

DRC News

SPRING/SUMMER 2024

Offering Spiritual and Pastoral Support to the Rural and Agricultural Community



^ Photo credit: William Madin

In this issue:

- "Hello and Easter Greetings" from Rev'd Alan Griggs
- Caretakers Of Our Green & Pleasant Land by Chaplain Alison Fletcher
- Dry Stone Walling...In Derbyshire And Beyond by Gordon and Jason Wilton
- Introducing The Anna Chaplaincy by Sarah Lacey
- Farmers And Their Churches
- Women In Farming...Tiffany Belfield by Alison Fletcher
- Farming Photography by William Madin
- Bakewell Market - A State Of The Ark Facility by Alastair Sneddon, Bagshaws
- Rooted In Time And Place by Chaplain Pete Evens
- Congregational Churches In Derbyshire by Elisabeth Sweeney-Smith
- Ashbourne Young Farmers' Trip To London In 1940 by Henry Oulton
- A Life In Farming by Peter Lomas
- Lobbying by Andrew Critchlow, NFU
- DRC Team Changes
- Would You Like To Support The Work Of The DRC?
- Helpful Contact Numbers for Advice & Support
- Tractor Prayer



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FARM WALK

Thursday 20th June at 7.00pm

Old Forge Farm, Alport, Bakewell, DE45 1LH



-  Burger & chips served at 7.00pm
-  Walk across the fields to New Farm
-  Stock judging competition £1 entry – cash prize

Free of charge, but booking essential

Limited numbers – first come, first served

To book, contact the DRC on 07593 380311
or email nicola@derbyshireruralchaplaincy.org.uk

By kind permission of Mr & Mrs M Walker and Mr & Mrs K Harrop



"Hello and Easter Greetings" from Rev'd Alan Griggs, Lead Agricultural Chaplain

God has created an incredible world and given us the responsibility to care for it and build a better life together. This *DRC News* captures a glimpse into the lives of people in rural Derbyshire who have made, and are making, a significant difference. For example, we discover farmers at the centre of local worshipping life of chapel and church alongside their love of farming, farming stories from the days gone by, and we read about the lives of expert dry-stone wallers, Gordon and Jason Wilton from Biggin by Hartington.



I was struck by Gordon's words as he describes his work: "You get transfixed by the job, you're out in the fresh air and satisfaction comes knowing that I am building something that will last hundreds of years". I like this picture of building something in the present with future generations firmly in mind. The Apostle Paul said something similar to the fledgling church in the ancient city of Corinth: "By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ."

Paul is reminding the church of its foundations as it builds up the community of faith, and in the Derbyshire Rural Chaplaincy we recognise the hard work that goes into every farming day, with the future in mind. And it strikes me that at a time of significant change as direct payments are phased out, and it is difficult to know in what direction to take the farm, the foundations of farming remain essential in order to build for the future.

Harvest Time with the DRC

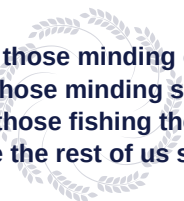
After several years of having a Harvest Service in the main store ring at Bakewell, we have decided to try something a little different for Harvest 2024. Join us instead for a Harvest Supper in Hulland Ward - for details see our poster on page 22.



We hope you enjoy reading this Spring and Summer edition of *DRC News*. Every blessing to the farming community this Easter, and here's a Celtic blessing before you get back out on the farm!

As a team, the thing we enjoy most is getting out to visit you on the farm and understanding more about your part in building our farming future. So, please invite us if you would like a visit by calling 07710 088972 or email me at: alan@derbyshireruralchaplaincy.org.uk

**Bless those minding cattle,
And those minding sheep,
And those fishing the sea
While the rest of us sleep.**



Caretakers Of Our Green And Pleasant Land

by Alison Fletcher, Agricultural Chaplain

It's exciting for us on the chaplaincy team to pull together the various articles and interviews that make up each edition of the DRC News. It gives us the opportunity to spend time with a range of people and to hear personal stories about the importance and contribution of farming and associated industries within our modern-day world.

There is so much information available – in print and visual media – that none of us can fail to be aware of the ongoing debates and opinions about the best way our “green and pleasant land” should be used and how accessible it should be. To say there are competing agendas is something of a huge understatement.



Just recently I read this: “... the countryside is not a theme park, but a living, working place and it is where food comes from...” Whilst that was just one sentence within an article that considered many other aspects of land use, one thing is for sure. Land is a finite resource – no more will become available over time.

There simply isn't space here to delve into all the various environmental debates currently being discussed about land use, but those of us who are privileged to work closely with our farming community know there are few other groups of people for whom the care of the land is so important and central to all they do.

Not only do farmers prioritise caring for the land for the benefit of their livestock and food production, but they are incredibly knowledgeable about what works. ➡➡



.....>> The role of many farmers in 2024 is already multi-faceted and regularly includes being a business manager, vet, midwife, mechanic, maintenance operative and weather forecaster. In addition they are expected to deliver within new initiatives, often for lower returns, and all the while against the backdrop of a vocal lobby for tree planting on pasture land as opposed to rearing livestock, and diminishing support for the eating of red meat.

All that said, many farmers would not choose any other way of life and are doing all they can to continue farming, often working long hours day in day out, both on, and also often off, the farm.



In the chaplaincy team we pray regularly for our farming community and would encourage you to join us.

We distribute electronically a bi-monthly prayer sheet and we meet regularly at Bakewell livestock market for a short service in the Main Conference Room at 10.00am, followed by tea and coffee – for future dates please see left.

You are very welcome to join us as we give God thanks for our farmers and pray they may be strengthened to continue their work, which is for the benefit of us all.

