

the Village Voice

Issue No 4, Volume 25

Lanchester, April 2025



April 2025 Wildlife Notes

As summer approaches, the grass verges on the roads around Lanchester are full of young rabbits feasting on fresh shoots of grass and favoured plants. But what of the rabbit's cousin, the hare? It's possible to see hares on the edges of Lanchester and the countryside around it, sometimes making their way along the quieter roads like Newbiggen lane, or zig-zagging at top speed across a field adjacent to footpaths (hares can reach speeds of 40 miles per hour and are the UK's fastest land mammal). Or, if you look closely, maybe with some binoculars, hunkered down in the grass, with ears flattened down along their body.

Hares are larger than rabbits and are distinguished by their longer ears with black tips. They are more intolerant of disturbance and noise than rabbits, and so haven't been domesticated in the same way, aren't found in semi-urban habitats like rabbits can be, and for this reason, hares aren't as well-known. *(continued on page 11)*

Photographs by Ian Appleby

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'As Time Goes By' A Retirement Concert

I can hardly believe that it is 53 years since I founded Lanchester Choral Society (or Choral and Operatic as it was then) along with my friends John Ord and Stan Hunter; yet this will be the 53rd year of concerts we have given in the village since 1972 and on 23rd May in the Methodist Church, my last!

We have always given two concerts each year- one choral and one of lighter music to cater for all tastes both in the society and in the village. Plus of course carols at Christmas. Initially the lighter concerts were full scale stage productions of the operettas of Gilbert and Sullivan, Johann Strauss and the comic operas of Offenbach with orchestra.

Then moving on to the concert shows of such composers as Cole Porter, Andrew Lloyd Webber, Irving Berlin, Rodgers and Hammerstein, Les Misérables, and even Mamma Mia!

The choral concerts have included the oratorios Messiah, Elijah, and Creation as well as the sorts of Choral music heard on Classic FM such as Vivaldi's Gloria and more modern compositions such as Carmina Burana and the choral works of Vaughan Williams and Karl Jenkins to name but a few.

I have made some very dear friends over these years; great singers who have shone brightly in performance both as principals and as chorus, many still with us but many sadly not. Also, superb pianists/organists without whose skills no choral society could exist. However, the more humble tasks of 'fetching and carrying', house management, tea making, set building, costume planning, programme construction, ticket selling, etc, etc have been faithfully carried out and are so vital. I am grateful to so many people. Like all societies numbers fluctuate, but the members who come along week after week and work hard to put together a performance the village can be proud of is impressive, and I look forward to hearing the society in the future, but this time from the audience!

These have been years I never will forget and my thanks go to the loyalty both of the singers and of the village folk who have come along over the years to concert after concert showing such wonderful support.

David Hughes



Right; David Hughes as many in the village have seen him orchestrating carols on the green.

Monday Art Group

The MAG has had an interesting month, working on our own pictures, and working on a common project. This was to copy a painting by one of the Scottish Colourists, Samuel Peploe, with some very good results.

In addition, we had fun painting some small dolls, which will form part of a 20,000 doll artwork designed to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the Stockton and Darlington railway.

Members of the group also enjoyed the opportunity to exhibit a painting in a shared MAG exhibition for a month at the Willow Cafe at Willow Burn hospice. New members are very welcome. Contact jimrafferty@yahoo.com for further details.

Jim Rafferty

Above: some of the painted dolls
Right: Members take a break for tea and a chat.



Chris's challenge to raise money for Motor Neurone Disease Research

I've been thinking quite a bit about my dad recently, as it comes up to nearly 4 years since he passed away from motor neurone disease.

But they're not sad thoughts or ones of self-pity. In fact, I don't think I've had many of those thoughts about my dad since he passed.

The thoughts have been about how lucky and privileged I have been to have had such a great dad for any part of my life. I owe a lot to him - my values, hobbies (running, more about that in a bit...), career interests and general outlook on life. I'm incredibly lucky.

That being said, I would still love to pick up the phone to my dad and chat all things sport. That's why I'm taking on a big running challenge in June, hoping to raise some money for MND Association and their essential research into a cure/remedy for such an awful disease.

My dad is the reason I love to run and without that exposure from an early age, watching my dad run every day, I doubt it would play such a prominent role in my life today. Ironically as I type this, Bruce Springsteen - Born To Run has just come on my Spotify shuffle.

Shout out to Traverse Tanzania's Brett Harrison for piquing my interest with a LinkedIn post a few weeks back, with the opportunity of a lifetime to run across Tanzania.

That opportunity, to use my love of running, have an incredible adventure experience and raise some money for MND Association was something I couldn't miss.

So here I am, a little blissfully ignorant as to what awaits in 5 big consecutive days of running.

Hopefully you'll ease my trepidation and chuck a few quid on my just giving page (link below) or click on the QR code. Thank you in advance for anything you are able to share.

www.justgiving.com/page/chris-mnd-tanzania
Chris Walker



Top: Chris
Above: Chris's father Steve

Willow Burn Hospice to Open New Charity Boutique in Lanchester

Willow Burn Hospice is delighted to announce the upcoming opening of its first charity boutique in Lanchester, located on Croft View. The official opening date is still to be confirmed, but preparations are well underway. The Willow Burn Boutique will be a preloved shop with a difference. It will raise vital funds to support the hospice, while offering a stylish shopping experience. From designer pieces and vintage gems to high street favourites, every item will be handpicked from generous donations.

The new shop will also become the base for Willow Burn's growing online stores, combining both in-person and digital retail under one roof. Managing the new store is Olivia Kiss, who has worked at Willow Burn as the E-Commerce Coordinator for over a year and has seven years' experience in retail.

"I'm passionate about sustainable fashion, vintage clothing and raising money for a good cause, so this is my dream job. We'll have more space to accept donations and more opportunities to find those gorgeous treasures that help raise money for Willow Burn Hospice.

"Around 90% of my wardrobe is from our shops – from a Topshop faux fur coat to a vintage Laura Ashley dress which I recently wore to the gala – and that's not going to change. I'll probably be our best customer!"

Rachel Quince, Deputy Chief Executive and Head of Fundraising and Marketing is equally proud of the new store: "The Willow Burn Boutique promises to be a warm, welcoming space where fashion meets fundraising. We have been keen to open a retail space in Lanchester for a long time and I'm so proud the boutique is opening in the hospice's hometown in our 35th anniversary year."

Watch the storefront, Willow Burn's website, and social media for further information about the store opening and volunteer opportunities.



Above: She's in fashion – Olivia Kiss, E-Commerce Coordinator at Willow Burn Hospice

Willow Burn Hospice 35th Anniversary Gala Raises Over £22,000

On Friday 21 March, Willow Burn Hospice celebrated 35 years of Treasuring Lives with a spectacular Anniversary Gala at the beautiful Beamish Hall. Nearly 200 guests gathered for the evening to honour the legacy and ongoing mission of Willow Burn in Derwentside.

Thanks to the incredible generosity of sponsors and supporters, the event raised an impressive £22,371 for hospice care. Guests were warmly welcomed by the multi-talented Alfie Joey, who not only hosted the evening but also live-painted an original artwork, which was auctioned during the event.

Adding a touch of fun, attendees played 'Ears and Tails' with the hospice's new mascot, Will O'Burn, bringing smiles all around. A stunning 18ct white gold pendant, donated by Berry's Jewellers, was the top prize of the evening's raffle, with lucky ticket number 241 claimed on the night.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to generous gala sponsors: Berry's Jewellers, Elm Marketing Solutions, KBB Interior Designs, Walter Thompson Contractors Ltd, and Very Important Parties.

Here's to the next 35 years of Willow Burn!



Photo: Will O'Burn playing 'Ears and Tails'



VE Day celebrations in Lanchester

Together with the majority of the UK, Lanchester will be celebrating the 80th anniversary of VE Day on May 8th with three different events.

On Thursday the 8th May there will be a service at the War Memorial on the Village Green starting at 2pm which we hope will involve the local schools.

Later the same day at the Burnhope picnic area starting at 8.30pm there will be a short service before the Beacon will be lit at approximately 8.45pm. The Lanchester Brass Band and a piper will provide music.

Refreshments will be available.

The final celebration will be Civic Service held at the Lanchester All Saints Parish Church on Sunday the 11th May starting at 3.30pm.

The Lanchester Parish Council and the Burnhope Parish Council warmly invite everyone who can, to attend one or more of these services not only to celebrate the end of the second world war but to remember those who paid the ultimate sacrifice.

"WE WILL REMEMBER THEM"
Lanchester Parish Council

Deadline

Due to technical issues we are combining the May and June editions into a bumper May/June issue.

Deadline will be Friday May 9th. It will be after VE day and all the celebrations so it would be great if you could send us pictures of your celebrations/street parties as well as anything else interesting you might have for us.

So, we will need the What's On information for JUNE and JULY please by the deadline.

Thanking you in anticipation
The Editors

New Deliverers for the Village Voice Needed

Permanent deliverers for Deneside and Alderdene required soonest. So please get your applications in by return to avoid disappointment. Deneside is a round of 53 papers and Alderdene a 35 paper round. Full training will be given to the lucky winners plus a free uniform and all the usual benefits of working for the Lanchester Village Voice - a multinational company with offices in Singapore, Pago Pago, New York and High Spenn.

Ring Mike Stoddart on
01207520291 for more details.

The Wood Beyond the Trees – The Truth About Greencroft Commercial Forest

A new action group of residents and local business owners has launched to oppose the proposed Greencroft Commercial Forest a 290-hectare forest in which sits a 90-hectare Sitka spruce logging plantation. This commercial timber operation is equivalent to 120 football pitches¹, and will cover almost the entire hillside between Lanchester, Maiden Law and Greencroft.

The action group is concerned this large-scale commercial forest will bring significant environmental, economic and social harm to the area, including visual and ecological degradation², flood risks³ and over 5,700 timber lorry journeys⁴ (for the first stage alone) on local roads including the A691 passing St Bede's School.

The same team spearheading this forest were involved in the Stobo Hope Forest project in Scotland, now under Judicial Review following premature herbicide spraying before approval[iii]".

"... the use of herbicide to kill off heather and other plants; the failure to assess the impact of the fragmentation of the moorland on black grouse; the application to re-introduce fox hunting allegedly to control predators; and the inadequately marked deer fences which kill grouse. 5"

Major Errors in the Forest Publicity

- **"No herbicides will be used"**
 - Forestry Commission documents detail the use of herbicides such as **glyphosate and propyzamide** and **"other appropriate chemicals."**⁶

'Return of red squirrels,'⁷

- Scientific evidence shows these species thrive better in mixed or broadleaf woodlands ^{8 9} .

