023 Apple Pressing Weekend at the cricket club was a wonderful community event involving both those who donated and picked apples plus others who helped wash, pulp and press them into over 2000 litres of juice. That was then transported to Stu Brew - Europe's first student run microbrewery based at the University of Newcastle - to be turned into Corbridge Lightly Sparkling Apple Juice and, for the first time, Corbridge (Dry) Sparkling Cider. The third year of the project, run by registered charity the Corbridge Community Partnership (CCP), is aimed at raising funds for the Charlotte Straker Project, Corbridge Youth Initiative, Corbridge Cricket Club's new practice nets appeal and the CCP. With thanks also to the Almasty Brewing Co in Walkergate for their help with the canning and labelling and the Hadrian Border Brewery in Newburn for their continued support.

330ml cans of Corbridge Lightly Sparkling Juice and Corbridge (Dry) Sparkling Cider are now on sale (while stocks last). The apple juice costs £2 per can or £24 for a box of 12 while the cider is £3 a can or £36 for a box of 12. Both products are also available in boxes of 24. You must be 18 or over to buy / order the cider. They can be bought initially at a pop up shop in Market Place during the St Andrew's Church Christmas Tree Festival. Free delivery is also available within a five mile radius of Corbridge for purchases of a box of 12 cans or more. To order please contact John Maude at: johnmaude100@gmail.com or 07791 590814 or Maurice Hodgson at: maurice.hodgson@btinternet.com or 07940 709636.

Mulled Cider or Apple Juice: Warm a litre of cider or apple juice gently with a stick of cinnamon, a few cloves, a small piece of root ginger (or pinch of powdered ginger), and a pinch of grated nutmeg. Simmer gently for about 10 minutes, do not allow to boil. Add the juice of half a lemon, and sugar to taste.







A Year In Review At Corbridge Middle School

Well, 2023 has been an incredible year. We have been able to engage in so many wonderful opportunities and activities. This year has not only been exciting for the students and the staff but also our families and our community as we opened our doors for many different public events. There have been many achievements throughout this year, too many to mention, but here are a few highlights which we are incredibly proud of.

We started the year in **January** with two of our Youth Parliament members presenting at the Holocaust Memorial Day. This was an incredibly poignant day and we were so incredibly honoured to be part of this. Next year we will be performing a piece of sensitive and thought provoking drama as part of the memorial day. We are once again so proud to be able to represent our school and local community at this county wide event.

February saw our students participate in a range of sporting events, most notably at the Northumberland County Athletic Championships which was a superb achievement.

March was World Book Day and the children and staff all made a sterling effort with their costumes this year. We also had our Year 5 residential to Kingswood which was such a wonderful opportunity for our new Year 5s - team building, friendship making and resilience were the achievements of the week.

In **April**, we were joined by author Mark Ballabon who spoke to us about his new book 'Home' and the narrative around sustainability and climate awareness - this was a great experience for our children.

In **May** a huge number of our students entered the Corbridge Coronation Bake Off and we were lucky enough to have some winners in different categories. The cakes looked amazing and the creativity on show was superb. Our Year 6 students also completed their SATs exams this month and we were so proud of their resilience - what a remarkable achievement from everyone. We ended the month with our Year 6 residential to Shropshire and our Year 7 residential to Ford Castle, which were enjoyed by all.

June was an exciting month for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) activities and we hosted a fancy dress day to raise money and awareness of biodiversity as part of Great Big Green Week. We were also joined by The Common Room who hosted some incredible workshops on geology. One of our Year 8 students also won The Big Bang Junior Science Award for their project on bird food. June was also a big month for the arts as we returned to public performances post-Covid. This year we performed Disney's Beauty and The Beast Jnr and William Shakespeare's Macbeth. Both performances were an absolute delight and the children enjoyed being a part of these wonderful experiences. In total over 120 students were involved across both projects.

July saw our Year 8s prepare to leave CMS and transition to high school. We finished the school year with an amazing residential to London, filled with theatre trips, football tours, wonderful food and lots of laughs. Our leavers assembly made sure our Year 8s left with wonderful memories and a real air of celebration. Finally we ended the year with our Young Green Briton Challenge Team being announced as winners at the London finals earning £1000 to take their 'fast fashion' project forward. What a summer term.