Derbyshire Rural Chaplaincy

Monthly Service
at Bakewell Livestock Market

Dates for 2024:

Monday 8th April
Monday 13th May
Monday 3rd June
Monday 1st July
Monday 2nd September
Monday 7th October
Monday 4th November

A short, informal service starting at 10:00am in the conference room of the Agricultural Business Centre, Bakewell, Derbyshire, DE45 1AH

Everyone welcome | Refreshments served

For details please call or email:
07593 380311 | nicola@derbyshireruralchaplaincy.org.uk

DRC Short Service (in Main >
Conference Room)



Dry Stone Walling ... in Derbyshire and Beyond

By Gordon and Jason Wilton

Gordon was born at Parsley Hay in 1947, the year of the big snow. Gordon moved to Biggin by Hartington when he was six and after he finished school, Gordon started farming at Biggin Grange with Sam Flowers for 22 years. The farm work required a lot of walling and building, and Gordon branched out and started the walling business on 6th May 1984, and the rest is history.

Both Gordon and his son Jason are well known across Derbyshire and Staffordshire, out in all weathers repairing and building our precious stone wall boundaries. As someone from the USA once said to Gordon, "it's the old grey stitchery of England". Gordon and Jason are part of the Dry-Stone Walling Association of Great Britain and there is a local Derbyshire branch where they meet Wallers from across the county, and attend various shows such as Chatsworth Country Fair, Bakewell Show and Ashbourne Show to do demonstrations.

Jason left school in 1992 and started helping his father by filling the middle and stripping out the old walls and over two years or so Gordon trained Jason to start building on his own to a good standard. Gordon says, "you get transfixed by the job, you're out in the fresh air and satisfaction comes knowing that I am building something that will last hundreds of years. A good Waller needs a good eye, staying power, determination and rhythm".



▲ L-R: Trevor Wragg, John Brown, Gordon and young Jason

In 1990 the Dry-Stone Walling Association introduced a Grand Prix for a Dry-Stone Walling National Champion, which Gordon won in 1992 and 1994. Participants from all over Great Britain – including the Cotswolds, Scotland, Derbyshire, Cumbria and Wales, to name a few – had their skills tested by building walls in different types of stone and styles. Jason won the Amateur Championship in 1994 at the age of 18. ➡➡➡

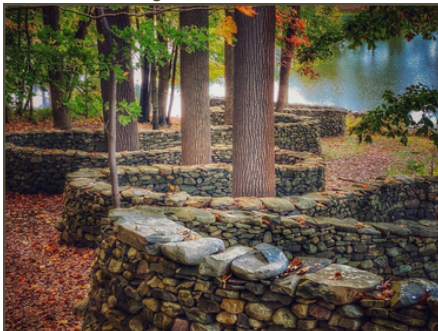
.....>> In 1995 Gordon and Jason met Steven Allen from Cumbria who was already completing pieces for land artist Andy Goldsworthy, and asked if Gordon and Jason would join a crew of Wallers going out to America to complete an installation for Andy Goldsworthy in New York state. Their first Goldsworthy installation incorporated a boulder that gave the impression that it is rising up out of the ground with vertical blue stone and local field stone at the sides. Along with two other similar installations, these are all on private land in New York State.



^ Andy Goldsworthy installation, New York State

From 1996, they took on an average of one project every year with Andy Goldsworthy. In 1997 and 1998 they completed one of Andy's most famous pieces, the Storm King Wall in New York State which has been seen by millions of people since the installation.

✓ Storm King Wall in New York State



✓ Cairn at Digne les Bains, Provence



Things started to evolve into much more complex structures and pieces. In 1998 they went out to the South of France on a geology reserve building Cairns out of local limestone on the side of a mountain, piping and pumping water into each Cairn so that the water could be heard but not seen.

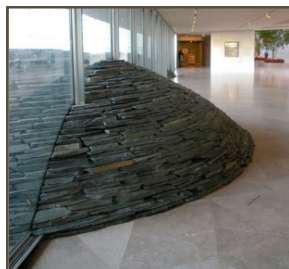


^ "Stone River", Stamford University >



In 2001 they completed a job at Stamford University in Palo Alto, California, just South of San Francisco, using reclaimed stone from the 1989 earthquake to build an installation called Stone River.>>

.....➔ In 2006 they worked in Washington DC at the National Gallery of Art to install nine slate domes, 26 feet at the base and 8 feet high and made with 60 tonnes of stone per dome, with each dome interlocking into the next. Some domes went up to the glass and were finished on the inside of the building. Gordon and Jason were invited to the British Embassy and whilst there they had a guided tour of the White House.



▲ Slate domes, National Gallery Of Art, Washington DC



▲ Refuges d'Art, Provence

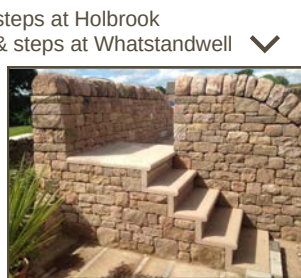
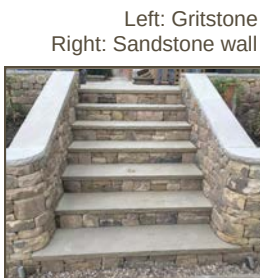
Many trips were undertaken to France in the coming years with many installations that were part of a much larger project called the Refuges D'art in Provence. There were numerous old, abandoned buildings that were re-built and had art installations along a 90 kilometre walk in the geology reserve in the foothills of the Alps.

Over the past 25 years, Gordon and Jason have travelled to Canada, the US, Spain, France, Scotland and Australia and in February 2024 they were off to Hobart in Tasmania to complete a passage way of sandstone that will lead off the shore and into the bay for the Mona Roma art museum.