In general, monocultures offer poor support for biodiversity and are vulnerable to pests like the spruce bark beetle, which has been found in the UK and poses a significant threat to spruce trees ¹⁰.

"Proposals for walking and cycling paths"¹¹

Official Forestry Commission documents state that visitor infrastructure such as paths and car parks will be considered 'at a future date if justified by demand'

The project is believed to have been granted over **£3 million** in public funding via the Woodland Creation Offer ¹²,

- Plus **£12,700** available in "stackable payments when delivering wider benefits to society, nature recovery and the environment".
- Plus an additional **£5 million** if the owners apply to sell their carbon via the UK Woodland Carbon Code ¹³



- Plus monies from the sale of timber

In contrast, the local economic benefit is calculated at £zero.

The project is spearheaded by assets fund manager, True North Real Asset Partners ¹⁴ with Pryor & Rickett Silviculture (PRS), part of Euroforest Group, managing design and implementation.

The same parties were involved in the Stobo Hope Forest project in Scotland, now under Judicial Review following premature herbicide spraying before approval ¹⁵.

The image opposite is of Stobo Hope grouse land, from BBC where you can find out more about the Stobo Hope project:

www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c20rq334577o

...the grant system is now being exploited by individuals and institutions based far away from Scotland and is no longer fit for purpose. The result is damage to wildlife, landscape, outdoor recreational opportunity and loss of local employment. This is a modern version of the Highland Clearances and will not stop until SF is instructed by the Scottish Government to cease financial support"

ParkswatchScotland.co.uk ¹⁶

We, the action group, believe the above statement regarding public funding being used for private commercial purposes, should also apply throughout the UK.

True North is operating through the Forestry Carbon Sequestration Fund II ¹⁷, a Guernsey-

based private investment fund. However, specific details regarding the grant amount received for the commercial aspect of the Greencroft Forest Park have not been publicly disclosed. The project has received consent from the Forestry Commission, but financial particulars, including any grants or funding, are not specified in available sources.

*NB, "Harry Humble is director of True North Real Asset Partners which is based in Alnwick, Northumberland, and used to be called True North European Real Estate Partners Ltd and could be confused with the tax haven registered True North European Real Estate Partners (Guernsey) Ltd which also has a Harry Humble as director" Quote from **www.parkswatchscotland.co.uk**

To help us fight it, and to find out more about the **Say No to Greencroft Commercial Forest action group**, please visit www.saynotogreencroftforest.co.uk

Produced by the Say No to Greencroft Commercial Forest Group who take full responsibility for the content of this article.

¹References:

A 290-hectare commercial forest, known as Greencroft Forest Park, is planned, encompassing approximately 600,000 trees across an area equivalent to 185 football pitches. Up to 65% of the plantation will consist of Sitka spruce which is equivalent to 390,000 trees / 188.5 hectares / 120 football pitches.

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/creating-new-woodland-operations-note-031>

³ https://cdn.forestresearch.gov.uk/2011/01/frmg004_woodland4water.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com

⁴ <https://timbertransportforum.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Timber-Transport-Forum-Road-Haulage-of-Round-Timber-5-Ed-Digital.pdf>

-8-Wheeler Rigid Lorry: Typically carries around 19 tonnes of timber = 5,789 trucks per 110,000 tonnes
Articulated Lorry (Artic): Can carry approximately 27 tonnes of timber = 4,074 trucks per 110,000 tonnes
44-Tonne Gross Vehicle Weight (GVW) Articulated Lorry: Under UK regulations, such lorries can have a payload of up to 28 tonnes = 3,928 trucks per 110,000 tonnes

⁵ <https://parkswatchscotland.co.uk/2024/12/16/forestry-finance-and-nature-the-cracks-are-beginning-to-show-at-stobo-hope/>

⁶ Forestry Commission England EIA Checklist 10b

⁷ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c5yggq77j82o>

⁸ rsne.org+1rsst.org.uk+1

⁹ <https://scottishsquirrels.org.uk/2022/01/25/for-nature-go-native/>

¹⁰ https://www.gov.uk/guidance/eight-toothed-european-spruce-bark-beetle-ips-typographus?utm_source=chatgpt.com 11 https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c5yggq77j82o?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAR5Dy27qwTHJZOVRJLoQhA3oicgSn4zL2RY3Rr56LmcRz3-tFwbbUPBznKw_Ug_aem_SHKJ83Y0KRTpX9sawQA3PQ

¹² <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/england-woodland-creation-offer>

¹³ <https://www.woodlandcarboncode.org.uk/> Carbon Offset – 72,000 tonnes ~ €80/tonne16 ~ £5,000,000

¹⁴ https://thedirt.news/forestry-commission-approves-commercial-forest-in-durham/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

¹⁵ <https://www.forestry.gov.scot/news-releases/scottish-forestry-halts-forestry-work-at-stobo-over-new-information>

¹⁶ <https://parkswatchscotland.co.uk/2024/12/16/forestry-finance-and-nature-the-cracks-are-beginning-to-show-at-stobo-hope/>

¹⁷ <https://www.chroniclelive.co.uk/news/north-east-news/600000-trees-hand-planted-north-31153279> 18 <https://www.bailiwickexpress.com/business-ge/saffery-champness-advises-30m-fund/>

Recent retirees from the band of Village Voice deliverers

Recent retirees from the band of Voice deliverers who have decided to call it a day and enjoy one of the many packages offered to ex-employees.

Pictured are Angela Lee, Suzzane Ward and Edward Lines. Suzzane Ward who delivered for 17 years to Colepike and Humberhill. This round is now delivered by Julie Sheldon. Angela Lee who delivered to Maiden Law since the Voice started. This round is now delivered by Dorothy Parry.

Edward Lines who delivered for the past 12 years to Alderdene. Alan Williams has taken the round on a temporary basis, but we still need a full-time deliverer.

*Fortunately for the Voice, we made a decision many years ago to invest in bitcoins so, with the cost of the various packages on offer rising steeply over the years, this has been matched by the rise of the bitcoins so the million pound we invested back in 1966 allows us to realise the fabulous offers that are available, ranging from cruises, space travel, attendance at state banquets etc. or even an all-inclusive trip to Whitley Bay.

Many thanks for the many years' service given by the above and please advise the Voice soonest of your wishes regarding what you choose from the Voice Brochure.

A permanent deliverer for Alderdene is still required to take over from Edward - phone me on 01207 520291 to join our dynamic team. Mike Stoddart

** This is a joke of course!!*



Local Government Elections

For **County Councillor** for the Lanchester and Burnhope Ward (one vacancy) the following four people are candidates:

GRAY Alison Louise 14 Lee Hill Court,
Lanchester, DH7 0QE
Labour Party

HARRISON Stephen (address in County Durham)
Reform UK

OLIVER Doug 30 Pavilion Terrace, Burnhope,
Durham, DH7 0DN

The Conservative Party

WILLIAMS Jeanette (address in County Durham)
Liberal Democrats

Election is to be held on Thursday 1st May
- don't forget to vote!

New Lanchester **Parish Council** Members

There were not enough nominations for the Parish Council, so the election was declared uncontested, and the following were deemed elected with effect from 1st May, 2025.

Alison Louise GRAY; Labour Party

Keith HARRISON; Conservative Party

Eric HEPPLEWHITE; Independent

Paul JACKSON; Independent

Vicky JACKSON; Property Landlord

Ossie JOHNSON; Labour Party

Alan Trevor JONES; Independent

Barrie MCDERMID; Business Owner

Lorraine MONTGOMERY; Labour Party

David SMITH; Independent

Jim SMITH; Labour Party

David TONER; Labour Party

Ian TUTE; Independent

Lynda Josephine WALKER; Labour Party

Stuart WALKER; Labour Party

Information from the Durham County Council Website

From the House



I am delighted to start this month's update by congratulating four North Durham businesses for their success at the North East Tourism Awards last month. A special mention goes to Hall Hill Farm, located just outside of Lanchester, which won the 'Large Visitor Attraction of the Year' award. This achievement highlights the exceptional businesses we have locally. Congratulations to all the winners!

With local elections fast approaching, I want to extend my gratitude to the Lanchester residents who have put themselves forward as candidates for Parish and County Council seats. I urge you to use your vote - whoever you are voting for.

Last month I updated you that I had visited the brilliant Willow Burn Hospice; shortly after visiting I found out that Willow Burn would be receiving £24,014 in government funding for facility upgrades and refurbishments.

I continue to visit schools across North Durham. If you are involved with a local school as a parent or staff member and would like me to visit, please contact my office to arrange a visit. I am also keen to visit local organisations and businesses.

As a member of the North East All Party Parliamentary Group, we recently discussed strategies to boost economic growth. I believe aligning regional growth with government priorities on defence spending and green new industries is crucial. Despite our rich defence manufacturing heritage, the North East has the fewest defence jobs supported by direct MoD spending in Great Britain. The recent increase in defence spending presents new opportunities for local industry, including SMEs*, and more well-paid skilled jobs.

I am holding monthly advice surgeries and have so enjoyed meeting so many of you face to face. If you are a constituent in need of assistance or advice, please do not hesitate to email me at luke.akehurst.mp@parliament.uk, call me at 0191 371 8834, or visit my website www.lukeakehurstmp.co.uk.

Best wishes,

Luke Akehurst, Member of Parliament for North Durham

* small and medium sized enterprises



Lanchester Men's Institute

Moving to the village during Covid it was nearly 18 months before the world opened up again and at that point, I didn't know anyone here. As a man of nearly 40 it was not easy to make new friends of a similar age. I was delighted last autumn to see the Community Centre was launching a group aimed at men. I was really nervous walking through the doors the first time, I am not shy, but it was still a little out of my comfort zone. Would I be the only one there? Would I get on with the others? Within 10 minutes I knew I had made the right decision. I think there were maybe 8 people at our first night where we made plans on what to do over the coming months.

Since then, we have played various sports: darts, archery and table tennis. We have had a masterclass in wreath making from one of the members as well as some very special guests. We had a local Indian kitchen in to make food for us, a brewery who did a presentation and gave us some samples and an extravaganza in sausage making.

On future meets we plan to go for a walk in the village, attend a comedy night, go bowling and play walking football. The best part of all of this is it is all funded so there is nothing to pay!

A little while ago I was asked to co-run the group, so I am now reaching out to the local community to help us increase our numbers. We meet the third Tuesday of every month in the Community centre 7-9pm.

We have set a group WhatsApp and a new Facebook page. We have just rebranded ourselves as Lanchester Men's Institute and have a fancy logo!!