We started **September** with a real bang, having had a bit of a makeover during the summer holidays. We opened up with a brand new porch to welcome visitors to the school and some fantastic design work to internal and external areas to reflect our school's core values of respect, resilience, responsibility, care and pride. It was such a lovely surprise for staff, students and families following the summer break. September also saw us awarded Eco Schools Green Flag Status with distinction for our diligent and thoughtful work on sustainability and the environment. Talk about hitting the track running!

October saw our school community pull together to collect a wonderfully generous harvest collection for the West Northumberland Food Bank. We were so pleased to be able to support our local community in such challenging times.

We are looking forward to our Creative Christmas Showcase in **December**, as well as our first Christmas disco for Key Stage 2. In the New Year, we look forward to four more wonderful residential with the children, a new Shakespeare performance and our school play.

We do hope you can join us for some of our events in 2024 - more details will be available on our Twitter / X page @CorbridgeMiddle

Headteacher: Mrs Adele Brown

It's A Sign



WELCOME TO CORBRIDGE

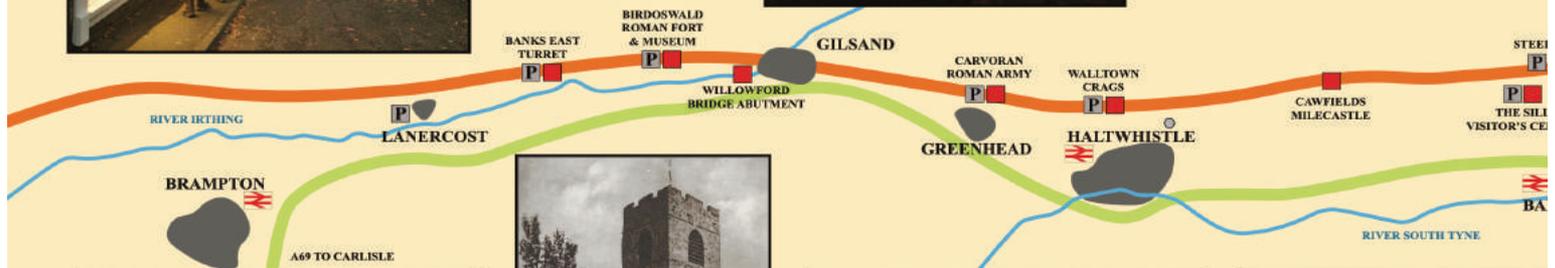
The Romans built a town where their North-South Dere Street crossed the River Tyne and met the East-West Stanegate three miles south of Hadrian's Wall. The site, deserted by AD 400, was excavated in the early 1900s. The Saxons built their town of Corbridge a mile to the east and the tower and parts of St Andrew's church, dating from 674, still stand. The settlement grew rapidly so that by 1295, with its four churches and medieval bridge, it was the second most prosperous and wealthiest town in Northumberland. That changed the following year when it was sacked by the Scots and it took several centuries to recover. Many present day houses in the streets radiating from the Market Place date back to the early 1700s. Growth accelerated after the opening of the railway, one of the first in the world for passengers, in 1835. A view of Middle Street in 1900 shows very little change to that of today in shop frontages. It has been this ability to retain its 'old fashioned' appearance and its resistance to modern change and in providing quality of both goods and service in its specialist shops and places to eat and drink that has made it such a popular place to live and visit. Corbridge's history is described in a new Heritage Centre which opened in 2023.



