

# MAY 2026



## **THE UNITED BENEFICE OF LORTON AND LOWESWATER WITH BUTTERMERE**

**£7.00 PER ANNUM (LOCAL)**

**£15.00 PER ANNUM (POSTED)**

# Letter from the Editor

Dear Link Readers

I think Spring might finally be here as we have been blessed with quite a few warm and sunny days - my shorts have been dug out from Winter hibernation.

For reasons to do with printing the Link pages always have to be in multiples of 4 - and this month my articles were too numerous to fit into 28 pages but too few for 32, so fill the two blank pages I ended up with I have added in a Spring poem on page 13 and some fascinating nature facts from the RSPB on page 23. The Melbreak Wildlife Group has nothing to fear - I can assure them this is a 1-off!

Other articles include guidance on how to make a scarecrow ready for the Scarecrow Festival, more scientific updates about the effect of climate change on Loweswater, our usual Nature Notes and a piece about home phone and broadband. There are also updates from Valley Wheels and the Balsam Bashers as well as information about Christian Aid Week. This month we also have an update about Eco Church/Eco Community which I hope will become a regular feature again after a lapse of a few months.

I'm sure many of you have been worrying about the state of my sweet peas and I can report that they are now doing well and will be planted out at the beginning of May. Any tips for keeping greenfly at bay, with which I was plagued last year, are very welcome.



Rosemary Riley

P.S Seven members from the valley walking group managed a hot but very enjoyable climb up Bowfell on Sunday 26th April.

Pictures available at

[www.loweswatercam.co.uk.260426\\_Mock\\_erkin\\_Mob\\_Bowfell.htm](http://www.loweswatercam.co.uk.260426_Mock_erkin_Mob_Bowfell.htm)

Our front cover photo this month is of the cherry in tree in blossom at St Cuthberts, taken by Lois Sparling



## Vicar's Letter

At the time of writing, it's almost three weeks since Easter. Or I *should* say, since Easter Day - because the church is still less than halfway through the "Great Fifty Days of Eastertide" which culminates on the day of Pentecost. The fifty days reflect, exactly, the period between Jesus's resurrection and the coming of the promised Holy Spirit.

Unlike our culture, which so often hastily moves on from one celebration to the next (reflected in the overnight turnaround of displays and products in the shops), the Church takes time to savour and reflect on key moments in the Christian faith.

The Easter season reflects the bible's account that the risen Jesus didn't just make a one-off appearance, but appeared to many people on different occasions in the period before he ascended to heaven. The risen Lord wasn't in a hurry to "move on" but took time to meet with his followers. And in many of the personal encounters recorded in the Bible, we see his concern for and attention to the particular needs of the individual: meeting Peter in his guilt and sense of failure; Mary Magdalene in her broken-heartedness; Cleopas and his friend in their emptiness;

Thomas in his doubt and annoyance at having missed out on the Lord's first appearance to his disciples. The risen Lord met each one in a very personal way, bringing restoration, renewing dignity, hope, purpose and joy. In his encounter with Thomas, Jesus said: "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." Two thousand years on, countless people continue to believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ and follow him. Today, we may not see the risen Lord in the flesh, but many people have stories of how they have encountered his presence in their life, sometimes in very subtle ways, experiencing peace, forgiveness, hope, joy, guidance and purpose. And if like Thomas, we feel that somehow we've missed out, or we're too full of doubt to ever follow Christ, the risen Lord is the same Lord, who isn't in a hurry to move on to someone else, but always has time to meet with us, exactly where we happen to be in life.

Eastertide blessings,  
Andrea Ward

For anyone wanting to receive home communion or in need of pastoral support, please contact:

Revd. Barbara Robinson, 01900 85234 or 07961902075. Please leave a message and I will get back to you asap. If your need is urgent please contact Revd. Jane Charman, Mission Community Leader on 01900 828028



## Valley Wheels - Transport for locals



*Looking to share transport to theatre, church or a meeting? Has your car gone in for service and you need a lift? Don't have a car? We can help!*

Thanks to volunteers, Valley Wheels WhatsApp group has been working well this spring. The aims are to:

- provide **free** local transport for those who need it.
- reduce the number of car journeys by lift sharing; so reducing cost and carbon emissions
- strengthen our community resilience.

**May Update** – We now have 30 in the group. People who needed a lift have posted on the group and volunteer drivers have responded. Updates regarding road closures have been useful this spring and links to the summer bus timetables are shared – good for those lucky people who are actually on the route!

**Join up** – The more the merrier! If you would like to join Valley Wheels Whatsapp Group to give or receive lifts, or would like to find out more, please email Debbie Watson [beech.lane35@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:beech.lane35@yahoo.co.uk)

**BEGINNERS CLASSES  
ENROLLING NOW**

ENNERDALE

LAMPLUGH

LORTON

HARRINGTON  
SCOUT HUT

HARRINGTON  
ST MARY'S CHURCH

TO ENQUIRE OR ENROL CALL

**07543 876490**

(THIS NUMBER DOES NOT ACCEPT TEXT MESSAGES)



**CUMBRIA COAST  
KARATE**  
[www.cumbriacoastkarate.co.uk](http://www.cumbriacoastkarate.co.uk)

ALL INSTRUCTORS ARE  
FIRST AID TRAINED  
AND DBS CHECKED





Our recent talk was an evening with the author, Mark Richards talking about Alfred Wainwright, a talk that included how AW inspired Mark's drawings and encouraged him into writing his many long distance footpath guides. Mark also told us of his Lakeland Fellranger Guides and his time spent with Wainwright and his wife Betty at their Kendal home. His talk ended with the background behind his podcasts, which can be found at [www.countrystride.co.uk](http://www.countrystride.co.uk).

On May 19th we look forward to a second visit from the Whitehaven Male Voice Choir who entertained us wonderfully last year. Their repertoire covered the whole gambit of classic Male Choir singing and, if last year is anything to go by, it will be an evening not to be missed.

A month later and it's our summer trip to The Devil's Porridge Museum, the wartime munitions factory at Gretna and includes an afternoon visit to the Annandale Distillery for tea (or something stronger). Spaces are limited to 24 so booking is essential for what promises to be another great day out.

