

# Norton-in-Hales

## Monthly Messenger December 2017



Website: [www.nortoninhales.org](http://www.nortoninhales.org)



### Dates for your diary

- Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> December Morning Prayer at 11:15am, St Chads  
(Psalm 80:1-8; 1 Corinthians 1:3-9; Mark 13:24-end)
- Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> December Friends of Norton-in-Hales Video Lecture, Keele World affairs series –  
7:30pm at the Jubilee Hall. Cost £1 including tea and biscuits.
- Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> December Praise and Worship with Holy Baptism at 11:15am, St Chads  
(Mark 1:1-8)
- Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> December Family Service at 11:15am, St Chads  
Christingle at 5:00pm (John 1:6-8, 19-28)
- Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> December Lessons and Carols at 10:30am  
Memorial Candle service at 3:00pm  
Christmas Holy Communion at 11:30pm  
(Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-20)
- Monday 25<sup>th</sup> December Christmas Family Communion at 11:15am (Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-20)
- Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> December Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> December - Annual Christmas Walk . This year we have  
altered the course. Start at the Cricket Club at 10.30am. Bacon Baps  
on arrival. Mince pies and beverages on the way around approx 5 mile  
walk. Children's quiz. All welcome please bring suitable attire  
wellies/boots and warm clothing.
- Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> December New Year's Eve service at 11:15am, St Chads  
(2 Corinthians 5: 17-21; Matthew 6: 31-34)

### Coffee Morning – Every Tuesday

10am – 11:30am, Jubilee Hall, all welcome. £1 for a cup of tea/coffee and cake

**Carol Singing around the village** – 4th, 6th, 11th, and 13th December

For any contributions to the Monthly Messenger, please email [hannahmariahague@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:hannahmariahague@yahoo.co.uk)  
Deadline for submissions is the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month.

## ***A View from the Vicarage***



“I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people,” proclaimed the heavenly angel to the shepherds in the fields near Bethlehem watching their flocks that night [Luke 2:10]. And so the story of the Good News of Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour began. Not in the temple; not in the palace; not in the fine homes. It was started with some deemed among the lowest in society. Imagine how those shepherds felt. God sent them a message of hope! Even though so many others overlooked them and even discarded them as human beings, these lowly shepherds were loved and noticed enough by God to be the first recipients of the Good News.

Imagine their surprise to see that the King of kings, Lord of lords, was not born in the palace or a fine home, but in a lowly stable and laid to rest in a manger. Imagine their confusion! After all, how could someone so extraordinary as the Messiah, the Christ, be born into such ordinary circumstances?

That baby boy would be the hope of the world! That baby boy would bring peace eventually to this world by growing into manhood and dying on the Cross as an atonement for our sins, thus restoring believers into a right relationship with our heavenly Father. That baby boy's death and resurrection would be the source of the great joy expressed by the heavenly angel. That baby boy is the epitome of God's love for you and me.

During the season of Advent (the first four Sundays of December this year), St Chad's focuses our worship on the hope, peace, joy, and love revealed through the baby Jesus. It is our preparation for the celebration of Christmas, when we mark the birth of our Saviour. Christmas is a time of rushing about, worrying about festive preparations and the perfect gifts. As the days fly by, the pressure mounts and with it come anxiety and the fear that everything won't be just so and the day will not meet our expectations.

Maybe some timeouts would help. Come to church for the Sunday services and enjoy some spiritual refreshment as we focus on the real reason for the season—Jesus! Come into God's house and experience His peace as we shut out the world for a little while and just bask in God's love. Maybe the lighting of the Christmas tree at Aston on Friday the 8th at 6:30pm could be a good beginning for you as we hear the familiar story and sing many of the traditional carols. Maybe the Christingle service on Monday the 17th at 5:00pm in St Chad's will help you relax and focus on the reason for the season. You are also invited to the Lessons and Carols service to be held this year at St Chad's, at 10:30am on Sunday the 24th (Christmas Eve morning) where you can hear the story and sing the carols we all love. The celebration of Jesus' birth happens at the midnight Christmas Eve Communion service beginning at 11:30am and again at a Family Communion service at 11:15am on Christmas Day at St Chad's. Come and join us!

