

The Link



April 2020



The animals are back on the Felts...

The United Benefice of LORTON and
LOWESWATER with BUTTERMERE

Letter from the Editor

Dear Link readers,

Well these are strange and challenging times and the Link has quite a different feel this month. There are many references to the Coronavirus outbreak and items aimed specifically at helping us to cope in a difficult situation. The church is always there to give support and this is covered in the Vicar's Letter. The Melbreak Community Emergency Committee covers how we can all keep in touch and offer help, while Lorton Village Shop can provide a delivery service. We have an update from the 1st Responders on the support they can provide and finally, on pages 20 and 21 a piece that will make us all stop and think.

Unfortunately in the current circumstances virtually all village activities have been postponed for the foreseeable future, as follows:

- All church services
- Indoor bowls
- Table Tennis
- Keep fit (exercise sheets are available from vebell2911@gmail.com)
- Community lunches
- Lorton WI
- Melbreak Coffee and Cakes
- Ullock Village Hall events
- Loweswater Ladies

- Loweswater 77 Club
- Lorton Vale Gardening Club (including Summer garden visits)
- Film nights
- Mockerkin Mob walks
- Remaining Lent lunches
- Youth Cafe
- Lorton and Derwent Fells Local History Society
- Arts Society Cumbria
- **The John Denver Concert scheduled for 12th June**

On a more positive note you will see elsewhere that we are setting up a lending library in Lorton church - a few new books will be very welcome, and as mentioned in Sandra's letter, all the Churches will remain open for prayer and comfort.

Finally a plea from your Editor, re-iterated both in the W.I Report and the Deadline Notice. We will need plenty of copy for the next few months so do please send in any interesting stories, poems, pictures, letters, recipes etc to the usual email.

Happy social distancing and keep washing those hands

Rosemary
07885 360353

In tribute to Alan Johnson, our front cover is a reproduction of one he created for April 2002.



Dear friends,

What a difference a month makes. As I am writing this letter in the middle of March I know that much will have happened by the time you read this in April. Coronavirus/COVID-19 has already changed our lives and will do so in the future. It is an evolving situation and day by day we are given further guidance or advice. Naturally we are concerned about our future and health but also anxious for our family and friends who may be in the elderly or vulnerable category.

As I write this the services at Churches have been suspended for the foreseeable future. On the advice of the Bishop and Archbishops. There are also restrictions on larger social gatherings such as weddings and funerals. As we must suspend services a notice has been placed on each of the Church doors. However, please do come into Church as they will all be open for quiet reflection or prayer. We will try and say private daily prayer in

each Church a few times a week. Bibles and prayer cards will be available and if you wish to take the prayer cards home with you to pray at home please do so. There are online prayer apps. available e.g. 'Time to Pray' and 'Daily Prayer' (both Church House Publishing apps.) or the Church of England web site has Prayer for the Day and other resources for prayer – especially during Lent and Holy Week. All of these follow the Lectionary. Also, the Radio has the Daily Service and Sunday Worship. If you do not have online access please do use our Prayer Ministry team if you wish to pray or talk to someone as I know that many of us will feel fearful and anxious about the current situation, especially if you do have to self-isolate. Be aware that we are praying for you also. We also have a Pastoral Care team who can help if you need anything. I suspect that community will come together and will naturally care for each other, but we are here if you need us and we can help. Help and hope are always here with the love of God.

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear. Psalm 46:1-2

We do have a Continuation (contingency) Plan in place if any of us must self-isolate.

Cont. overleaf

Cont. From previous page

Clergy have been advised not to visit people but to phone or e mail instead. Please do phone if you would like to talk. Sadly, we have had to cancel the Lent lunches and Lent groups for fear of close contact with others but the first lunches at Carole and Bob Baird's home in Lorton and Buttermere Old School were enjoyed by many. Although we cannot meet at Easter remember the hope of the resurrection.

On the positive side we had a lovely, intimate and meaningful wedding at St. Cuthbert's, Lorton recently and hopefully look forward to more in the valley over the next few months and the good news is that apparently 76, 219 people have recovered from COVID-19 as I write. We have had some better weather and planted some trees in the churchyard at Lorton. We are progressing with the external renovation of Buttermere Old School. Let us hope and pray that we do all come though this together and we will

support and care for each other during the next few months and beyond! We are more resilient than we perhaps imagine. Be careful but not fearful. We are here is you need us. We can do this together.

Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy
in this time of uncertainty and distress.
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may rejoice in your comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from
your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Amen.

Take care and God bless
Revd. Sandra Ward

Contact details:
Revd. Sandra Ward 01900 85237
revd.sandra@gmail.com
Churchwardens:
Lorton:
Roger Peck 01900 85236
Keith McNeil 01900 85383
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Barbara Robinson 01900 85234
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Keeping in touch during the Coronavirus emergency

People in the community can help with:

- Shopping
- Posting letters
- A friendly phone call
- Urgent practical jobs

If you use email or the internet and would like to share information, provide practical help to neighbours or ask for assistance, the Melbreak Communities suggest you sign up to **Nextdoor.co.uk** and we will organise dedicated groups for the valley. Anyone can share information and offer help or advice; or just read messages if you prefer. [James Lusher can provide help and advice about Nextdoor on 01900 85335]

The Melbreak Communities has an Emergency Plan for the parishes of Blindbothel, Buttermere, Lorton and Loweswater, which includes a Telephone Tree to help contact everyone.

If you don't use the internet you can phone the contacts listed here for information and support.

| | |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Penny Poole (Blindbothel) | 01900 85722 |
| Richard Kahane (Buttermere) | 01768 770249 |
| Ian Aitken (Lorton) | 01900 85787 |
| Chris Poate (Lorton) | 01900 85265 |
| Carolyn Davis (Loweswater) | 01900 85708 |

You can also check for information in the diary and message board on the Melbreak website.

<https://melbreakcommunities.wordpress.com>

LORTON WOMEN'S INSTITUTE
MARCH 2020 Meeting



We really didn't know how the world would be, two weeks ahead of our Birthday Party on March 10th. If we had known maybe we would have hugged each other more closely before leaving Portofino's, where we had a delicious meal and a good chat. We sang Happy Birthday, rubbing our hands in the prescribed manner. We did some business, particularly to do with events planned for the following few weeks, which are of course now cancelled. There will be no more hugs, except with those sharing our "self-isolation" premises, if we are lucky enough to have someone; many will not, and no meals in restaurants for the foreseeable future.

As our lives have shrunk to our four walls, gardens and, if we are lucky, solitary walks round our villages or the countryside, maybe now is an opportunity to catch up with friends and family we had meant to keep in touch with but never had the time. For those with a computer, email, texting, Skype, Facetime and WhatsApp groups are invaluable for keeping in touch with family and friends. For those who have not entered the digital world for whatever reason, there is a wonderful device, called a telephone, which will give access to friends and family between your own home and theirs! And people are likely to be at home to answer the phone, unless they are "key workers".

So, as we get used to our "new normal", be aware there are several things happening

in our villages to support those who are self-isolating. Lorton Village Shop (01900 85102) will deliver to your door, including milk (now available in eco-friendly glass bottles). Chris and Derek Poate are offering to pick up prescriptions from Cockermonth Hospital, although it is possible to phone up the surgery there (7 days before the new prescription is needed) on the prescription queries line 01900 826018 and ask for it to be delivered to your door. There is an app called "Nextdoor" for keeping in touch, asking for and offering help. Contact James Lusher on jameslusherlorton@gmail.com or Diana Clarke on diana.clarke2@googlemail.com. I am sure there will be other initiatives to keep us all connected and supported in the villages which, no doubt, will be given in other Link articles.

So, due to "you know what", there will be no more W.I. meetings for a while and therefore no reports on such. Maybe we can fill the next few Links with stories and experiences, tips, etc., for each other. I am not sure what is planned by Rosemary and her team.

So, for now, it's goodbye from your W.I. correspondent and best wishes to everyone.

Keep Linked!

