

SEPTEMBER 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

You've obviously all been very busy planning your next series of events, or celebrating past successes, as I have been inundated with copy - hence a 36 page edition.

At the end of June Lorton ran it's first major Scarecrow Festival - and what a success it was. See the pages either side of the centre-spread for updates. We also have updates from the Balsam Bashers and about the production and delivery of the Lorton Vale Welcome Booklet. Also included in this edition is the YTH AGM report and an article about the latest situation regarding defibrillators.

Quite a few organisations re-start their activities this month including the 77 Club, Lorton Film Nights and Loweswater Ladies - full details can be found in various articles and posters.

We have information about a new initiative happening in the Valley to create a pen pal scheme as well as the annual invite to apply for grants from the Mockerkn Educational Foundation.

Upcoming events include a Race Night, our usual Coffee and Cakes, the ever popular Apple Day and also in October the Loweswater Harvest Festival and Supper and the Lorton Harvest Festival and lunch - both followed by an auction of produce.

STOP PRESS - Free Hedgerow Survey Training - Learn how to identify hedgerow trees and plants, assess hedgerow health and survey hedges for wildlife using the Great British Hedgerow Survey method.

Sunday 3 October | 10:00am to 12:30pm

Lorton (venue TBC). Led by Naomi Walker, Nature Recovery Officer, Friends of the Lake District. To register, contact Zindzi Cresswell, 07983568965 or zindzic@gmail.com

Sadly a long standing resident of Lorton - Hugh Ralph - died during August and we are very pleased to include two moving tributes to him - one from his wife, Sue, and one from fellow choir member Sue Ritchie.

For those of you who follow my gardening exploits I can confirm that the sweet peas are still going strong - this bunch was picked a couple of days ago.

Charlie the Cat hasn't learnt any new IT skills over the summer but has perfected his technique of standing in front of the screen.



Rosemary Riley

Our front cover photo this month is by Adam Baker - 'here's another nice mess you've gotten me into Stanley'



The wisdom of the ages

Do you (still) believe in progress?

As we look around us, it can sometimes feel more of an urban myth than a reality. Are things getting better? Is humankind learning anything at all? Don't innovations like cars, television, social media and AI all only make things worse in the end? And what about the depletion of our ecosystem – melting glaciers, disappearing species, so much of the planet becoming infertile and uninhabitable?

In the Christian church, it's an article of our faith that, even when we can't see it, God is making all things new and perfect beyond our imagination, in His own time, and that our own personal progress towards being the best version of ourselves is part of that process.

But it's neither about putting our faith in new technology nor putting our feet up and letting it all play out either.

Day by day, week by week and festival by festival, we lean in to learn from the wisdom of the ages about how to play our part in that progress towards the kingdom of God. We consider not only the writings gathered and sifted over the centuries to make up the Bible as we have it today, but many other records and stories of the first practitioners of our faith. Among them are our northern saints, such as St Cuthbert, the patron saint of Lorton church, whose festival falls on 13 September. How can we learn to live as simply as he did in the modern world? How can we be as diligent in service to our neighbours as he was? How can we cultivate a faith half as strong?

In this valley, living in these ancient and comparatively unchanged landscapes, perhaps we all share this longer perspective and this appreciation of the hard work and hard-won wisdom of the human beings who settled and shaped them.

Our annual show does celebrate the contemporary life of our farms and villages – with the latest machinery and supplies on show, besides this year's prize animals and the fresh produce and newly-crafted creations in the industrial tents. But this year's show is also 'a celebration of 147 years of Cumbrian farming' as it says on the poster. It's also about building on knowledge passed down from generation to generation. I know if I were brave enough to be baking something for the show it would be skills taught me by my mother, and taught her by her mother, that I would be using – which isn't to say I wouldn't use my electric beaters!

In the church we do believe that, in the end, 'all things will be well', but only because all of us will eventually hear and understand what we need to do, in this time and in this place, to make it happen.

Lois Sparling
Licensed Lay Minister (Reader)
and Community Chaplain,
Grasmoor Mission Community

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

Pen Pal Scheme

Over the past year, Sue Gorman (of Linking Lives) and Lois (the GMC Community Chaplain) have been approached by different people looking for 'pen friends' and we wondered whether we might be able to broaden this more widely. Lois has been writing to a delightful lady Devon for the past six months or so, because her son approached Loweswater Parish Council, after a visit to our area, asking whether anyone might be willing to exchange letters with her. Sue has recently been approached by someone in Cockermouth similarly - and the two have now been matched as Pen Pals, with great success.

If you know of anyone in your community who would like to have a pen friend to exchange news with - or anyone who would be willing to be a pen friend to someone who has asked for one - please let Sue (cockermouth@linkinglives.uk) or Lois (community.chaplain.gmc@gmail) know. Letters do not have to be handwritten if your handwriting is no longer legible! They can be typed and printed – but they do have to be sent through the post so that someone who does not have email has the pleasure of reading and treasuring them.

Lorton Film Club



Autumn Season Offerings

We've just selected a diverse group of three films for our autumn season: **'Black Bag'**, a 2025 spy thriller starring Cate Blanchett and Michael Fassbender (15 October); **'Sorry We Missed You'**, Ken Loach's 2019 portrayal of life at the sharp end of the gig economy (20 November); and the 1987 classic **'A Month in the Country'**, featuring youngsters Colin Firth and Kenneth Branagh (18 December).

Exciting Times Ahead!

After December's offering the Film Club will enter a period of dynamic hibernation while Yew Tree Hall is redeveloped, and will re-emerge next autumn in a novel form whose shape and activity will become visible to readers during the first half of 2027 – when we'll be inviting your ideas and input for this new entity.



Loweswater 77 Club - Anniversary Year -

We've been 'digging around' for speakers for the new season and come up with a perfect start. Mark Hatton, a renowned geologist and mining expert will be giving an illustrated talk on the Elizabethan Miners of Cumbria, hopefully with specific reference to the influence they had on mining in the Loweswater and Buttermere areas. The talk will be in Loweswater Village Hall on the 20th of October at 7.30pm.