▲ Left: Red sandstone at Dales Park, Ashbourne
Right: Local limestone at Biggin by Hartington

However, they always love coming back to their home in Derbyshire where they can guarantee good weather!!! They can also guarantee lots of their own work ahead of them. Here are some recent local examples.



Left: Gritstone steps at Holbrook
Right: Sandstone wall & steps at Whatstandwell ▼

Introducing the Anna Chaplaincy



Hello! My name is Sarah Lacey and I am the Anna Chaplain to the White Peak and Youlgreave Group of Churches, licensed from St Giles Church, Hartington, where I have lived for 20+ years and worshipped at St Giles Church for nearly as long – I expect some of you may even know me! I'm delighted to have this opportunity to introduce myself and to tell you about the work of the Anna Chaplains.

My patch covers Hartington, Biggin by Hartington, Earl Sterndale, Chelmorton, Monyash, Taddington, Youlgreave, Middleton by Youlgreave, Birchover and Stanton and, somewhere in amongst all those lovely places, there might perhaps be older isolated or lonely folk who might like to get a visit or a 'phone call from me - I'd really like to know of you and where you are, and to be of help, if I can.

What does an Anna Chaplain do? My role is to offer a person-centred, non-judgemental ministry to older people of strong belief or none, working alongside and hopefully complimenting the local church ministry. It's also about having a wider role in the community as an advocate and champion of the contribution older people make to society. It's about offering gentle pastoral support to any older person in need, whether in their home, care home, hospital or hospice. It is about fostering hope and resilience, caring, listening, and appreciating older people. It's about valuing the person I'm visiting and perhaps providing comfort and succour to someone at a low point in their life, or indeed as their earthly life draws to its close.

It's the companionship, all the shared stories, home-spun wisdom and the precious memories – and the mugs of tea! It's a wonderful opportunity and a great privilege for me to be able to spend time with people who still have so much to offer and, although sometimes they and others don't always think they do, I know differently, and so does God!

If you would like to get in touch regarding a visit for yourself or for someone else, and are connected to one of the above parishes, please do contact me via email at lacey_sarah@btinternet.com



Farmers And Their Churches

The churches and chapels of various Christian denominations found dotted around the villages and towns of our county provide a spiritual home for many folk, including our farmers. In this piece we talk to farmers about the churches they attend and what these places of worship, prayer and community mean to them.

Introducing Philip Mason

Philip and his wife Gill farm at Ildridgehay, near Belper.

Philip says: "I have attended Greenbank Chapel in Turnditch since I was a child and I am the 4th generation of my family to do so. It is an independent chapel, run by elders and deacons with visiting preachers. I have been an elder for some years and sometimes take the services. Having always been interested in Bible prophecy, the services I have most enjoyed have been where the preachers explain how those centuries-old prophecies are aligned to current day world events."



Philip and Gill used to milk, fatten bulls, keep sheep and pigs and grow some corn. Having given up some land and finished milking, they now run a few cattle and lamb about 180 ewes, mostly Mules and Texel crosses. Their lambs are sold at stores or fat through Bakewell or Leek markets.

Introducing Stacey Archer



Stacey farms at Sutton-on-the-Hill with her husband and his father. She lives in Mercaston and attends All Saints' Church in Mugginton.

Stacey says: "I have attended All Saints for 29 years, since moving here aged 13. With my husband Sam and our two children, I still live in the parish and my parents now live in a conversion at ours. Home also has a few calves and two shire horses! We were married here at Mugginton and the children, now 4 and 7, were baptized here. I've been PCC Secretary for nearly ten years.

I learnt to bell-ring here and am technically one of the bell-ringers of the peal of six, although life is very hectic and I work on practice nights! I even rang in my wedding dress after our wedding ceremony.



.....➞ I like the friendliness of the congregation, an eclectic mix of young and old, established local families and newcomers to the villages. I really enjoy carols by candlelight – sometimes by necessity because the power is off – and the 8am service on Christmas morning at Halter Devil Chapel. The village school, where my children are, is a Church of England school, so the children regularly come into the church for services and activities. Their Christingle service is another favourite.

The Archer family are beef and sheep farmers on about 100 acres. They run a suckler herd of 50 Blue cross cows put to a Limousin bull, and their 130 ewes, mainly Texel cross, are lambed in 3 batches, from February onwards. While the men are out contracting, Stacey keeps her eye on stock, whilst also managing the admin of both the farm and Derbyshire Young Farmers.

Introducing Graham Kirkham

Graham and his wife Caroline and family farm near Hartington in the Derbyshire Dales and attend St Giles church in Hartington.

Graham says: “I have attended St Giles with my family for 35 years and I have been on the church PCC there for about 30 years. My connection with church started as a teenager in Tissington where my parents farmed, when I attended a group at Tissington church run by the Vicar and also got involved in helping as a server.

There have been a number of memorable services for me at St Giles over the years including the baptisms of our sons Oliver and Robert, and then more recently in 2021 when Oliver married Eleanor and even more recently when their daughter Jemima was baptised there. One other service sticks in my mind for a very different reason - when we took our donkey Charlie to take part in a Nativity carol service. I like the fact that at church in Hartington we have a really nice group of friends and it has a good community feel.”



Graham is a dairy farmer milking approximately 90 head of cattle - mainly Norwegian Red cross. He shares the milking with his son Oliver. They farm around 200 acres in total. They AI with sexed semen for their dairy replacements but have a bull to use with their heifers. They rear all their calves and sell most as stores in Bakewell at about 24 months. They currently have about 65 store cattle. The family also run a CL Campsite on the farm which is very popular.

Women In Farming ... Introducing Tiffany Belfield

Interview by Alison Fletcher, Agricultural Chaplain

Alison: Tell us a little bit about yourself – how old you are, where you farm and something about your farm.