Penny's Piece

In other news I have come to the conclusion that frogs are either desperate or stupid. There is a lot of frogspawn about at the moment. Most of it in the usual, sensible places- dams, ponds and pools that get a water supply. Some of them in decidedly unsuitable places. Firstly, puddles in potholes, then ruts below hedgerows following hedge trimming. At the moment there is plenty of water in these (anyone would think there has been some weather) but as soon as they hatch out, it invariably dries out- when exam season starts- and they are doomed. I know they lay lots of eggs to increase the chance of some making it but that doesn't work if you lay it in the wrong place. It would be like a mother rabbit leaving her young out in the open and hoping a fox or bird of prey would ignore them.

The recent weather seems to have been blowing in from a slightly different direction. I know this, not because of a weather vane but because the fire has been smoking down in an unbelievable way. The last time I remember it being this bad was when both of my grandparents were still alive. I remember walking in and barely being able to see across the room. Thankfully it is not allowed to get that bad as the smoke alarm goes off. At its worst, the upstairs alarm went off too. At least it proves they work and it doesn't take much to set them off. Getting them to shut up is a different matter. Wafting them with a magazine or cushion gets them to stop but they only stay off if you've done something to remove some smoke. Cue the 'Benny Hill music' as we run around opening and closing various combinations of doors and

windows. The first combo always makes it smoke more, all alarms go off again and you have to do more wafting. Then you try something else only to discover that the ideal solution is doors open right through and up the stairs with an upstairs window open. Great. No smoke, not deaf but freezing and probably raining in through some of the open doors and windows. Slightly defeats the object of having the fire on.

There are many different computer games out there. At the start of the year I was subjected to Red Dead Redemption 2. It is set in fictional wild west and you are a character who has to travel about and complete missions that people you meet give you. Most of them seemed to involve shooting, hold ups and stealing stuff but one made me laugh with the realism. The mission was to kill a sheep to get a good quality hide to sell. To kill it you had to be relatively close to use a particular weapon. That meant sneaking up on it. Anyone who has ever tried to catch a sheep knows what happens next. It will run and keep running and be anywhere except where you are. I arrived on the sofa during the beginnings of this twenty-minute saga (again realistic) and suddenly the air around the sofa started to go blue. I was glared at as I started to laugh and pointed out that, that was the best and most realistic thing I'd seen in the whole game. I also reassured that the reaction was also accurate!

Hope everyone is staying safe and well.
Penny

2020 LENT LUNCHEES

Our first two Lent Lunches were very successful and well attended. Here is a picture from the second lunch in Buttermere Old School. Unfortunately all subsequent lunches have been cancelled following government guidance regarding the Coronavirus.



The original colour pictures, taken by Roger Hiley, can be found at:
http://www.loweswatercam.co.uk/200313_Day_Out_to_Brockhole.htm

Loweswater with Buttermere PCC
100 Challenge Club

The prizewinners for the draw held on 1st March 2020

1st prize of £25 No 27 Diane Gordon
2nd prize of £10 No 60 Revd Margaret Jenkinson
3rd prize of £5 No 70. Barbara Robinson

Congratulations to the winners and thanks to all our supporters.

NOTES FROM ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S AND ST JAMES

How totally unlike any previous April notes, our lives being dominated by the Covid 19 crisis. By now all will be aware of the cessation of church services for an indefinite period. Sandra, our Vicar, has covered this subject fully in her letter. Our churches remain open as usual for quiet time and prayer.

We had our initial meeting with our church architect Chloe earlier this month at Loweswater regarding the dilapidations and the state of the south wall of the church and widespread damp problems. We have had an extensive survey of the trees in the churchyard undertaken following wind damage.

Many of us are self isolating following government advice which will throw up its challenges but we are so blessed to live in such wonderful surroundings with opportunities to enjoy the outdoors. How nice to have had two glorious days of sunshine and to see the crocuses and primroses; it lifts the spirits.

We will not be able to see much of one another for a while but can support each other in any ways we can, phone calls and of course social media really comes into its own.

Eleanor Ella

Prayer for a Pandemic

May we who are merely inconvenienced

Remember those whose lives are at stake.

May we who have no risk factors

Remember those most vulnerable.

May we who have the luxury of working from home

Remember those who have to choose between preserving their health or paying their rent.

May we who have the flexibility to care for our children when their schools close

Remember those who have no options.