This event will kick-start our 50th year as a Club, so watch out for Helicopters, Drones, Music, Burns Nights, Clocks, Guide Books to the Lakes, a Big Party and a Summer Trip to round off what we hope will be another successful year.

However, it all starts with you the members. The Club is open to all, not just those in the local Loweswater area, so come along and renew your membership or join a-fresh. This is your chance to keep in touch with, or make new friends with, your neighbours and those from further away that enjoy our Valley life here in Loweswater.

Most of our talks are on the 3rd Tuesday of the month and will be advertised in The Link and on the Mellbreak Valley Diary. We look forward to seeing you all for our first meeting on Tuesday 20th of October. Mark the date in your diaries now.

Tuesday 20th October

The Story of the German Miners in Elizabethan Cumbria

Loweswater Village Hall at 7.30pm

Tea & Coffee served after the Talk



**Illustrated talk
by Mark Hatton**

**Members Free
Visitors £5**



Mark Hatton, Cumbria Amenity Trust Mining History Society, will give an illustrated talk about Copper Miners who arrived in Keswick from Germany in 1564, - bringing new technologies to the local mining industry.

RACE NIGHT

£20

SAVE
the DATE

Yew Tree Hall

Saturday 24th October

SUPPER
BAR
RAFFLE

Avoid disappointment

Pre-booking: contact
Catherine Armstrong
(07917 795404) or Nige
Lee (07827 338834)

All proceeds Yew Tree Hall



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Loveswater Village Hall

Our next social event at the hall will be on Friday October 2nd when we shall once again join with Arts Out West, to present "A Brief History of Music", by GreenMatthews, which takes in 600 years of musical history, from the middle-ages to the twentieth century, in 90 minutes! In their Autumn Tour, Chris Green and Sophie Matthews combine long forgotten songs and tunes, (not to mention jokes!), to paint a vibrant picture of our musical DNA, framed with the wit of "*Blackadder*" & "*1066 And All That*"!

There will be a licensed bar, and a Ploughman's Supper available in the interval, (advance booking essential). For full details please see the poster in this edition of the Link. Tickets are available from Penny on 07766 888102.

A week later on Saturday October 10th we will be hosting the month's Melbreak Communities Coffee Morning. Alongside the opportunity to meet and catch up with friends and neighbours, there will be the usual coffee and selection of delicious cakes, as well as wildlife stalls representing photography from Rosamund and John Macfarlane, project updates, displays and sales from Melbreak Wildlife Group and Lorton & Loveswater Valleys Butterfly Calendar sales, courtesy of Stuart Medland. For full details please see the poster in this edition of the Link.

Looking a little further ahead to Friday November 20th we are very pleased to welcome back, by popular demand, Cath & Emma, with music from Queen. (Themed dress will be encouraged!)

There will be a licensed bar, and Sausage Baps, (ordered in advance), will be available in the interval. Further detail in next month's edition of the Link.

Mockerkin Educational Foundation invites applications for financial grants in line with its aims in "promoting the education (including social and physical training) of persons under the age of 25 years who are resident in Loveswater Parishhave been resident for not less than 2 years and are in need of financial assistance."

The Foundation would also welcome applications for smaller and larger value grants, up to c. £2,000, for more substantial projects or education skills support which still meets the aims detailed above. Such larger applications would need to demonstrate a significant impact and/or a legacy within the Loveswater Parish.

Applications, with an initial short explanation, can be submitted by email to graeme.sparke@talk21.com or by letter to Graeme Sparke, Mockerkin Educational Foundation, Tarn View, Mockerkin, Cockermouth, CA130ST.



Melbreak Communities APPLE DAY



Friends of Lorton School

Saturday, 3rd October

Lorton Primary School | 10am - 2pm

FREE ENTRY

- 🍎 Press apples into juice • Make block prints • Apple games • 🍰 Cakes and drinks • Apple ID and growing advice

Bring clean apples from your garden and turn them into freshly pressed juice to take home.

There will be plenty to share if you don't have apples of your own.



FREE ENTRY | ALL WELCOME

What to bring

Clean apples without major bruises or rot. Small and knobbly ones are fine—no need to peel.

Clean bottles to take your juice home in. An old milk bottle works perfectly—ideally use 1 litre (2 pint). If you can, sterilise it at home with something like Milton Sterilising Fluid.

One supermarket bag of apples makes roughly 1 litre of juice. We suggest a 50p donation per litre.



Please note

The juice we press on the day is not pasteurised. Please drink it within 2–3 days, or freeze it straight away.

Have apples to share?

Get in touch with Zindzi on 07983568965 or zindzic@gmail.com if you'd like to arrange a collection from your garden.



Harvest Festival

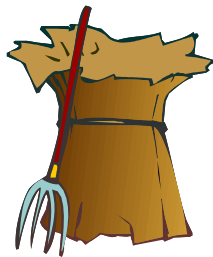
*St Bartholomew's Loweswater
with St James's Buttermere
Celebrate at St Bartholomew's on
Sunday October 4th at 10.30 am*

Tatie Pot Supper & Auction

*On Monday October 5th 2025
Loweswater Village Hall 7.00 pm
Admission £13.00 Children £6.50*

For catering we need to know numbers please.

*To reserve your place please ring:
Jan Collins-Webb on 01900 85609
or Eleanor Ella 07756 341163*



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Nature Notes – Geese in North Cumbria



We each have particular sights and sounds which we associate with the seasons. In spring it could be flowering crocuses or daffodils, or seeing/hearing returning swallows, cuckoos, curlews. Summer may be characterised by the beautiful colours of wild flowers, or by screaming swifts. But what about autumn? For me, a natural highlight at the start of autumn is the migration of geese.