We even just had our first night out in Crinions which was fab!

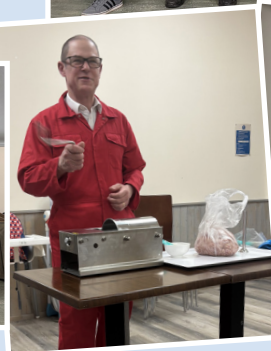
We are always looking to see new members and it would be great to meet some more locals.

I would love to see you there but, in the meantime, please get in touch with me if you want to know more.

Adam Plumpton 07930008412



Left: Adam Plumpton



Thursday Club

It was one of those special days that come along now and then. 45 years of Thursday Club birthday meetings - and this was my final one as Chairlady - a momentous day for me.

We had a lovely afternoon enjoying one of Sam Simpkins' table top rallies. The membership was divided into 8 groups, and we had to find our way via various leaflets and clues to finally arrive in Diggerland. First group past the post were 'The crazy ladies'.

It was then time for coffee, birthday cake and nibbles. I was presented with a lovely bouquet of flowers and a jewellery voucher which was gratefully received.

Members then had time to look at the vast array of old photographs showing what we had been up to over the last 45 years. 45 years on from when we were founded by a small group of ladies from a defunct Townswomen's Guild. Only 3 of us remain - Joan, Jennifer and me.

We've visited locations from Floors down to Whitby, castles, halls and glorious gardens for scrumptious afternoon teas, fashion shows and lunches out. We've been bowling, sailing and once to 'the dogs' in Sunderland. 45 years of memorable moments, too many to remember. We also found time over the years to raise a significant amount of money for the Great North Air Ambulance through holding coffee mornings, jewellery sales, and afternoon teas.

The Thursday Club is something of which I am inordinately proud, which has given me immense pleasure over the years, and I leave being Chairlady of a club which is well attended, financially viable and an extremely sociable and happy place to be. I am so pleased that Jan and a new team are taking it over - keeping it all going for hopefully the next 45 years.

I look forward to enjoying future meetings from my seat in the audience, viewing proceedings from my comfy, carefree vantage point.

Olive Simpkins

Above: Jan Vasey (left) presents Olive Simpkins with flowers on her retirement as Chair of the Thursday Club
Right: Olive with multiple birthday cakes



Concern among Lanchester residents as avian flu surveillance zone covers village

Locals have noticed signs across the village regarding an outbreak of bird flu in Burnopfield, with a 10km surveillance zone being enforced. The protection zone covers about half of the village - the council have advised residents to stay vigilant, and to report any diseased or deceased birds they encounter. On the 26th and 27th March, cases of avian flu were discovered in two premises in Burnopfield. The Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, or Defra, said that captive birds at the discovery site would be culled humanely.

A protection zone was established in the 3km surrounding the site, stating that all birds must be housed, along with a 10km surveillance zone, to ensure public safety is maintained and the risk of infection stays low. Defra also said that the zone will remain in place until further notice but will be reviewed regularly. The Animal and Plant Health agency (APHA) said: "the risk to public health from the virus is very low, however it is important that people don't pick up sick or dead birds."

APHA have reassured that birds within the surveillance zone are not subject to automatic culling but will be contacting known owners of poultry or captive birds to "gather further information," and assess the risk of further spread of the disease.

On the 7th April, APHA announced that regional housing measures, previously in force across areas like Merseyside, Cheshire and North Yorkshire, had been extended to cover Cumbria, County Durham, Northumberland and Tyneside. From the date of the announcement, it is now a legal requirement that any poultry or captive birds must be registered and housed, and where it is not possible to house birds, they must be in a fully enclosed or netted outdoor space.

Conservative Councillor Douglas Oliver shared with us the information and advice he received from Durham County council, including their plans to erect signage on roads upon entering or leaving the protection zone. The council briefing also includes how the disease is spread, and the common symptoms:

"Avian Influenza spreads through direct contact or contaminated fluids and faeces.

Symptoms in poultry include:

- Swollen head and blue discolouration of the neck and throat
- Loss of appetite and diarrhoea
- Respiratory distress (gaping beak, coughing, sneezing, gurgling, rattling)
- Reduced egg production and increased mortality"

Other cases have been discovered recently in areas such as Riverside Park in Chester-le-street and Burnhope reservoir, but in wild birds, so Durham County Council could take no further action than safely remove the carcasses and warn the public. Defra have advised against feeding wild birds such as geese, swans and ducks due to the current outbreak.

The advice from both the council and Defra for what to do if you suspect a bird has contracted avian flu, or if you come across a deceased bird, is to not touch the bird, its droppings or its feathers, and report it immediately to the APHA helpline: 03000 200 301, or contact Defra in the case of wild birds at 03459 335577.

Kenzie Harrison



Lanchester Flower Club

Member of the National Association of Flower Arrangers Society

Our meeting held on the 26th of March in Lanchester Community Centre was a demonstration by Christine Ogle, her theme was "This and That". We all enjoyed Christine's chatter as she progressed with her arrangements, which in true form were really lovely and raffled on the day. The members and friends then enjoyed chat, tea and coffee.

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday 28th May in Lanchester Community Centre main hall at 1.30 pm. Our demonstrator will be Wendy Smith and her theme will be "Rings and Things". Everyone is welcome to come along to a lovely relaxing afternoon ending with chatter, tea, coffee and friendship.

Lestrine Kelly



Local History Society

At the March meeting we were joined by Richard Pears, a regular to the society.

His topic was 'The Fenwick Four', all about the four statues of local worthies that decorate the facade of the Northumberland Street store. The four are Harry Hotspur, Roger Thornton, Sir John Marley and Thomas Bewick. It is uncertain why it's these four, but they all have strong connections with Newcastle.

Bewick was a well-known artist from Cherryburn who was apprenticed as an engraver in the 1700s in Newcastle. Marley was the defender of Newcastle during the Civil War. His ploy of keeping the Scottish prisoners of war in St Nicholas Cathedral saved it from the Scottish attack during the 1644 Siege. Thornton was a wealthy trader in the 1400s and a customs collector. He was involved with the coal trade and mining at Fugar area of Whickham. He became involved with repelling the Percys. Harry Hotspur (Percy) in 1300s was a soldier who battled with the Scots at every opportunity with fearless aggression. He got involved with the Percy family battle with the Royal forces of Henry IV in 1403 at Shrewsbury; sadly Hotspur lost his life and was hung, drawn and quartered. One quarter was allegedly set on a spike in Newcastle.

However, back to the building with the statues. Interestingly it was only built in 1912 as a Boots the Chemists store. All of their stores were the same from the architect Michael Vyne Treleaven with figures on the facades of local interest or connection but the reasons for the choices are unknown.

Marian Morrison





Poppy's walks

Good day readers and my walk this month is a rather long one, within Lanchester. It took myself and the male Human two hours to complete and included quite a lot of stiles and no small amount of mud! I thought I may as well get those facts established at

the very beginning to warn the more faint-hearted among you. As you will know by now, I am Poppy, a Patterdale terrier who enjoys sharing my walks with you.

We set off from the village green and walked along the by-pass in the direction of the Jet garage, we crossed the main road at the island and walked past said garage, then turned right along Howden Bank.

After a short while we crossed the main road and then turned left at a public footpath sign. This took us over a stile and into a field. We continued walking with St Bede's School across fields on our left and Willowburn also across fields on our right.

We came to a small burn and a gate which was easily opened - and of course closed behind us. This led to another field which we walked until we came to an arrow at a stile on the right. We crossed the stile - which was quite steep but very solid - and walked across a field to another stile. This was quite muddy but again we were able to negotiate it without too much difficulty.

By now we were walking uphill away from Lanchester, and we eventually came to yet another stile which we climbed across. By now the male Human was looking a bit red-faced but I was enjoying the exercise. We kept walking mainly uphill across yet another field and following the occasional arrow to reassure ourselves we were on the right track.

Fortunately, there were no cattle to be seen when we did the walk, because I tend to turn round and beat a hasty retreat in the direction I had travelled from if I see any in the distance. At the end of the field, we came to a very muddy gateway. The male Human contorted his body around the post and sort of edged his way around the gateway without sinking in the mud! Not a pretty sight. But we soon came to another stone stile which we crossed to a place which is known as Elsie's Tree. This brought us onto what is probably best described as a farm track. We joined it by turning right and walked along it in the direction of Tower Road.

But before we reached Tower Road, we turned right along a country path with fields on one side and a wood on the other. As we walked a fawn ran right out in front of us before taking one look at me and sprinting back the way it came. We kept walking through a gate and eventually came out at Maiden Law on the main road.

From there it was a straightforward downhill walk of about a mile and a half back to Lanchester. We could have stopped for refreshments at the Willow Burn Cafe on the way down but the male Human had come out without any money, and as you probably know I never carry cash. While dogs aren't allowed inside the cafe there is a pleasant outdoor area where we are welcome, if we have the wherewithal to pay our way of course!

We arrived home exactly two hours after setting out and it was a very pleasant walk indeed.



I thought it was time we properly introduced ourselves. Lauren and I moved to Lanchester in 2020 with our daughters, Daisy & Penny. We can't imagine living anywhere else (though southern France will always tempt!).

Lanchester has everything we love—community, independence, great schools, beautiful churches, sports, an orchard, and, yes, a few canny pubs! Arguably, more importantly, it has the nicest people! I love how you can't pass a Lanchester face without that warm smile and the obligatory "good morning". It's unique; very special.

When people visit the office and ask what it's like to live here, I can't help but get animated. "You quite simply will not find a better place to live around here... and I'm not just selling, I'm living it!" is what I'll often explode into!

Just this week, I sent the last six editions of The Village Voice to a potential buyer in Wales promoting the village. That's the level of service, passion, and attention you get when you list with Bourne & Co, and why I hope you would trust me with your property when you decide to sell or rent.



Simon Bourne

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Boys' Brigade Report

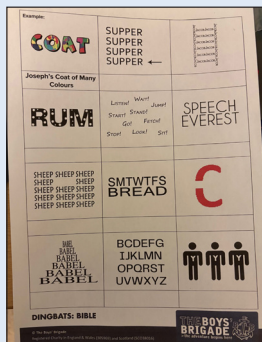
Early in March all the focus was on our badminton team who were, for the second year running, one of two teams representing England in the UK final alongside two teams from both Northern Ireland and Scotland. The team travelled down to Rickmansworth on the Friday evening ready for a full day of matches on the Saturday.

