

FEBRUARY 2021



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

Letter from the Editor

Dear Link readers,

A belated Happy (?) New Year to you all, surely things can only get better. As usual we have an interesting mix of articles and I'm glad to say I have been able to fit in the poem from John Scrivens that I couldn't squeeze in in Dec/Jan. Mark Elliott has written a fascinating article about his early years in the Diplomatic Service and has promised to write a follow-up article in a month or two. We have news about a couple of community surveys - one about lighting and the other about traffic. There are even a few 'virtual' events taking place in February including the Dark Skies Festival, a WI talk about nature and Rosie's update on progress of her temporarily suspended run from Loweswater to Mongolia. Quizzers amongst you will be pleased to see the results from the Brain of the Benefice Quiz - many thanks to Mike Suckling for continuing to organise this. We have also had some memories sent in prompted by the photos of the lone pine in the last edition. Ann Peck has written an interesting monologue about Christmas in lockdown and has also produced a poster of photos of all the snowmen in our Winter Wonderland

afternoon. This poster is not included in the printed version of The Link as black and white will not do it justice, but a colour version will be in the electronic version. If any of you would like a paper copy then please contact Ann on 01900 85236. I hope many of you will buy the book by Tommy Coulthard featured on page 13. We are taking a short 'holiday' from Paul's bicycle trip around India but he will be back next month.

I have been asked to pass on thanks from The North Lakes Food Bank for all the gifts the valley donated through our Acts of Kindness Initiative. They were very welcome.

On a personal note I'd like to ask you all to send in your subs for the 2021 Link ASAP - details can be found on the inside back cover. We have received masses of interesting copy during the year for which I thank you all. However, the increased size of each addition has also increased our printing costs but we've decided not to put the subs up this year.

Rosemary
07885 360353

Our cover photo this month is of Great Gable and fells from Low Fell taken by John Macfarlane. Another lovely wintry picture from Roger Hiley is on the back cover.

VICAR'S LETTER



‘Digital expatriates’

If ‘digital natives’ are young people who were born in the digital age and can’t remember a time before computers, the internet, mobile phones and social media, then what does that make the rest of us? Maybe we are ‘digital expatriates’, people who were born and grew up in a non-digital age and have had to adapt to the digital environment. From ordering the weekly shop to working from home via Zoom, to reading a remote bedtime story to the grandchildren, many of us have widened our horizons and learned new skills during 2020. And haven’t we done well!

With church buildings closed for much of the time over the past ten months we have even discovered that we can worship online. The Grasmoor Mission Community weekly online service has been a welcome lifeline and we are hugely grateful to all those who have contributed to it and to Gareth and Ruth Browning at Christ Church Cockermonth for putting the service together for us all. This service comes to an end at the end of January but you’ll still be able to connect to other online Sunday services across the Mission Community, from the United Reformed and Methodist Churches, from Christ Church Cockermonth and St Bridget’s Bridekirk, and there is also a daily service of Night Prayer from All Saints Cockermonth which is proving very popular. Links to all these services can be found on the Grasmoor Mission Community website which now has a new

address at

www.grasmoormissioncommunity.co.uk

From the beginning of February, we’ll also be launching a brand new weekly Grasmoor Mission Community slot with a blend of music, readings, reflections, local news and an opportunity to pray for one another in our life together. More information about this coming soon. We’ll still be looking for people to record readings and prayers, to be interviewed about their life and faith and to share interesting stories from around our communities so there will be plenty of ways to get involved. You can even sign up to receive a weekly link via your email inbox, all you’ll have to do is click on it. Help will be available to anyone who would like to sample these online good things but isn’t sure how to get going. Watch this space.

Of course, online worship isn’t the same as being able to gather in our beautiful churches. For the moment that isn’t possible but as infection rates begin to fall and more of us receive the vaccine, we can begin to look forward to a time when we can meet up once more. We very much hope and pray that we will be able to hold services again in time for Easter. Do please help to make that possible by following government guidelines and keeping yourself and your loved ones safe.

With God’s blessing.

Jane Charman

Grasmoor Mission Community Leader

LORTON WOMEN'S INSTITUTE
JANUARY 2021



In December we had an enjoyable Christmas Zoom party which included quizzes, poetry, a monologue written by Ann P, and cake and chocolates provided by Kris.

12 members attended our January "meeting". Our speaker was Andy Warner, who regaled us with stories from his 32 years with the National Trust. He first worked with the Pathway Team, which involved him manually carrying tons of rock up onto the fells to repair eroding footpaths worn away by walkers. He had terrifying stories, before "health and safety" protocols, of chasing huge boulders which "escaped" downhill, threatening life and limb and farmers' stone walls. Later Andy worked repairing stone walls, fencing and hedgerow laying and enjoyed passing his skills to new recruits. Andy spoke of his joy in observing wild life, particularly in the corridors between walls and hedges. Andy saw many changes over the years and emphasized the differences between the National Trust - a charity - and the National Park, a cost-driven Government department, but saw also how they worked together on projects, complementing each other. A really interesting, enjoyable talk from a man who had the good fortune to passionately enjoy his work. After a Q&A session we resumed business and voted to put forward a Resolution to

the National AGM to increase awareness of the subtle signs of ovarian cancer.

We then remembered Maud Vickers, a much loved former member who had died. Maud held many posts, including president, in our W.I. over the years. I remember her telling us about Lorton W.I. in WW2 when, amongst other things, our ladies made mittens from rabbit fur. She was particularly remembered for her enthusiasm for entering Federation competitions, her flower-arranging skills and leading Christmas wreath-making sessions for the village, fuelled with mulled wine and mince pies. We may revive the wreath-making workshop in December as a tribute to her. As we were unable to attend her funeral, it was particularly apt that Ann P, Judith B and Elly made a green wreath to leave in the churchyard, which members visited and added to. Maud will be fondly remembered and greatly missed - 2 pictures of her are shown on the following page.