If you spend time outside in September, you may well see v-shaped skeins of Pink-footed Geese high overhead, flying southwards towards the Lancashire coast. Or rather, you will almost certainly hear them before you see them, because they are continually calling to each other as they fly. We are so lucky to have this opportunity to watch the phenomenon of migration taking place above our heads!

Pinkfeet are one of 4 species of geese commonly found in north Cumbria. Two of these species are largely resident whilst the other two are mainly migratory.

The two resident species are the black & white Canada Goose and the grey Greylag Goose, whilst the migratory species are the grey Pinkfoot and the black & white Barnacle Goose. Canadas and Greylags have established local breeding populations, and can often be seen on/near lakes in our valley. Canadas were introduced to UK in the 18th century whilst Greylags are the ancestors of most domestic farmyard geese. Numbers of both these species have been increasing in UK - opinions vary about whether this is a good thing!

The Pinkfeet flying above us in September have migrated in family groups from breeding grounds in Greenland and Iceland; birds breeding in Svalbard and Russia tend to overwinter in Denmark and Netherlands. Factors including reduced hunting and persecution have resulted in a huge increase in numbers wintering in UK – from around 30,000 in 1950 to over 500,000 now. Return migration tends to take place over a longer period, and it is during February, March and April that the biggest numbers can be seen on the Solway coast, as they stop to feed on the way back to their breeding territories.

The UK is also a hugely important wintering area for Barnacle Geese, with the Solway coast being the major overwintering area for birds breeding in Svalbard. They typically start to arrive in October and November, with numbers increasing to about 20,000 on the Cumbrian side of the Solway in February, March and April. For several hundred years it was widely believed that Barnacle Geese did not migrate, but rather hatched from goose barnacles (meaning they were classified as 'fish', and so could still be eaten during Lent!). These myths were only finally dispelled by 19th century scientific studies.

A winter trip to the Solway coast, particularly to the peninsula around Anthorn, Cardunock and the RSPB reserve at Campfield, gives a very good chance of seeing spectacular numbers of Barnacle Geese, as well as the possibility of Pinkfeet, wild swans, ducks and waders. This is a Cumbrian birdwatching highlight which is not to be missed!

David Gardiner

Melbreak Communities Balsam Busters



Every week for 12 weeks, 8-20 volunteers have been out doing battle with Himalayan Balsam above Lorton and in Loweswater valley. The strimmers have strimmed with a vengeance and even visitors have been roped in to help. Meanwhile others have been inspired to take on patches of the invasive plant near where they live. It has been a great effort by all and will mean that next year we can make more progress further downstream.

For anyone who has been out balsam bashing this season, whether with the group or independently, we are having an end of season celebration at Yew Tree Hall Monday September 28th 7pm. All are welcome. If you would like to join for next year, contact Debbie beech.lane35@yahoo.co.uk

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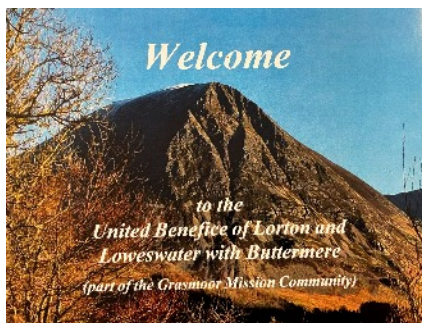


We are now pleased to present the completed copy of the new **Lorton Vale Welcome booklet**.

It's been put together by St Cuthbert's, Lorton, with the support of the Melbreak Communities, and a team of deliverers are getting it out to every household in the valley before the end of August.

Many thanks to those deliverers:

- Ann Roberts
- Ann Peck
- Pip Wise
- Rachel Williamson
- Chris Poate
- Valerie Allison
- Mary and Adam Baker
- David Gardiner
- The Vyner Brookes family
- Jan Evans
- Roger Hiley
- Penny and Cath Leck
- Simon Brown
- Simon Riley



The idea is to make sure everyone in the valley knows how to find all the local services and contractors and community activities and groups that they might be interested in – without having to hunt around (on the internet, on the noticeboards or by asking people they may not know or want to bother). We hope it will help support local contractors and local groups, as well as making life a little easier for those who don't 'do digital' or don't have time to get the help they need.

10 tightly-packed pages cover:

- Transport
- Local Suppliers
- Local Representatives (councillors etc)
- Pubs
- Community Groups and Activities
- Annual Events
- Other Local Support Services (such as befriending, bereavement, Citizen's Advice)
- Information about Cockermouth (such as tourist information and U3A)

You can have a look at the booklet as a PDF here:

<https://grasmoormc.church/wp-content/uploads/2026/08/Welcome-booklet-2026-final.pdf>

Or download a blank version to adapt for your community here:

<https://grasmoormc.church/wp-content/uploads/2026/08/Welcome-booklet-2026-final-template.docx>

COMMUNITY LUNCH

£8.00

Served promptly at 1.15pm.



Monday Sept. 14th
Monday Oct. 12th
Monday Nov. 9th

At Lorton School

Everyone welcome

Booking essential
call Helen on 07790 459064

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.



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In association with Kirkgate Arts Out West.

GreenMatthews



A Brief History of Music

600 years of music in 90 minutes

'Eclectic and enjoyable. . . a bewildering range of instruments' English Dance and Song.

Loweswater Village Hall

Friday 2nd October at 7:30pm

Tickets: £12, £6 (U18/ students), £25 family.

Licensed Bar. Interval treat: Ploughman's Plate: £6, please book to avoid missing out.

loweswaterevents@gmail.com to book tickets and Ploughman's Plate.

LORTON NOTES

As usual September sees our Patronal Festival and to mark this event we have a centre-spread celebrating the wonderful Community Lunch we held over the summer - a full report was included in the July/August Link but we wanted to mark this great community event with a number of photos.

Another superb community event that took place this summer was the Lorton Scarecrow Festival and so on pages 17 and 20 there are reports and photos from that as well. St Cuthbert's did have their own Scarecrows - Mr McGregor and Peter Rabbit - I hope you recognised them.

