

HOLY CROSS CHURCH, HALTWHISTLE

OUR CHURCH PROFILE 2019



OUR MISSION STATEMENT IS THAT

Our Church is a place of love and learning, of holiness and hospitality, of friendliness and fellowship, of mission and outreach and a place of generosity and goodness.

TOGETHER WE CAN AND WITH GOD'S HELP WE WILL

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Our profile has been written to give the reader a snapshot of who we are. We hope you will enjoy reading it.

HOLY CROSS CHURCH



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OUR BENEFICE

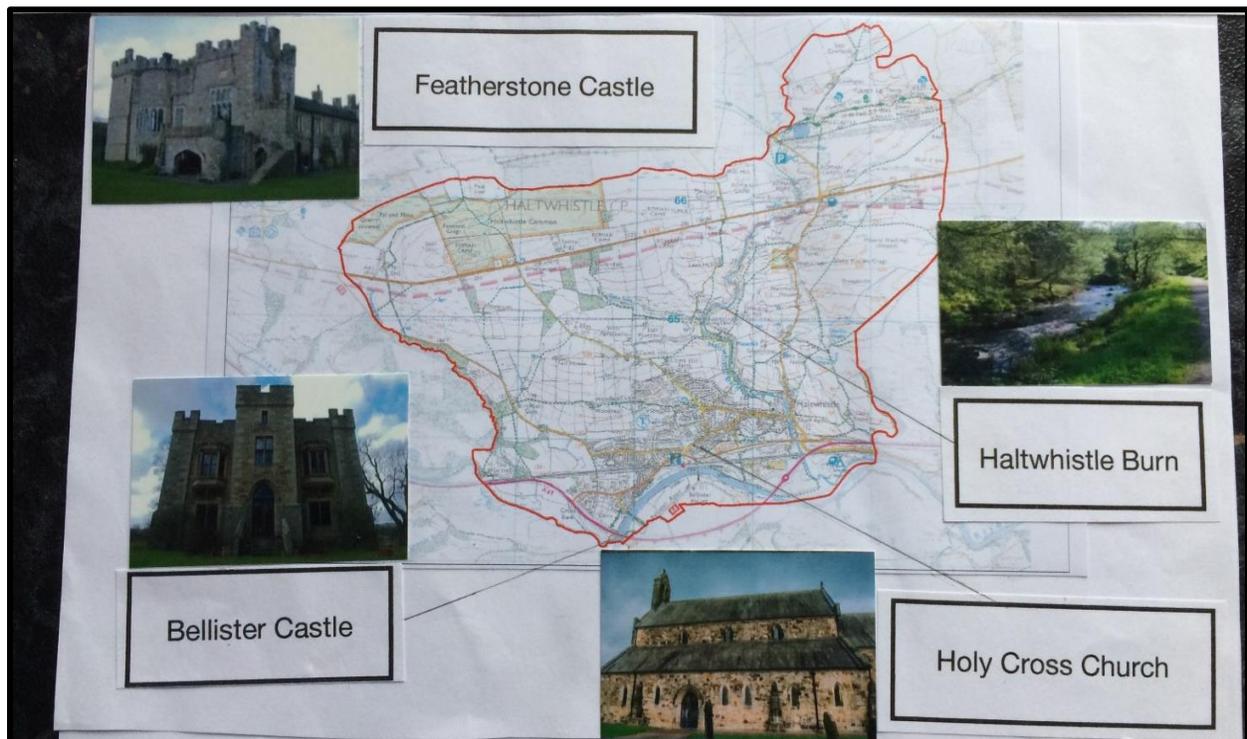
Holy Cross, Haltwhistle & St Cuthbert's Greenhead

Post Town is HALTWHISTLE

HALTWHISTLE:
POSTCODE DISTRICT is NE49

DIALING CODE is 01434

- Haltwhistle, which has existed since Roman Times is a small town and civil parish in Northumberland, 36 miles west of Newcastle and 21 miles east of Carlisle, near Hadrian's Wall.
- The 2011 Census shows a population of 3811. Haltwhistle maintains an active Town Council which has succeeded in making a number of local improvements.
- The town is in the parliamentary constituency of Hexham.
- Haltwhistle railway station is on the Newcastle and Carlisle Railway known as the Tyne Valley Line.
- Haltwhistle parish comprises the townships of Bellister, Coanwood (East), Featherstone, Haltwhistle, Melkridge and Plenmeller.