For more information and for booking places on the trip, please phone me on 07740 461059 or Keith Mc Neil on 07810 772192.

Concert by  
Whitehaven

**Male  
Voice  
Choir**



**A welcome return visit**

**Tuesday 19th May at 7.30pm**

Refreshments will be provided.

**Loweswater Village Hall**

**Free to Members, £5 for guests: All welcome**

Contact Roger Hiley on 07740 461059

Lorton & Derwent Fells Local  
History Society

Thurs 14 May, 7.30 pm at YTH



CARLISLE CASTLE, CUMBERLAND.

***Border Fortress: The Turbulent  
History of Carlisle Castle***

Instantly recognisable as one of Cumberland's most iconic buildings, Carlisle Castle's bulky sandstone keep still lowers over the city it was built to defend some nine centuries ago. No comfortable stately home but rather a fortress in the truest sense of the word, the castle's long and storied past is full of tales of violence, scheming and derring-do.

This illustrated talk will feature a rich cast of characters including kings, queens, soldiers and reivers, and will span Anglo-Scottish border clashes through

to treason, civil war and rebellion. It will shine a spotlight on the turbulent heritage of one of the most besieged places in Britain, highlighting the vital role it played in both local and national history, and bringing its dramatic past to life.

**Dr Maksymilian Loth-Hill** is a cultural historian of modern East-Central Europe and an Honorary Fellow of Durham University. He is keen to promote engagement with history beyond the world of academia.

All welcome, members free, visitors pay £4 cash at the door (including refreshments).

*A date for your diary*

Thursday 11 June, 7.30 pm

***Artists and Prints: Cumbria  
Illustrated in Early 19th Century  
Prints*** with Dr Michael Winstanley.

This talk will be preceded by a short AGM.

Visit our website at [www.derwentfells.com](http://www.derwentfells.com) to find out about our society, publications and programme. Annual membership is £12 (or £20 for two people at the same address) and includes a subscription to our periodical the *Wanderer*.

# Fabulous Friday Social

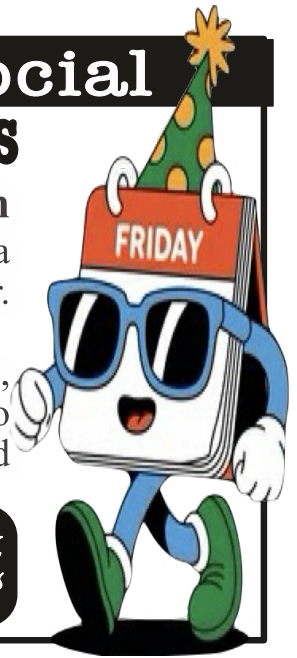
## PLEASE NOTE DATE CHANGES

The Fabulous Friday Social on 24th April will be the last one before a summer recess and will resume again in October.

It has been a great success for people of all ages, with the bar, games and entertainment. Thanks to everyone who has come along and supported your village hall.

Yew Tree Hall Committee.

*"We'll be back  
in October"*



- ⚡ EV charger installations
- ⚡ Testing & Certification (EICRs)
- ⚡ Fuse board changes
- ⚡ Home batteries
- ⚡ Solar panels

**TIM IRLAM**  
ELECTRICAL



**Tim Irlam**

📞 07806 656650

✉ [ti.electricaltd@gmail.com](mailto:ti.electricaltd@gmail.com)

📱 /timirlamelectrical @ /ti.electrical



**CUMBERLAND**  
**STOVE SERVICES**

- Stove and Fireplace Installation
- Flue Lining
- Chimney Sweeping
- Stove Maintenance and Repair
- FREE NO OBLIGATION SURVEY AND ESTIMATE

Email: [enquiries@cumberlandstoveservices.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@cumberlandstoveservices.co.uk)

Tel: 01900 268737 Mob: 07702112406



*Melbreak Wildlife Group*



## SWIFT GROUP



We are aiming to revitalise the Swift Group + build on work done in previous years. This will hopefully involve erecting new swift boxes + callers, monitoring current nest boxes + recording the presence of swifts in our locality + assisting with swift rescue.

If you are interested please message me on 07512 104910 with your details + I can add you to a whatsapp group to provide further information. Time is short, the first report of a swift returning to a cumbrian box was in Lazonby two days ago!

Many thanks,  
Jeremy Watkins.



# CHRISTIAN AID WEEK – May10<sup>th</sup> to 16th 2026

As you know Christian Aid was founded in 1945 by British and Irish churches to help refugees after the Second World War. Back then, we worked with partner churches to alleviate suffering by raising the equivalent of £3 million plus in today's money.

And now Christian Aid work with local partners and communities on the ground to fight injustice, respond to humanitarian emergencies, campaign for change, and help people claim the services and rights they are entitled to.

The work includes helping people to:

- become more resilient to shocks and disasters such as drought, climate change and hurricanes
- make the most of opportunities, such as being able to sell their produce for a fair price.
- This Christian Aid Week, your support could help mothers in Nairobi and Kenya, facing the devastating reality of urban poverty and the daily struggle to feed their children.
- By funding urban farming projects alongside specialist training from our partner "Beacon of Hope", we can help parents fight food insecurity, grow fresh vegetables in small city spaces and earn an income to support their families.
- This May, will you to help mothers like Fridah Moraa and Belinda Kasudi, so they can protect their children from hunger and grow a more hopeful future.