In August we held another annual event - The Buttermere Camino. Around 14 of us covered the 11 miles from St Cuthberts to St James via St Bartholomews, pausing at each church and at other locations along the route for prayer and reflection. We concluded with a Holy Communion Service at St James' before wending our way home for, in my case, a well-deserved G&T.



Hopefully you will have seen the poster about the Apple Day which this year is on 3rd October. This is appropriately followed by our Harvest Festival and Lunch. The service takes place at 10.30 on Sunday 11th October and we'd love as many families as possible to attend and for everyone to bring their harvest gifts up to altar rail during the Service. The Service will be followed by the Harvest Lunch at 1pm which will culminate in the ever-popular auction of produce. Lunch will comprise of home-made Tatle Pots followed by apple pie. See the poster on page 31 for further details.

Rosemary

LORTON SCARECROW FESTIVAL

What a fantastic day - exclaimed Reginald



“A Day for the History Books” says Reginald

What a sight it was! From the tiniest sprouts to the most seasoned villagers, Lorton turned out in force, and the sheer joy on everyone's faces was enough to make even my straw heart swell. The sheer scale of folks collective imagination was simply breath-taking.

To mention a few, we had everything from a perfect Wallace and Gromit to a daring Welsh coracle. Not forgetting the poor fellow in a capsized kayak, but who after a cream tea was able to continue on his journey, ending up in Workington enjoying fish and chips. Also big congratulations to Lorton School for winning the popular vote, with such a well crafted and detailed entry entitled the ‘Wedding Party’. Thank you for such enthusiastic participation.

Of course, no gathering in Lorton is complete without sustenance, and oh, did we enjoy our scones. The scones made by Helen, our beloved school cook, were absolutely spiffing - fluffy, light, and served with generous helpings of cream and jam. It was wonderful to see so many folk getting together, sharing laughs and stories. While there are simply too many names to thank individually, please know that every single hand that stuffed a leg or baked a cake or enjoyed an ice cream, contributed to a real community coming together.

Well done Lorton, thank you

Images from the St Cuthbert's Community



ty lunch, in celebration of our Patronal Festival

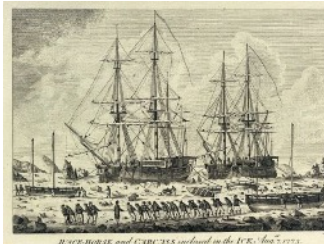




Some examples of your Creativity

**Lorton & Derwent Fells Local
History Society**

Thurs 10 September, 7.30 pm, YTH



***In Search of Arctic Wonders:
Cumbria and the Arctic in the
18th and 19th Centuries***

Dr Rob David will range widely over Arctic exploration starting with the role of Skeffington Lutwidge of Holmrook Hall in the North Polar Expedition of 1773, when Horatio Nelson was a midshipman under his command. That expedition sailed around Spitsbergen and reached within ten degrees of the North Pole, but was prevented from travelling further north by thick sea ice.

The talk will relate the extravagant adventures of Hugh Lonsdale known as the Yellow Earl, the role of Sir John Barrow in promoting

Arctic exploration at the Admiralty, and the role of Sir John Richardson, a naval surgeon and naturalist who mapped large areas of the Canadian Arctic coast.

Sir John Franklin's expeditions in search for the North-West passage (a navigable shortcut between the Atlantic and the Pacific) will also be related. Rob will speak about the fascination with Arctic exploration in the Victorian age and the search for Franklin's last expedition in 1845 which vanished with 129 men aboard. Dr Rob David is the author of *The Arctic in the British Imagination, 1818-1914*, Manchester University Press, 2000.

Featured left: HMS Race Horse and HMS Carcass enclosed in the ice, August 1773.

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

A date for your diary

19 November, 7.30 pm
A History of Slate Quarrying in the Lake District with Mark Hatton

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

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Penny's Piece

I am currently feeling sea-sick. I am not on the boat to Shetland yet. It is because I have just got my first pair of varifocals. Those of you with them, will understand the waffy feeling in the first week when you try to work out which part of the lens to look through for different distances. The choice between looking down with your eyes or tilting your head and meeting the blurry bit in the middle. I have only tripped once, so I count that as a win and I have driven without crashing, so I'll take that as another win. I'm just glad that once I've made my viewing decision, everything is actually clear!

You may remember the start of the summer involved a lot of back-to-back sport. Beginning with the world cup. Many of us will be familiar with the phrase: there was a bit of argy bargy. Having watched the fouling and general foul play in most of the Argentina games, I think I have found the origin of the phrase. On the plus side, it sounds like most other teams were also unimpressed with them. By contrast, the Scottish and Norwegian teams and fans were adopted by most cities they visited. Though many seemed stunned by being drunk dry by the Scots-good effort. Wimbledon happened without any rain. Not sure that has happened often. It was also good to have a relative unknown Brit to cheer for in Arthur Fery. Though he does seem to like to play long 5 set matches rather than getting it over in 3 sets. I am beginning to (cynically) think that the trainers have some kind of pay-off to train players play long matches so punters at Wimbledon feel they have had their moneys worth. Then they can put the price up next year.

Has everyone managed to get where they wanted to go this summer? I am not talking about going on holiday, just simple things like getting to town. We seem to be in the time of 'Road Roulette'. Signs appear and disappear overnight. Some signs report possible weeks of work happening and then nothing happens. There are diversion signs all over the place and it isn't always clear which route you were/should be following. I have found, either ignoring most signs and carrying on as normal seems to have worked so far as nothing was happening. Where it was happening, using local knowledge usually works better than following the diversion. Especially since there have been more of those instances of a diversion route running into a different set of works! It has not helped that there seems to be water, electricity and Viberoptix or Fibrex (whichever

company it is) trying to do things at the same time but not together. In the middle, there is usually an Openreach van as one of the above have breathed near the line and cut someone off.