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*Welcome to the parish profile
Of Holy Cross Church, Haltwhistle*

Thank you for your interest in Holy Cross Church, Haltwhistle and St Cuthbert's Church Greenhead. Whilst this Profile will focus on Holy Cross Church you can also read the Profile of St Cuthbert's which is also available on our website.

Whilst the Churches are quite different in many ways, they are very supportive of each other and produce a joint monthly Magazine and have two joint PCC meetings each year. This website has been a joint venture between the two churches.

The Benefice is currently in a period of interregnum having been without a Priest since September 2018. We are all looking forward to the appointment of a new Priest so we can continue to move forward and grow in numbers as well as depth of personal discipleship. We are looking forward to working with our new Priest to build on what we have already achieved, meet new challenges and move to the next phase of our journey.

We hope you enjoy reading our profile and maybe one day you will get the opportunity to visit our beautiful church.

Best wishes from the team at Holy Cross.

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OUR HISTORY

Our Christian journey ...

Our story begins

Huatweutl (the high place between the two waters – the Tippalt and Haltwhistle Burn) is situated in the Tyne Gap – the link between east and west sides of the North Pennines which had been created when the glaciers on the High Pennines formed the South Tyne and flowed north until it hit the hard rock of the Whincill and turned east to flow into the sea. It is also where the pre-Roman Maidenway (the road that brought lead out of the North Pennines) meets the Ulster to Tyneside Stanegate – the itinerant preachers' road which runs parallel to Hadrian's Wall. The road was probably used by St Patrick, St Cuthbert and St Paulinus who would camp and preach at gatherings at Bewcastle and Simonburn and maybe Haltwhistle.

KEY FACT

While there is evidence of Christian gatherings on this route during the Roman occupation there is also evidence of pre-Christian burials in the 7th Century in the valley just north of Haltwhistle at Wydon Eals.

And our Story continues Between the dark ages and Medieval times cross border relations were reasonable and farming quite prosperous. Haltwhistle grew into an important centre where the surrounding population could exchange goods and small businesses developed including woollen products. King John considered it important enough to grant a charter to hold a market and shortly after this the monks of Arbroath built the church. This peaceful period was destroyed by Edward (the Hammer of the Scots). He spent about 6 months with his retinue at Lanercost in 1312 (on his way he stopped at Braidley Farm) taking much of the produce of the farms in the Tyne Gap to feed his army).



The next 300 years...

The Border Country was overtaken by plagues, Border Reivers and religious conflicts – Bishop Ridley from Willimoteswick was burnt at the stake by Bloody Mary for his Protestant beliefs and in the 1580's Haltwhistle was razed to the ground by the Armstrongs in a feud with the Riddleys. The town featured in a number of border tales the most famous being "The Fray of Haltwhistle 1597"

The Jacobean period brought some peace and many of the farms and Bastles up the valley were improved.

In the 17th and 18th Centuries Haltwhistle isolated itself from the Cromwellian Civil War and '15 and '45 Jacobite Rebellions.

A lot of new farms were developed out of the Enclosure Acts during the prosperous years of the Napoleonic Wars and it is noticeable that a number of farms were named after Napoleonic War Battles.

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HALTWHISTLE'S MAIN PERIOD OF GROWTH

This came with the railways in the 1850's which enabled the Haltwhistle coal and North Pennine lead to be sold to a wider industrially developing world

RESTORATION OF THE CHURCH

In 1870 Haltwhistle's prosperity enabled the whole church to be restored including new stained glass windows by William Morris.

Haltwhistle's central position in the Border's growing railway network enabled a number of farming and textile suppliers to thrive.

The Great Depression of the 1920's closed many of the mines and caused 50% unemployment for a time but Alston's led mines had encouraged paint and varnish manufacture and grey paint for the Navy was in great demand during the 30s in the build up to the Second World War. Haltwhistle's remoteness during the war encouraged other wartime industry and since the war, quarrying Hadrian's Wall's Whincill, has been forbidden. The town has also benefitted from industries which need unpolluted air.