**As you know, we believe in life before death". by acting again now, to help relieve suffering and build a world where everyone has a safe place to call home. If you pay income tax, may I ask you to consider making your donation gift aided to enable the charity to reclaim; for every £10 you give, they can claim an extra £2.50, making your gifts worth more to the communities Christian Aid supports. As some of our collectors have retired in our Valley and Mockerkin, if you are able to help in collecting it would be much appreciated.**

**THANK YOU - Jan Collins-Webb - Lorton Vale Organiser**



## **Lorton School 10K. Fundraising Road Race**

**Thank you all for your help on Saturday 18th April at the Lorton School 10K. A typical Cumbrian day but at least the sun did shine. We have raised approximately £2,400 which would not be possible without the continuous support of the local community. A big thank you to Paramo for sponsoring this event. For the full results visit: [www.timingupnorthresults.co.uk](http://www.timingupnorthresults.co.uk)**



## **Farm Shop**

**Saturday 10am – 1pm**

**Wednesday 3pm – 6pm**

**Low Netherscales Farm, Embleton  
Cockermouth, CA13 9YP**

**[info@cumbriafarmers.co.uk](mailto:info@cumbriafarmers.co.uk)**

### **Sustainable Produce from Local Farmers**

**Belted Galloway Beef**

**Herdwick Lamb**

**Venison**

**Pork sausages**

**Seasonal Vegetables**

**Cut Flowers**

**Milk and Eggs**

**Bread and Flour**

**Rapeseed Oil**

**Apple Juice**

## Nature Notes – Advancement of Pied Flycatcher Breeding Season

Pied Flycatchers are cavity nesting, single brooded migrants; in 2016 there were estimated to be 22,000 pairs in the UK, of which 4,000 were in Cumbria. They make a round trip of about 10,400km each year between their breeding and west Africa wintering grounds, many returning to the same woods or even the same box where they were born; they weigh about 14g, similar to the weight of a £1 coin. They are on the amber list for Birds of Conservation Concern since they have declined between 25% and 50% in the last 25 years.

Pied flycatchers need specific deciduous woodland habitat favouring Sessile Oak (*Quercus petraea*). The western Lakeland valleys, namely Loweswater, Lorton, Wythop and Borrowdale are some of their 'hotspots'. They take readily to nest boxes, where nests are more successful and less prone to predation (Lundberg 1992), and can be monitored more easily. Clutch size is usually six or seven, chicks hatch together, are born naked and blind, but at 16 days are fully feathered and ready to fledge. Chicks are ringed at about six days old.



Pied Flycatchers only compete for a small area around the nesting cavity; most of the food, especially for the chicks is gained by foraging in the woodland canopy up to several hundred metres away. Only the female incubates; many males are also polygamous and multi territorial (Lundberg 1992).

I have been monitoring pied flycatcher nests, and ringing both adults and chicks in Lorton and Loweswater since the 1980s. Over that period, dates for breeding have become at least 10 days earlier (Callion:2023). Since then, data collected by the **West Cumbria Ringing Group** has shown a further advancement.

In 2022 we ringed 108 broods giving a total of 690 chicks. The first brood was ringed in the Lorton Valley on 24<sup>th</sup> May, three days earlier than any previous ringing. 35 broods (32%) were ringed before the 1<sup>st</sup> of June.

In 2025 from 135 broods we ringed 744 chicks; this increase from 2022 is likely to be a result of more boxes in some additional woodlands. The first two broods were ringed in the Lorton Valley on 19<sup>th</sup> May, five days earlier than 2022. 101 broods (75%) were ringed before 1<sup>st</sup> June showing a further advancement of breeding dates.

In summary, long distance migratory passerines that are reliant on short seasonal food supplies for breeding can be susceptible to a mismatch between arrival time and relevant food sources. These potential misalignments could also occur on either spring or autumn migrations. In response to an advance in spring phenology, some Pied Flycatchers have advanced their dates of both arrival and egg laying (Nicolau et al 2021). Here in West Cumbria the **WCRG** is seeing and recording this first hand.

We would like to express our thanks to the many landowners who grant us freedom of access to do our conservation studies on this extraordinary 'local' species.

Follow our group on Facebook/Instagram - @West Cumbria Ringing Group

John Callion (Photo of male Pied Flycatcher by Thalia Sparke)

## NOTES FROM ST BARTHOLOMEW'S AND ST JAMES'S

Our Easter morning service at Loweswater attracted an almost record congregation of over 70 in a beautifully decorated church with fine music and singing. Thanks to all the talented flower arrangers. On the subject of flowers, the flower rota at the back of the church needs a few more names please - many thanks.

We held our Annual Parochial Church Meeting in April. Jan Collins-Webb and Eleanor Ella were re-elected as Churchwardens for Loweswater and Buttermere and all current members of the PCC were re-elected. In January of this year I took over the role of Parish Safeguarding Officer from Barbara Robinson.

We had a recent visit at St.James from a conservator who specialises in church windows and stained glass. We anticipate using her services to restore the windows, in particular the Wainwright window currently boarded up. This is to be discussed at our next PCC meeting. The working group of the Buttermere Restoration Appeal is due to meet shortly.

We were sad to lose Bev Cubey, a well respected member of our community in April. The Cubey family moved from Suffolk to live in Hope Beck Farm in 1984. Bev initially worked at West Cumberland Hospital as an Eye surgeon. He later set up a service with GPs with a mobile eye clinic able to perform day cases.

Bev was a regular churchgoer with Ann, and as a previous choral scholar at Cambridge loved music and sang regularly in choirs. He had a great love of gardening, a family tradition, and shared with the next generation. We send our love and condolences to Ann and her family Fritha, Mark, Janet and Wolfgang, and Tanya.

By way of a reminder the Bluebell Service takes place at Rannerdale 3pm on 10th May. The current hot and sunny weather bodes well for a good display of bluebells.

I conclude with a message left on our prayer board at St.James clearly written by a young child :-

Please come back to life if you can and stay with my family...

I hope all enjoy the Bank Holiday weekend  
Eleanor Ella

**Spring**  
**by**  
**Christina Rossetti**

Frost-locked all the winter,  
Seeds, and roots, and stones of fruits,  
What shall make their sap ascend  
That they may put forth shoots,  
Tips of tender green,  
Leaf, or blade, or sheath;  
Telling of the hidden life  
That breaks forth underneath,  
Life nursed in its grave by Death.

Blows the thaw-wind pleasantly,  
Drips the soaking rain,  
By fits looks down the waking sun:  
Young grass springs on the plain;  
Young leaves clothe early hedgerow trees;  
Seeds, and roots, and stones of fruits,  
Swollen with sap, put forth their shoots;  
Curled-headed ferns sprout in the lane;  
Birds sing and pair again.

There is no time like Spring,  
When life's alive in everything,  
Before new nestlings sing,  
Before cleft swallows speed their journey  
back  
Along the trackless track, —  
God guides their wing,  
He spreads their table that they nothing  
lack,  
Before the daisy grows a common flower,  
Before the sun has power  
To scorch the world up in his noontide hour.