Our next Zoom meeting is on 9th February at 2.30. Tanya St. Pierre from Cumbria Wildlife Trust will be telling us about their Get Cumbria Buzzing Project, including information about the Get Your Garden Buzzing Campaign. All are welcome to join us at what promises to be a buzzing event – just send your email address to Kris on kris.longshaw@gmail.com to be invited.



Maud Vickers on the left with Mary Wallace, also a long-serving W.I. member, who died in May 2020



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PRIVATE • BUSINESS • EVENTS

Brain of the Benefice 2020

“The Christmas Zoom Quiz”

42 entries, 34 correct and 1 booby. A few *SLICED* their pub food rather than *SHARED* it. Bad luck those the Church Warden failed to draw out of the hat. The lucky winners were Christine and David Walmsley, second was John Hudson, third was David Gardiner (very grateful for the £104 so generously donated to his coffers) and the booby prize went to Sonia Steele of High Lorton. For those of you still peering through the bars of their cages, the inmates were:-

“I had just met her sitting alone at a party the other day. She has a bit of a **PROBLEM MING**ling and was trying to avoid a couple of **ROG** ues in a bit of a drunken **stuPOR CUP IN** Each hand, trying to **gRAB BITS** of food from passing waitresses. Being myself a bit **sHY EN**abled us to get on together and she had invited me round for a meal.

She opened the door, saucepan in hand, wearing a lovely **roBE A VERY** pretty **aMULEt** pinned in front. “What would you like to eat?” she asked”. I have **gOT A MARIN**ading piece of lamb, or shall I **coOK A Pie?**”. “ No, leave your **saucePAN THERE** and let’s go out to dinner”, I said. “Well the **puB IS ONLY** just down the road”, she said. “No” I replied. “The restaurant I usually **moTOR TO IS** Easy to find.”

She **iS TALL, I ONLY** hope she fits into the **miniCAR I BOU**ght recently. I don’t know if I was **wronG OR ILL** Advised to buy it but I’m not one to **worSHIP PO**rsches and a **liMO USES** much more fuel and really needs a **RICH OW**ner. They are very wide and make you feel you are too close to each **EDGE HOG**ging the middle lane as a result. And their **outsIze BRAK**es look horrid. I think the mini was **aMONG RELI**able alternatives.

We set off. They were making a new road. Where they were laying new **tarMAC A QUE**ue was forming. The old road was **noW ALL A BY**path only, very neglected and you needed a walking **STICK IN SECT**ions that were badly worn. We got past the holdup and headed towards our destination, a pub, The **AnCHOR SEt** by the roadside, a new and **elegANT EATERY**.

On the restaurant doorstep sat an **urCHIN CHILL** And hungry, raising a finger to **touch A MOISt** cheek. We went in. “He is, I **feAR MAD, ILL** Or something” I thought. So we ordered drinks and sent him out some **souP AND** Apple pie. “It will only make it a slightly **larGER BILL**.” I thought.

I said “The menu **wiLL AMA**ze you.” It did and we, being **hUMAN ATE** Every bit although some dishes had to be **SHARED**.

We left, but as I backed out I nearly went **wHAM STERN**wise into another parked car. The driver hooted loudly and his voice **also RANG OUT ANGR**ily with a **biG OATH**. I thought of **handING Over** the rather un**COMMON KEY** ring I’d won in a raffle and let her drive home but decided not to.

I suggested we went to my place for a coffee but she could **pinPOINT ER**otic intentions with ease and declined. “That’s **NOT TERRI**bly friendly.” I thought. “It’s the sort of **refuSAL A MAN DER**ives no pleasure from.”(As distinct from what you got from this.Ed.)

With best wishes for a better year, Mike Suckling

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

Following January's national lockdown, due to the deteriorating Covid situation in order to mitigate the risk of the coronavirus infection, thereby protecting the NHS, the decision was taken to suspend church services for the present. Consequently the usual Lent activities - lunches and discussion group won't be taking place this year. On a positive note the vaccine roll out started at the end of December has been moving on apace, particularly impressively in Cockermouth and Maryport as has been noted in the national news.

On the Sunday before Christmas Loweswater celebrated the traditional carol service of nine lessons and carols. Whilst no congregational singing was permitted a small distanced sing song took place in the churchyard after the service. Our thanks to Sue and her choir for their rendition of Christmas music and carols to their usual high standard.

I was struck reading our Rector's letter in an old parish magazine from 1953 from our Surrey village by the deprivations he and his crew experienced 30 years earlier whilst on a 4 masted barque, the Pommern, sailing through the roaring forties. He describes being reduced to the treat of eating blackened ship's bread with greasy margarine as "seeming very heaven" He goes on to say "It is one of God's great mercies that when things are bad and times are hard, He gives to us His children and intense enjoyment of the small good things of life, an enjoyment which we are in danger of losing in easier times." Pertinent to our times I think.

Sadly we have to report the death of Ann Hiley in December after an illness she faced with

extraordinary courage. Ann and Roger moved to Oak Cottage in 2002 hard on the heels of her retirement from teaching. Ann was a popular and active member of the community, acting as press secretary to the Loweswater Ladies and regulars at all village social events. Ann, an avid fell walker, loved the lakes and fells with a passion. Family was paramount to her as well as her love of animals and in particular her retrievers.

In December we also said farewell to Les Pooley in St. Bartholomew's church after a long illness. Les and Loes lived in St. Bees but had worshipped in the Benefice churches for many years. We extend our thoughts and condolences to both Loes and family and Roger and his family.

In December we celebrated the first wedding of the year at Buttermere that of Megan Thompson and James Moncreiff. It is always lovely to have a local wedding; especially complete with piper and a splendidly decorated church. We wish them every happiness.