Tiffany: I'm 27 years old and live near Hollinsclough with my family on our dairy farm. We milk around 70 cows which are mainly Holstien Friesians and dairy shorthorns. We also have a small number of pedigree Aberdeen Angus suckler cows. Back in 2018 we diversified and opened a glamping site Peak Glamping Hideaway. I am quite a "people person" so I love meeting guests and telling them about our lovely area of the world.



Did you go to agricultural college or learn farming on the job?

Once I left school, I went to Reaseheath College for two years on a level 3 apprenticeship in Agriculture. I completed the apprenticeship at home. From an early age my three sisters, my brother and I have all been very involved on the farm so it was a natural move after school. I also completed an accountancy course at the University of Derby in Buxton so I learnt more about the financial side of business.

I know you have a number of different roles off the farm. Please tell us a bit about those.

I am a person who likes variety so, yes, I have a few different roles keeping me busy! I have worked at Bakewell livestock market on a Monday since I was 17 which I love as I get to meet so many farming characters. I also work part time for The Farming Life Centre which is a rural charity based in Bakewell. We provide business and health/wellbeing support for farmers and rural people. My main role is supporting farmers in accessing grant funding and helping out with paperwork queries. In between these roles I am often found busy on our glamping site at home and also relief milking on a local farm too.

.....>>

If you could take time out to experience farming anywhere in the world, where would you choose to go, and why?

To be honest I'm such a homing pigeon I don't think I would go anywhere too far away as I love being where I am now. But if I were to go anywhere I would go to America on a ranch, as doing work on horseback with such a large number of cattle would be so different to what we do here, so that would be interesting. However I am no horse rider so I would have to brush up on that beforehand!

Farming is going through lots of changes just now. What excites you and what concerns you the most?

I agree there are big changes in farming at the moment. What concerns me is the lack of funding available after the decline and removal of the Basic Payment Scheme. There are different schemes out there, but they are quite confusing for farmers and all the paperwork is rather overwhelming. For dairy farmers the milk price is also very low at the moment and the numbers just aren't adding up. On a positive note I think the community feel of farming and the farming way of life that most of us love on a daily basis is worth a lot, so you just have to keep going the best you can!

Given that farming and all your other work is pretty full on, what do you do to help you relax?

I love socialising with friends every weekend and never really say no to going out partying! I am also lucky to have a large family and we are very close so we love going out for meals and days out together.

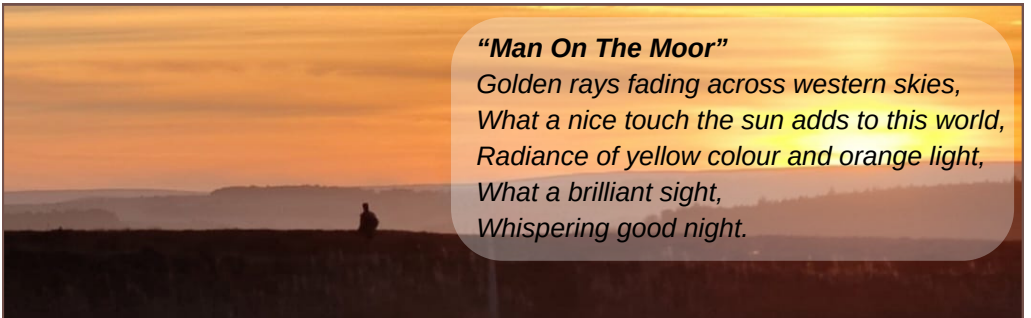
Thank you Hognaston Village!

A big, heartfelt thank you goes to the residents of Hognaston village for dedicating the money raised from their 2023 Christmas Card Fundraiser to the DRC and, along with the silent auction of the Hognaston painting, a total of £732.75 has been raised, which is absolutely wonderful. And thank you also to the organisers for the time and effort they have put into making the fundraiser such a success.

Farming Photography by William Madin



William is a dairy farmer located in between Bakewell and Chesterfield. He's also a very talented photographer with an eye for the natural world and for the beautiful scenery on and around his farm. The photographs on these pages are all his own work, as is the picture of the young shorthorn on the front cover.



"Man On The Moor"

*Golden rays fading across western skies,
What a nice touch the sun adds to this world,
Radiance of yellow colour and orange light,
What a brilliant sight,
Whispering good night.*

William is very proud of his award-winning dairy herd.



All photographs © William Madin



Invite a chaplain or contact the DRC on 07710 088972

.....>> During the past 14 years William has restored 70 acres of species-rich grassland. The botanical diversity of these grasslands has been enhanced by the introduction of various wildflower varieties such as Oxeye Daisy, Birdsfoot Trefoil, Cowslip, Lady's Bedstraw & Wild Red Clover amongst others. These wildflowers, which are grown without any sprays or fertilisers and are not cut for hay until after mid-July, provide essential food sources for nectar-feeding bees and butterflies and also support other species such as moths, bats and birds.



All photographs © William Madin

Chaplain Visits

The DRC chaplains talk to many farmers at Bakewell Market, but did you know that we also visit people at home on the farm? Our chaplains are always keen to learn more about farming and are happy to spend time chatting and talking with farmers. If you live in Derbyshire and either farm, or have a connection to farming, and would like one of our chaplains to call in for a friendly visit, please contact Alan.

Telephone 07710 088972 | Email alan@derbyshireruralchaplaincy.org.uk

Bakewell Market - A State Of The Ark Facility

By Alastair Sneddon, Senior Partner at Bagshaws

Ten generations after the Creation of Adam, God saw that the earth was corrupt and filled with violence and He decided to destroy what He had created.

The book of Genesis tells of God's decision to return the universe to its pre-creation state of watery chaos and remake it through the microcosm of Noah's Ark.