LEFT
The Black Bull in Middle Street
RIGHT
Bridge House from the River Tyne



LEFT
The Vicar's Pole and Tower Lane
RIGHT
Corbridge from Prospect Hill



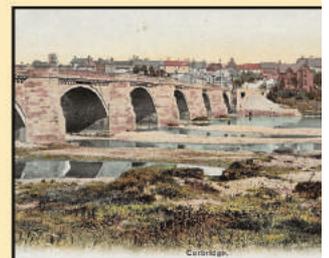
Hill Street and Town Hall Building 1907



The King's Oven and Saxon church tower 1900



The Angel Inn and Middle Street 1944



Bridge over the River Tyne from the South



The latest new signage was installed at Corbridge Station recently as part of continuing improvements. The large sign on the Newcastle bound platform involved work in partnership by Northern, ISS, the Friends of Corbridge Station, Visit Corbridge, Corbridge Community Partnership, the Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership, David Waugh, John Holmes and Sign & Design. Sign present day photos by Ian Wylie with the historic scenes taken from the Corbridge Heritage Centre Vintage Postcard collection.

GE – A BRIDGE TO HADRIAN'S WALL



LEFT
St Andrew's Church



RIGHT
Monks Holme in Main Street



LEFT
The Pele Tower



RIGHT
The Roman Town Excavations



RIGHT
Bridge over the River Tyne built in 1674



KEY

- Hadrian's Wall
- Main Road A69
- Rivers
- Roman Sites
- P Parking
- Railway Station

Map & Design by David Waugh
Present day photos by Ian Wylie
Printed & fabricated by Sign & Design

jessie juniper

Cut Loose
Mama B
Sahara
Fly London
Privatsachen
Grizas
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by local artist M J Forster



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📷 [m_j_forster](https://www.instagram.com/m_j_forster)

Farewell Brown Owl

Tributes were paid to Linda Hunter when she recently retired as Brown Owl of the 1st Corbridge Brownies after almost 46 years as leader. Only the third person to hold that position in the history of the group dating back to 1922. Linda's journey in Girl Guiding began long before her leadership role in Corbridge, when 58 years ago, as a seven year old, she made her Brownie promise. She achieved her Queen's Guide Award in 1974 and two years later was already serving as a Young Leader. A farewell event at the Corbridge Community Hub heard that one of the most memorable moments in Linda's guiding journey was the visit of Princess Margaret to Wallsend in 1996. Linda was one of a select few who met the, then, Queen's sister.

Not only did Linda serve as a leader, but she also held pivotal roles in guiding leadership in the county. In the early 2000s, she was the Leadership Coordinator, responsible for shaping future leaders. Prior to that, she served as, District Commissioner, Division Commissioner, Pack Holiday Adviser, Chair of Programme and Training and was a Trainer for the North East Region from 1988 where her background as a teacher and head of the junior department at Central Newcastle High School - now the Newcastle High School for Girls - prepared her well.

Linda has not been the only Hunter to support Girl Guiding. Her father, Harold, a former scouter, served as the Chair of the Whittonstall Holiday House Committee for many years, demonstrating the strong guiding spirit that ran in the Hunter family. Her mother Joan was a member of the Trefoil Guild whose members recently shared their memories of Linda. One lady described Linda with a single word, "inspirational", and shared many fond memories of their time with her.

Joanne Lynn, Division Commissioner for Tynedale East, told the event: "Linda, on behalf of the entire division and the Girl Guiding community, I want to express our heartfelt gratitude for your years of unwavering dedication, your leadership, and your tireless commitment to shaping the lives of young girls in our community. Your legacy will continue to inspire us, and though you may be moving into a new chapter of your life as a Reverend, your guiding spirit will always be with us."



Forum Books

Hello Readers

We have, not surprisingly, accumulated a great many Christmas cook books over the last decade. Our shelves creak with offerings from all of the big names, your Slaters and Lawsons; as well as lesser known gems from the likes of Gizzi Erskine and Donna Hay. We also have the Do Ahead Christmas, two Scandi ones and Easy Vegan Christmas.