Eleanor Ella

From St. Bartholomew's Register

Baptism

3rd January - Ayla Tremble

Burial

18th December - Leslie Polley

St. James's Register

Wedding

20th December - Megan Thompson and James Moncreiff

Penny's Piece

In school we decided the greeting in January would be different to the norm so, health and happiness to all.

Here we are again. Who would have thought a year ago that 'to zoom' would cease to mean move quickly and be linked with tech and being able to see friends and family who don't live close by? I have spent the past month (and the near future) on Seesaw. Not the playground apparatus, another tech aid allowing me to set and receive work back from the kids at home. It is much better than last time as we get to see each other every day. As my colleague is in a bubble in school, I set a lot of the work for our year group and try to include little videos or voice notes of explanation so the kids can get on themselves. I have the press record, say what you need to, press stop approach. Some of it whilst being a character and wearing a silly hat. One of my colleagues does the full make up, check the angle and lighting and then record approach. I am keeping it real. My kids know that as the day goes on my hair do becomes more of a hair don't and if that makes someone smile (parents included) then so much the better. However, recording several things in one day has turned me into a quick-change artist as I thought it was beginning to look a bit strange that I was always wearing the same burgundy hoodie. The weather has again proved to be entertaining. The snow in Jan made me realise the disadvantage of the school being further down the hill- more paths to clear and grit. The roads have also been challenging at times. Thanks especially to the council for closing the road past Rhea Park so I have little option but to go over Steel Brow. Do they do the single person bob-sleigh? I feel I now have

some experience and would love to know if genuine athletes swear on their runs downhill, like I have on mine.

In order to help reduce damp in the barn the challenge of re-assembling the guttering and downspout on the corner was undertaken. Firstly, possible replacement bits were gathered from the various collections here and there. There were over a dozen bits of pipe, bends and short bits of guttering. Some of it was metric, some imperial. Some of it didn't seem to be either which was odd. The ladder was erected and a suitable wedge found to level it as naturally this was all happening on the steepest slope on the property. Yes, bits fitted together but would not stay together. The cable ties weren't long enough, the glue went off before everything was in the right place so the whole thing is tied into position with many different pieces of string. It has been up over a month and the wind has not beaten it yet. It might not look pretty but it works.

I can now re-light the fire again for a while. It was smoking terribly and coming out of the airing cupboard which both alarming and unusual. Yes, the chimney needs re-lined. We have also discovered that after the chimneysweep came last, the cowl had become blocked. Explains why the smoke was coming down more than going up and escaping out of any gap it could find. I am no longer feeling (or smelling) like a smoked kipper which is nice.

Take care and stay safe. Penny.

**LOWESWATER 77 CLUB and
THE MELBREAK COMMUNITIES**

- warmly invite you to join our
COMMUNITY ZOOM MEETING
Monday 22nd February at 7.00pm



ROSIE WATSON

RUNNING LOWESWATER to MONGOLIA

Last August Rosie Watson set off from Loweswater to run to Mongolia to raise awareness of the climate crisis. She reached the Black Sea, but then the pandemic struck. At present she is back home, but plans to resume as soon as possible. In this presentation she will talk about her adventures so far.

To request the zoom link please email-

*John Hudson or
Carolyn Davis*

johnhudson25@hotmail.com
carolynmarydavis@gmail.com



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LORTON NOTES

Here we go again. I doubt whether two consecutive Notes have previously started in the same way, but I am glad that this is where the similarity ends. We were all aware that the lockdown was coming, but this time it is a consolation that the government has acknowledged that the Church has not played a part in the spread of the virus and has allowed churches to hold services. Despite this, churches have decided that holding services does present a risk, however small, and nearly all are closed. Another big difference from last time is that vaccinations are proceeding apace and that, hopefully, it won't be long before it is not thought irresponsible to be holding services, especially as most of our congregation is

getting on and should soon get their jabs. And the end of this lockdown will surely be the end of lockdowns for good and all. Watch this space.

February Notes usually mention Lent and the associated lunches and study groups. I remember that these activities last year were among the first casualties of the pandemic, but hopefully will be the only annual events to suffer two cancellations. The outlook is brighter; as I write this the glorious winter display of snowdrops is just starting to come into bloom. What a difference that makes, the first sign of new life in the new year.

Roger Peck.

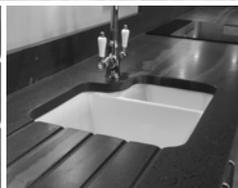
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Buttermere Traffic Survey

Whether you are a Buttermere resident, a resident of another area the Link encompasses in its distribution or a second homeowner or a visitor to the Lakes who has stumbled across this item, all are invited to participate as Buttermere and its surrounding areas have major issues with traffic volumes. Normally one says it is due to overseas visitors who swell the traffic problem. However as was demonstrated in the summer/autumn of 2020 it was staycation and visitors from local areas that created the bottlenecks.

The local parishes had with the assistance of an undergraduate from Lancaster University undertaken a traffic survey project to attempt to establish issues and pinch points and interview those in the area. Obviously, the whole project was itself thrown into doubt due to Corvid 19 and face to face interviews were ruled inappropriate. Therefore, this is plan B a survey inserted into the distributed copy of the February 2021 Link magazine which we would ask you to consider completing and scanning or posting back. For those of you viewing this on your electronic device then please follow this link,

https://lancasteruni.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/preview/SV_8u1hsSJXdV09nSJ?Q_CHL=preview&Q_SurveyVersionID=current

Your response would be much appreciated, and it will help us build a picture of what is potentially required to ease the problems as the parishes tackle the problems with the LDNP Authority, Natural Trust, Cumbria Highway, the Enforcement Agencies and local landowners and business owners. We look forward to your responses and thank you for taking the time to respond. Mike Milner, Buttermere Parish Clerk

buttermereparishclerk@gmail.com

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Lorton Lighting Survey

Lorton Parish Council distributed a survey about street lighting and dark skies in December.