At Bakewell market we pride ourselves on our integrity and we try to keep violence to a minimum, so I think The Almighty is being a bit hard on us. Nevertheless, we have had more than our fair share of rain recently and there have been numerous occasions when the access drive has been flooded as a result of the river Wye bursting its banks.

Construction of an ark is not really an option because stock tends to arrive in quantities greater than two by two. Not having Moses on hand to part the waters has not helped and there is enough trouble in and around the Red Sea without transferring any more problems to Bakewell.



▲ Flooding on Agricultural Way (Jan 2024)

Watery chaos is a good description of what we have had to put up with lately, but thankfully we have been able to use the back gates accessed from the Coombs Road. This is not without its own flooding problems with water gushing from the hillside as if Moses had struck a rock with his staff.

The long-suffering residents of the Coombs Road have had to put up with convoys of heavy agricultural traffic creating a tidal wave and threatening to engulf their properties.

Is this just Climate Change or should we be ordering some Gopher wood?





Rooted In Time And Place

By Pete Evens, Agricultural Chaplain

At first glance the farmhouse is 'only' 159 years old, even though the name of Callow Hall suggests previous history as an administrative and gathering centre of the locality.



Yet above the dated lintel, a weather-beaten face looks older than mid-Victorian, as does an arched feature in the gable end.



Step through a door from the kitchen and you're in the undercroft of an older wing of the house, with stone vaulting to support the structure above. In the corner is a most unusual fireplace, whose main lintel is made up of interlocking sections



This has been dated as 12th or 13th century, based on the face carvings which embellish the supporting pillars, reminiscent of those at nearby Kirk Ireton church. I wasn't the first to sit in this spot admiring the ancient craftsmanship. The King was here before me (King Charles III, before he ascended the throne).

It's not only the present owners of Callow Hall who live among daily reminders of the occupation and cultivation of their lands over centuries. Are there features of your own home or buildings which tell of deep roots anchoring you in time and place as a Derbyshire farmer? If so, and you'd like to share pictures in DRC News, please contact me.

Email pete@derbyshireruralchaplaincy.org.uk | Telephone 07776 188587

Congregational Churches in Derbyshire

**By Elisabeth Sweeney-Smith, President, Congregational Federation
(May 2024 to April 2025)**

Derbyshire Rural Chaplaincy opened their hearts to me when I enquired about a placement year with them in 2020 as part of my theological degree – and I have not been able to prise myself away since! I would never have guessed that four years later towards the end of my degree I would be elected to serve as national President of the Congregational Federation.



Congregational churches are to be found dotted around the county of Derbyshire and throughout the UK. Many of these congregations began life in the 17th century as groups of dissenting folk, gathered around one of 39 Derbyshire Ministers ejected by the State-church for non-compliance with the Act of Uniformity 1662. In those turbulent times, non-conformity resulted not only in the loss of a home in the manse and subsistence, but Ministers were denied a pulpit. Rev'd William Bagshawe of Glossop, the founder member of my own church, Chinley Independent Chapel, began holding services in secret in his brother-in-law's barn, at Malcoff Farm.

What makes Congregational churches distinctive is not necessarily their place in history as dissenters, important as that is, but rather in the way they are governed. Each congregation is independent from any external hierarchy which means the congregation is responsible for calling their own Minister, for their own finances, and for their style of worship – decisions all taken at the local level in the meeting of its church members.



↖ Elisabeth outside Chinley Chapel

In 1972 a large number of Congregational churches nationally chose to become part of the newly formed United Reformed Church. For those that did not, whilst united in the Christian faith, today some 50 congregational churches remain unaffiliated (www.uccc.org.uk), one of which is found in Little Longstone, Peak District, whilst another 120 associate themselves within the Evangelical Fellowship of Congregational churches (www.efcc.org.uk). ➡

.....>> A further 220 independent congregational churches associate with each other for mutual support and the advancement of the Christian faith within the Congregational Federation (www.congregational.org.uk). One former president of the Federation, Barry Osborne, has been working for many years in Rural Mission Solutions (www.ruralmissionsolutions.org.uk), a charity offering free support helping rural churches of any tradition to engage with their local community.



As I embark upon my year as President of the Congregational Federation I am conscious not only of the role all rural churches play in their particular locality, but the caring work of the Derbyshire Rural Chaplaincy team along with other organisations dedicated to the welfare of the farming community, themselves such superb examples of stewardship of God's creation.

◀ Elisabeth outside Chinley Chapel

Would you like to feature in a future issue of the DRC News?

We are always on the look out for new material for the DRC News and if you have an interesting story to tell that you think our readers would enjoy, please do contact us. Your story could be about farming (either in the past or modern times), or farming and the Christian faith. You don't have to write an article out in full, you might prefer to just tell us your story and we can write it up for you to check afterwards. Please do contact Nicola if you would like to contribute to the DRC News.

We're also on the lookout for some help with a feature we have planned for a future issue of DRC News about wisdom in the farming community. If you've heard of any old farming sayings or proverbs, please do let us know.

Telephone: 07593 380311

Email: nicola@derbyshireruralchaplaincy.org.uk

Ashbourne Young Farmers' Trip to London in 1940

By Henry Oulton

Henry Oulton, from Belper, talks about his memories of the Ashbourne Young Farmers' trip to London in May 1940:

"I left school in April 1938 at age 13, when I was diagnosed with rheumatic fever and missed the last spring term. I relapsed again in September 1938 and the doctor thought it was serious and that I needed to sleep downstairs. By early spring 1939 I was gradually up and about again, to the point that my parents insisted that I brought the cows up for milking the day war broke out on the 3rd September 1939. I had learned to milk by hand, which I became quite proficient at. I also had a part-time job with the council, clearing leaves with a horse and cart and filling potholes for a shilling an hour.