There is no time like Spring,  
Like Spring that passes by;  
There is no life like Spring-life born to die,  
Piercing the sod,  
Clothing the uncouth clod,  
Hatched in the nest,  
Fledged on the windy bough,  
Strong on the wing:  
There is no time like Spring that passes by,  
Now newly born, and now  
Hastening to die.



Christina Rossetti (1830 - 1894) was born in England to a family of great literary and artistic talent. A beauty who frequently modeled for her brother Dante and other respected artists of her day, Christina began writing as a child and published her first poem at eighteen. A kind-hearted woman who spent many years as a charity volunteer, Christina's devout faith was often a central theme in the three books of poetry and four books of devotions she wrote during her life. Though her poems show up consistently in contemporary films, television shows, and musical compositions, her most familiar work is "In the Bleak Midwinter," which, when set to music, became a beloved Christmas carol.



# COMMUNITY LUNCH DATES

May, June & July

May 11<sup>th</sup>

June  
July

8<sup>th</sup>  
13<sup>th</sup>

Lunches held at Lorton School

Served promptly at 1.15pm. Everyone welcome

**Booking essential**  
call Helen on 07790 459064

All profits go to providing additional support to the children at Lorton School

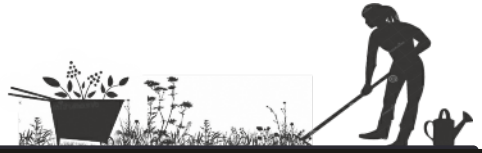


Dual qualified Sports massage therapist and Chartered physiotherapist specialising in Sporting injuries, Musculoskeletal (MSK) conditions and Poly-trauma recovery.

Contact Emma on 07595 672 188  
[www.fellsidephysiotherapy.co.uk](http://www.fellsidephysiotherapy.co.uk)

   @fellsidephysio

Lorton Vale  
Gardening Club



# Coffee Morning

£4

Saturday 16th May  
Yew Tree Hall 10.30-12



**PLANT** STALL  
and Seedling  
**SWAP**

BEFORE YOU  
START DARLING -  
IF I NEED YOUR  
ADVICE I'LL ASK  
FOR IT!

Raffle Proceeds  
**Growing Well**

Mental Health  
Horticultural  
based Charity  
located in Cumbria

"Harmony in the Garden"

please park responsibly, thank you

# Lorton Scarecrow Village Trail Sunday 28th June 1-4pm

## Let's make a Scarecrow a message from Reginald



Listen up, Lorton! It's your old friend **Reginald**. You might remember me from the "Good Old Days". One of the village eccentrics, and in fact Lorton's Head Scarecrow. Often to be seen leaning precariously against the stone wall near the Yew Tree Hall, sporting a rather dapper tweed jacket and a jaunty flat cap.

For many years I've been concerned that the village hasn't enough Scarecrows, too many empty gardens. We have a glorious, distinguished history to uphold, and frankly, I'm feeling a bit lonely hidden away in Nev's shed.

**So Join in the Community Fun.** The village is hosting a Lorton Scarecrow Day, and I have been asked to recruit some Scarecrows. So whether you're a lifelong resident or just sprouted here, it is your civic duty to create a straw-filled masterpiece.

**Give them a name, give them a personality,** we need doctors, rock stars, happy farmers, and maybe straw versions of members of the Yew Tree Hall Committee!



**Why Bother?** Because it will be a fantastic Community get together, and a fun day for all! This is for the youngsters to marvel at and the "experienced" folk to show off their creative flair. Let's line the lanes, gardens and fill the fields until the real crows think they've stumbled into a third dimensional nightmare! Let's make Lorton the Scarecrow Capital of the North. Don't let me down, or I shall be forced to have a very stern, rustling conversation with your hydrangea bushes.

**Please contact Liz Irlam (at very latest by end of May)  
tel 07776 410814 if you're happy to make/display a scarecrow**

# The Scarecrows are Coming!

**Stuffed with straw, brimming with Gossip**

# Lorton Scarecrow Trail with Quiz

Trail Map £1 - Yew Tree Hall from 1pm)



**SUNDAY  
28th JUNE  
1-4.00pm**

**Cream Teas £4 at Yew Tree Hall 2-4pm**  
(with ice cream option/available)  
Parking available at Lorton School Playground  
**Please let Liz Irlam (07776 410814) know if you will be displaying a scarecrow ASAP or latest by end of May**



**William Keith Campbell**  
**Chimney Sweeping Services**

- Open fires, stoves, Agas etc. swept and cleaned
- Clean & efficient
- Fully insured
- Certificates issued on request.

**T: 01946 813052**  
**M: 07756 470041**

# Lorton Vale Gardening Club



What better way to start the Winter Talks Programme, than to plan colourful displays of spring tulip bulbs! Matthew Smith of Brighter Blooms gave an illustrated history of tulips, including the fact that the marbling effect on tulips, highly prized by the Dutch in the 1630's (a single bulb sold for thousands of pounds), was caused by a disease rather than breeding! Matthew advised on the best situations in which to plant different varieties of tulips and with this in mind, members bought bulbs from Matthew's large selection.

'Gardening in a Changing Climate', by Elizabeth Woodcock, was sadly abandoned at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour, due to a very icy Whinlatter. A good turnout of members and guests were already at Yew Tree Hall, so guest and Storyteller, Jessie McMeekin, stepped into the breach and entertained us with an expressive and intriguing tale, 'Meg and Her Daughters'. We were able to welcome Elizabeth back and she advised us how, in the face of climate change, we could best manage our gardens. She encouraged us to observe changes, think ahead, adapt and strengthen resilience - improving soil health and biodiversity, by mulching and adopting a no-dig policy. Steve Mees, volunteer gardener at Lakeland Horticultural Society Garden, Holeyhead, is responsible for the fern collection, contributing to the RHS National Collection. 'Ferns, Fabulous Ferns' illustrated a vast array of ferns and Steve spoke knowledgeably -and about how difficult it is to identify species of fern. Unfortunately, due to climate change, part of the collection has been relocated, where conditions are more favourable.

A mid-winter party was enjoyed by members and with Jessie McMeekin's storytelling, delicious food, good company (and wine), it was an excellent evening.