Forty two completed forms were received from around 150 distributed, a pretty good response for a village survey. Thank you to everyone who took part.

People were asked to indicate their preferences from four statements:

1. I would prefer to keep all the village lights as they are now
2. I don't mind some of the village lights being turned off
3. I support fitting 'dark-sky' friendly LED lights where appropriate
4. I would like those that are left to be switched off overnight

Most people would like to see some modification to the lights, with four out of five supporting 'dark-sky' friendly lights and some overnight switching-off.

Half the respondents don't mind turning some lights off; five responses (12%) prefer to keep them as they are now.

Some respondents added written comments which expanded on the reasons behind their choice of preferences. Some 20 per cent emphasised the importance of keeping some lights and of these half were related to concerns about safety, especially for people on foot.

The Parish Council will take these views into account to plan future lighting. More information can be found by joining in the next Lorton Council Meeting on 3rd March via Zoom and in the Spring Council Newsletter.

Chris Poate
Lorton Parish Council Chair



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Tommy's Tyale

Around oor county in 90 years



Countryman Tommy Coulthard's Life in the Lakes

True countryman Tommy Coulthard has spent a lifetime living and working in his beloved English Lake District. His affectionate tyale shines a light on a way of life which has changed in many ways – but where there remains a vibrant and warm sense of community as well as respect for and appreciation of heritage and tradition. The book is being sold in aid of Hospice at Home - Carlisle and North Lakeland. Copies can be bought for £10.00 plus £3.00 postage from Louise Green on 01697371710 or by emailing her at irebygreens@btinternet.com or can be bought from Lorna at The Grange Hotel 01946 861211.

MEMORIES OF A DIPLOMAT BY MARK ELLIOTT

People often ask what diplomats actually *do*. One popular image is that their main function is to bail out Brits who get into trouble on their patch. Another is that they are all trade promoters – and for many of our embassies nowadays supporting British exports is indeed their most important function. But there is also the rather more general business of political reporting, meaning getting to know the country and its people well enough to be able to keep London informed about who matters, what is actually going on underneath the press stories, and what might happen in the future. Much can be done by remote analysis but there is a clear place for people on the ground with personal knowledge of local individuals and conditions, able to brief British visitors and if necessary interpret for them.

As well as embassies in individual countries, there are missions to international organisations such as the United Nations in New York and Geneva. My own first job was a three-month stint at the UN in New York as a reporting officer in our delegation to the General Assembly. Multilateral diplomacy is important as we need to influence decisions which can be binding on us, and our mission to the UN, like that to the EU in Brussels, is among our biggest. Watching the interplay of national prima donnas was fascinating and educational, given that one aspect of any world crisis is always played out on the UN stage (for example my time there in 1963 included the assassination of President Kennedy).

Most Foreign Office (FO) recruits start with a year or two in the London office to learn the ropes, so after New York I joined United Nations Department in London. Around half of FO personnel are in London at any one time, fielding reports from abroad and acting as the interface with Whitehall. UK representatives in meetings of the UN Agencies, such as the World Health Organisation (WHO), need FO briefing to navigate a morass of international political controversy, and it was my job in UN Department to provide that. Other FO departments, described as ‘functional’ rather than ‘geographical’, provide a political input on other subjects; a few years later I had a spell as, in effect, desk officer for the sea (a larger geographical area than any mere China desk officer, say, could boast), covering potentially sensitive matters such as fisheries and continental shelf oil and gas. The requirement to represent the FO at Whitehall meetings on these matters gave one a quite undeserved sense of one’s own importance, even as a junior.

My first normal embassy posting was Tokyo, initially as a language student. Reasonable competence in the local language is necessary for at least some diplomats, especially in major posts where the language is unfamiliar. In 1965 the full two-year Japanese course was in Tokyo, a mix of formal one-to-one tuition and local acclimatisation.

One is thrown in at the deep end – on our second day an elegant 70-year-old Japanese lady in a kimono came to our front door and made it plain without speaking any English that she wanted to start teaching me.

Reading is important, though it takes several weeks before one is offered even a square inch of newsprint to decipher. But it is the spoken language which really matters, and everything from TV news bulletins to a chance encounter in a park with a Japanese student can be educational. Social intercourse has pitfalls, such as using the wrong honorific term (one uncomplimentary word for one's own wife, one respectful one for one's interlocutor's, don't mix them up). It's easy to muddle, to thank somebody for the poor repast at his hovel and invite him in return to a banquet at one's own palace. Even food can need an honourable prefix, usually the sound o-, as in o-sushi. One iconoclastic embassy junior of our generation, not a Japanese speaker, used to mock at the whole thing by offering o-peanuts and o-crisps in English (he became generally known as 'o-peanuts X').

After language study I had two-odd years in the political section or Chancery, the traditional hub of an embassy, where I covered the local political and social scene. Language skills were essential in Japan then (1967) in dealing with politicians and even journalists, and there were frequent interpreting duties for visitors of many kinds; one was naval visits by Royal Naval vessels (a regular excitement of their visits was an open day, with real English sausages available for all). Japanese speakers were often called on to assist at major embassy functions, chatting-up Japanese guests with inadequate English – there were lots. Opportunities for travel to other parts of Japan gave one an insight into the still very traditional world of most of the country, as well as its scenery and architecture, all important in broadening the understanding.

Mixing with Japanese of our own generation was important too, often through the local Japan-British society. A wife was as always a vital asset in making contacts, with anybody but especially with Japanese women. We have vivid recollections of a visit to stay with a friend in a country region, where the village women clustered round Julian to feel her pregnant bulge and pronounce on whether it would be a boy or a girl – after expressing amazement that she was not wearing the traditional restricting belt normal in Japan. Some months later, in Tokyo, the infant appalled some passing ladies when observed in his pram on a coolish day not swathed in the appropriate quantity of protective garments, but was pronounced to be 'just like a doll!' - western-style dolls in Japan always being fair-haired and blue-eyed.