The Ashbourne Young Farmers had organised a day trip to London in late May 1940, and on the day my older brother Richard, our neighbour Bill Chadfield and myself cycled from Darley Moor to Ashbourne to meet the bus, as neither family had a car (although my parents had been offered a car for £9 by a corn traveller who had been called up, they just couldn't afford it). When we got on the bus we went straight upstairs to the front as we had never been on a double decker bus before!



▲ Henry (left) with brothers Norman (centre) & Richard (right)

We caught the train at Derby station to London St Pancras. I remember the rush of air from the underground trains and the visit to London Zoo. The only sign that there was a war on was that a lot of doorways were sand bagged up. The main thing I remember from the day was the buttons that held my braces to the back of my trousers coming off, and having to hold my trousers up which was very embarrassing! Luckily one of the senior members who looked after us very well got a safety pin to re attach them, much to my relief.

The train was late leaving London and it stopped to pick some soldiers up who, unbeknown to us at the time, were probably returning from the Dunkirk evacuation. We didn't get back to Ashbourne until around 2:00 in the morning. ➡➡➡

.....>> With hindsight we should never have gone to London at that time, but it had been organised well in advance. We were aware of the fighting going on in France and it wasn't going well at that point in the war, but we had no idea of the gravity of the situation that was unfolding with the army encircled at Dunkirk.



▲ Henry (circa 1947/8)

Less than twelve months later, the farm was requisitioned for the Darley Moor airdrome. The local auctioneer, Mr Berry of Bagshaws, knocked on the door and said we'd got six weeks to move out. My father was only paid the same for the farm as he paid for it 20 years earlier.



▲ Henry, farming in Parwich
(circa 1947/8)

In 1943 my friend Ron Twigg signed up for the army. And – although I was in a reserved occupation – I wanted to sign up as well, but my parents wouldn't let me. My father said he didn't want any of his sons to go through what he had been through in the First World War. However, in early 1945 I received a letter for an interview in Ashbourne which I attended and presumed I would be called up but the war was coming to an end, and nothing became of it."

Henry Oulton

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If you don't already receive a copy of the DRC News directly to your farm or home, or you know someone else who would like to receive a copy, we would be delighted to send it out by post free of charge or via email. Just let us know.

Email: nicola@derbyshireruralchaplaincy.org.uk

Tel: 07593 380311



Derbyshire Farmers' **Harvest Supper**

With Harvest Hymns & Stories of Faith In Farming

Thursday 10th October

Arrival from 7.00pm, supper served at 7.30pm

at Hulland Ward Village Hall, Dog Lane, DE6 3EH



Join us for pie & mash as we
celebrate the harvest together!

£10 per person

To book, please contact the DRC on 07593 380311
or email nicola@derbyshireruralchaplaincy.org.uk

A Life In Farming

By Peter Lomas

Ever since he can remember, Peter has had a passion for farming. There never was a time when he wanted to do anything else. Born in Monyash, a few miles from Bakewell, Peter grew up on his parents' smallholding in the village – the eldest of five boys and two girls. His dad was a labourer at a nearby farm and would start work every day at 7.00am, but he would be up by 5.30am to tend to his own animals and complete the jobs on his smallholding before he left for work. As soon as Peter and the next eldest boy, Geoff, were aged about 7 or 8, they took over the smallholding work from their father. They would feed the cows, then milk them by hand and then take them out into the yard to drink water. Peter recalls one particular cow, Millie, who was very unpredictable about drinking. On her good days (which the boys called their bad days) she would demand so much water that the boys had to make a second trip to the standpipe in the village street, which could make them late for school, so on those occasions they would have to make do with a quick cold wash and breakfast would be eaten standing up to save time.

Peter has many happy memories of his time in and around Monyash. He would sometimes accompany his cousin Morris – who was one of the first people in the area to have a tractor, in this case a Standard Fordson – on his contracting work around local farms. The tractor had a space on the left hand side of the steering wheel just large enough for a small child to snuggle up comfortably on some empty seed



^ Peter Lomas and son Ian

sacks and be rocked to sleep by the steady rhythm of the tractor going up and down the field. During such trips Peter recalls seeing his cousin stop the tractor to very gently use a spade to move a lapwing nest containing five eggs that was in the path of the tractor, before replacing it in the same spot afterwards to ensure the nest and eggs were conserved, and sure enough Peter remembers seeing the lapwing settling back down on the nest to brood her eggs. It was only a couple of years after the introduction of the first tractors that people in the area stopped using horses for farmwork.



.....>> Peter had mixed feelings about the demise of working horses. Although the tractors could do far more work – and in the post-war years this was crucial in feeding the nation – he couldn't help but feel sad that so many of these wonderful animals were being replaced by machines. Peter, who had always loved horses, had enjoyed working with them in the fields as he felt at one with nature and could hear birdsong all around him. And all of this came to abrupt end with the tractor – unless you stopped and turned the engine off and simply listened.

Leaving school aged 15, as you did in those days, Peter had a few offers of work but had already found himself a job with the Mycock family at Henmore Farm, about a mile and a half out of the village. Peter spent two years with the Mycocks and enjoyed his time there. He was treated like one of the family, and Mr Mycock was a very knowledgeable farmer and Peter learned a lot from him. One January morning Peter was out on his own on muck-spreading duties, which consisted of cleaning out the cow muck from the sheds and transporting it to a field, where it would be spread over the grass with a fork. He recalls returning to his work after lunch and seeing jackdaws squabbling over nesting material, a covey of about a dozen partridges flying up from the ground near his feet and a blackbird making some odd noises, trying to get his song going! He also watched a gang of about three brown hares engaging in a sparring match in the fields. Leaning on his fork he thought to himself, “who in the world has a better job than me, muck spreading?!”