The first rounds of the event saw us drawn in the hardest group where we lost very close matches to both 1st Largs and 1st Ballyclare. We then played 6th Livingstone which we won meaning that we equalled our position from last year finishing in 5th place. The overall winners were 1st Ballyclare from Northern Ireland. Our congratulations to all the boys who represented our company so well: Logan Smallwood, Arnould and Louis Lefoyer, Reuben Temple and Nathan Kendrick.

The competition theme was continued at our Wednesday meeting when the Junior Section took part in the International Games where we completed six games and submitted our results to Boys Brigade HQ to be ranked alongside other companies from around the world who completed the same six games.

Company section took part in the Top Team Challenge, which is a test of skill, teamwork and time management. Six tests, four were against the clock either individual or as a team and two, Capital Cities and Dingbats that could be completed at any time during the 50 minutes that each team were allotted. The results will again be marked by our Boys' Brigade HQ against other companies from the UK. (Results will be announced in next month's Village Voice).

Eric Hepplewhite



Top: L to R Arnould Lefoyer, Reuben Temple, Louis Lefoyer, Nathan Kendrick and Logan Smallwood.
Middle: all the competitors at the event
Above: one of the question papers with Dingbats – answers next month.

Lanchester Vintage Tractor Club Presentation

At their April meeting Peter Suddes presented a cheque for £617 from the Vintage Tractor Club to Paul Jackson, President of Willow Burn Hospice. The members fundraise throughout the year and the proceeds are shared between Willow Burn Hospice and Great North Air Ambulance Service.

Paul did crack a joke about it being an annual event and he thanked the members for their continued support.



Above: Paul Jackson (left) receiving the cheque for Willow Burn Hospice from Peter Suddes chairman of the tractor club.

Friend Request Fright Excerpt

Friend Request Fright is my current WIP – book 5 of my series called Skin Crawlers. Each book is an individual story similar to Goosebumps. Drusilla starts at a new school and gets a friend request from an account on social media named Echo. Below is from chapter 6:

"Maybe we should try and find out more about this Echo? I could try speaking with them and find out who they are?"

Ruby pulled her chair to watch as Drusilla initiated a chat with Echo – "Whoever it is, is online right now!"

Hello? Who is this behind this profile? – Drusilla Holloway

For a while there wasn't a response, but both Drusilla and Ruby could see that whoever it was, had read Drusilla's message.

"Maybe it is someone messing around with you?" Ruby suggested. But then a response came:

I'm a friend. – Echo.

Drusilla and Ruby eyed each other.

Ok, but do I know who you are? How do you know about Lila and The Roses? – Drusilla Holloway.

Again, whoever was behind the profile of Echo had read the message but took a while to reply.

I am a friend. The Roses have had it coming to them. – Echo

"Hmm, whoever it is, seems strange. Do you think I should unfriend them?" Drusilla said.

Just then, the library doors slammed open, making several students jump.

"YOU!" a voice screamed out, breaking the silence of the library.

"Young lady, this is a library! You will not be permitted to enter, shouting and screaming like that!" Mrs. Atkinson, the school librarian, had stepped out of the reception to block whoever was storming in.

Drusilla looked up and saw Lila's face, red and like thunder. Mrs. Atkinson was holding her back as Lila continued to shout out.

"YOU WILL GET WHAT'S COMING TO YOU! WATCH YOUR BACK, DRUSILLA HOLLOWAY! THE ROSES WILL GET YOU! WE WILL GET YOU FOR WHAT YOU DID!" Lila screamed out and repeated before being ejected from the library.

Matthew James' work can be found on Amazon. Search Matthew James books – such as Monstrous Mobiles Book 1 in Skin Crawlers. Friend Request Fright is due to be released at the end of April 2025.

Matthew James



Plans for new affordable homes in Burnhope have been approved

Officials backed proposals for 32 social rent units at Greenwood Avenue in Burnhope, which councillors heard had been "neglected" leading to fly-tipping and anti-social behaviour problems. Conservative Doug Oliver, whose Lanchester ward covers Burnhope, said: "The site on Greenwood Avenue has been neglected in recent years leading to fly-tipping and occasional arson and anti-social behaviour."

"The former housing that needed to be demolished about 15 years ago for structural reasons is still missed by locals."

"By developing the site, it will help address both problems."

Work is expected to start later this year.

Lanchester Parish Council

Notes from the Ordinary Meeting held in Lynwood House on Tuesday 11th March 2025 at 7.00pm

Minutes – Ordinary Meeting 11th February – approved
Police Reports – received. A meeting has been arranged with the new PCSO

Correspondence

Lanchester Partnership – a request to use the Village Green for the annual litter pick was approved

Designated parking for Croft Court Residents

Members discussed a request for more designated parking for Croft Court residents. Members were advised there was a consultation regarding parking coming soon

Local Elections

Councillors have all been given a nomination pack for the upcoming local council elections on 1 May. The clerk has forwarded e-mails to Councillors regarding the elections

Grants / Donations - It was agreed that a donation of £200.00 is made towards the 100th Celebrations of Lanchester WI

Howden Bank – Double yellow lines – The traffic management officer responded to the letter the Parish Council wrote regarding vehicles parked on the grass verge near double yellow lines. She has advised that where parking restrictions apply on roads this does include footpaths and grass verge areas and has requested that the Civil Parking Enforcement Officers carry out some target enforcement. The Parish Council will be updated with any actions going forward.

Forest Development – Members were updated that the development has been approved. A letter to be written to North East Community Forest asking them to answer several questions the Parish Council have.

Solar Planet Walk – Councillors received an update on the project.

VE Day 80 Celebrations – Councillors were updated on the plans for the celebrations.

Grass Cutting 2025 – the price for grass cutting for 2025 was approved.

Financial report – approved.

Accounts for Payment – approved.

April 2025 Wildlife Notes

Continued from page 1

Like so much wildlife, the more you learn about them, the more they reveal themselves to be fascinating creatures. Unlike rabbits, hares don't live in burrows, but rest in 'forms,' which are depressions or dips in the ground or grass. They usually return to the same resting spots, but you could easily pass by without noticing them.



They have a relatively long breeding season, so it's possible to see a young hare, or 'leveret' as they are called, in a frosty field in February or on an early autumn September day. They give birth to smaller litters than rabbits, typically 2-4 leverets, which are born with a full coat of fur and eyes open, unlike rabbits, and are left alone by the mother in different spots, hidden for long periods of time before she returns to suckle them – the aim being to draw less attention from predators. Hares – very unusually for mammals – can conceive again whilst already pregnant, in a process known as superfecundation, meaning they can carry two healthy foetuses of different ages and birth them at different times.

Hares are known for 'boxing' during the breeding season, and it was long assumed that these were males fighting each other, but it's now known to usually be a female 'doe' fighting off a male 'buck' that she doesn't want to breed with – rising up on her back legs and hitting out with her front paws. There has been a big decline in hare numbers, with changes to agricultural practices leading to their habitat loss. Allowing wider field margins – with a greater variety of wild plants growing alongside the field crop – as well as denser hedges, with the plants that grow within and along these hedgerows, helps to provide more food sources and shelter for this interesting creature that shares our countryside with us.

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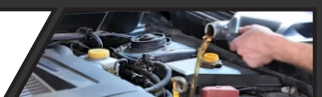
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Lanchester Women's Institute

Lanchester Women's Institute President Marie welcomed 28 members and 6 visitors to the April meeting; she told us about upcoming events and presented flowers to Helen Gardiner and Joan Osborne who had special birthday and wedding celebrations. Lucky raffle winners were Tricia Banister and Judith Collins. Speaker Paul Nash told us about his journey to Jerusalem and back in a Post Office van in 1965 all without the technology we take for granted today. The evening finished with refreshments and a chat with friends.

Tracey Dobson

Police Report

A691 Durham Road, Lanchester speed camera

While the speed cameras were in place 72 drivers triggered the safety camera:

0 drivers fell within our Process Level (Court action)

2 drivers fell within our Conditional offer level (fine and points)

70 drivers fell within our Speed Awareness Course level

Other incidents in the area

01/03/25, Road Traffic Accident at Peth Bank Lanchester, vehicle ended up on its roof; driver swerved to avoid animal in the road, driver was unhurt. Checked over by Ambulance staff.

11/03/25, Greenwell Park two off road bikes 2 males wearing balaclavas and dark clothing, unknown bikes, no number plates. Off road bikes are increasingly an issue. Police are limited on how to resolve this issue as they are not allowed to pursue the bikes or follow in case of accidents. It is still important that the public report these issues, so we can get intelligence of the areas the bikes frequently use, and operations can be organised with other agencies to combat this issue. Any incidents with off road bikes report on 101 or via crime stoppers 0800 555 111.

18/03/25 Lanchester Spar shoplifting theft of £77 worth of meat by someone wearing a white scruffy looking tracksuit with hooded top. Anyone noticing an incident of this type report it to 101 or Crime Stoppers on 0800 555 111.

25/03/25, Jet Petrol Station A691 Lanchester, theft of petrol, car making off without paying, ongoing investigations, anyone with information on this incident please contact 101 or Crime Stoppers on 0800 555 111.

Based on incidents reported by PCSO 30494 Paul Egan, Consett Neighbourhood Police.

Application for landfill plans at Spring Gardens Farm, Howden Bank, approved

The application to "improve" agricultural land using imported soils was approved by Durham County Council despite over 40 objections and no supporting inputs from the community. (Direct quotations below are from the planning report.)

"The application seeks to improve the agricultural land utilising imported soils materials to make it possible to facilitate better agricultural utilisation of the site to provide grazing and haylage for the farmstock. The applicant has confirmed during the course of consideration of the application that the material to be imported would only be soils (topsoil and subsoil)."

Import of inert soils took place prior to submission of the planning application and is the subject of a planning enforcement complaint.

"The applicant has advised that some limited filling took place in the southeastern part of the site in late 2020 under an environmental permit exemption. The applicant has advised he was unaware that planning permission was required, and 827 cubic metres of material had been deposited."