May we who have to cancel our trips

Remember those who have no safe place to go.

May those who are losing their margin money in the tumult of the economic market

Remember those who have no margin at all.

May we who settle in for a quarantine at home

Remember those who have no home.

As fear grips our country,

Let us choose love.

During this time when we cannot physically wrap our arms around each other,

Let us yet find ways to be the loving embrace of God to our neighbours.

Amen

ECO PROJECT UPDATE

Well our Eco Project must be blessed as as our tree planting party was probably the last group activity to take place in the valley before the new social distancing policy came into force. The afternoon was a great success with 8 volunteers plus Bracken the Springer Spaniel taking part. We managed to plant around 13 trees and shrubs including honeysuckle, guilder rose and a holly bush. Many thanks to all took part. The afternoon was rounded off with a welcome hot drink and biscuits.



As we all grapple with altered work patterns, self-isolating and some food shortages could I ask that we all think of those who already need to use food banks and who will be finding life even more difficult than usual. I'd therefore urge you all to leave donations in the food bank collection points in Lorton and Loweswater churches.



Jasper Baker, penname, *JASPER* is a local writer residing in Low Lorton. Some of you may know him, hopefully for the better. He has grown up here in Lorton all his life and now at 22, it only seems right to impart the truths he has found and dug up along the way, just things to ruminate about, lessons learned. He is a poet/poetry obsessive and has no shortage of them either, He wants to publish a collection in the future and this poem will be included.

Love is the Pen.

This is when
Love writes the pen;
And the left-hand learns to scribe Bewilderment,
Without a smudge, into Every-Thing
I see.

Jasper knows
What we all secretly long for,
The ability to come out the other side of hardship
And misery without a scratch,
Scribing love upon
All surfaces.

To repair every despair in The Family,
To kiss every scar and precious wound of your Lover,
To be tied in sacred union to the pole
Of belonging and divine,
Never faltering or squandering our
Immaculate gifts in
The world.

My
Pen is broken.
Now all I write is this,

Love.

~ *Jasper* ~



Coping with the Corona virus - message from Lee and Arwen at Lorton Village Shop:

If you are SELF-ISOLATING, we can arrange delivery for you

Please note that we don't hold a lot of stock, so we might have to place limits on essentials.

You can contact us on:

01900 85102

lortonvillageshop@gmail.com

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Lorton Vale Wildlife Survey Spring 2020

Many of us will be having more time at home and in our gardens over the coming weeks, as spring arrives. Many will also get great pleasure and solace from birds, bird song and other wildlife around us, especially at troubling time. If you would like to share in a simple bird and wildlife survey, drop us an email and we will see what we can organise. Thanks.

John and Rosamund Macfarlane, Loweswater.

jtmacfarlane@gmail.com



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Loweswater Ladies March 2020

Our March 11th meeting was much anticipated and as a result we had a packed and enthusiastic audience. Once again we had the immense pleasure of welcoming our local valley residents, Rosamund and John Macfarlane to entertain us with another of their photographic presentations. This one was entitled 'Living with the Nomads and Eagle Hunters of Mongolia'.

John gave us a fascinating insight into Mongolian history and culture. Mongolia, known as 'The land of eternal blue sky', is a land-locked Asian country which was originally under the auspices of China, then the USSR but became independent 30 years ago. John and Rosamund have journeyed to the country twice, once in 2003 and again in 2018. John's historical insights into the country history were both detailed and memorable and illustrated with photographs and videos from both of their visits.

We were enthralled with the beautiful photographs of the scenery, the flat steppe (grasslands) and valleys and the ever present background of mountains. The 40 metre high statue of Genghis Khan on horseback was also impressive. John detailed the food, the drinks and the hospitality that they were treated to by the very welcoming Mongolians. He had many detailed photographs of the exterior and interior of the Gers, the large tent like structures that the nomads of the country live in, surrounded by their goats, camels, cows, sheep and horses. Nomadic life is still practised by 40% of the population.

He also detailed the other side of Mongolia, the capital city of Ulaanbaatar which is the second most polluted city on the world, beset with 3 Soviet power stations, gridlocked streets of old cars belching fumes and also the smoke from the fires within the Gers. Huge swathes of the city have permanent Gers like these, erected by Nomads who were forced to seek work and live in the city.