You know when you start a job and almost immediately regret it. This was me on the day I decided to deep clean the bedroom- you know, move the bed etc. It had started the day before when I decided I needed to sort my shoe cupboard. It has clearly been a holding space as the footwear I use regularly are not in it. I found 6, yes 6 pairs of worn-out black Sketchers and I have also realised I do not need to buy sandals for years. In the drawer part I have belts and scarves in all colours and a ridiculous amount of shoe laces I have clearly removed from previously 'done' trainers and boots. There were also 3 Nokia 3310s- which probably still switch on as the battery lasts for ever. I still haven't found my power bank though. Then the bed. No major surprises, just lots of spiders and dust. Missing small items like nail files and a wind-up torch- for power cuts. I had to take everything out from under it and hoover crouched on the floor as it is too heavy to move on my own- old wood and metal framed bed with a set of springs on the frame. It wasn't until I was remaking the bed that night I realised I could have lifted the mattresses off (we have two as there was nowhere to put Richard's when he moved in) and then the springs to do the hoovering. We did this so I could then easily and properly get the dust off the spring's frame. A proper Spring clean. I now need to remember all of that for when I need to do it again. . . in another few years! It only took a day for the spiders to move back in. Great.

Fingers crossed we have some of the lovely weather we've had this summer on Show Day. If anyone else feels they could support on a gate, let me know. I also hope to see some of you at the next Art out West event in October. See details else where in this edition of the Link. Penny.

ECO CHURCH/ECO COMMUNITY UPDATE

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

The Season of Creation (1 September-4 October) is dedicated to God as the Creator and sustainer of all life. Join A Rocha UK's Season of Creation prayer and reflection webinar on Wednesday 2 September to start this season with others. During this period of the church calendar, many churches celebrate Harvest, thanking God for his provision through the land and the food that it produces. If you are part of a church or community, suggest that a service or gathering has a Season of Creation focus. Prayers, worship, teaching and the offering could focus on creation. Could there be an activity with a creation focus too?

Explore more Season of Creation resources at: arocha.org.uk/what-we-do/season-of-creation

As promised last month here is an update about a Nature Networking day that Rosemary attended (along with a number of interested people from Cumbrian churches) who aim to make their church yards more wildlife friendly. Let's see where we can go from here - I certainly found it inspiring

Churchyards are actively valuable spaces for nature – and more opportunities to enhance them for biodiversity and community exist. Nature highlights include – wildflower meadows, bees, swifts, swallows and martins, bats and waxcaps.

Volunteers are the biggest asset and the biggest challenge. Some churches have very few capable volunteers or one or two individuals that are relied upon. Some churches successfully utilise community payback teams, existing eco groups and partnerships with other organisations like schools. Recruiting new people is always hard, and projects are easily stalled when key people leave.

Practical management questions remain – around management plans, what and where to plant, how to control weeds and brambles. Advice can be overwhelming or hard to distill. Key challenges exist around communication, with more sharing of stories and case studies needed. How do we share that “wilder” spaces are not neglected?

Next steps suggested:

- Expert advice and mentoring
- Help developing management plans
- Site visits and churchyard exchanges
- Scything training
- Case studies and examples of success
- Online and in-person networking
- Annual churchyard forums
- Sharing communications materials
- Support with Eco Church requirements
- Funding opportunities and grant advice

NOTES FROM ST BARTHOLOMEW'S AND ST JAMES'S

What an extraordinary summer it has been. We have been fortunate once again to have been spared the worst excesses of the south's drought and blistering heat but have had periods of heatwave here and less than our usual rainfall. We are now winding down to autumn as the evenings begin to draw in and perhaps anticipating the threatened El Niño. It has been a busy summer for work on our churches. The damaged Wainwright window at St. James has been removed some time ago and we await the imminent arrival of the new window. Our Restoration Appeal continues and we shall be having a stall at Loweswater Show to bring the appeal to a larger audience. Loweswater church has had its wood worm treated involving the removal and replacement and repair of carpets. Over the summer a family of swallows took up home in the church and were a regular accompaniment to our services. Sadly, most of the fledglings did not survive.

We now have a new footpath from the main church gate; thanks to the Todd family. Our first wedding of the year that of Mags Todd and Tom Peet took place on a beautiful sunny day; a lovely occasion marked by Mags arrival by tractor! See photo below. Our Harvest Festival will take place on 4th October followed by the harvest supper on the following Monday evening.



From the Registers

Marriage: 22 August: Tom Peet and Mags Todd

Funeral: 21 July : Ruth Clarke,

12 August Donald Huddart

Baptism: 8 August: Ivy Sanderson Thompson

Eleanor Ella



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Loweswater with Buttermere PCC
100 Challenge Club

The prizewinners for the draw held on 1st July 2026

1st prize of £25	No 95	Xander Hamilton
2nd prize of £10	No 62	Elly Rowland
3rd prize of £5	No 33	Chris Judd

The prizewinners for the draw held on 1st August 2026

1st prize of £25	No 39	Hilary Hope
2nd prize of £10	No 25	Carol Priestley
3rd prize of £5	No 80	Diane Hayton

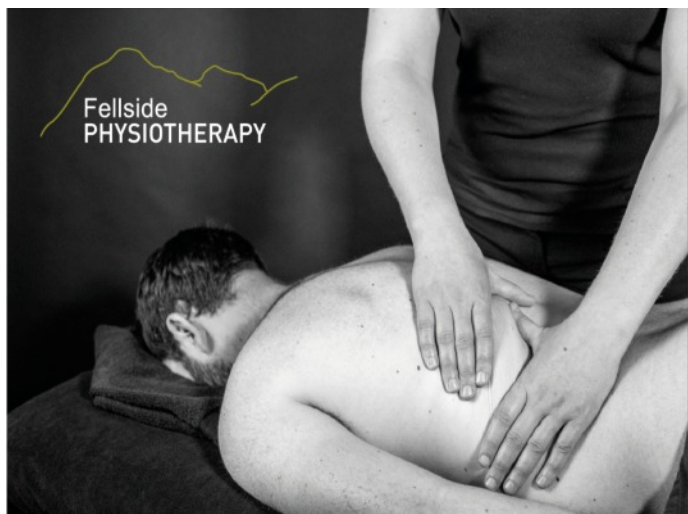
Congratulations to the winners and thanks to all our supporters.