The Second World War brought Kilfrost to the town. A strategic industry, manufacturing antifreeze, brought here from London to avoid the bombing. Post war there has been many changes, new factories have opened and the high street has survived. Small enterprises have started up.

The town council has 12 members and is the local government body for the civil parish. The partnership was set up to access charitable funding for Haltwhistle and District and has representatives from local councils and organisations.



MORE RECENT TIMES ...

Until 1960 the main provider of housing was the local council with very little private housing. After 1960 there was an increase in the provision of private housing by local builders.

NOW ...

The town is becoming increasingly dependent on tourism and is a commuter town for people working in Carlisle, Hexham and Newcastle.

Information in the county Council development plan says that:

There has been no increase in the population in recent years and we have the lowest number of under 15s in the county.

There has been a growing number of retired people moving into the town.



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HOLY CROSS CHURCH BUILDINGS

Background - There is sound documentary evidence to show that Christian worship has taken place in Haltwhistle for the past 800 years but as you will see from reading our Christian journey there are indications that it goes back much further.

When the church was built it would have been a bare shell with rushes on the floor, and possibly benches along the walls for the infirm or elderly. It is a fine example of early 13th century architecture. Indeed Holy Cross is such a fine, beautiful and interesting building that it has Grade 1 listing. Its importance lies in it being of one style built in one period.



Some interesting features of Holy Cross:

- ✦ The nave and aisles make the main body of the church into a square and the chancel is disproportionately long in comparison with the nave.
- ✦ In Jacobean times box pews were installed for the local gentry. In 1870 Haltwhistle's prosperity enabled the whole church to be restored and Robert Johnson an architect from Newcastle was appointed to carry out a major restoration. The oak pews were replaced by pitch pine; the stone parapet to the nave was removed and the west wall rebuilt and the roof replaced. By this time the rich and influential were much in favour of stained glass as a fitting memorial and hence stained glass windows by the William Morris Company were included in the restoration. These were based on designs by Burne Jones, Madox Brown, Philip Webb and Charles Kempe.
- ✦ Where the vestry is now was once the main entrance to the church rather than the present south door. Visitors are also much intrigued by the font which dates from the 17th century. The carving on it looks quite primitive and not very well executed.
- ✦ The water stoup located by the vestry door is the oldest object in the church. There are various theories as to its origin and it remains a mystery. We now keep holy water in it!
- ✦ There are also many interesting memorials and gravestones dotted around inside the church.

Changes - In 2010 the west end of the church was reordered to provide toilet facilities and a kitchen. It proved to be a challenging project as many wanted the church to remain as it was. However the changes were managed well and the work carried. The facilities and the opportunities they now provide have confirmed that this was a positive change and is widely accepted as such. It is used by the Mothers' Union for weekly soup lunches for the community and it is also used for light refreshments following services. It is now available for hire for meetings or small gatherings. Hadrian Singers our local choir meet in the church every week and they also hold their Annual Meeting there.



The Graveyard –Surrounding the church is a well-kept graveyard with many ancient stones which the local history society has mapped and listed in a file kept in church. The wooden/stone shed by the main gate is where the hearse was kept many years ago. The local Council maintains the grounds of the church.



The gravestones can be found around the church grounds as can be seen in the photographs.

The Vicarage – Further west along Eden’s Lawn is the Vicarage. It is a semi- detached, 3- storey house, set in its own grounds with a garage and space to park at least 2 cars.



On the ground floor there is a south facing lounge overlooking the garden, a separate dining room and a kitchen. All the rooms have high ceilings. The study has its own entrance and can be quite separate from the main rooms but is still accessible.

Below stairs are cellars. The two upper floors house 4 bedrooms, 2 toilets and one bathroom and shower. There is also a toilet attached to the study. The house is in good decorative order. Vehicular access is from a side road off the main street and there are open views across the countryside from the south facing windows and the garden.

The photograph of the Vicarage top right shows the south facing side of the house as does the garden photograph to the left of it. The top left photograph shows the side of the house leading past the study area down to the main house and garden.

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THE PARISH OF HALTWHISTLE

The Centre of Britain

Background information ...