Peter was very keen to get a farm, and although his father was on the lookout he had not found anything suitable for the family. But on the way back from viewing a farm on the Smedley Estate that had unfortunately turned out to be too small, Peter's father and Fred Palfreyman, who had been driving Peter's father, mother and Peter himself, decided to call in for a quick pint at the Hollybush and, as was the way in those days, Peter's mum and Peter waited in the car. Quite fortuitously the landlord Jim Cartwright knew of a farm on the Cromford Key Estates which was available to rent and which turned out to be just what the family was looking for, and in 1952 at the age of 17, Peter and his family moved onto the 156 acre Griffe Walk Farm to start life as tenant farmers.

The family took with them to their new home the nine cows they already owned from the smallholding, and around five sheep. They brought in a few more cows but unfortunately some of their livestock suffered contagious abortion and it took around ten years to really get going with a decent number of animals. Peter recalls the 1950's as being lean times and his father and the older boys did extra work such as sheep shearing or helping other farmers to make ends meet. The farm also suffered setbacks from TB around this time. Although TB was around in>>

.....>> those days, it was nothing like as prevalent as it is today, so this was particularly bad luck. A lot of the family's heifers had been infected, but closer examination showed that the affected animals were all calved in a particular field, and once they stopped using that field for calving they had no further issues with TB.

When they moved onto the farm, many of the walls were not stockproof and needed to be rebuilt, which Peter's father accomplished over a period of about two years – and some of those walls are still in place today!



The herd at Griffie Walk ^

Peter and his brothers got into a lot of scrapes on the farm, including the time he was out mowing and managed to tip the tractor on top of himself. They didn't have cabs or roll bars for safety as they do now. His youngest brother, Ken, was nearby and Peter was stuck under the tractor with broken ribs and a broken collar bone for about an hour while Ken went to fetch help. A trip to the hospital in Derby followed, where they managed to patch him up.

After marrying Anne in 1960, the couple bought a home in Wirksworth where they raised their family, and Peter continued to work alongside his parents and brothers on the farm. It was around 1987/88 that a piece of land of about 7 acres came to Peter's attention. The owners had attempted to sell it through auction, but it did not meet its reserve price, so Peter decided to put in a cheeky offer and to his amazement, the offer was accepted. The family had now become landowners! Over the years since then, the family were able to buy other parcels of land and, finally, they were in a position to buy the farm that had been their home since 1952.

Today, Derek, Peter's brother, farms in partnership with Peter's son, Ian, at Griffie Walk, and brother Ken farms with his son at Griffie Grange. Derek and Ian's farm is close to Longcliffe, just north of Carsington Reservoir. Ian looks after the day-to-day running of the farm, where the family has built up a herd of around 160 British Friesians, with Derek handling the paperwork.

Every Monday you'll find Peter watching the live feed of the Bakewell market sales via his iPad at home, and brother Derek telephones daily with updates from the farm. Peter's love of farming over the years has never dimmed and he is still as infatuated with farming life as he ever was as he guides and advises his son Ian, and looks forward to hearing the news and seeing all the new developments at Griffie Walk Farm.

Lobbying

By Andrew Critchlow, NFU County Adviser for Derbyshire

Politics has been very unpredictable for the last few years but one thing that is fairly certain is there will be a general election within the year. The runners and riders in each constituency are starting to emerge and making themselves known by leaflets, local and social media.

If the opinion polls are to be believed nearly all of the seats in Derbyshire could see a change of MP. Currently all eleven Derbyshire and Derby City constituencies are held by Conservative MPs except Chesterfield and Derby South which are held by Labour. If we go back to the 1997 election, when there were only 10 constituencies, all went to Labour except Derbyshire Dales.



The Boundary Commission has reviewed all Parliamentary constituencies in order to better even up the number of constituents in each to around 73,000. Derbyshire has not seen the major changes some areas have.

Enough of the technicalities. Why is this important to farming and the NFU? Lobbying - derived from meeting MPs in the lobby area of Westminster - is central to what the NFU does. The NFU is apolitical and offers to meet with all candidates and will certainly offer the same type of meeting, such as a farm visit, to all major candidates. At this moment in time, this approach of being even-handed with all candidates is more important than ever. Not only because MPs could change but also because there is so much change happening within the industry particularly with Government support payments.

What are the main points we should be landing when talking to a candidate? Stick to a few, say three, key points. Remember when the candidate has met you, they will go to another meeting and talk about something totally different and do that several times in a day. They can only remember so much. Keep them relevant to you and therefore relevant to their constituency. However, if the point is almost unique to your situation say so and try and stick to points that are relevant to many more farmers in the constituency in order to have the most impact.>>

.....>> A bit of background knowledge is always good to start with such as:

- The UK is only around 60% self-sufficient in the food it can grow and produce here, that has fallen from around 80% in the 1980s.
- Agriculture contributes to only 10% of the total UK greenhouse gas emissions compared to the 27% transport emits. Emissions from UK livestock amount to around half of that 10% which, due to our efficiency, is much lower than the world average. UK beef for example is 40% of the world average. Methane emissions are short lived at around 12 years, compared to hundreds of years for CO₂. With UK herd and flock size fairly stable or shrinking, there is not a net increase in global warming gases from ruminants.
- 65% of UK farmland is best suited to growing grass. Cattle and sheep can turn inedible grass into nutrient dense beef, lamb and dairy.
- Well managed grassland is one of the largest carbon stores in the UK and will sequester carbon more consistently over time than planting woodland which varies a lot depending on the age of the trees.

The biggest ask has to be is there an increased budget to support sustainable food production which the nation expects to be produced to the highest welfare and environmental standards? This can only be achieved if we have a level playing field and are not undercut by cheap imports produced to lower standards.