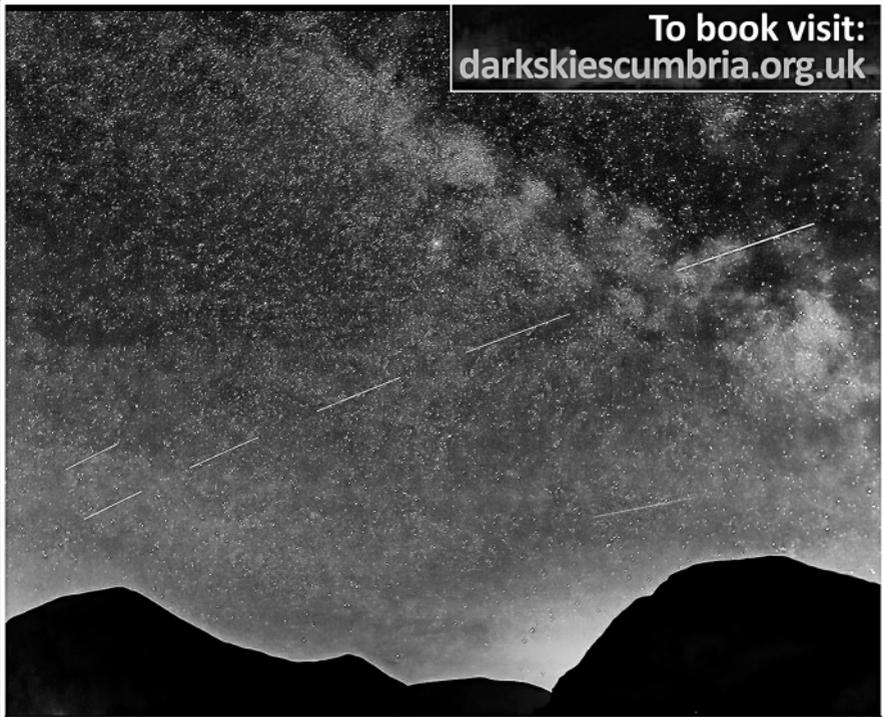
It would have been hard to better Japan for interest and variety as a first posting. Greater challenges lay ahead. But that's another story – and despite enormous recent advances above all in communications, the essential pattern of diplomatic work has remained constant since those days of the 1960s.

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Explore our dark skies with talks from
astronomers, astrophotographers,
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CUMBRIA DARK SKIES festival 2021

Fri 5th - Sun 21st February

To book visit:
darkskiescumbria.org.uk



Crummock valley. Stars, Satellites. (Melbreak (R) with light pollution from Windermere)

Image: J Macfarlane

Cumbria Dark Skies Festival 2021
is a partnership of *Friends of the
Lake District*, *Cumbria Tourism*,
Forestry England and the
Lake District National Park.

Photo: Dave Wilson



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Live ONLINE events over 17 evenings in February give you the opportunity to explore Dark Skies with talks from Astronomers, Astro-photographers, Authors, Film-makers, Lighting & Design Professionals, Performers, Poets and Outdoor Adventurers



CUMBRIA DARK SKIES festival 2021

Fri 5th - Sun 21st February

Fri 5th February 7pm

Tristan Gooley: Wild Signs and Star Paths
Navigating using the stars is not complicated

Sat 6th 7:30pm

Terry Abraham: Life of the Mountains after Dark
Film and conversation with Terry Abraham

Sun 7th 7:30pm

Gary Lintern: Astrophotography

Night photos: getting the best from your camera

Mon 8th 7:30pm

Richard Darn: How photography changed our
view of the heavens for ever

Tue 9th 7:30pm

What Future for the UK's Dark Skies?

Bob Mizon, The Commission for Dark Skies

Wed 10th 5pm (Children's show)

LUiverse Planetarium Show

An immersive journey through astrophysics and space

Wed 10th 7:30pm

Dark Sky Imaging - Astrophotography basics

Jeremy Hunt, Cockermouth Astronomical Society

Thu 11th 7pm

Matt Gaw: Under the Stars

In conversation, the power of light

Fri 12th 7:30pm

Moving Nightscapes: Choreographing Nightfall

Ellen Jeffrey explores the night dancing in the dark

Sat 13th 7pm

Dr Martin Kitching: Creatures of the Night

Nocturnal wildlife; the challenges of light pollution

Sun 14th 7pm

Harriet and Rob Fraser: Under a single sky, our
spirits are starlight Poetry, stories and night images

Mon 15th 7pm

Good Lighting – Ask the Panel Q & A

Put your questions to the expert panel

Tue 16th 7:30pm

International dark skies for astronomical research

Prof. John Stott, Lancaster University

Wed 17th 7:30pm

Rethinking Places After Dark

Nick Dunn, Prof. Urban Design, Lancaster University

Thu 18th 7:30pm

Dark Skies: A Journey into the Wild Night

Tiffany Francis-Baker, author of 'Dark Skies'

Fri 19th 5pm (Children's Show)

LUiverse Planetarium Show

An immersive journey through astrophysics and space

Fri 19th 7:30pm

Heavens Above: Encounters with the Dark

Jonny Randall, Freelance Film/Theatre Maker

Sat 20th 7:30pm (Adult show)

LUiverse Planetarium Show

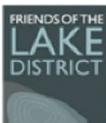
Exploring what you can see from the UK skies

Sun 21st 7pm

Phoebe Smith: Explorations Under the Stars

Photographs and inspiring stories

Cumbria Dark Skies Festival 2021 is a partnership of *Friends of the Lake District, Cumbria Tourism, Forestry England and the Lake District National Park.*



Cumbria Tourism



Photography credit: Dave Wilson.