Emma Greenshaw, talked about her Fellside Flower Farm, championing the British flowers movement – Flowers from the Farm. With a resurgence of popularity in British grown cut flowers, Emma encouraged us buy flowers grown locally.

Tom Attwood of Halecat Nursery, had a refreshingly creative take on planting, advocating boldness and experimentation in painting a picture with colour, texture, form and size, whilst considering where plants would thrive. Abundance was key when planting containers, with the same principles applied. Tom offered advice with his illustrated talk and members appreciated the opportunity to buy the lovely plants he brought.

Coralin Pearson gave an entertaining, anecdotal and eye-opening talk about the trials and triumphs of designing and building a Silver Award- winning Chelsea Courtyard Garden, concluding it a very worthwhile, rewarding experience - just never to be repeated!

A willow weaving workshop, making plant supports, again proved popular with members, as did a seed propagation and hardwood cuttings workshop with Shelagh Todd.

LVGC Coffee & Cakes is on Sat 16<sup>th</sup> May (see poster). There will be a Plant Stall and raffle, with proceeds donated to the charity, Growing Well.

Members now look forward to a stunning variety of Summer Garden Visits and new members are always very welcome to join us - Membership is only £12!

For further information, please contact Fiona Lambrick [fionalambrick@btinternet.com](mailto:fionalambrick@btinternet.com)

*Experienced installers of Renewable Energy Systems.*



**Over 30 years  
experience in design  
and  
installing grid & off-  
grid systems.**



**MCS Accredited  
Installers**



**Border Hydro Ltd,  
Armaside Farm  
Lorton  
Cockermouth  
Cumbria  
CA13 9TL**

[www.borderhydro.co.uk](http://www.borderhydro.co.uk)

Tel: 01900 85616

email: [emma@borderhydro.co.uk](mailto:emma@borderhydro.co.uk)

Loweswater with Buttermere PCC  
100 Challenge Club

**The prizewinners for the draw held on 1st Apr 2026**

1st prize of £25	No 71	David Walmsley
2nd prize of £10	No 57	Bethany Meadley
3rd prize of £5	No 34	Christine England

*Congratulations to the winners and thanks to all our supporters.*

# Loweswater Ladies April Report

For our April meeting, we welcomed Philippa Chadwick of West Cumbria Rivers Trust who presented a talk on Pearl Mussels in West Cumbria.

The River Ehen in West Cumbria currently supports 90% of England's pearl mussels with around 350,000. However, studies show that the population is ageing and declining. They are a critically endangered species and the river is designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

Freshwater pearl mussels are a bivalve mollusc. They are filter feeders, able to filter up to 50 litres per day, with a muscular foot, living two thirds buried in the river bed with an iridescent mop inside. The pearl can form when a dirt particle becomes wrapped around the mop layer. Only one in every 1000 has a pearl inside. The life cycle of mussels relies on a healthy population of salmonoid fish (atlantic salmon and trout). The tiny juveniles, known as Glochidia, are inhaled by the fish and attach to the gills where a cyst is formed over the mussel. They live for around 9 months as a "parasite" on the fish and drop off the following spring and burrow into clean sand and gravel river beds to continue their growth. In five years they will grow to around one inch. Mussels reach maturity in 10-15 years. They are aged by size, with their shells showing rings, and measure around 150mm in length when mature.

In the Northern hemisphere, pearl mussels have become critically endangered due to commercial fishing and habitat degradation with a decline in water quality and fine sediment clogging

riverbeds. Juveniles are the most vulnerable. They are a keystone species providing stability of the river bed in high numbers. The River's Trust has embarked on a conservation strategy with habitat restoration, providing areas of dappled shade with moderate water flow and tree planting to give a buffer to surrounding land. Enforcement of fishing regulations to ensure a host population of fish is carried out, together with support from local landowners. Trout numbers are improving with salmon numbers stable. Translocation from donor populations and breeding in captivity is now taking place at a facility in Windermere to ensure certainty of numbers, releasing 1000 juveniles into the Ehen and Irt.

Other restoration projects are revetment removal providing natural channels to connect the river to the flood plain, adding boulders and woody debris for fish habitat and blocking of ditches.

Monitoring has shown that the juvenile population in the Ehen is improving. Many thanks to Phillipa for a most interesting and lively talk.

**Our next meeting is 13<sup>th</sup> May 2026 in LVH at 7.15pm. We will be joined by Claire Keys who will talk to us about Fraud Prevention. Visitors and friends are always welcome.**

Sue Severs  
Secretary

# Lakeland Slate Co.

Working with world famous  
**'Westmorland Green Slate'**

Suppliers of:

**Memorials • Worktops • Hearths  
Nameplates • Homeware • Walling Stone  
Quoins • Lintols • Sills**

**Unit 5, High Hill, Keswick • Shop, 9 Lake Road, Keswick  
Tel: 017687 74695/75834 • Mob: 07950 642 298  
www.lakelandslate.com info@lakelandslate.com**



## JARDINE TREE CARE

Email: [jardinetreecare@gmail.com](mailto:jardinetreecare@gmail.com)

Tel: 07949817280

Web: [www.jardinetreecare.co.uk](http://www.jardinetreecare.co.uk)

Free quotations.

Fully qualified and insured with  
8 years of experience.

### ***Services:***

*Hedge trimming, reductions and  
removals. Tree pruning, reductions  
and removals. Chipping.*




## DÉCOR & DESIGN

**Kate Pritchard**

Quality Decorating and Interior Design  
Bespoke Painted Kitchens and Furniture

Tel: 07989 773708

[decoranddesign.kp@gmail.com](mailto:decoranddesign.kp@gmail.com)

Find us on 

# *Penny's Piece*

Over the Easter weekend it was decided that some of the family wanted to see the new Mario film. Rather than just go for the film we would have a wander in Workington first, have Superfish and then go. However, just before bed on Good Friday I had a thought. When was Uppies and Downies on? For those who have no clue what I'm on about: Uppies and Downies is a no rules ball game where the town is split in two. The ball starts on the Cloffocks- by Allerdale House (Perry's Palace) and the Uppies are trying to get it to Curwen Park area and the Downies are trying to get it to the harbour. There are hundreds involved, no team colours and it all seems a bit confusing/ a ball lost in the middle of a street fight. I looked on Cumbria Crack at about half ten on the Good Friday night to find that the game had started at 6:30 that day and was at that time, outside TK Maxx and The Entertainer and had been there about half an hour! At 11pm there had been more progress uphill but I was beginning to think we might find ourselves in the scrum, mid-shop. Thankfully a short while later the ball was 'hailed', the Uppies had won round one and I could go shopping without fear of being rugby tackled on my way to HMV. For anyone who's bothered, the Uppies won all three games of this year's series.