A wee tribute to Hugh Ralph from Sue Ritchie

I have such great memories of Hugh who became a good friend after we moved to live permanently in Lorton and I started singing in church with the valley choir organised by both Sue and Pat Williams. The highlight for me then became the regular helpful extra practices in the School House with Sue going through all our parts but then for those non-drivers we would be invited to stay for some wine and I would invariably say I should get home but maybe "just the one" – of course it was never just the one as another bottle appeared far too quickly and it would be "well, just one more"!

Hugh persuaded me to join Keswick Choral initially then the Carlisle Cathedral Voluntary choir which sang when the usual choristers were on holiday. Cockermouth Harmonics was next and Cumbria Rural Choir for a couple of concerts. Throughout all these practices Hugh and I would share the driving. Now Hugh obviously thought we were of like minds as he had spotted immediately my fun T-shirt from some university or other which had a set of partial differential equations and then the words..."And then there was light!" and responded –" Ah... Maxwell's Equations of Electromagnetism" which was absolutely right of course!! We had fun chats on our car journeys sometimes about Astronomy depending on the cloud cover in the evenings but he would often go down deep mathematical rabbit holes where I may say I recognised many of the words and terminology but "not necessarily in the right order"!! (With a nod to Morecambe and Wise and Andre Previn.) He will be remembered so fondly by all our singing community which we are so fortunate to enjoy in these far reaches of Cumbria – his wonderful bass voice will be greatly missed. Thank you, Hugh for introducing and encouraging me to sing.

Sue



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Hugh Ralph – a tribute from Sue Ralph.

Hugh and I moved to School House in Lorton in 1993.

We had met six years earlier, when we both worked in the South.

Although we enjoyed our professional lives, he as a Research Physicist and I as a freelance musician, we had a dream of moving to the Lake District. And so we did, although it seemed totally impractical at the time. Somehow we made it work and it was the best decision we could have made.

We were pleasantly surprised to find what a thriving community we were joining and how friendly and kind people were. There were regular activities in the valley and a wealth of culture in the surrounding areas. People were taking part as well, not just attending.

Hugh retired from his regular work, and became a freelance Computer Consultant. He also taught Mathematics for the Open University as well as studying with them for his own interest.

Not long after moving here, he joined the Cockermouth Harmonic Society in which he was an asset to the bass section with his rich voice. He later sang with Abbey Singers, Nova Cantica and the Cathedral Voluntary Choir. He sang with the Valley Benefice Choir and provided a huge amount of professional quality sheet music using his computing skills.

His health had deteriorated over the last few years, but he carried on as well as he could. He was to be seen riding round the village on his mobility scooter when the weather permitted. He enjoyed watching interesting programmes on YouTube, including historical documentaries and comedies from the 1970's. His lifelong love of steam trains resulted in his watching train journeys 'from the drivers' cabs'. He would follow the routes on his railway maps. It looked like miles and miles of straight tracks to me, but he enjoyed it. Maybe he had once dreamt of becoming an engine driver, but he never said so!

So hard to have to let him go. But so many happy times to remember.

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Yew Tree Hall AGM 6 July 2026 – Chair's annual report. Adam Baker

Another remarkable year in the history of our hall. Our year started with excitement and renewed vigour as our 'Friends of Yew Tree Hall' redevelopment fund had reached an incredible £125,000. We pressed ahead with many iterations of the plans, taking feedback from the community through drop-ins and surveys. In October we even attracted the attention of both BBC TV and BBC Radio Cumbria for interviews such was the interest in what we were doing.

With help from Cal Williamson, our local architect, we managed to get our planning permission and listed building consent in towards the end of our year. So a huge thank you to everyone that took the time to review and comment on the ideas and then wrote in to support the plans.

Our committee was further strengthened by a twelfth member, Judy Johnson, Co-Chair of Governors of Lorton Primary School, who joined us as a representative trustee for the school. It's great to have that formal tie-in with the school again.

As you may know, Yew Tree Hall 'lost' its title deeds in a flood in the 1940s so we spent some considerable time redefining the property and curtilage around the garden and river bank. Our solicitor advises that Land Registry is about two years behind so it may be some time until we receive the final confirmation.

Catherine will speak to the finances in due course but it is worth mentioning that nearly all our efforts are focussed on the redevelopment fund. However, we still have to pay the bills and maintain the hall. Like everyone, our costs continue to rise but we did realise a significant reduction in electricity costs by changing supplier. However, it still costs us the best part of £1k per month to keep the hall running.

Our social events programme remains healthy with a number of events and coffee & cake mornings taking place – thank you to Melbreak Communities for their continued support in this area and their wider support in terms of grants and communication.

Hires and occasional events dropped off slightly, largely due to the cessation of the U3A Bowls group but the Move to Improve class has now become a regular weekly hire. We are grateful to all hires for choosing Yew Tree Hall as their venue.

Working in partnership with Lorton Parish Council in the dedicated Development Group was hugely important to the Trustees – it provided cohesiveness, an inextricable link, between the two main representative bodies of the community. And of course it was the original work done by LPC that led us to the decision to redevelop the hall. On behalf of the trustees, I formally thank Peter as Chair and the Parish Council for their help and input to the project and especially to Cathy Lee, who without her drive and determination, the project simply would not be where it is.

We held a number of notable fund raising initiatives not least of which was the Grand Auction in November raising an incredible £22,000 in one night! Again, many thanks to everyone that donated an item or service, or bought things like a year's supply of ginger cake for a princely sum! But what an incredible night of fun and laughter – led by our tame auctioneer, Seth Armstrong. We'd also had great fun at the ceilidh in May raising over a £1000. We managed to sell off most of the old items in the basement that raised another £1200. Other sources of income were £4600 from Gift Aid and our treasurer, Cath Armstrong, also shrewdly switched our development fund into an old deposit account, attracting over £1000 in interest.

o coincide with the grand auction, and to celebrate the humble beginnings of Jennings in Lorton, Jennings launched a brand new, heritage beer – Lorton Ale. They donate £1 to us for every bottle sold. We very much keep in touch with Jennings and with Rebecca Canfield, the owner of Jennings – we appreciate their ongoing support.