**For bookings visit:
darkskiescumbria.org.uk**

Loweswater with Buttermere PCC
100 Challenge Club

The prizewinners for the draw held on 1st December 2020

1st prize of £25 No 100 Keith McNeil
2nd prize of £10 No 82 Alan Gane
3rd prize of £5 No 25 Frank Judd

The prizewinners for the draw held on 1st January 2021

1st prize of £25 No 4 Richard Kahane
2nd prize of £10 No 58 Zoe Thomson
3rd prize of £5 No 12 Edna Vickers

Congratulations to the winners and thanks to all our supporters.



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Could I please pass my thanks to all those who have written, called, phoned, helped and generally got in touch with me during and after Ann's recent illness.

Her treatment in the months up to Christmas was disrupted by Covid but not due to it. She passed away due to cancer, her life ending peacefully at home with her family around her on December 7th.

My thanks to the Castlegate Medical team and particularly to the District Nursing and Palliative Care nursing staff who attended her at home. Ann and myself also appreciated the charitable care offered by the Hospice at Home nurses, who also offered wonderful support to us both during her illness.

The funeral was of necessity a small affair and the limited number allowed meant we could not offer an open invitation, but it was a comfort to see so many people line the route at so many places between here and the crematorium. I thank you all.

A few printed copies of the Order of Service are still available if anyone would like one. I have posted a few photos and a link to the electronic version of the booklet on our web pages at www.loweswatercam.co.uk

Roger Hiley



MEMORIES OF THE LONE PINE ON LOW FELL

The two fine images in the Dec/Jan Link evoked lovely memories of a superb afternoon in high summer around three decades ago when Bob Sandwith asked me to go with him " t't owd tree up yonder". One of his favourite walks but, getting on in years, he knew that this would be his last climb. I did not need any persuading. I collected Bob from the village hall and we wandered off along Thackthwaite Lane to the footpath at Foulisye,sauntering through the wood to the start of the climb. It was quite a pull; we paused frequently for a breather and a good look round. There was plenty to see!

Heavy rain on the previous day had cleared the air and the visibilty was magnificent - so unusual for a day in midsummer. The surface of Crummock Water was a sheet of glass, the Gables- Grey Knotts ridge a profile of knife edge clarity. The silence was deafening. We took our time along the ridge,eventually seeking shade beneath the old tree. Sharing a bar of chocolate, we put the world to rights in very quick time and agreed that at that particular time on that particular day there was absolutely no other place on Mother Earth where we would rather be. Reluctantly, however, we retraced our steps.

Back at the village hall Nellie soon put the kettle on and produced a plate of her valley-famous "scyonns". A wee dram completed the refreshments and I was on my way home,another fine Lakeland walk safely in the memory bank.

And so my thanks to John Macfarlane and Roger Hiley for evoking the memory of a very special day.

Len Ball

THANK YOU TO THE MELBREAK COMMUNITIES

On Christmas Eve I received an unexpected gift. It represented all the qualities of what life in our community means. Not only was it delightful - beautifully packaged yummy treats - and a jolly card - but it was created and delivered by loving, caring, thoughtful people who knew that I live alone.

Jan Evans

One family of our wild animals, namely the Mustelids – includes the otter, pine marten, polecat, American mink, stoat and weasel the latter being the smallest carnivore in Britain. Each and every one of these species is fascinating in its own right but none is particularly easy to study. They are all inclined to be secretive, nocturnal and fast moving, a combination which is singularly unhelpful to the would-be observer. However, there are ways and means, and recent technological developments have provided us with improved methods for positive identification, such as the camera trap and DNA analysis.

In short, one species, the pine marten (*Martes martes*) is of particular interest these days for reasons which will become apparent. Pine martens, or “martens” as they are known, have a body length of about 18 inches, a tail of about 9 inches and weigh between 1 and 2 kilograms; they are brown in colour, apart from a pronounced white bib running down the chest.

(Therefore not to be confused with the rather smaller polecat which has a “mask” of two white rings, one around the muzzel and another just behind the eyes, and white ear tips too). However, appearance is unlikely to be particularly helpful because of the habits already mentioned, and also because martens tend to favour woodland and often the upper fringes of hillside woodland, which, at least in this area, is frequently rough country, typically bracken and/or heather covered rocky terrain which is tricky walking.

Similarly, the fact that the footprints of martens are distinct is seldom of much help, because the chances of finding sufficiently clear-cut imprints in such terrain are remote. Nevertheless, another factor comes into play which is far more helpful, namely the faeces or droppings, known as scats. The scats of each species of mustelid are fairly distinct so it is possible to say with some degree of certainty whether the scats are from say a pine marten or a polecat. Pine martens use their scats to mark their territories and they therefore quite deliberately place them in prominent positions, such as on tree stumps, the tops of ant hills, rocks, or tussocks such as those of giant woodrush. They are likely to return to such sites, so it is quite common to have something of a build-up. Typically, the individual scat is dark in colour, twisted, pointed at one end and very often heart shaped. They are 8-10cms long and 1.2cms wide. They have a distinctive musky smell. In addition to judging by appearances, scats may now be subjected to DNA analysis, which results in absolutely positive identification. Positive identification may also be achieved these days by the use of a camera trap, to record nocturnal activity. Mart dens are often in hollow trees or holes among tree roots or rocks, but they will

also use outbuildings or roof spaces at times and can be accommodated in large nest boxes or specially designed mart boxes.

Pine martens have been the subject of constant trapping and shooting by game keepers in times gone by, and became virtually extinct as a result except in Scotland, but they are now protected.