DRC Team Changes

Revd Stella Mills

Stella joined the DRC as an Agricultural Chaplain in 2016 and has been instrumental in developing the DRC over the years. Stella stepped back from her role in September 2023 and continues as a Supernumerary Minister in the East Staffordshire and South Derbyshire Methodist Circuit. We are extremely grateful for all Stella's support to both the farming community in Derbyshire and the work of the DRC. We wish her well as she continues her ministry.



John Eley

John has also decided to step back from his role as a volunteer for the DRC in the Farmers' Support Team. It has been such a pleasure to work with John since he joined us way back in 2017. John says:

"Hi everyone - it's time for change, because of family health issues and more commitments at home for Christine and I, it's time for me to step back. I've seen several changes over the last six years. When I started with the DRC it was mainly just Alan with a little help from me for this part of Derbyshire. Alan has successfully grown the team to what it is now. I have many memories of people we have helped and have taken a lot from it. The majority of my time has been just keeping in touch with people who often just needed an ear. Although I am officially 'retiring' from this post, you will still see me about, and I will still love to have a chat."

Thankfully we will still see John at times on a Monday in Bakewell and wish him, Christine and all the family every blessing for the future.

Louise Latham

Louise Latham has provided outstanding administrative support to the DRC since April 2020 and helped navigate the DRC into our new home with Chaplaincy Derbyshire. Louise will be handing the admin baton over to Nicola Theakstone who started in September 2023. Louise says:



.....>> “I would like to give thanks to Alan Griggs for giving me the opportunity to join the DRC back in April 2020 as their temporary part-time administrator. I knew very little about farming and the issues facing the agricultural community, but by being welcomed into this wonderful team, I caught a glimpse of what life is like for many of you and the challenges you face. I would like to thank you and the team for giving your time, kindness and knowledge; it has been such a privilege to be a part of this journey - watching and learning and seeing how the chaplaincy cares deeply for our farming and agricultural communities.”



Order Cards in Support of the DRC



Our local artist, Lesley Griggs (Alan's mum) has produced some beautiful paintings from Derbyshire landscapes which have been made into cards and are available to buy in support of the Derbyshire Rural Chaplaincy



Evening Walk



Bradbourne Brook



Poppy Meadow



Wildflower Meadow



Fields near Belper



Milldale

The cards are A6 in size (4" x 6"), produced on FSC card, blank inside, and come with envelopes made of 100% recycled paper. The cards are available for a suggested donation of £1.50 for a single card or a set of each design at £6.50. The costs include postage and all the proceeds goes towards supporting the DRC.

If you would like to order any of the cards, contact Nicola on 07593 380311 or email: nicola@derbyshireruralchaplaincy.org.uk

Invite a chaplain or contact the DRC on 07710 088972

Would you like to support the work of the Derbyshire Rural Chaplaincy?

If you would like to support the work of our small team throughout the year, there are a number of ways you can do this:

- Attend our monthly short services at the livestock market in Bakewell – details and dates are to the right
- The work of the DRC is reliant on donations and funding and if you are able to help, either a one-off gift or regular giving will make such a difference. Please do contact us for details
- Visit us at any of the agricultural shows we're at this year – see the "events" section of our website (we'll be updating this throughout the year as new events are added)
- Sign up for our electronic bi-monthly prayer and news updates – contact Nicola with your email address
- Distribute copies of our twice-yearly DRC News to your local church – contact Nicola to request extra copies
- Invite one of the DRC chaplains to speak about the work of the chaplaincy to your church or social group (Derbyshire only) – contact Rev'd Alan Griggs to book



Monthly Service
at Bakewell Livestock Market

Dates for 2024:

Monday 8th April
Monday 13th May
Monday 3rd June
Monday 1st July
Monday 2nd September
Monday 7th October
Monday 4th November

A short, informal service starting at 10:00am in the conference room of the Agricultural Business Centre, Bakewell, Derbyshire, DE45 1AH

Everyone welcome | Refreshments served

For details please call or email:
07593 380311 | nicola@derbyshireruralchaplaincy.org.uk

CONTACT US:

Website: derbyshireruralchaplaincy.org.uk

Contact Nicola: 07593 380311 | nicola@derbyshireruralchaplaincy.org.uk

Contact Rev'd Alan: 07710 088972 | alan@derbyshireruralchaplaincy.org.uk

Helpful Contact Numbers for Advice & Support



Struggling and not sure where to turn?



Offering spiritual and pastoral support to the Agricultural and Rural community

alan@derbyshireruralchaplaincy.org.uk

07710 088972 (Revd Alan Griggs - lead chaplain)

www.derbyshireruralchaplaincy.org.uk



- We understand the pressures you face
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- **0800 188 4444**



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Suicide Bereavement Care offering support to those in suicide crisis.

tomorrow@harmless.org.uk

01246 541935

www.tomorrowproject.org.uk



Derwent Rural Counselling Service

0800 047 6861

email: admin@dracs.org.uk

or visit www.dracs.org.uk

Cut-out-and-keep farmers' prayer

Merciful Father

We pray for farms in the midst of lambing and ask that the little lambs and vulnerable sheep be protected from predators. We pray for the growth of the grass in the emptied silage fields. We pray for the sales of sheep with lambs at foot.

We pray for farms planting potatoes, maize, linseed, oil seed rape, and for the treatments that encourage growth and protect from pests.

We pray for cattle turned out from winter housing.

We thank you for the blossoming of the orchards and for the pollinators and we pray for the fruit that will grow.

As we pray that new life will come and that it will be protected from harm, so we pray that Easter life will grow in us and be kept safe too.

Source: *Prayer And Worship For The Farming Year*, Revd Stephen F Caddy