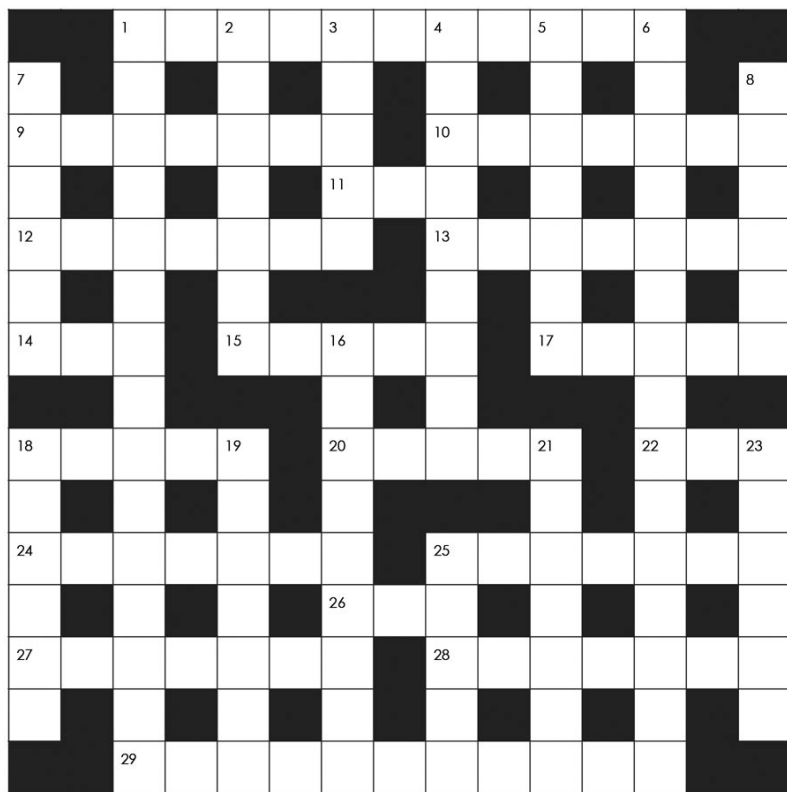
Most of the objections were from residents local to the site primarily concerned about the impact of multiple lorry deliveries on traffic on Howden Bank combined with the nuisance of the site operation. Other comments were that the site only needed improvement as it had been neglected by the current owners for a number of years. There were, however, other comments about damage to the habitat and wildlife by these changes including loss of, and damage to trees, and potential flooding. There were also concerns that the conditions and details of the application should be monitored and enforced given previous non-compliance.

Despite this the application was approved with a number of conditions including: It must be completed within six months with the land graded and seeded by then. Only soil and subsoil should be used on the land fill and that this should be tested prior to being deposited. Hours of operation were Mon-Fri 7:30 to 6pm and Saturday 7:30 to 1pm

There is a subsequent management plan for the land. **Keith Brown**



CLUES CROSSWORD 207



Across

1. Bread dispenser (4,7)
9. Agreement or deal (7)
10. Pilot (7)
11. Variety of lettuce (3)
12. Settle or sort out (7)
13. Like a species which has vanished (7)
14. Target (3)
15. Item of furniture (5)
17. Shout in approval or joy (5)
18. Thing of value (5)
20. Fundamental (5)
22. Lowest cardinal number (3)
24. Name associated with a group of UK universities (7)
25. Type of log holder found in a hearth (7)
26. Hearing organ (3)
27. Looking pale and weak (7)
28. Archaic words of welcome or praise (3,4)
29. Causing great damage (11)

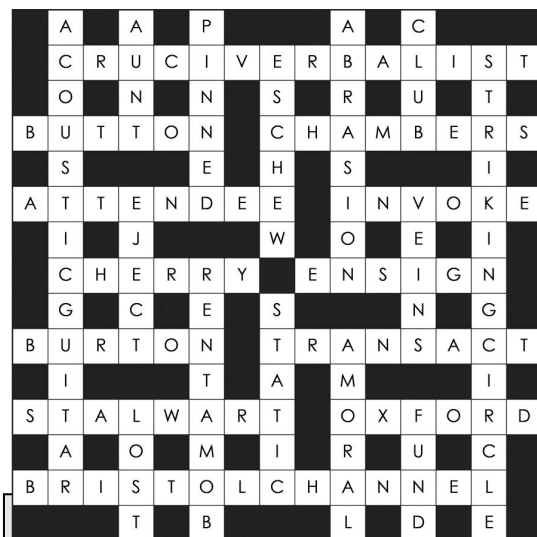
Down

1. Remote Australian territory (9,6)
2. Girl's name meaning 'red' (7)
3. Ground meat (5)
4. Constant and unending (9)
5. Very stupid (7)
6. Statement of Anglo-French agreement and friendship (7,8)
7. Spain and Portugal (6)
8. Bowl shaped cavity (6)
16. Egg shaped vehicle of the 50s and 60s (6,3)
18. Overseas (6)
19. Insulated flask (7)
21. Louis de Bernières' captain (7)
23. Sweep over and surround (6)
25. Bit of old French bread (5)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Please send your completed entries for the £10 prize draw by **Friday 9th May 2025** to the Village Voice, c/o Lanchester Community Centre, Newbiggen Lane, Lanchester, DH7 0HY



Solution crossword 206

There were 15 entries this month of which 13 were correct.

The winner, drawn out of the hat, was Jo Kelly.

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Greencroft Forest plans approved by the Forestry Commission – claimed to be the largest contiguous commercial forest planted in England since the 1980's.

Greencroft Forest Park will house a mixed productive forest comprising 31 different species and 600,000 individual trees on a site roughly equivalent in size to 185 football pitches. Tree planting will begin this winter 2025, with site preparation starting in the summer.

It is claimed that 70,500 tonnes of carbon will be sequestered (captured from the atmosphere), and the forest planting will help mitigate the risk of flooding in the local area by reducing river levels by up to 10%. 37 acres of wet woodland, a declining priority habitat, will be planted around the flood-prone areas of Newhouse and Smallhope Burns in Lanchester.

To create a diverse, productive forest, broadleaf and spruce will be planted. Oak will form the largest percentage of native/naturalised broadleaves, along with birch, willow, hornbeam and others, all planted for their biodiversity gains and future timber use. Sitka spruce, Scots pine and yew will be among the conifer varieties. Sitka Spruce will make up the largest single species in the new forest (approximately 65%); Sitka captures large amounts of carbon from its first day in the ground.

Specialist teams will begin planting saplings individually by hand in November. The forest will be tended and managed, with the first timber yield expected in 2045 and a total of 110,000 tonnes of sustainable homegrown timber produced in the first rotation.

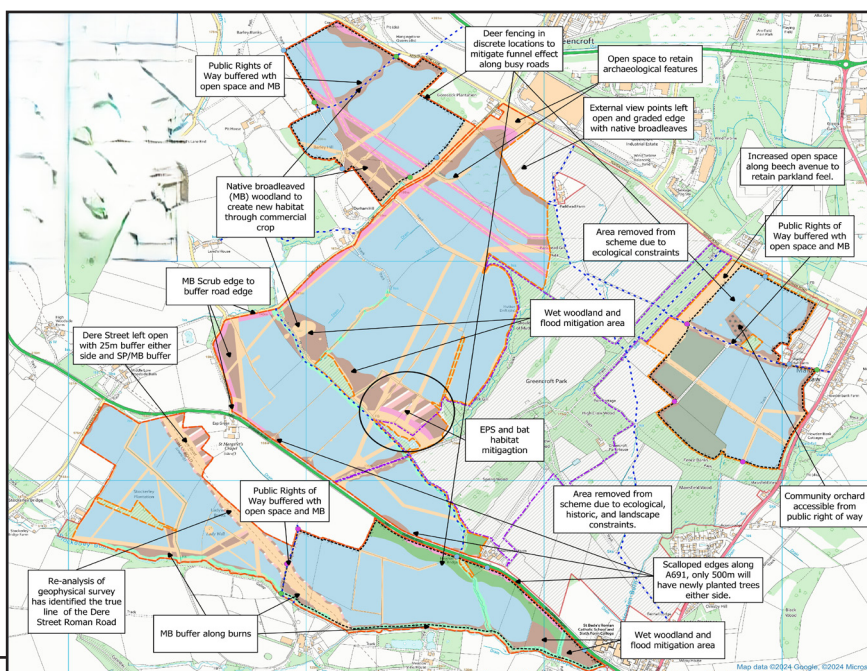
Extensive archaeological surveys undertaken for the project have shown the true route of the Dere Street Roman Road through the Lanchester valley. Public access to this route will be protected with information boards installed. The Roman road will also be treated as a historic monument, with planting designed to integrate the road

sympathetically into the landscape. Walkways will be created between the trees, giving buggy-compliant access to the forest and making a connection across the Lanchester Valley with the county's wider network of cycle paths.

Harry Humble, Chief Executive of True North, the largest afforestation investor in the UK said: "We are delighted that consent has been granted for the Greencroft Forest Park. It is a historic moment for the county. We have invested heavily in understanding the ecology and heritage of the estate and canvassing local opinion. All of this informs the final design that has now been approved.

"We are looking forward to getting the forest planted and delivering something that our neighbours in Lanchester and Annfield Plain can enjoy for decades to come. The massive amount of carbon captured by this project is not being sold for credits, the project is built on its value as a source of commercial timber to help decarbonise the future of the building industry. The project will also greatly enhance public access to the new Greencroft Forest.

"This has been a complex development, and it is reassuring to see the largest commercial afforestation project in England for decades handled so efficiently by the Forestry Commission."



The proposed holiday village development with up to 140 lodges was not included in the forestry application, for which the Forestry Commission has sole jurisdiction, and is subject to planning approval by the local authority. The application is currently with Durham County Council to be considered.

This report has been produced from the press release from True North.

Map showing the overall scheme for the forest. This and many other details can be found on:

<https://www.greencroftforestpark.co.uk/>

Lanchester Social Club

Do you know what we have to offer the community?

Below are a few things which we hope will encourage you to consider us.

Are you looking for a large room you could hire for various activities? Our concert room holds 150 and can be booked for one off celebrations and parties - see photos of a fabulously decorated room for a recent birthday party. Or would you like to run a regular event - we have a Line Dancing group who have a regular booking on the 4th Saturday of each month.

Do get in touch by email on lanchestersocialclub@live.com if you would like to book the room or to request further information.

On the "What's On" page of the Village Voice you will find details of the acts we have coming up over the next month.

We also have a Facebook page - Lanchester Social Club - which you may like to take a look at.

The Club Committee



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City Theatre

'Loot' by Joe Orton will be on at The City Theatre, Back Silver Street, Fowlers Yard, Durham DH1 3 RA, from Sunday 29th June till Saturday 5th July. 'When Hal robs a bank and hides the money in his mother's coffin what could go wrong? Why should his mother's nurse get involved and is the man from the water board who he says he is? Mr McLeavy, the grieving husband, tries to make sense of it all, but one outrageous development follows another'. (This play is a Black Comedy and reflects the attitudes and humour of the 1960's). Tickets from Durham Gala on 03000266600 or www.durhamcitytheatre.co.uk. Tickets £9.50. Concessions £8.50 Sun/ Mon/ Tues. Performances 2.30 pm Sun and Sat, 7.30 pm Mon- Fri.