They have been the subject of considerable research in recent years, in Ireland, Wales and in England, where a three and a half year project was conducted by the Vincent Wildlife Trust, which specializes in this particular species. This produced evidence that the Scottish population of martens is now spreading slowly southwards again into Northumberland and Cumbria. The rate of increase in population is bound to be slow however, because martens do not breed until their third year and only have two to four kits per year. However, there is particular interest in the species these days, primarily because it has been found that their presence discourages the presence of grey squirrels, on which they predate, but not the reds, and can therefore be a very useful ally in restoring the red squirrel population. Should anyone suspect a pine marten is in the area and would care to let me know, I would be happy to investigate, and install a camera trap for confirmation.

Alan Gane.



ECO CHURCH/ECO COMMUNITY UPDATE

The Eco Church/Eco Community sub-committee has tried every month to implement an Eco-saving action - here are their top tips for you to try in 2021:

FEBRUARY - Change to LED lightbulbs - This is easy to do and as it will reduce your energy use, you should notice the difference on your energy bill. This is something you can do gradually when your current lightbulbs need replaced.

MARCH - Switching to a renewable energy supplier - Have you thought about changing your energy supplier to one that offers electricity from renewable sources?

APRIL - Source local produce - Did you know that food accounts for on average between 20% and 30% of our annual carbon footprint? This is mainly due to its manufacture and transport, so where possible source local produce. We are lucky to live where there is a lot of local produce on offer, and did you know that British farming produces some of the most sustainable meat in the world?

MAY - Do you need to take the car or could you walk or cycle? - When reaching for the car keys, especially for those local journeys, just think – could I walk or cycle? Not only does this help the environment but it helps keep us fit and healthy.

JUNE - Have you thought about getting a food waste digester for the back garden? - looking to reduce the amount that you put in the black bin? Getting a food waste digester could be the answer. Food waste digesters take all types of food waste, along with garden waste and turn your waste into compost which you can then use in the garden.

JULY/AUG - Install a water butt - Rather than reaching for the garden hose to water the garden, why not install a water butt to collect and put all our lovely rainwater to good use.

SEPT - Turn electricals off - Leaving electricals, such as the television, on standby needlessly uses up energy, so turn them off.

OCTOBER - Only boil what you need - Next time you go to make a cuppa, only fill the kettle with the water that you need (most of us are guilty of over filling). You will save water and reduce energy use

NOVEMBER - Think about packaging -

When doing your weekly shop, where possible choose products that are not wrapped in plastic – buy unpackaged fruit and veg, and opt for cans and cardboard that can be recycled rather than plastic packaging.

DEC/JAN - Turn your Christmas cards into next year's gift tags -

When it comes time to take the cards and decorations down, why not spend an hour or so cutting your Christmas cards into gift tags for next year.

We will tell you about Eco Church/Eco Community next steps in the March Link.

PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE VALLEY



It's been great to see so many photos featured in the Link over recent months, particularly when you can see them in full colour in the online version. I am not sure that many people know that you can share your local photos on the Melbreak Communities website? When I started to put the website together in 2011, I created a "Photos" page for pictures of Mellbreak itself and "others" and added a few of my own efforts to get it going. 10 years on, not many others have followed suite, although Rosamund and John Macfarlane have contributed quite a few.

Inspired by the photos of the lonesome pine in the last Link, I have added a new photos page dedicated to it and added ones for "Sunsets", "Reflections" and "Wildlife" with others possibly to follow. Unfortunately, it's not as easy as Instagram to get your photos online as you'll have to send them to Richard Easton (the current website administrator) or myself to upload them to the site. The Winter weather is a fantastic time for photography, the only problem sometimes being getting to where you want to take the photograph. Do get out there with your cameras or look through your archives and send your photos to either administrator@melbreakcommunities.org.uk or les@damsonghyll.co.uk.

Leslie Webb, Damson Ghyll, Loweswater. Tel: 01900 85609.

NSPCC

I have had several generous donations to the NSPCC in lieu of our usual carol singing and as a result, have been able to bank £250. I recieved a further £29 from the sale of jams and pickles. Many thanks to everyone for their support in these uncertain times.
Ann Hayton



(No room at the L inn k in the Christmas issue for the excellent reason that Rosemary received such a lot of items!)

Cooking is relentless. So easy to take for granted that the family chef produces tasty and nutritious meals day after day after day, such an effort to replicate if you cordially dislike the whole process (except the thankful, eating bit). Worse if you live alone.

For a start, the time estimates in recipes really should be the subject of Trade Descriptions Act prosecutions. It can take as long to assemble the kit, peel the spuds, hard-boil the eggs, flake the fish or make the sauce as the irritatingly cheery millionaire author shown grinning on the cover says is the time needed ~ from start to finish ~ for that 'easy, quick supper dish'.

And then there's the dreaded word 'meanwhile': I suppose hard experience of launching instantly into the answers to exam questions should have taught that it is a really, really good idea to read the question.

I suppose it helps if you already know what you're doing, which in turn of course suggests that doing it more often is an equally good idea.

And then there's Aga recipes ~ how on earth do you achieve a required oven temperature of 228.67 ° in a posh storage heater?

I jest, of course. My Aga-baked fish pie is renowned family-wide. Could do it with my eyes shut.

Thanks so much to all who love cooking.

Whatever Christmas means for you, in uneventful years and in this most peculiar year, I hope you can enjoy the festival. Can Spring be far behind Thankyou Rosemary for keeping the Link going during a crazy year. An excellent community binder.

Signature Dish

I reckon there's an Aga cooking gene,
A gift to make stupendous yummy pies;
A gift to make that tricky soufflé rise
And every day deliver haute cuisine.
You know, you should be famous for those lean
And sizzling steaks, a feast for hungry eyes
And palate. And those smells that tantalise ~
Such magic from a culinary queen!

Decided it was time to take my turn,
Immerse myself in Aga's magic way;
Acquire enough of arcane skills to boast.
And there has been so very much to learn;
But now at last my graduation day:
I give you now with pride my *Beans on Toast*.