Just after Christmas we also launched our new website, Lorton Yew Tree Hall.co.uk. The best thing is that it was all put together and continues to be managed by Rachael Jennings, the six times great granddaughter of John Jennings who built... this place. We're very grateful to Rachael who gives her time each week to update the site.

As part of the survey work connected with the redevelopment of the hall, it was identified that there were some minor concerns in the roof. It was last reroofed in the 90s but used a non-breathable membrane meaning the roof timbers are subject to extremes of temperature and humidity. At some point we will need to rectify this but it is hoped we can do it in conjunction with the overall longer term plans.

Aside from our plans to revolutionise the access arrangements, toilets and kitchen area, we are actively seeking out audio visual solutions for the hall. One of the key concerns is the poor sound quality so we intend to install acoustic boards, improved PA equipment and an electric drop down screen; after redecoration of the ceiling. We're also looking to improve storage by using the space at the top of the old stairs.

Running the hall and any events takes a lot of time and coordination. If it wasn't for the hours of work and organisation put in by trustees and volunteers alike, they just would not happen. I'm not sure people fully appreciate the time it takes to run an active village hall, and a charity to boot, let alone all the events we run. So, on behalf of the whole community, I say *thank you*, to you, all the trustees and volunteers, who give your time to keep Yew Tree Hall what it is, and what it is to become.

Of course, we need money to realise our vision, £120,000 more to be precise. Our community target is £300,000 and while £180,000 raised so far is an incredible amount, we now need the final push.

The people that use this wonderful, historic building are the local community. No one else is going to look after it, no one else is going to pay for it – we may get grants to help us but ultimately it's us, the people, who make up this lifestyle we all enjoy. The views, the location, the buildings, the organisations, the social occasions, the friendships; that's the Lorton community. And we help create that.

Every time we do maintenance, pay for something or make a donation, it's an investment. We are investing in this community, in the people, in future generations and in the very fabric of this, Yew Tree Hall. We have to do everything we can to raise that £120,000 to give ourselves a facility that is fit for everyone to use and fit for the next 100 years. If you have £10 or £10,000 we'd be delighted to hear from you.

Thank you Lorton, thank you everyone, for making Lorton, Lorton. It's a grand place.

(Edited. Full version <https://www.lortonyewtreehall.co.uk/meeting-minutes> plus accounts)



New Year's Eve Party at Yew Tree Hall

New Community Defibrillators

Vale of Lorton Community First Responders are delighted to announce that we have two new Community Public Access Defibrillators (CPADs) now available in the valley. The existing unit at Croft House Farm Café, Buttermere has also been upgraded. We are very grateful to the owners of Croft House Farm Café for funding the new defibrillator and a new cabinet. We would also like to thank those at Gatesgarth Farm for giving permission to site a new unit there. This includes the owner, Willie Richardson, tenant David Mallett and John Richardson who has the snack van at the carpark. John has also generously offered to pay for the electricity to keep the cabinet lit and dry. The unit was funded by charitable monies raised at The Buttermere Bash Charity Free Flyers Festival. Special thanks to Gordie Oliver for the prompt and generous donation.

There is now also a new CPAD at The Wheatsheaf, Low Lorton funded by Vale of Lorton First Responders.

As a reminder here is a list of the Community Public Access Defibrillators that are now in place and active:

1. Lorton School outside wall.
2. Loweswater telephone box.
3. Loweswater, Waterend Farm.
4. Croft House Farm Café, Buttermere.
5. Gatesgarth Farm, Buttermere. On barn wall to left of snack van opposite the car park.
6. The Wheatsheaf, Low Lorton. On exterior wall near the door.
7. Yew Tree Hall, Lorton. Inside and a temporary unit pending the redevelopment works.
8. Loweswater Village Hall – inside.
9. Hassness House, Buttermere

These units are all now registered with North West Ambulance Service. In an emergency Dial 999 and you will be directed immediately to the nearest defibrillator. The new units are not locked. Where existing cabinets have coded keypads we have put the code on the front of the boxes for immediate access. As First Responders we arrange for all units to be checked regularly to ensure batteries and chest pads are all in date. We are very grateful to helpful volunteers who do this fortnightly. This includes Cathy Leck, Yvette Kahane and Dave Mitchell. We will also be upgrading existing units, when necessary, over the next few years.

We sincerely hope these units are never needed but reality tells us otherwise. **There are more than 40,000 “out of hospital” cardiac arrests every year in the UK, but less than 1 in 10 people survive. Every minute without CPR and defibrillation reduces the chance of survival by 10%.** This is why we have organised and look after the Community Defibrillators and have registered them on the national “Circuit” so you can be directed immediately to the nearest one. Anyone can use one and we should never be frightened to do so. You could save a life. Our team will be organising short training sessions soon, and I would encourage as many as possible to come along and familiarise yourselves with the process.

We are now a very small team of four comprising myself, Peter Deeks, Roger Hiley and Jim Weir. We desperately need some new members. It is a very rewarding thing to do. You do not need any medical background and can dedicate as little or as much time to being a Responder as you wish. Please contact myself, Roger Hiley or Peter Deeks, Team Leader if you want to chat about this.

Pam Jaques

Sunday 11th October

HARVEST

Festival & Lunch

Harvest Festival
St Cuthbert's Church
10.30-11.30pm

with presentation of harvest
gifts and produce at the altar

Harvest Lunch
Yew Tree Hall
1.00-3.30pm

followed by auction of
harvest gifts and produce



If you'd like a glass of wine, a beer or a soft drink with your
TatiePot - please bring your own as there will be no bar this year.