Kings Head Socials

Join us on our coffee socials to meet like-minded people for coffee, cake & a chat. No need to book, just come along. Parents & Carers after the School Run - Wednesday 9-10:30 Seniors Over 60's - Wednesday 10:30-12 Parents of Babies & Toddlers - Thursday 10:30-12

Acappella Choir (singing without musical accompaniment)

This is held in the Chapter House of All Saints church every Monday between 10.30 and 12. New members are always welcome. No previous choir experience necessary. We sing a wide variety of songs, lead by Sheila Trow, and are open to both men and women.

Willow Burn:

Nurses' Spring Fair
10 May, 11am – 2pm, Willow Burn Hospice
Free entry for everyone, come along and join in the fun. The Willows Café will be offering some fantastic goodies as will the Potting Shed and there will be a Spring Raffle, tombolas, fun and games for all, plus hand massages from Willow Burn's complementary therapist, Sue. We will have some adorable little guests for visitors to cuddle, ice creams courtesy of Iced Dreams and our lovely newest recruit, Will O'Burn will be around for your selfies and high fives! We look forward to welcoming you and would kindly ask, if you do intend to come to our fair, please be respectful

of our neighbours at Maiden View as parking is limited at the hospice. All proceeds from the fair will go to fund the vital services provided by the Willow Burn Nursing and Care Team.

Walk for Wellbeing

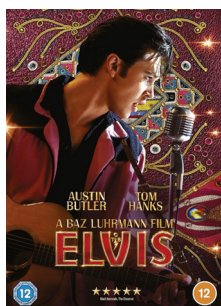
1 June at 10am, Lanchester Village Green
Following the success of the hospice's first 'Walk for Wellbeing' this second family friendly walk, led by Noel Harrison of Move Durham, is a 4.5 mile walk on a fairly flat route (but please note it will include some hills and stiles). Registration fee: £5.00 per adult, £2.50 per child, dogs free. Fundraising is welcome but not compulsory. Sign up with Ali English at: aenglish@willowburnhospice.org.uk / 01207 529 224 / www.willowburnhospice.org.uk/our-events

Thursday Club

The next meeting is at 1.30pm on Thursday 15th May in the Community Centre. Weardale railways are coming to give us a talk about their enterprise in the Weardale valley.

Paradiso Social Club

Sunday 11th May 2025 (note earlier start time below) : ELVIS
"With electrifying performances from Austin Butler as Elvis and Tom Hanks as Colonel Parker, Baz Luhrmann's whirlwind biopic is cinematic dynamite" (Mark Kermode in the Guardian). This biographical music drama chronicles the life of American music icon Elvis Presley, from his childhood to becoming a rock and movie star in the 1950s while maintaining a complex relationship with his manager, Colonel Tom Parker.
THIS FILM IS 160 MINS long.
Lanchester Community Centre, 6:45pm refreshments and raffle. Film starts at 7.00pm (with a short intermission). Finish



about 9.50pm. Members: £4, Non-members: £5. Annual membership: £5

Lanchester Library

Library Book Club

On Monday May 19th at 2.30 to 3.30pm, the group will be discussing 'The Paris Apartment' by Lucy Foley, a gripping murder mystery, 'twisty and mysterious and surprising' (a reviewer on Amazon). Will you be gripped? Will the group have divided opinions, time will tell. You never know what topic will emerge in our discussions!

Thursday Book Club

On Thursday May 16th from 4.00-5.00pm, this group will be discussing 'Blood Orange' by Harriet Tyce. A tricky murder case and a conflicted female barrister. 'Complex and menacing, this is a very impressive debut' (Alison Flood, Observer). Will you enjoy this thriller? If you would like to join this group, pop into the library and speak to the librarians.

Pins and Needles will meet up on April 3rd from 10-11.30am. Bring along your wool, thread, needles and patterns and share your makes and get advice too. Do you like knitting, crocheting? Everyone is welcome, enjoy.

Scrabble Group meets the 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month from 1.30pm to 3.30 pm. Do you enjoy this word game and want to get on the Triple Word Square? Come along and enjoy the company.
Rummikub Group meets on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month from 1.30 to 3.30pm. A great strategic but simple game with tiles that are always changing. It is a very enjoyable game
Children's crafts are available every afternoon and Saturday. Different crafts, ideas and materials are set out in the library for children to be creative, pop along with your children and enjoy.

Lanchester Methodist Church Coffee Mornings

Coffee mornings are held every Saturday at the Methodist Church between 10 and 12. If you would like to organise a coffee morning for your organisation, please contact Judith Brown on 521898.

Wellbeing walk

Every Monday at 1pm on the village green next to the war memorial. Walk lasts up to 90 minutes, all welcome. Just turn up before 1pm and introduce yourself to a leader. www.durham.gov.uk/walkdurham or call 03000 262539.

Playgroup

Every Friday at 9:30 at Croft View Halls. Find us on Facebook, 'Lanchester's new playgroup'.

The Lanchester Community Orchard Work Sessions

We meet regularly to maintain and care for the orchard. Come and join us to find out more and help look after the trees. There are jobs for all ages and we always stop for coffee! New members are always welcome. For all our work session dates please visit the What's On page of our website lanchesterorchard.org

Lanchester Hiking Group

Meets at 10am every second Wednesday. Walks are about 5 miles long within a 30 minute radius of Lanchester – lifts provided. For further details please call Helen Thomas on 07712425623 (or email hdbthomas@live.com).

Lunch Club (Cuppa and Company)

The next meeting of the lunch club held at Lynwood House will be Tuesday 13th May 2025, 12 pm start, all welcome.

Monday Art Group

We are a small friendly group who enjoy painting and drawing, and come together to learn, and give each other support in making art. We meet each Monday in the Community Centre from 10.00am to 12pm with an occasional demonstration by visiting artists or our own members. New members are most welcome. Contact tojimrafferty@yahoo.com if you would like further information.

Wildlife group

The next meeting will be an introduction to beetles (the insects!) by Ed Hardy. His talk is entitled "Beetles for Beginners". It will be on Tuesday 13th May at 7:30pm. Please be prompt due to the security system.

Vintage Tractor Club

Meets on the first Wednesday of every month at 7:30pm in Lanchester Social Club.

Flower Club

Our next meeting is Wednesday 28th May in Lanchester Community Centre at 1.30 pm. The demonstrator will be Wendy Smith, her theme, 'Rings and Things'.

Lanchester Partnership Friends of Longovicium

At the time of going to press, no meeting has been planned for May.

Information on the Friends and our work may be obtained from Mrs. M. Williams, tel: 01207 520063 or from Rodney Hawkins email at hawkins_15@sky.com. Our website provides details of our work and investigations to date, see www.longoviciumcoulk.wordpress.com (note there is no dot between coul and k). You can also find us on Facebook Friends of Longovicium where we have up-to-date information if available.

Social Club

3rd May BILLY IRVINE
10th May MICHELLE B
17th May TONY MONTANA
24th May RHIAN LESLIE
31st May DARRYL TODD

WI

The next meeting is on Monday 12th May at 7.00 pm in the Community Centre. Entertainment for the evening is 'Old English' with songs of the North East. Visitors are always welcome to join us, if you would like more information contact lanchesterwi@talktalk.net.

Scottish Dance

Scottish dancing takes place every Friday 7.30 to 9.30 in the community centre and complete beginners are very welcome, contact Elizabeth Grayson on 0191 384 4836 for more information.

Local History

Our next meeting will be Friday 2nd May with Dave Shotton filling us in on 'Who stole the treasures of Saint Cuthbert?' Then on 6th June Graham Soult, the retail expert who explored shop fronts with us last year is talking on 'Details and Detours: Architecture and Landscape', equally retail based. We start at 7.00 in room 3 at the community centre but ask you to arrive early to avoid the challenges of the security system. Everyone is welcome to come along.

Art Group Coffee Morning

Lanchester Art Group are hosting a Coffee Morning in the Methodist Church on Saturday May 3rd between 10 -12. All are welcome.

All Saints Catholic Church concert

All Saints Catholic Church will be the venue for a music concert by Langley Park Gospel choir and Harp group on Sunday 11th May at 5

pm. Free entrance, everyone welcome. Please come along and join us.

Riverside Musical Theatre Company

Riverside Musical Theatre Company will perform Disney's Beauty and the Beast at Park View Community Theatre in Chester le Street, from 14th to 17th May. This enchanting production promises to be a delightful experience for all ages, with spectacular performances, stunning sets and costumes, and unforgettable music. To book and secure your tickets, please contact our ticket secretary on 07846992611 or email rmtc2018@outlook.com.

Local History

Our next meeting will be Friday 2nd May with Dave Shotton filling us in on 'Who stole the treasures of Saint Cuthbert?' Then on 6th June Graham Soult, the retail expert who explored shop fronts with us last year is talking on 'Details and Detours: Architecture and Landscape', equally retail based. We start at 7.00 in room 3 at the community centre but ask you to arrive early to avoid the challenges of the security system. Everyone is welcome to come along.

Ladies who lunch

Last time out saw us in Shotley Bridge lunching at Sale Pepe, sister restaurant to the Owl and Otter and also Sorella Sorella. One definite downside is no immediate parking - you have to be able to walk, once you've located a suitable parking spot!

However, once inside it is quite a delightful venue with a lovely and very efficient, front of house waitress. We were soon settled in and perusing both the fixed price menu - 2 courses for £13 and 3 courses for £16 as well as the main menu.

And not very long after that - we were enjoying eating for starters Caprese - a tower of fresh tomatoes and mozzarella with a basil and olive oil dressing and tomato and basil soup with bread. Mains were fillet of salmon with green vegetables, mash with spring onions, spinach and pesto and creamy sauce; pollo picante - chicken breast, spicy Nduja sausage, spicy salami and mozzarella in a Napoli sauce with a choice of side order; gamberoni al crema - prawns, lemon zest, spinach and white wine in a creamy sauce served with rice and a side order; braised beef feather blade with mash, seasonal veg and beef jus. Desserts were tiramisu; chocolate fudge cake served with ice cream; raspberry pavlova.

It is a lovely Italian restaurant with food, as one of our members said, 'to die for'. We had a really good lunch. And then - if walking wasn't too much of a problem, just down the road was retail therapy in the form of a super clothes shop.

Back to the car with full tums and bags of shopping - what more could a girl want?

Providing the legs keep on working we will be back.

The Gourmet Girls



Lanchester Partnership Friends of Longovicium

After a long winter lay-off the Friends held their first meeting of the year on March 27th. The main item for discussion was the possibility of applying for a Lottery Heritage Fund Grant and for what purpose we could use it. Various projects were proposed, from small-scale signage in the village to excavation and publishing of a nearby archaeological site. This is a very long-term procedure but should eventually prove of worth to the village.