Easter day has our pace egg rolling competition. We had decorated our eggs and took them outside. It was at this point that we realised neither my husband or my sister's partner knew what a pace egg was. Decorated hardboiled egg. We rolled them down the little hill in the garden, which didn't do much damage so we got some guttering to extend the drop. Minimal additional damage. So, we went to the top of the garden and had to try to roll/ fling the egg to the holly bush at the bottom. If it didn't get that far, you had to do an extra roll. No worries for me. My egg eggsploded halfway down the lawn on the first fling. Oh well. There's always next year. We all know our homes are full of appliances and that some of these are plugged in permanently. My question is, why is the fridge allowed to get away with making so many varied and strange noises? It's the Tourette's suffering appliance. It sits in the kitchen humming away when it suddenly makes a burbling sound, there's a plop followed by the sound of the air thingy that froths the milk in a coffee shop and then an unexplained and slightly unnerving

silence. Sometimes the silence lasts long enough for me to begin to think it's packed in. Then there is a breath and the normal humming starts again. Does it really need to do that? If any other appliance did that, we'd all be ringing for some kind of engineer or looking for a new whatever it is. If the fan noise in the oven stopped mid-cook, we'd all be on our hands and knees (like on bake off) glaring through the glass to see what is or isn't happening. There's no need. It is also only the fridge freezer that is left turned on when we go on holiday. I've just proved it can't be trusted but understand no one wants to waste food by turning it off. Then there's the dryer. Just this weekend I was confused by the dryer. I have a condenser and noticed water on the floor. Then I remembered there is a second filter beyond the main one at the edge of the drum. Last time I took this out I thought it was be easiest to wash the soggy fluff out. Instant regret and rapid fumbling to put the plug in before it blocked the sink. I then had to find something to use as a strainer. I used the tea strainer. Worked a charm. This time I remembered the earlier error and found a skewer to poke out or hook the soggy fluff out. Of course, now I've done that, the weather is lovely so the washing will be going out.

The thing I like about holidays, apart from not having to get up and be at work, is the not having to care about what I'm wearing. Faded clothes, things that have reached peak comfort because they are holey, not ironed. Just generally baggy, dishevelled comfort. I call them 'knocking around at home' clothes. If they get dirty, stained or ripped, it doesn't really matter. Being away on holiday is even better. I don't wear make up as a rule anyway but I have seen the fresh-faced smiles of plenty who have decided not to faff about with make up when away. Relaxing. Here's hoping we get some nice summery weather. Penny.

# *Nature facts for May(courtesy of the RSPB)*

## **International Dawn Chorus Day**

Just before first light, thrushes and Robins begin to sing. It's the opening act of nature's greatest show. For a breeding bird, energy is valuable, and singing is a costly exercise. If a male bird can hold a strong tune, he proves to prospective partners that his larder is well stocked.

This month marks the crescendo of the Dawn Chorus as migratory songsters, like Whitethroats and Nightingales, have arrived back on their breeding territory. But plenty of resident birds and early arrivals can still be heard, as they're still on the lookout for their dream date.

## **Badgers go bump in the night**

Deep in our woodlands, clans of Badgers snuffle around their ancient underground setts. Around four to eight individuals can live together in a network of twisting tunnels and hollows, where nesting chambers are lined with bedding material to keep young cubs warm. These communal breeding and sleeping spaces are often passed down through the generations, with some setts thought to be over 100 years old.

Their diet mostly consists of earthworms, but these adaptable mammals will forage for fruit, berries and slugs when the ground is dry. Badgers also becoming more and more present in urban settings too, adapting to life in smaller setts and feasting on whatever they can find.

Badgers are less active in winter so are best seen between April and July. The arrival of cubs means more badger activity outside of the sett, and coupled with shorter nights, they're more likely to be seen foraging in the daylight.

## **No Mow May**

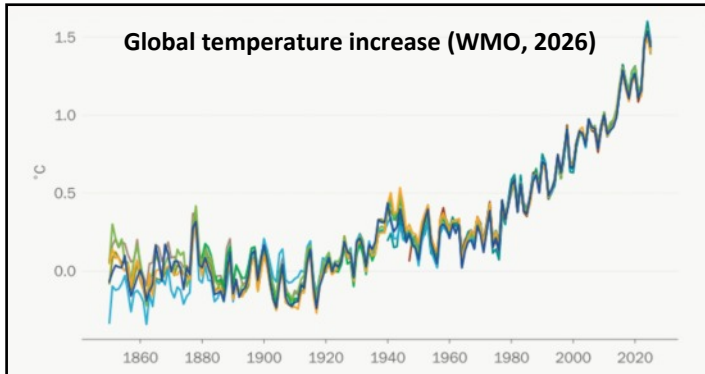
Did you know that domestic gardens make up roughly a quarter of UK urban land? Our back gardens account for more land than all our nature reserves combined – that's a win for nature, just waiting to be unlocked.

So, why not ditch the lawn mower and let your garden grow wild? Not only does this save you from breaking a sweat on a spring day, but the flowers that could emerge in your garden are invaluable for our pollinators.

## **Emerging bats**

The old saying goes 'blind as a bat', but did you know that bats have perfectly good sense of sight? However, when they hunt at night, they're much more dependent on their hearing. Bats rely on echolocation: their very own radar system. They emit a high frequency noise, which bounces off objects and potential prey items, allowing them to paint an audio picture of their surroundings.

## Joules, kilowatt-hours, calories, BTUs, therms, etc



At the Melbreak Wildlife Group meeting at Loweswater Village Hall in March, Andrew Shaw and I gave a talk about Loweswater and, amongst other things, how ‘climate change’ might be affecting it. The meeting took place a couple of days after World Meteorological Day when the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), part of the UN, published its 2025 State of the Global Climate Report. If you are interested in climate change, I would strongly recommend reading this report as it packs an enormous amount of information into just 46 pages and is much easier to digest than the multi-100 page reports of the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), excellent in their way as these are.