Rosamund took up the theme of the Mongolian

horses, so very important in both an historical context and also in present times. In this second half of the presentation she also detailed the falconry aspect of the talk, the famed Eagle Hunters of Mongolia. There are 380 eagle hunters around the town of Uglii, in the north western part of the country, and these magnificent birds, weighing 4-8kg with a wingspan of two metres are carried on the arms of the hunters on horseback and used to hunt wolves, foxes and other prey. It is a cultural tradition in Mongolian dating back to 2000 BC. We were fascinated to follow the story of Aisholpan Nurgaiv, the teenage girl who was trained by her father to hunt on horseback with a golden eagle, traditionally a male pursuit and shocked everyone by winning the prestigious eagle hunters' competition held annually in the town of Uglii in 2016. Rosamund and John had some wonderful photos of Aisholpan. She became famous in Mongolia and beyond as the star of the 2016 documentary film 'The Eagle Huntress'.

Alison thanked our guests for their fascinating presentation. They donated their monies from the group to the Friends of the Lake District. Rosamund was fortunate to win our raffle for the evening, a voucher for the New Bookshop, Cockermouth, presented by Judy.

Please note that, due to the current situation, the next meeting on Wed April 8th and all future Loweswater ladies events have been cancelled until further notice.

Ann Hiley

LORTON NOTES

These Notes customarily tell of Church activities in the coming month, but as we all know, there won't be any. We are hearing that there will be no Church services for the foreseeable future but the Church in Lorton will remain open (as will Loweswater & Buttermere) and we hope that folk will venture in to benefit from the calm, peaceful atmosphere in these troubling times, but services are suspended for an indefinite period. I hope to keep these Notes going somehow to provide copy for The Link, as it could be much thinner as social activity in the village is severely curtailed. At the moment I have even greater regard for Penny who manages an entertaining Piece each month on scant material. Perhaps she can give us lessons.

What is impressive is the reaction when it is generally believed we face a real crisis, but what I do find disturbing is what is considered to be not a real crisis. What

will have the most serious long term impact on this planet, the coronavirus pandemic or the effects of climate change and the degradation of the environment through human activity? The pandemic has grounded planes and closed airports whilst climate change even failed to halt their expansion. Am I being unrealistic in hoping that one positive outcome of the pandemic will be to persuade people that it is not necessary to fly as much as we have been doing? I hope not.

From St. Cuthbert's Church Registers:

Marriage: 11 March: Colin Stuart Knight and Rebecca Jane Hirst.

Roger Peck



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Walkers Way - Number 200 - Not Out!

Over 30 years, and over 100,000 words ago, the Rev (now Canon) Michael Braithwaite, the incumbent at Loweswater at that time, suggested I made a regular contribution to the Link on the subject of Walking and Wildlife. At the risk of being unconscionably boring, here we go again! Many things have changed in the last 30 years, not least the increasing concern over Climate Change and the effects of this and other factors on our wildlife. And how that has changed. In the 1980's I was constantly recording details of the wildlife I encountered while walking, indeed my records of birds seen have been passed to the RSPB. For example, on the 25th January 1986, I visited Loweswater Lake and recorded seeing 112 mallard, 20 red crested pochard (now on the Red List), 3 great crested grebes, 18 graylags and a heron – rather different to the numbers one would now see. However, we still have much wildlife, and there are plenty of signs of Spring. In the garden, birds have been examining nest boxes, with a view to approaching occupancy, and frogs have returned to the pond to lay large quantities of spawn. The average female frog will lay some 4,000 eggs, but they and the resulting tadpoles are heavily preyed by a range of birds and animals, and only about 5% are likely to survive. In fact, predation was so heavy last year, that this time a concerted effort has been made to provide protection, just a little effort to counter some of the worldwide depletion of frogs. A bath has been placed at the top of the garden, filled with rain water, with some plants of Canadian pond weed as oxygenators, and covered with fine plastic mesh to exclude predators. A supply of spawn has been placed in the bath and – well, we will see what happens. Needless to say, in due course an appropriate means of escape will be provided for the froglets. True, in spite of all this, the spawn and tadpoles may not be entirely secure because the eggs of some predators are laid on pond weed and may possibly have been unwittingly introduced.