Holy Cross Church is situated in Haltwhistle, West Tynedale which has a population of 4000 approximately and includes around 900 under eighteens. This population is predominantly white British with a small number of other ethnic groups. It is a small market town, between the major centres of Carlisle (25 miles west) and Newcastle (36 miles east). Communication and commuting are excellent as we have an hourly bus service east and west and a similar train service. We are situated just off the A69.



Local industries now consist of haulage contractors, a plastics factory, Kilfrost and tourism together a variety of smaller shops. There are a number of small businesses on local industrial estates. Half day closing, Wednesday and Saturday still applies here. There is a strong farming community in the surrounding rural areas of the town. Haltwhistle is known as "The Centre of Britain" and is very definitely 'The Gateway to Hadrian's Wall' with a very popular Walking Festival. There are 2 hotels, a number of guest houses and a Tourist Information Centre. We are within easy reach of Hadrian's Wall and some magnificent walking country at the west end of the very beautiful Tyne Valley.

THE TOWN AND SURROUNDING AREA:

Haltwhistle Railway Station



Haltwhistle Market Place



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THE PEOPLE OF HALTWHISTLE

We asked the Haltwhistle community how they would describe themselves to someone new to the area and this is what they said – “Haltwhistle is one community. It is a rural, friendly, caring and close community but not an especially church-going one. However it is very supportive of the church and works hard for good causes. The church congregation work hard to maintain a meaningful Christian Anglican presence in the town. Haltwhistle is very welcoming but it can be cautious of new people and take time to get to know them.”

FACILITIES IN HALTWHISTLE

- Variety of small shops and two supermarkets.
- Bank and Building Society
- Library
- Leisure Centre with outdoor swimming pool.
- Pubs, hotels and guest houses.
- Cafes
- Garage
- Medical Centre
- Newly built community hospital.
- Nursery and primary school.
- Hourly bus service to Carlisle and Newcastle.
- Train station with regular services to Carlisle and Newcastle

A little more detail:

The newly built hospital retains the name of the original War Memorial Hospital which was part of the town's memorial to those who died in the First World War.

Primary education is provided at both Haltwhistle First and Middle school who joined the Wise (We inspire success and excellence) Academy group in September 2018. Currently West Northumberland (including Haltwhistle) is still in the 3 tier system but will convert back to 2-tier from September 2019. At that time students will move to secondary education from Year 7. Secondary schools are Haydon Bridge High, Queen Elizabeth High School, Hexham or William Howard School in Brampton.



CHURCH ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE COMMUNITY OPEN TO EVERYONE ...

WEEKLY:

- Monday morning prayer group.
- Wednesday soup lunches.

MONTHLY:

- Messy church
- Coffee mornings
- 100 club draw.
- Distribution of Magazine Outlook supported by local businesses.

THROUGHOUT THE YEAR:

- Summer and Christmas Fayres.
- Concerts
- Afternoon Tea.

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES IN HALTWHISTLE:

-Monthly over 60s luncheon club.

-Weekly community drop in.

-Youth club strongly supported by the Town Council and the Partnership.

-Weekly Saturday morning coffee mornings (one per month is Holy Cross). These are very well supported by the Community and rare to raise less than £500.

-Cubs and Brownies based at the local school.

-Monthly memory café for those with Dementia or memory problems & their family and friends.

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HOLY CROSS CHURCH COMMUNITY

Background

We have approximately 80 members on our electoral roll which is due to be updated this year. The average attendance at worship on Sundays is 30 but this is higher on feast days. The average communicant on Sundays is 24. We are predominately over 60 and retired. Most members of the congregation live in the town of Haltwhistle, with a few coming from the surrounding rural area. We have a mix of social groups

- BAPTISMS** - average 7 per year, majority early afternoon and these are well attended.
- WEDDINGS** - average 2 per year.
- FUNERALS** - average 17 per year.
- MONTHLY HOME COMMUNICANTS** - presently 4

OUR CHURCH TRADITION

This is modern catholic using Common Worship and other forms of authorised liturgy. We observe the Church's calendar of Festivals and Feast Days. Worship is predominantly Eucharistic centred. We have a full set of liturgy vestments. We are gradually re-developing a team of people to assist at services.