Climate change is all about energy - the way we generate it and how and where it accumulates on the planet, hence the title of this piece which are all energy units. Temperature (as seen in graph above) doesn’t tell the whole story about energy - its impact depends on what is heating up. For the earth, it’s reckoned that about 90% of its increased energy is held in the earth’s waters, mainly the oceans.

It can be difficult to appreciate how a temperature increase of just 1.5°C (something we don’t notice on a daily basis) can cause the climate change (storms, floods, fires, glacial melt, etc) we’re already experiencing. The primary reason is sort of simple - due to its structure, water has a very high value of “heat capacity” or “specific heat” (10x that of many metals) and of latent heat (the energy released when it condenses in clouds). Water hides these features well, but an increase of just 1.5°C in Loweswater, which is a relatively tiny lake, would provide enough energy to heat about 1500 homes (if you didn’t know, it does heat two local homes already!).

Leslie Webb, Loweswater Care Programme, WCRT.

St James' Church, Buttermere

# 4<sup>th</sup> Bluebell Service

Rannerdale Knott



Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> May at  
3pm

Service of Songs and Praise

Castlegate Singers

&

Cockermouth Mechanics Band

Free carparking, Bring a chair or rug

## Home Phone & Broadband.

As you may be aware the technology that connects your home telephone is changing. The traditional phone line to a local exchange is being phased out in favour of either a digital connection using the existing wires or a fibre optic connection. In both cases during a power cut your phone and /



or broadband will not work, unless some extra kit is installed. I won't go onto the rights or wrongs of this situation but the most important thing is that you should be aware that this is happening, for some in the valley it's already happened.

So what can you do?

If you consider it necessary to have your phone and or broadband available during a power cut, you need to purchase some extra equipment. The extra kit you need has two names either a "battery backup unit" (BBU) or an "uninterruptible power supply" (UPS). They both do the same job during a power cut with a small battery providing power to your phone and or broadband router for a couple of hours (longer if you pay extra for a bigger battery).

So instead of plugging your router or phone directly into the mains you plug the router or phone into the BBU / UPS and then plug that into the mains.

An example of a UPS / BBU is the "CyberPower UT800EG-UK Desktop UPS" which has 3 x 13a sockets on the back and costs about £55. There are lots of alternative units available and I do not necessarily endorse this unit it is merely an example of what is available.

Steve Irlam

steveirlam@gmail.com



### **S MCADAM GARDEN SERVICES**

Independent business offering a quality gardening service in and around Cockermouth, Lorton Vale and Keswick

Grass Cutting – Lawn Care – Turf – Artificial Grass - Fencing – Landscaping – Hedge Cutting – Pruning - Planting - pressure washing and re-sanding

Tel/Whatsapp: 07864860720

Email: [mcadamgardenservices@gmail.com](mailto:mcadamgardenservices@gmail.com)

Facebook: S McAdam Garden Services

## LORTON NOTES

Many thanks to everyone who came along to help decorate the church for Easter, it looked magnificent. I have long been in communication via email with Dawn and Trev Mason who have a static caravan on the Whinfell site. They popped into church to say hello and ended up helping with the arrangements, which was a lovely surprise, and Dawn took this super photo of the Altar.



Like Loweswater we have also held our Annual Parochial Church Meeting. Myself and Pete Ward were re-elected as Churchwardens for Lorton and all of our current members of the PCC were re-elected, with the exception of Rachael Edmunds who has stepped down - we thank her for her years of service. We are also very grateful to Eleanor Ella who has agreed to be Safeguarding Officer for Lorton as well as Loweswater and Buttermere.

On Sunday 14th June we will be holding our Climate Sunday Service followed by a Community Lunch. Please put the date in your diary and further details will appear in the June Link.

Last month I promised to update you about my progress with the Carbon Fast Challenge - you will find this overleaf together with a more general Eco Church/Eco Community update.

Rosemary Riley

# ECO CHURCH/ECO COMMUNITY UPDATE

Beginning with the Carbon Fast Challenge;

**Week 6:** Fast from wasting energy - the unnecessary consumption that drains our wallets, strains our grid, and contributes to global warming. Here are some tips, together with an update on how I did:

1. Unplug appliances not in use and switch off standby mode - devices on standby still draw power
  - 1.1 Guilty I'm afraid, I never remember to do this but will try harder
2. Wash clothes at 30°C and air-dry instead of tumble drying where possible - tumble dryers are massive energy users
  - 2.1 Big tick, always wash at 30°C, have an air dryer and whenever possible dry my clothes outside
3. Take showers under 5 minutes
  - 3.1 Takes me about 30 seconds
4. Heat the person, not the space - turn down your thermostat by 1-2°C and wear an extra layer. Make use of blankets and hot water bottles.
  - 4.1 I think a lot of you have seen my woolly jumper collection
5. Boil only the water you need in the kettle!
  - 5.1 That's us - we have a boiler tap so never use excess water
6. Turn off lights in empty rooms
  - 6.1 Golly - this is my week as I do this obsessively
7. Spring clean your emails and cloud storage - data centres use enormous amounts of energy and water
  - 7.1 I hadn't realised how big an issue this was and am now trying harder

## ECO CHURCH/ECO COMMUNITY UPDATE

**Week 7:** Fast from Social Media to Focus on God - we were invited to enjoy the outdoors and find renewed strength to play your role in caring for creation—and to pray for the climate vulnerable and decision-makers.

### HOLY WEEK CHALLENGES

#### START SIMPLE

Take a social media break for a day—Good Friday or Easter Sunday

Take a prayer walk at least once

#### NEXT LEVEL

Disconnect from social media for Holy Week

Phone-free evenings for all of Holy Week

#### BIG LEAP

Go screen-free for the whole of Holy Week

Book a sacred retreat—silent or active

Take a prayer walk daily

I have to confess this did prove a real challenge for me so I'm going to try harder next year, but it certainly makes you think!

