

St CUTHBERT'S HOLY WEEDS AUTUMN, WINTER AND EARLY SPRING PERIOD 2016



The 'Weeds' pressed on with autumn tasks, not least the clearance of last year's spectacular leaf-fall. The leaf bedecked grounds looked enchanting in the early morning mist, but the bitter chill from the inshore wind and the enormity of the clearing task sharp focussed our attention.

We wondered what had become of John, who regularly joined us with his carer? Anyway, we're confident his few months of fellowship with us gave him a lift. Tommy and Keith spent even less time with us, but we see them passing by from time to time and they know they're always welcome.

The Church's Christmas Tree was dismembered to make a new fence for the wild-life garden and we felt we should clear out one side and prepare to re-seed it later. We'd kept watch over the bird boxes throughout the winter noticing that a number of Blue-tits were visiting. However, none seemed to stay long but the Blackbirds remained good winter companions and are in full voice once again.

The Snowdrops gave us a really nice show along the shaded north boundary wall and we had many appreciative comments from the congregation and passers by about the grounds in general. They'd seen us planting hundreds of additional daffodil bulbs and a whole new tranche of tulips last autumn. That had been hard work. Many bulbs were gifted to us and we'd also acquired loads more quite cheaply as shops lost interest in their remaining stocks for sale. Now the Snowdrops have gone over we plan to split and spread them to enhance the display for next year. We've also noted a number of Daffodil clumps, which hadn't flowered for a couple of years, so they'll be replaced. Our spring bulbs display this year seems to have lifted everyone's spirits, even passengers on the local bus services, which run past the church.



We've created a second oval shaped flower bed next to the existing kidney shaped one. Both beds will soon be cleared of the roots of old shrubs and ground elder, and then planted out with perennials and summer flowering bulbs. We feel this is more economical and both beds will provide a nice counterbalance of colour to the nearby Garden of Remembrance.



We also acquired two, two-tier planters. They are old Council ones and although we were too late to plant them out with spring flowers, they will provide us with a couple of nice focus points when filled with summer bedding.



This winter and early spring has been a time of preparation for summer, especially because of the visit of the Tall Ships to Blyth in late August, when our church and grounds will be open to the public.

Our own boat, 'Sally Dawson' named after a competition last year, has been a regular talking point both at church and within the town, especially now that it has been planted and 'flagged-out'. It's right on the main road leading into the town, pointing all those who see it towards this summer's Tall Ships Festival. It will soon be planted up with brightly coloured Marguerites and other flowers.



We've also now established a good link with Adam, who runs the plant/garden centre next to Ridley Park. His experience and knowledge is helping us to think through our seasonal priorities and to better understand 'plantsmanship'. He has visited us and talked us through the grounds from which we've a page or two of useful notes to guide us. Mind you, we still don't know how a dozen or so Broad Beans were found flourishing in the grounds, especially how they ever got there in the first place? It's been a great talking point!

Looking ahead, we're inviting people from both church and across the town to join both the 'Weeds' and/or, a new companion group, yet to be named. It will offer people who like to do a bit of lighter gardening, such as planting out boxes, weeding, watering, dead-heading, conversing with the flowers etc; an opportunity they perhaps otherwise wouldn't have, plus a bit of social fellowship. An invitation will be in the local paper and church magazine before our first 'Planting-out day', which is on Sunday 15th May and our Annual Coffee Morning on Saturday 22nd May.