The heavy predation of tadpoles is of course precisely why frogs have developed the ability to lay such vast quantities of eggs, indeed the very considerable effort involved in laying some 4,000 eggs often proves fatal for the female, which is why we so often see dead frogs in ponds at this time of the year. While walking recently on one of those glorious Spring days in the coastal dune and marsh country, there was one of those startling “ornithological explosions” almost under foot. Yes, a snipe soared up from the undergrowth, dashing away with incredible speed, and with that unmistakable zig-zag flight for which it is renowned. Dependant on soft ground in which to insert its bill in search of food, the snipe is much less common than it once was, but nevertheless resident all year round in the UK and Northern Europe. Another good sighting on the same day was a prolonged and very close up view of a pair of stone chats, perched, as they so often are, on fence posts. The striking little male with its rust-red breast, black head and throat with white shoulder patches, with its rather plainer female companion. However, the highlight of the day was another species. Imagine the scene – a bright, sunny day, pure blue sky and not a cloud in sight, a wide expanse of dune and marsh country bordered on one side by the sea, and inland a view all the way to Great Gable and Scawfell Pike, when suddenly, a lark ascending! That almost vertical, fluttering climb into the blue, accompanied by continuous outpouring of that delightful chirruping song, only to terminate in a plunge to earth. In fact, “Hark, Hark the Lark, at Heaven’s gate sings”. Beautiful ! Oh yes, walk and look, there is always something.

Walk on dear friends,
whilst time and limbs allow,
’ere age demands a slower pace,
and wrinkled is the brow.
Alan Gane.

turbance, labor, or affectation; easily.
 quiet; repose; facility: *v.t.* to free **Easy Street** (strēt), a position of
 from pain, anxiety, or trouble: give financial comfort. [Colloq.]

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LORTON LITTLE LIBRARY

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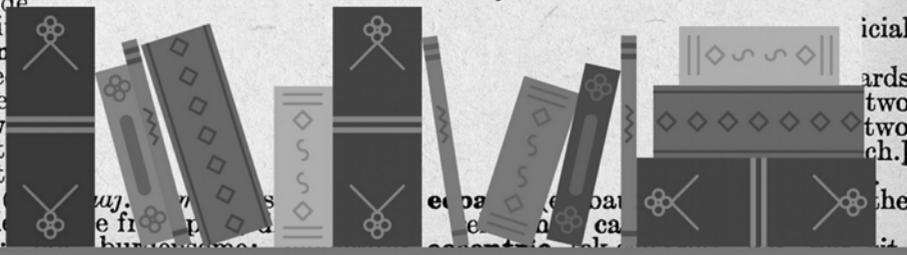
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Vale of Lorton Community First Responders

Just to say that your CFR team are still up and running and ready should we be called out by the Ambulance Service, we will make every effort to be there for you. Should you have a medical emergency ambulance, please dial 999 as normal.

With the current medical situation, you should be asked by the person on the Ambulance Service call-desk if there are any Corvid-19 symptoms (high temperature, persistent cough) or recent C-19 contacts, in addition to the normal details of your medical emergency. We will be called and respond accordingly.

This is written on 19 March and things may change by the time that you read this. In this event, we would post a message on the Mellbreak Communities Message Board and next edition of The Link.

Leslie Webb, Vale of Lorton CFR leader



It was a great disappointment that in view of the Coronavirus emergency we had to cancel our meeting planned for 26 March, when we were due to hear a presentation from Rosamund and John Macfarlane. However they have kindly agreed to speak to us at a later date when things have returned to normal.

Please note the lunch party at Hunday Manor Hotel planned for 23 April **has also been cancelled.**

In view of the latest Government advice, it is very unlikely that we shall be able to hold the community charity coffee evening in aid of Help for Heroes planned for 12 May. Please refer to the May Link for a final decision.

If anyone who is self-isolating needs help with obtaining supplies, please give me a call on 01946 861555 and the Club will make arrangements.