The past work of the Friends can be found on our website www.longoviciumcouk.wordpress.com (note no dot in couk) and recent images can be seen on Facebook.

There is currently an excellent drone video showing the area of the fort and a close-up of the surviving walls. Further information on the Friends can be obtained from Mrs. M. Williams, 01207 520063, or from Rodney Hawkins at hawkins_15@sky.com. Our next meeting will be on Thursday 24th April 7.30pm in the Community Centre.



Community Centre News



Here is your latest news from your Community Centre

Are you aware that the Community Centre is a self-funded charity? Here is an idea of one of the easiest ways you can help: Sign up to easyfundraising.org.uk

Have a look at the website, by either logging in

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/lanchestercc> or scan the QR code shown.

This is a website and an app, which will donate money to the Centre when you shop. The site has over 8,000 partners (with businesses such as eBay, Amazon, M&S, etc). All you do is register, select the Community Centre as your nominated charity, then shop as you usually would. Shopping this way through the website or app does not cost you any extra at all, but it does help us enormously!

Room Hire:

Are you planning a family event or business function? We have 2 amazing large halls to hire from as little as £15.20 per hour, 2 small meeting rooms from £9.70 per hour, a conference room and a larger meeting room. We are a great place to hold parties and any type of business or social functions.

The office is staffed Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9am-1.15pm. On Tuesday and Thursdays, it's 9am-3pm. If you have any enquiries about any of the activities or clubs available or you want to know more about hiring our brilliant venue, please get in touch on 01207 521275 or drop in and have a chat. It will be good to meet you!

To keep up to date with what's going on check out our Information Point; follow us on Facebook 'Lanchester Community Centre' or check out our website - <https://lanchestercc.co.uk/> or scan the QR code for our website.

Marie Murphy

Lanchester Medical Centre: Patient Participation Group Staying Safe

Everyone has a right to live safely. Staying safe at home, in the community, on social media, in work or in care, is part of our daily lives. Sometimes you or someone you know may be in need of support to keep themselves safe.

Abuse and neglect can happen anywhere and to anyone. Some types of abuse include physical, financial, domestic abuse and neglect. Anyone can abuse. It is not always easy to spot the signs of abuse or neglect.

Helping to keep vulnerable adults safe from abuse and neglect is known as 'safeguarding'. This means preventing abuse and neglect from happening and protecting people when it has happened. The Durham Safeguarding Adults Partnership oversees how well agencies prevent and protect people from abuse and neglect.

It helps communities and public, private and voluntary sector agencies to recognise abuse. If abuse or neglect is happening, it helps to know what you can do about it.

If you are worried about an adult, a relative or a friend or feel that they may need support to keep safe you can report it to Adult Social Care on 03000 267979. A trained officer

will listen to your concerns, give advice and explain what might happen. In an emergency dial 999. You can find out more at the Durham Safeguarding Adults Partnership website <https://www.safeguardingdurhamadults.info/article/18047/Reporting-abuse>



Ravello's Deli Opens

Brilliant spring sunshine greeted the opening of the new Ravello delicatessen with many customers able to eat outside continental style!

We wish them well with their new venture.



Cricket Round up

As you read this, the cricket season will have started! Recruitment during the winter months saw several new faces arrive at the Club. Former Durham Academy all rounder Jamie Dass arrived from Willington, John Meadows another all rounder came from Consett and Jordan Grosert was recruited from Brandon. A familiar face returned to the Club when Darren Wingfield, son of treasurer Jeff Wingfield, returned after a four year gap. Darren or DJ as he is known came through the ranks of the Club and returns to become second team captain. 21-year-old South African, Reuben Du Toit was a late recruit as a batter. He was picked up by an unusual means through Instagram when Stu McPhail realised he was a Toon fan and lured him with the prospect of getting him into Newcastle matches!

April 5th saw the ground and the Clubhouse get spruced up ready for the new season in what is now known nationally as 'Get set weekend'. Members both playing and social came along to carry out a number of tasks ranging from cleaning out the changing rooms, cleaning the outside benches or painting duties. Neil Graham and Hannah McPhail kept the workers happy by providing some bacon or sausage sandwiches. The Club continued the togetherness going into the evening with a quiz, bingo and karaoke that everyone could join in with.

All Stars is open for parents to sign up their children. It has unfortunately increased in price, something which the Club has no control over, as the bookings are made with the ECB. We start on Friday 16th May and there are 8 sessions. We miss out the Friday in the half term. They start at 5pm and we will do our best to have a food vendor on site as well as the bar being open.

Andrew McConnell

Photos: "Get set weekend".



PARTNERSHIP REVIEW

TIME FOR A SPRING CLEAN!

It's the season for spring cleaning. Readers can help us with the process of creating a bright, refreshed Partnership ready for the future!

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONNAIRES

We'd like to thank everyone who took the time to complete the questionnaires which were distributed in a cold and bleak January and February. Trustees have now looked at these so they can pick out common themes for further investigation.

In general, respondents hold the Partnership in good esteem and value its work. They picked out a number of projects and activities which they had appreciated since our foundation 25 years ago. These included the youth club, work on flood mitigation, the village link bus, our lovely award-winning Community Orchard, many memorable community social events and action to improve the knowledge of Longovicium.

A common theme was the sense of community cohesion brought about by volunteering around common themes – important to the community as a whole. A good example would be the Village Litter Pick – which was, as always, very well supported this year. Covid support activities including a shopping service and the distribution of food parcels were also mentioned.

Respondents were particularly appreciative of activities which engage people from a mixture of age groups and all sections of the community – such as the Family Fun Run and Jubilee Picnic.

FURTHER THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

Concerns included:

Difficulty in recruiting volunteers and trustees as people have longer working and busier lives

The need to engage better with younger people

Lack of clarity about the mutually supportive roles of the Partnership, the Parish Council and the Community Association

Some people also mentioned that conversion from our current status as a Charitable Company into a Charitable Incorporated Organisation might be a good development at this stage.

DROP IN AND GET INVOLVED WITH THE DISCUSSION

We'd now like to dig under the surface and will be holding focussed discussions with individuals and groups around the patch. To assist with these we're also organising an open drop-in consultation session:

Partnership Consultation Drop-in

11.00am to 1.00pm

Lanchester Community Centre

Saturday 17th May

All Welcome

Henry Edwards



The Lanchester Partnership

Lanchester Spring Clean in Numbers

Thank you to everyone who made the Lanchester Spring Clean such a success this year. It was a bright and cheerful day, the village green crocuses were in full bloom and the villager volunteers were out in force.

Here's a summary of the event in numbers!!

42 bags of rubbish collected

11 bags of recycling sorted by our very own Bin Rat, Kath Ivens (her words not mine)

12 empty beer bottles, washed, neatly packaged and dumped in the hedge for someone else to pick up.

6 roadside signs erected and collected by Henry Edwards

68 keen, hardworking volunteers picking throughout the morning. (A record number I believe)

5 bags of rubbish collected by Dennis and Jane Laycock from Peth bank on Friday because they couldn't attend on Saturday. That's dedication for you.

21 children who stayed the course and did a sterling job.

335 cigarette ends collected from the bus stop and the back of the front street shops by Jennifer Guy. She promises to continue her visits to the proprietors and ask them to provide an empty suitable repositories for any staff who smoke at the back of the shops.

5 members of the environment group who organised and ran the session or helped pick.

1 County Councillor, Doug Oliver, who always lends a hand and promised to chase up the issue of excessive rubbish on the roads leading out of the village particularly along Ford Road.

8 used vapes that were recycled in the library. Do we need more vape recycling facilities in the village to keep these dangerous items out of landfill?

2 helpful springer spaniels Ella and Ruby who retrieved empty bottles and cans from the bankside inaccessible to their handler.

1 Paul Emerson who single handedly collected 5 large bags of rubbish along the A691 west of St Bedes. What a star!

48 breakfast butties supplied free of charge, for our volunteers, by Stuart and his volunteers at the Community Cafe. A very big thank you Stuart.

39 gin and wine bottles from under one bush near the line, found by Michael Martin and his delightful daughters.

1 Lanchester village that is spruced up ready for spring.

How good it is to be part of a village where so many of its members are keen to keep it looking good. Thank you to everyone.

The Spring Clean is organised by the Environment Group which is part of the Lanchester Partnership. If you'd like to become involved our email is: contact@lanchesterpartnership.org.uk

Sonny Shepherd

Below: 1 Yet more young happy helpers, off to claim their free butties!

2 Austin and Amber, two experienced litter-picking children equipped with their own pickers.

3 New Lanchester residents with their dog, ready to lend a hand.

4 - 12 bottles cleaned, packaged and dumped at the roadside.

5 Lily, Lara and Paddy with their respective parents, ready for the task ahead

6 Ella and Ruby our bottle retrieving Spaniels.



1



2



3



4



5



6

Lanchester Endowed Parochial School

Life in our school has been quite full on for the last 6 weeks. Academic work obviously takes place all the time and our children work hard on a daily basis. However, this is supplemented with a rich diet of enrichment activities across the year and for all year groups.

I am sure many of you will have heard about the interesting end to our week in Dubai with 8 pupils. We all enjoyed a fabulous week there, spending time in two partner schools whilst also enjoying a desert safari, a trip to the Grand Mosque in Abu Dhabi, visiting the souks and a boat trip in an Abra on the creek. We also enjoyed a wonderful final day in the waterpark where the children spotted Ederson and even had their photo taken with him (Manchester City goalkeeper for those non-footballers!).

Unfortunately, we were caught up in the Heathrow Airport closure on Friday 21st March as our flight was due to depart at 10am on the very day the airport was closed all day! After waiting in the airport for almost 6 hours, we were told to leave and were put up in a superb 5* hotel for the evening. We weren't 'stranded' like the newspapers made out – we were, in fact, living it up in the lap of luxury! I was interviewed for BBC Breakfast News and the children for Newsround – all a very interesting experience.

However, what we omitted to mention was the spectacular fall I had in the airport trying to step over a suitcase. Unfortunately, as I stepped over a case, my foot slipped on something and my leg just kept going, leaving the rest of my body behind. As one of our Year 6 girls said, 'Mrs Davis really did do the splits you know!' I ended up in a wheelchair for the next 24 hours, adding to the adventure for the children - who were so exceptionally caring and considerate. It didn't prevent us making the most of the amazing hotel though, but we were all relieved when we managed to book onto flights the following day to Glasgow.