On the last Sunday of December, there will be a special New Year's Eve worship service focusing on the conclusion of 2017 and the coming of 2018. It is a time to reflect on the year coming to an end and on the year about to begin. After the hubbub of Christmas, here is a great opportunity to refresh yourself spiritually once again. My faith, my relationship with God through His Son Jesus, is the foundation of my entire life. I'm not sure I could face all the ups and downs of this world without it!

What will the new year hold? We have great hopes, but equally we have many fears. There is one thing which will be the same as it was this year—God's love. Our heavenly Father has loved us from the very beginning and will do so for all time. He promised to be with us and showed His great love by sending His Son to be born at this time and then to die on the Cross, that we might experience His love and reconciliation. That will bring us the great joy, that angel proclaimed to the shepherds so long ago.

May the peace of God which passes all understanding fill you this Christmas season with his love and joy. Welcome the baby Jesus into your heart and experience the fullness of God's love for all eternity. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Rev. Don Alcock  
Telephone: 01630 647 911  
Email: [dga952@hotmail.com](mailto:dga952@hotmail.com)

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## Messages...

A sincere thank you for all the cards, letters and support given to the family after the recent loss of William Tavernor. It is much appreciated – Janice Tavernor.

### **Friends of Norton in Hales**

The Friends of Norton-in-Hales were sorry that the Quiz which should have taken place on Friday 17th November 2017 had to be cancelled at short notice. It is hoped to re-arrange the Quiz in the New Year.

### **Calling all Flower Arrangers and Cleaners!**

First of all, thank you to all Festival Flower Arrangers for decorating the church so beautifully for harvest. We do need more volunteers on the flower arranging rota and cleaning rota. Even if you can only manage one week in the year-that would still be appreciated. If you can help in any way, please contact Church Wardens or any member of the P.C.C.

FRIENDS OF NORTON-IN-HALES VIDEO LECTURE KEELE WORLD AFFAIRS SERIES  
VILLAGE HALL – THURSDAY 7TH DECEMBER 2017 @ 7.30pm  
COST £1 INCLUDING TEA & BISCUITS

“The Unfinished Global Revolution”  
Rt Hon Lord Mark Malloch Brown KCMG  
Former United Nations Deputy Secretary General

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# Norton in Bloom Newsletter

## December 2017

### Growing your own fruit and veg

This is a good month to prepare the soil in your vegetable beds. If it is heavy dig it over – this will allow the winter weather to break it up. If you have an unused area of the vegetable plot add some soil improvers this month. Add home produced compost if it is ready, or well rotted manure if you have access to some. A 5cm layer over the surface of the soil is a good guide – then turn it over. The worms will work wonders on this and incorporate deeper down ready for spring sowing and planting. If you are clearing up the plot avoid composting any diseased material.

Fruit bushes will need pruning if you haven't yet done so (RHS website very useful) and mulch around the base of the fruit bushes this month with compost or manure to help them along.

Your apple and pear trees can be pruned this month and into January.

December is also a great time to overhaul your tools and plan for next years cropping and succession of vegetables and salads for your kitchen.

### Jobs for December

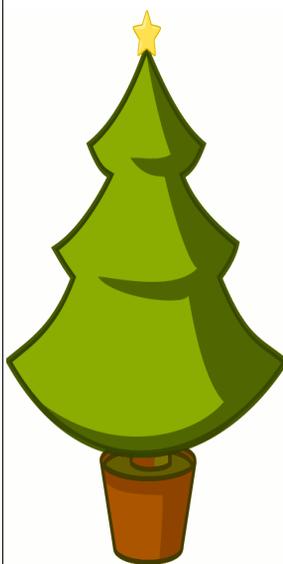
- Check your winter protection structures are still securely in place
- Insulate outdoor taps and prevent ponds from freezing
- Prune open-grown apples and pears (but not those trained against walls)
- Prune acers, birches and vines before Christmas to avoid bleeding
- Harvest leeks, parsnips, winter cabbage, sprouts and remaining root crops
- Deciduous trees and shrubs can still be planted and transplanted
- Take hardwood cuttings
- Keep mice away from stored produce
- Reduce the watering of houseplants

### Bloom Group activities

The barrels around the village have had summer planting replaced with wallflowers that will bloom in early spring.