But the one we reach for first - as the decorations are going up, as those halls are decked - is Delia Smith's Christmas, published back in 1990 by BBC Books. The book is well worn, the spine cracked and the pages tacky. There are pencil scrawlings in some of the margins ("half this amount!"). Sub-titled 130 Recipes for Christmas ... it has all of the big guns: Christmas puds and mince pies, cold cuts and roasted meats, pickles and chutneys. It also has - tucked discreetly away on page 93, with no illustration - an unassuming recipe for vegetarian sausage rolls. Just some cheese, breadcrumbs and thick cream essentially. Pinch of mustard powder and cayenne...a scattering of chives. But that recipe - and those daft wee veggie sausage rolls - are a big part of the festive season for me. It's a family tradition. It's Proustian. One bite and - as Noddy Holder may bellow - it's Christmas. We all have our seasonal traditions. Might be a bracing winter walk (Pennypie for us, then a toastie at the cafe), the Christmas Tree Festival at St Andrew's Church (this year's Forum tree is inspired by **Stars & Snowflakes** by **Jennie Lantz and Cecilia Möller Kirchsteiger**); it could be a particular carol service you love, the place you get your tree, or the quiet treat of a new book.

Across the literary pages it is, of course, the tradition to round up your favourite books of the year. And perhaps inspire some last minute book gifting. So, in that tradition, here are a few of our 2023 favourites. For the crime lover, a debut called **Kala** by **Colin Walsh**, in which old friends reunite and uncover a decade old mystery; it has notes of *The Secret History*. Many YA (Young adult fiction) gems this year, among them **Finding Phoebe** by **Gavin Extence**, an enchanting tale with an inch-perfect depiction of neurodiversity. If there are any history buffs or cycling enthusiasts in the family, you must get them **1923** by **Ned Boulting**; the story of an obsession, it's part detective story and part cycling adventure that begins with a chance purchase from a London auction house.

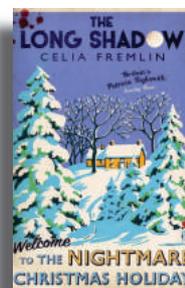
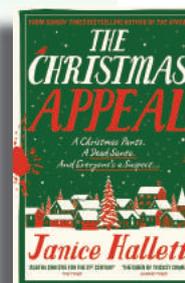
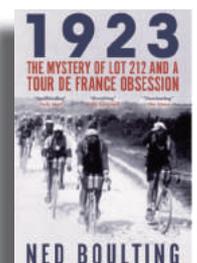
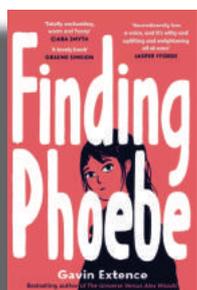
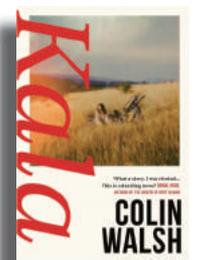
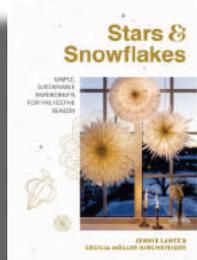
And the chilly months are perfect for a cold case of murder with **Janice Hallett's The Christmas Appeal** - one dead Santa and a town full of suspects. **Celia Fremlin's The Long Shadow** promises a classy, spine tingling mystery from Britain's Patricia Highsmith and **Winter Spirits** by **Bridget Collins** and 11 other award winning authors is a vibrant collection of haunting stories, a perfect companion for frosty nights that will take you from a haunted Tuscan villa to a remote Scottish island with a dark secret.

And So This Is Christmas... with his signature wit, **Brian Bilston** returns with 51 poems in celebration of all things festive, from bizarre family traditions to the office Christmas party; from voting day for turkeys to the impossible art of gift giving.

So hang your stockings, grab your mistletoe and curl up with this heartwarming collection of Christmas crackers. And have a very Merry one from your friends at FORUM Books!

Happy reading!

Helen





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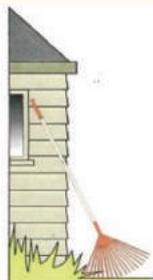
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Poppy Appeal 2023

The Corbridge branch of the Royal British Legion attracted many customers during this year's Poppy Appeal. Photos of the Armistice Day Service at the Market Place Lych Gate and the Remembrance Sunday parade through the village to the Civic Service at St Andrew's Church will appear in the next - February - edition.

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The Northern Lights over Corbridge last month (November) as seen looking from Prospect Hill. With the red dot lights of the Bingfield Transmitter mast on the horizon. (Image: Ian Wylie)



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