Our international trips are obviously just fated – that is the third in a row delayed by more than 24 hours with visits to Montreal and India also delayed by 24 hours or more on the inbound journey. However, our children take it in their stride, showing amazing resilience and just getting on with it all – something many adults could learn from too!

The beginning of April saw Year 3 heading off for their first residential when each class spent a night at the Roman Fort of Birdoswald. The weather could not have been any better for them and they all had a wonderful time, sleeping exceptionally well! Year 4 also had amazing weather and spent a night at Seahouses Hostel, visiting Alnwick Gardens and Alnwick Castle over the two days. These residential are wonderful experiences for the children and help to develop their independence, confidence and resilience which does help prepare them for the week-long visits halfway round the world in Year 5 and Year 6!

Meanwhile, our Early Years children had a visit from the Fire Brigade and a tractor and some lambs from some of our parents who are also farmers. Needless to say, they loved it!

Year 1 enjoyed a visit to Newcastle, exploring the city for their 'Bright Lights, Big City' topic while Year 2 have been to Whitehouse Farm to bring their topic of 'Scrumdiddlyumptious' to life. There is never a dull moment in our school with something different happening every week. We are really looking forward to welcoming some children and staff from our partner school in Delhi from Tuesday 20th May. They will be joining us in school and taking part in our lessons whilst also exploring some of the village too. If you see us out and about, please say hello! We have told them all about our wonderful, friendly village of Lanchester!

**Mrs Jane Davis,
Head Teacher**



Right: Mr Adamson looking after Mrs Davis whilst in Dubai



Left: In awe of the Burj Kalifa, Dubai



Above: A trip to the desert in Dubai



Above: The children were thrilled to meet Ederson at Wild Wadi Water Park in Dubai



Above: Year 3 enjoying a march along the Roman Wall



Above: Mr Taylor's Y4 Class enjoying some downtime on Beadnell Beach with Woody, our school dog, on his first residential.



Above: Mr Adamson's Y4 Class on the beach before driving to Alnwick Castle



Above: Year 3 listening intently to a Roman Soldier at Birdoswald Roman Fort

St Bede's Catholic School and Sixth Form College

Carlo Acutis Relic Event at St Bede's

Carlo Acutis, a London-born teenager, is on the path to becoming the first saint of the millennial generation. Born in 1991 and growing up in Milan, Italy, Acutis passed away in 2006 at the age of 15 due to leukaemia. His life, though short, was marked by a profound faith and a passion for technology, which he used to spread the teachings of the Catholic Church. Carlo had great devotion to the Eucharist, and he created a website documenting Eucharistic miracles.

He was passionate about caring for others, particularly the vulnerable, and in school he stood up for people who were bullied. He famously encouraged all his friends to embrace their uniqueness, urging them to be 'originals not photocopies'. His dedication to faith and skill with technology earned him recognition within the Catholic community and beyond.

Pope Francis has formally recognised two miracles attributed to Carlo, paving the way for his canonisation as a saint in April 2025. He will be the first millennial saint, a testament to his enduring impact and the inspiration he continues to provide to young people. This is why he is chosen as the patron of Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust. On Thursday 27th March, St Bede's hosted the relic of Carlo Acutis which involved a talk, celebration of the word and veneration of the relic of Blessed Carlo Acutis.

The visit of Blessed Carlo's relic was a truly special opportunity to be close to him and to benefit from learning from his actions in life.

We were joined by students from 38 primary schools, members of the Trust, Governors,

Fr Marc Lydon Smith, Fr Tom McHale as well as Monsignor Antonio and stewards who protect the relic.

The event was livestreamed across all Trust and Diocesan schools.

Our choir, musicians and readers performed brilliantly at the event; the choir performance was so good some visitors thought the singing was a recording!

The feedback received from visitors about our site team, staff and particularly students was wonderful. Indeed, the event was a showcase of everything that makes St Bede's such a special community, well done to all involved!

St Bede's Fundraising for Lent - Lenten Fundraising

Sponsored Fun Runs: St Bede's students have been working really hard over the last fortnight completing the sponsored fun runs in aid of the Children's Heart Unit Fund (CHUF) and St. Vincent de Paul Society (SVP). Students have completed 3574km (passing Athens!), smashing our 3000km target with more laps still to be added to the final total. We have raised £2064 so far so we are getting closer to our £3000 target.

Please continue to send any sponsorship to St Bede's Catholic School & Sixth Form College or you can use this QR code.

St Bede's Sixth Form – Applications still open, don't delay, apply now!

Catherine Hammell, Head Teacher



St Bede's students, Fr Marc Lydon Smith and Monsignor Antonio with the relic of Blessed Carlo Acutis.

St Bede's Sixth Form Admissions



Lanchester All Saints' Catholic Primary School

We have had a wonderful end to our term and are all looking forward to a well-deserved Easter holiday. During Lent, we are called to pray more, give something up (or do something extra) and give alms. We have made ourselves proud as a family of All Saints' and over the course of Lent, we have raised a MASSIVE £825.50 for CAFOD.

Our Year Six House Captains of St. Hilde organised an assault course which raised money at the beginning of Lent and then, our whole school, including lots of families, joined together for a one hour walk to raise money! We come together as Christians, people of no faith and of other faiths to support the most vulnerable in our society and work together to serve others...as one big community.

This half term in Nursery, we have enjoyed helping mammy duck by searching for ducklings in the outdoor classroom. Reception have been studying the life cycles of both frogs and butterflies and have enjoyed watching the tadpoles and caterpillars in the classroom.

Year One have loved designing and building castles and Year Two were fascinated by our old school logbooks and the chance to learn about the children who attended All Saints' in the past.

Year Three have loved designing and making their own sandwiches and eating them outside to enjoy the glorious weather we have been having.

Year Four have been exploring the habitats of invertebrates and searching for them within our school grounds. We waved goodbye to Year Five as they are off on their residential to Berwick this week. They are so excited to spend time together exploring Holy Island, the Northumberland coast and taking part in outdoor activities.

Finally, Year Six have created their own musical compositions which we practised outside, making the most of our lovely outdoor space.

At the end of our Lenten Walk, everyone received an ice cream as a thank you for the hard work that was shown during our recent Ofsted inspection. Earlier in April, we were able to demonstrate to inspectors the exceptional learning, fantastic behaviour and wonderful community that we cherish and maintain here at All Saints'. We are looking forward to sharing our report with you all soon. That is the second inspection we have had within a few months, and we are so proud of our school.

What a fantastic way to end our spring term and head into Easter. With the sun shining and smiles on our faces, we're ready to have a fun-filled summer!

Frances Stephenson, Head Teacher



Top: Big Lent walk
Middle: Ice cream in the sun
Bottom: Torch lit walk in Berwick

Lanchester Bowling Club - Forty Years a Bowler

This year our club will be forty-four years old. Unfortunately, none of the founder players are still members, but Peter Harrison comes close to it. Although not the oldest member of our club, Peter is the longest serving, having joined in 1984. This means that Peter has been representing Lanchester for forty years.

As most players today don't start playing until they retire, this is a tremendous achievement; I'd have to be over a hundred to achieve such a goal!

Peter is actually from Ferryhill, but his wife Jean is from Lanchester, and they bought their first house together in the village in 1966. Peter was an engineer in the Royal Navy at the time. Upon leaving the Navy after twenty-five years service, Peter obtained an HGV licence but never used it; instead, he became an engineer on the North Sea oil rigs.

The work schedule on the rigs enabled Peter to spend a block of time at home to enjoy his golf and, eventually, to join the bowling club where his friends, and golf partners, Dickie Ball and Stan Easten were already members. Working away from home in blocks, however, did mean that he sometimes missed chunks of the season. When he was fifty, Peter was offered a redundancy package he couldn't refuse and took early retirement which enabled him to spend more time on the golf course, to play bowls and to do his woodwork. He was a member of the club when the pavilion roof collapsed in 2010 and was given permission to remove the cedar wood the building was made of. From this he used his woodworking skills to construct a couple of garden sheds and a playhouse for his daughters.

He was also a member when the nearby school had to be used for toilet facilities, but this wasn't unusual. Peter remembers once playing at Barnard Castle where they had to use the facilities in Bowes Museum of all places.

Other memorable games Peter recalls include one in a County competition in Gateshead where he, Dickie and Stan were 18-3 up but went on to lose 21-18!

During his time, he has won the club doubles competition with Dickie Ball and a now defunct club competition requiring players to play a best of three mini game to seven shots. He was also a member of the team who won the league cup.

Although he has played lead and skip, Peter prefers to play at three where he says he can most influence the game. He now frequently plays with Mike Stoddart who was in the merchant navy, and they can often be heard bantering about life at sea. Two years ago, Peter injured his shoulder and missed most of the season, but this was a mere inconvenience to a man who has had heart bypass surgery in the past. Last year, however, a slimmer Peter managed to play more frequently. Although he's given up his golf, he still

enjoys the social side of his bowls as well as the competitive side of the game.

Like us all, Peter enjoys winning and is looking forward to the new season.

Here's to a successful forty-first year.

Bob Cuthbertson



Tennis News

We couldn't have wished for better weather for our maintenance weekend that took place on the 12th and 13th of April. Volunteers, club members and their families turned out to clean/cut/paint and line the courts in readiness for the new season, and they look great!

Because of the lovely weather we've been having recently we were also able to open up the club for the new season a week early! So play has officially started, and what a joy it is to be spending these warm spring days hitting a tennis ball in the company of such friendly players.

If you'd like to join us here at LLTC as a member, or join our coaching programme, please find the details on our website (*we have a reduced membership fee for new members this year!*).

www.lanchesterlawntennisclub.co.uk

Our Big Tennis Weekend, will take place on Saturday 10th May - 1pm - 4pm, don't miss a chance to pick up a racket and play tennis, it's all about having a go, we provide rackets and tennis balls, so anyone can come along and play...it's suitable for all the family, it's fun, and it's free!

Activities include; Tennis Factory for younger children, Mini Tennis, with smaller courts, nets and racquets, Cardio Tennis, hitting tennis balls to music for a cardio workout, Ball machine, practice ground strokes, test your consistency hitting tennis balls, Free Play and Family Time, play short doubles or singles matches, and of course there will be light refreshments available.

For further details:

www.lanchesterlawntennisclub.co.uk

FREE COACHING

As mentioned in last month's tennis report, LLTC were successful in securing some funding for additional coaching.

This FREE coaching will take place on Friday 23rd May for 5 weeks, we will be providing two sessions, 2-3pm and 3-4pm each week.

If you would like to try tennis, or even improve your game, please register your interest by emailing:

lanchestertennis@gmail.com

There'll be refreshments available too!