PATTERNS OF WORSHIP

SUNDAY:

- 8 am. Holy Communion except last Sunday of month is BCP.
- 9.30 am. Sung Eucharist, Common Worship

WEEKDAYS:

- Thursday 10 am. Holy Communion.

Saints Days and Holy Days



- All Souls.
- All Saints.
- Ash Wednesday (with Ashing)
- Daily services in Holy Week may include Stations of the Cross, Compline and Holy Communion.
- Maundy Thursday (washing of feet), stripping of Altar, Watch of the Passion.
- Good Friday Procession of Witness through the town, Final hour at St Cuthbert's.

We also have

- Occasional ecumenical services and
- Prayers Together each Monday at 10.30 am.



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OUR CHURCH ACTIVITIES

Recently we haven't had the opportunity for quiet days or retreats but there would be some wishing to participate.

We have study groups in Advent and Lent which are Priest led and we also join with our Roman Catholic and Methodist friends for bible reading etc.

In relation to Education and Youth work the priest visits schools in the area and the schools have been invited to use the church for worship and as a teaching centre. The uniform organisations come less now but we are delighted to welcome them on Remembrance Sunday

As a congregation we are active in Messy Church – a churches together initiative which takes place once a month in the Methodist Hall and once a year in Holy Cross,

We support Christian Aid, ACS, British Legion, the West Northumberland Food Bank and the people's kitchen. One of our members is a volunteer at the Food Bank. A number of local families use the Haltwhistle Branch of the Food Bank on a regular basis.

MOTHERS' UNION

We have an active Mothers' Union which organises outings, teas and speakers. The members work hard to help church finances and organise soup lunches each week for the town community.

Members of our congregation visit the sick in their homes and one of us visits Haltwhistle Memorial Hospital each week. A chaplaincy is attached to the hospital.

MINISTRY – Lay involvement in worship. – We have a number of people who assist in worship – readers, intercessors, administrators of the Chalice, Offertory, Procession and Servers. We also have people willing to lead worship on an occasional basis and one person is allowed to administer communion by extension and Home Communion. We are keen that our Wardens and Sidespersons welcome visitors and friends to our church and help them to feel at home.

ADMINISTRATION – Currently we have someone who produces the pew sheet Crosstalk, the monthly magazine Outlook, the Service lists and also carries out general clerical duties such as photocopying.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT ..

We have representatives on the Partnership, and Chamber of Trade.

One member of our congregation works in our local primary school.

Our previous priest and two members of our congregation were trustees of Haltwhistle Partnership.

We also have two parish council members.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH NEIGHBOURING PARISHES

Two members represent us on the Deanery Synod.

One of our Wardens is Hexham Deanery Secretary at the moment.

Our previous priest attended Chapter meetings.

We have occasional joint worship with St Cuthbert's and 2 joint PCC meetings each year.

ECUMENICAL RELATIONSHIPS ...

We are committed to Churches Together in Haltwhistle.

Committee meetings are

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NEXT STEPS

OUR SHARED MISSION STATEMENT (PRESENT)



| | |
|--|---|
| | <i>That our Church is a place of love and learning, of holiness</i> |
| | <i>and hospitality, of friendliness and fellowship, of mission</i> |
| | <i>and outreach and a place of generosity and goodness.</i> |

OUR SHARED CORE VALUES (THESE UNDERPIN OUR VISION)



| | |
|--|---|
| | WORSHIP |
| | <i>Worshipping God is central to all our gatherings. We believe</i> |
| | <i>Prayer should be at the heart of our life as a church.</i> |



| | |
|--|---|
| | COMMUNITY |
| | <i>We believe in and value community. We are committed</i> |
| | <i>to transforming Holy Cross into a hub of positive activity for</i> |
| | <i>the whole community.</i> |



| | |
|--|---|
| | GROWTH |
| | <i>We are committed to growth both in numbers and in</i> |
| | <i>Personal Discipleship. As we grow we will strive to accept</i> |
| | <i>and embrace the changes such growth may bring.</i> |

OUR SHARED VISION FOR THE FUTURE IS - TO BE:



| | |
|--|---|
| | <i>A church for people of all ages,</i> |
| | <i>an open church which welcomes everyone.</i> |
| | <i>A growing church both in numbers and in personal discipleship.</i> |
| | <i>A church which lies at the heart of our community.</i> |

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