Eco Church have published an Eco Tips Calendar for 2026, here is what they suggest for May;

Support pollinators. Nothing says Spring like the buzz of a bee! But these precious pollinators are declining due to habitat loss, climate change and agricultural intensification. Wednesday 20 May is World Bee Day, so look around to see how you can improve habitats for bees and other pollinators.

Read more about bees, butterflies and habitats that support them in our Target 25 resources at [arocha.org.uk/what-we-do/target-25](http://arocha.org.uk/what-we-do/target-25). Sow a pollinatorfriendly seed mix, make or buy a bee hotel, let some wild flowers grow in your garden, and don't use pesticides. Pray that our pollinator populations will increase.

For more about World Bee Day visit: [awarenessdays.com/awareness-days-calendar/world-bee-day/](http://awarenessdays.com/awareness-days-calendar/world-bee-day/)

I will continue to publish tips throughout the rest of the year



## Melbreak Balsam Busters



### May Update

The Strimmer course organised for us by West Cumbria Rivers Trust in early April went very well and we now have 6 volunteers certified to use the machines. Strimmers will help tackle large areas of Himalyan Balsam although we will always need volunteers hand pulling the plants in the more inaccessible places.

Our next event to set the season going - Wednesday May 27<sup>th</sup> 7-9pm at Loweswater Village Hall. At this meeting we will show you the plan and areas we will tackle during this season, explain how

sessions will be organised etc. We will also learn how to use INNS mapper to map areas of balsam that you see. Bring your mobile phone for this. This is an open meeting for volunteers already signed up and anyone else interested.

Melbreak Balsam bashing sessions will be every Monday 10am – 3pm in Loweswater and Lorton valleys, starting Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June. We are also having a 'start the season' social/work session on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> June Low Lorton followed by an early supper at The Wheatsheaf, courtesy of Angela Jackson at Woodhowe. Please put these dates in your diary.

Big thanks to WCRT who have helped us set this group up with funding and advice. Please send Debbie your email and mobile number if you would like to join the Balsam Busters group - more volunteers always welcome. If you have balsam on your land and need help to tackle it, let me know as soon as possible. Debbie Watson [beech.lane35@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:beech.lane35@yahoo.co.uk)



# BURROW



## Septic Tank Owner?

**Fully funded upgrades are now available in Cumbria**  
**Register your interest online today!**

Due to the nutrient pollution of river catchments in Cumbria, we are replacing septic tanks with modern treatment plants that cut down on phosphates. This ongoing upgrade project is being funded by local planning authorities, so you can have a positive impact on the environment, free of charge.



01768 428 000  
[burrow-environmental.com](http://burrow-environmental.com)



## DIARY DATES

### MAY

- 1 Fri Dean Arts Scarecrow Festival, Friday to Monday, in and around the local villages.
- 6 Wed Lorton Parish Council 7.30pm YTH
- 7 Thu Loweswater Parish Council 7.30pm Loweswater Village Hall
- 11 Mon Community Lunch at Lorton School at 1.15pm. SEE POSTER
- 13 Wed Loweswater Ladies - LVH 7:15pm - Fraud Prevention
- 14 Thu Border Fortress: The Turbulent History of Carlisle Castle, L&DFLHS talk with Dr Max Loth-Hill, 7.30 pm, YTH
- 16 Sat Coffee morning hosted by Lorton Vale Garden Club 10.30am YTH. Plant/ seed stall
- 19 Tue Loweswater 77 Club - Whitehaven Male Voice Choir - All welcome 7.30pm LVH.
- 21 Thu Crafternoon - LVH 2-4pm. All welcome.
- 31 Sun Loweswater Ladies Cream Teas - 2-4pm LVH

### JUNE

- 8 Mon Community Lunch at Lorton School at 1.15pm. SEE POSTER
- 10 Wed Loweswater Ladies - Walk and Buffet supper
- 11 Thu Artists and Prints: Cumbria Illustrated in Early 19th Century Prints with Dr Michael Whinstanley, L&DFLHS, 7.30 pm, YTH
- 14 Sun Big Green Community Lunch, St Cuthbert's, Lorton. 12 noon - 2pm. More details to follow
- 16 Tues 77 Club Summer Trip, Devil's Porridge Museum & Annandale - coach leaves 9.30 am.
- 18 Thu Crafternoon - LVH 2-4pm. All welcome.
- 28 Sun Lorton Scarecrow Trail and Cream Teas - .We need your scarecrow! SEE POSTER

Please note that Table Tennis takes place in YTH every Wednesday from 7-9p.m. unless otherwise notified. There are Keep Fit sessions in LVH every Monday 9.00-10.00a.m and every Friday 5.30-6.30p.m. These will not be listed every month in Diary Dates but can be found on the Melbreak

Communities diary page - [www.melbreakcommunities.org.uk](http://www.melbreakcommunities.org.uk)

**WHEN ATTENDING EVENTS AT THE YEW TREE HALL PLEASE ENSURE YOU PARK RESPONSIBLY**

## The United Benefice of Lorton and Loweswater with Buttermere

May 2026

3 <sup>rd</sup> May 10.30am 6pm	<b>Easter 5</b> Holy Communion Evensong	Loweswater Buttermere
10 <sup>th</sup> May 10.30am 3pm	<b>Easter 6</b> Holy Communion Bluebell Service	Lorton Buttermere (Rannerdale Farm)
17 <sup>th</sup> May 10.30am 6pm	<b>Easter 7</b> Matins Holy Communion	Loweswater Buttermere
24 <sup>th</sup> May 10.30am	<b>Pentecost</b> Holy Communion	Lorton
31 <sup>st</sup> May 10.30am	<b>Trinity Sunday</b> Holy Communion	Loweswater

Service information for the Grasmoor Mission Community and news of other events is published weekly on a Friday in our Staying Connected news sheet. The sheet is available on the GMC website or if you would like it sent directly to your inbox please email Sue Lake on gmcoffice@grasmoormc.church with your request.

Deadline for June is Friday 22nd May all articles, photos (especially for the front cover), funny stories, letters to lortonvalelink@gmail.com by this date. Thank you

If you are reading this copy second hand and wish to have your own individual copy delivered on the day of publication, please contact Ian Smith on his email:- isumis@gmail.com and he will arrange payment and delivery.