John Hudson



Finnish Vegetable Soup

A rich and warming soup
Brilliant for cold days!

Roger and Ann Hiley, Loweswater.

Ingredients

| | |
|------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1lb 500g | Diced potatoes (preferably new) |
| 3 | Medium carrots, diced |
| 4oz 100g | Cauliflower in small florets |
| 2oz 50g | Frozen peas |
| 4oz 100g | Sliced green beans |
| 1.5 pints 850 ml | Vegetable Stock |
| 1oz 25g | Margarine or butter |
| 1oz 25g | Plain flour |
| 1 | Large egg yolk |
| 4 tablespoons | Double cream (or Elmlea cream) |
| ¼ teaspoon | Paprika |
| | Salt and ground pepper |
| 2oz 50g | Grated Cheddar Cheese |

Method

Boil potatoes, carrots, cauliflower, peas, beans and stock in saucepan for 10 minutes. Remove and drain, keeping both veg and separated stock.

Heat butter & flour in the rinsed pan until straw- coloured, then slowly add back the stock and continue heating to thicken the stock.

In a separate bowl mix the egg yolk, cream and paprika. Gradually stir in 4 tbsp of thickened stock then slowly add this mixture back into the main stock in the serving pan.

Finally, add the saved vegetables back into the pan, mix and adjust seasoning as required. Heat through but do not boil or it may curdle. Serve in soup bowls with grated cheddar cheese.

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This piece has been passed to us by a parishioner and we thought it appropriate to publish here:

Yes there is fear.

Yes there is isolation.

Yes there is panic buying.

Yes there is sickness.

Yes there is even death.

But they say that in Wuhan after so many years of noise, you can hear the birds again.

They say that after just a few weeks of quiet the sky is no longer thick with fumes but blue and grey and clear.

They say that in the streets of Assisi, people are singing to each other across the empty squares, keeping their windows open so that those who are alone may hear the sounds of family around them.

They say that a hotel in the West of Ireland is offering free meals and delivery to the housebound.

Today a young woman I know is busy spreading fliers with her number through the neighbourhood so that the elders may have someone to call on.

Today Churches, Synagogues, Mosques and Temples are preparing to welcome and shelter the homeless, the sick, the weary.

All over the world people are slowing down and reflecting.

All over the world people are looking at their neighbours in a new way.

All over the world people are waking up to a new reality.

To how big we really are.

To how little control we really have.

To what really matters.

To Love.

So we pray and we remember that.

Yes there is fear.

But there does not have to be hate.

Yes there is isolation.

But there does not have to be loneliness.

Yes there is panic buying.

But there does not have to be meanness.

Yes there is sickness.

But there does not have to be disease of the soul.

Yes there is even death.

But there can always be a rebirth of love.

Wake to the choices you make as to how to live now.

Today, breathe.

Listen, behind the factory noises of your panic.

The birds are singing again

The sky is clearing,

Spring is coming,

And we are always encompassed by Love.

Open the windows of your soul

And though you may not be able to touch across the empty square...Sing.

Fr. Richard Hendrick, OFM

March 13th 2020

Alan Rothwell Johnson

Alan died on February 25th just two months short of his hundredth birthday. Always dearest to him were his parents, Annie and Tom, and his two wives, Joyce and Kathryn (Kathy). Sadly, his parents' health was undermined when they were bombed out of their home in World War Two, Joyce died after only seven years of marriage, and Kathy (so gifted as artist, singer and gardener) has now been suffering from advanced Alzheimer's disease for some years. In Alan's life times of great happiness have been punctuated by times of deep sorrow.