Bulb planting is taking place so that we can enjoy a show of tulips next spring.

Working parties go out most Mondays into winter, weeding and pruning the beds and planters, planting bulbs and undertaking general maintenance. **It would be great to have more volunteers – would you be interested in maintaining the border that goes along Napley Road and Napley Drive corner?**



### Christmas tree care

Prevent premature needle drop on your Christmas tree by choosing a pine (*Pinus*) or fir (*Abies*) tree instead of the traditional Norway spruce (*Picea abies*); these hold their needles for longer. Avoid placing your tree near sources of heat such as a fire or radiator. Cut trees will last longer if stood in a bucket of water or a stand with a reservoir. Saw off the bottom 5-7.5cm (2-3in) of trunk to allow the tree to drink freely. (RHS advice).

We are always looking to increase the members of the group. Please email Chris for more information - [chris28green@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:chris28green@yahoo.co.uk)



# Norton Nature Notes

21<sup>st</sup> October to 19<sup>th</sup> November 2017

Fieldfare and redwing are now to be seen all around the village. Flocks of these winter visitors from northern Europe have migrated to the UK to avoid the harsher winters found on the continent – and what a welcome sight they are in late Autumn. Numbers will slowly increase but I did see a flock of around 20 redwing on the 18<sup>th</sup> Nov and was pleased to have a solitary fieldfare visit the garden on the same day. In a mixed flock redwings are the smaller bird in comparison to the fieldfare which has a harsh 'chack, chack, chack' call.

At Partons Pool on a very mild 12th November I saw what I expected to be my last Red Admiral butterfly of the year. Results from the annual Big Butterfly Count indicate that this migratory species of butterfly did very well this year (even with it being the wettest summer in 100 years!). Records indicated a 75% increase on the 2016 Count. I certainly saw a lot more on the buddleia this year.

Last month I wrote about the garden bird table. A frequent visitor recently has been the great spotted woodpecker and I include a photo that I took of a male (the female has also visited) who has a habit of taking over the peanut feeder. They are a delight to watch but once scared will not return for some time unlike the sparrows, tits and finches who seek refuge close by and then quickly return for more food.

Carolyn and Alan shared a sighting of a heron. What was unusual about this heron was that it spent two hours on the cricket field. On the photo shared the heron was clearly foraging, rather than in stationary pose with its neck bent over its chest. They will take small mammals and may be seen frequenting fields after harvest but I am not sure what the cricket field had to offer.

Bee and Joe B spotted a barn owl on the 17<sup>th</sup> Nov out towards Bearstone sat on a post. Given the clear night it was unmistakable. This road with its wide verges and numerous fence posts is a regular hunting and perching spot.

You may have noticed a flock of lapwings in typical wavering flight over the fields to the north of the village (they are certainly harder to spot amongst the stubble). I have counted 24 birds on two separate occasions over the past three weeks. This is a lovely sight in winter and we are lucky to have them resident – our summer breeders being joined by winter migrants.

I maintain a list of birds that I have seen or heard in, and from, the garden. This currently stands at 45 species. Dick W recently shared his own lists with me which was a fascinating read, clearly highlighting the changing seasons. Please share your own nature sightings with me using the contact details provided.



*Great spotted woodpecker on the feeder in my garden. The male has a red patch on the back of the head, the female does not. In summer you may see one with a red crown – this is a juvenile. We have several breeding pairs in the village.*