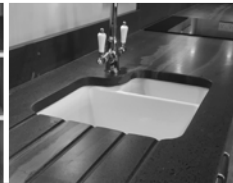
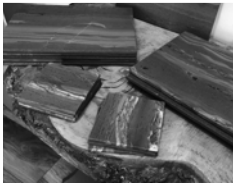
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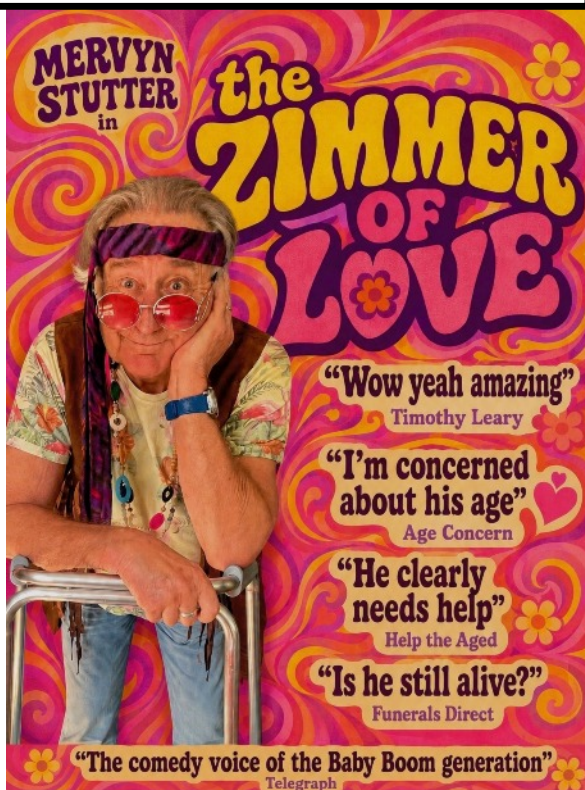
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Coffee Morning

In Loweswater Village Hall



Saturday October 10th - 10.00 'till 12.00

Coffee/Tea & Cakes

and an opportunity to catch up with friends & neighbours

Photographs by Rosamund & John Macfarlane

Project updates, displays & sales from Melbreak Wildlife Group

Lorton & Loweswater Butterfly 2027 Calendar from Stuart Medland



A Melbreak Communities Event

Proceeds in aid of Village Hall & Melbreak Wildlife Funds

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Loweswater Ladies July Report

July saw the annual Loweswater Ladies summer outing, which this year was kept very local. Keswick was our destination for a trip on the launch around Derwentwater and a matinée performance of Nell Gwyn at the Theatre by The Lake. A beautiful warm sunny day was ordered and we weren't disappointed. Even though we had all been round the lake on numerous occasions with small children, relatives and guests, it was a relaxing hour spent watching the activities on the lake and of course chatting about past memories. We then enjoyed a fabulous buffet at the theatre provided by the theatre café. The matinée was great fun, lively and entertaining, so all in all a good

day out before our summer break. Our thanks go to the theatre, café and to the launch company for all their help and professionalism.

Our return meeting, on Sept 9th, will be Seated Curling with Val Bell, which we have had the pleasure of hosting before and which brought out the hidden competitiveness of some of our members. It turned out to be a very lively affair with some ladies showing more skill than was first thought possible. Everyone welcome as usual, 7:15pm at Loweswater Village Hall, £2:50 for guests.

Jenny Burr

DIARY DATES

SEPT

- 2 Wed Lorton Parish Council meeting 7.30pm YTH
- 3 Thu Loweswater Parish Council meeting 7.30pm Loweswater village Hall
- 6 Sun Loweswater and Brackenthwaite Show
- 9 Wed Loweswater Ladies - LVH 7:15pm - Seated Curling
- 10 Thu In Search of Arctic Wonders: Cumbria and the Arctic in the 18th & 19th Centuries, with Dr Rob David L&DFLHS, 7.30 pm, YTH
- 14 Mon Community Lunch, Lorton School 1.15pm. Booking essential - see Poster
- 17 Thu Crafternoon - LVH 2-4pm. All welcome.
- 28 Mon YTH 7pm End of season Balsam Bash Celebrations

OCT

- 2 Fri AoW- A Brief History of Music LVH 7:30. See poster to book.
- 3 Sat Apple Day - see poster
- 4 Sun Free Hedgerow Survey Training. 10:00am to 12:30pm, Lorton (venue TBC)
- 5 Mon Loweswater Harvest Supper - see poster
- 10 Sat Melbreak Communities Coffee Morning LVH see poster for times
- 11 Sun Lorton Harvest Lunch - see poster
- 12 Mon Community Lunch at Lorton School 1.15pm. Booking essential. See Poster
- 14 Wed Loweswater Ladies - LVH 7:15pm - Life at the Bar
- 15 Thu Crafternoon - LVH 2-4pm. All welcome.
- 15 Thu YTH Lorton Film Club
- 20 Tue Loweswater 77 Club - AGM and Evening talk Mark Hatton LVH 7.30pm
- 24 Sat Race Night at Yew Tree Hall - 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

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

Deadline for October is Friday 18th September - 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:- isumisu@gmail.com and he will arrange payment and delivery.

The United Benefice of Lorton and Loweswater with Buttermere

September 2026

6 th Sept 12 noon	Trinity 14 Loweswater Show Service	Loweswater Show Ground
13 th Sept 10.30am	Cuthbert, Bishop of Lindisfarne Holy Communion & Patronal Festival	Lorton
20 th Sept 10.30am 6pm	Trinity 16 Matins Holy Communion	Loweswater Buttermere
27 th Sept 10.30am	Trinity 17 Holy Communion	Lorton

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. Services are also advertised two weeks ahead on the GMC website: grasmoormc.church/stayingconnected. Lois, the Community Chaplain, can be contacted on community.chaplain.gmc@gmail.com, and weddings etc can be booked through Sue Lake.



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