Growing up in Salford, Alan left school at fourteen and then studied for two years at the Manchester School of Arts. His first job was as a junior artist in a small advertising agency in Manchester. With war threatening in 1939 and the agency closing down, he sought adventure by signing on as a pantry boy on a merchant ship sailing to the eastern coast of the USA. On the return journey, as Alan learnt later, a German U boat had his ship in its sights and they only escaped sinking when the U boat commander was ordered to go after a larger vessel. Come the real war, Alan was delighted to find himself serving as an army despatch rider in North Africa. For the next five years he rode hundreds of miles a week, often at night, carrying sometimes very important messages. He only saw action from a distance but one night he was directly strafed by an enemy air gunner, who fortunately missed his target. Alan later recorded this hairy incident in one of his most dramatic paintings. Truthfully, riding his motorbike in the North Africa desert Alan was in his element. But later, driving home through Italy and Germany into Belgium he saw such terrible destruction and so many people in dire straits that he could only feel pity for those he had previously thought of as enemies. The war ended, Alan resumed his career as a graphic artist. For a long while he worked in the largest advertising agency in Manchester and rose to be its Creative Director. He then set up his own business, employing a staff of five, and worked freelance very successfully until he retired in 1978. It was then that he came to live in the valley, marrying Kathy soon after.

Alan was, perhaps, a driven man. Outside of work he had numerous interests and passions, which he pursued to the full. His boyhood ambition to be a successful marine artist was amply fulfilled. He was elected to membership of the Royal Society of Marine Artists and exhibited in the same gallery in Manchester as L.S.Lowry. For many years he spent weekends and holidays in serious potholing and mountaineering. There is a photograph showing Alan with a friend on top of the Matterhorn. He had a huge knowledge and interest in steam locomotives and was never happier than when he was driving Ratty's engines in Eskdale. But his greatest passion was for motorbikes and motorbiking. In North Africa he was co-founder of the famous wartime Bar None Motorcycle Club. He wrote well for motorcycle magazines. He was a member of the Vintage Motorcycle Club for thirty years and was riding one of his own vintage bikes with some of his many biker friends when in his nineties he suffered his debilitating stroke.

Many of us will remember the contribution which Alan and Kathy made to valley life after Alan's retirement. They were faithful members of the Buttermere congregation. Alan helped produce the monthly Link and his brilliant line drawings appeared on many of its covers. Kathy's lovely garden at Palace How was open every year in aid of charity. Alan tried to teach some of us to paint in classes held in Loweswater village hall and he organised a very helpful paper round at a time when it was needed.

But surely we shall best remember Alan for the man he was. He had a phenomenal memory and seemed able to recall every detail of his past life. He was a fighter and never ceased to battle against the effects of his stroke. He was up for every challenge, as when he sailed before the mast on one of the training ships in his early seventies and when his devoted live-in carer, Aileen, took him to the Remembrance Day ceremonies in London in his late nineties. The 100th birthday party which Aileen planned in Loweswater village hall must have been a challenge for him but he was looking forward to it and no doubt would have had much to say to us. As a true Lancastrian he was blunt and spoke his mind, never seeking to endear himself to anyone. But to those of us who knew him of old and were aware of the sadness and frustration of his last years that is exactly what he did. May he rest in peace and rise in glory.

R.H.W.

BEWARE - CORONA VIRUS SCAMS
Message from Neighbourhood Watch in Cumbria

We have been made aware of a number of new scams exploiting peoples fear over the Corona virus. The scams take several forms which include (so far):

Individuals in some areas, posing as Medical Staff conducting Covid-19 tests in your home.

Messages claiming to be from HMRC offering a tax refund due to changes in the law around Covid-19, recipients have to click a link which takes them to a fraudulent website

Messages claiming to be from the Centre for Disease Control or from the World Health Organisation. These messages offer the recipient the chance to view a list of confirmed cases within their local area by clicking on a link and making a Bitcoin payment.

Emails claiming to be from a virologist sending an attached document with instructions on how to avoid the Coronavirus. The attachment is malicious.

Fraudulent online sales of masks and hand sanitiser which never materialise. If an online shopping offer looks too good to be true, then it probably is.

Please don't allow anyone into your homes to conduct tests.

Please do not click on links or open attachments and take time to check that the email is from a legitimate source.

Please be aware that fraudsters will go to great lengths to make their communications with you look genuine.

As Covid-19 continues to spread, fraudsters are likely to continue using the anxiety it generates to trick people out of their personal data and hard earned money.

Deadline for May is Fri 24th April, all articles to lortonvalelink@gmail.com by this date. A plea to all for some interesting articles/recipes/letters etc please to replace all the items that will be missing.