John Scrivens

Lorton Winter Wonderland on Sunday 20th December

A big thank you to everyone who helped set up and joined in the Lorton Winter Wonderland.

The weather settled into a dry, sunny afternoon and we were thrilled at the turnout. Food and drink just about held out to 4 o'clock, as did our musical ensemble Penny Poole and Ann Peck, playing to great acclaim despite cold fingers.

Thanks are due to all on the committee: for procuring an excellent mulled wine; donating mince pies and sausage rolls; manning the refreshment stations from their camping vans; creating attractive, quirky advertising posters; to Santa Claus for interrupting a busy schedule to visit; and for a challenging quiz and snowmen to spot. Special appreciation to Andrew and Karen Nicholson for giving a fine tree; Pippa and Adrian McGuire, and Andrew Chamberlain for steadfastly keeping the tree upright, decorated and lit. Credit also to the team of talented artists who painted the windows of the Yew Tree Hall.

We are all grateful to our generous residents who made a tremendous effort to decorate their gardens and admire their neighbours', and to visitors who joined in the fun. We collected £825 and will send £275 each to our Community First Responders, the NSPPC and The Calvert Trust.

Yew Tree Hall Committee

National Trust New General Manager for North & West Lakes

I would like to introduce myself as the new General Manager for the newly merged portfolio of North and West Lakes, for the National Trust. This portfolio now covers an area from Borrowdale, Buttermere, Ennerdale, Whitehaven coast round to Wasdale, Eskdale and the Duddon valley. I have worked for The National Trust in the Lake District for the last nine years and have a great fondness for these valleys through enjoying walking, running and cycling with my family. I live in Penrith with my husband, two teenage children and two dogs and I look forward to getting out and about to meet our communities and understand the work we have to deliver collectively.

If you would like to get in touch please contact on jane.saxon@nationaltrust.org.uk



Father Christmas and the festive season ...in lockdown

Monologue by Ann Peck

Due to social distancing.....

1. Father Christmas may have to *drop* the presents down the chimney and miss out on his sherry and mince pie
(Altogether now ...a-h-h-h!)

A small price to pay for still giving children joy and glee (which rhymes with chim-ney)

2.The team of reindeers..(thinks)... I believe one of them is called Vixen -yes- *that's* his name

Maybe it could be changed to Vaccine ('That's a good idea -.....son!')

After all, the vaccine is going to be gold dust and compared with the old one, the new name's much the same.

3.As we know masks have become a fashion icon-Father Christmas's mask has pictures of sherry and mince pies on.

While on his travels north and south That's the nearest *they* will get to his mouth!

4. Who's in Father Christmas's bubble? Hope its not a witch with her "Bubble, bubble, toil and trouble"

How I wish it was I! We could feast *under one roof* on Xmas pud and mince pie.

5. For those who can only phone, it'll be just a hearty greeting, presents will be a-miss.

Treat Father Christmas and yourself instead ..With bottles of sanitiser and Dozens of bars of Pears soap

To fight *coved!*

6. For those in total isolation...Zoom and Skype will be the way forward

But....From your window... Nature calls: It will be ..nuts for the red squirrels, ..seeds for the longtail tits

For me the nuthatch is a big hit.

7. The Oxford Dictionary...like the queues outside the shops..Will be getting longer and longer

With vocabulary with new meanings: 'bubbles','furlough', 'super spreader', 'streaming'

Conversations do sound rather intriguing.

8."has your bubble burst?", " Is this a reality live show?", "Is this streaming?", "What is virtual reality?" are questions we ask.

They would have really perplexed , Even amused people in the past.

So its.....

9.Wash hands,....wash, wash, wash,

And sing, sing, sing:

'Happy Christmas to You

Happy Christmas to you

Happy Christmas to everyone

Happy Christmas to you'

Same old tune I'm afraid But then it is Jesus's birthday!

Final verse: Anyway..Xmas is coming, virus or not...

Lorton village and friends show plenty of resource

We 'party', skype and zoom..

Wishing everyone well and safe ofcourse.

Hopefully none of this will apply next Xmas! Better not!

Thanks

Ann Peck

DIARY DATES

FEB

- 9 Tue W.I. Zoom meeting at 2.30. Get Cumbria Buzzing Project
22 Mon Community Zoom Meeting. Rosie Watson: "Running from Loweswater to Mongolia" 7.00pm. See separate notice for details.

MAR

- 2 Tue Buttermere parish council meeting using Zoom platform 7.30pm
3 Wed Lorton parish council meeting using Zoom platform 7.30pm
4 Thur Loweswater parish council meeting using Zoom platform 7.30pm

LINK SUBSCRIPTIONS 2021 NOW DUE

I think you will all agree that The Link has been a real lifeline during the ongoing pandemic. So much so that we have included lots of extra copy and therefore printed a bigger magazine for many months. This has naturally caused an increase in printing costs, yet we have decided not to increase the subs this year. We therefore ask you to please pay your subs (with any additional donation you can afford) as soon as possible.

If you wish to continue with the Link this year (10 issues) , please note that the rate for postal subscribers is still £12 pa. and £5 for the copies the distributors deliver.

Please send your subs. (using the envelope provided) to the treasurer: David Walmsley, The Old Police House, High Lorton, Cockermouth. CA13 9UL; or give them to your distributor. Please write your name on the envelope.

For electronic payments to our Cumberland BS account then the account name is The Benefice Link Account, sort code 16-52-21, account no. 54167346, please identify the payment with your surname.

Thank You.

To all the wonderful friends in the valley and beyond.
I would like to say a big thank you for all the lovely cards of condolences for Les his passing. Les is now in a beautiful peaceful place near his beloved mountains.

Thank you very much from Loes van Cappellen.

Winter Wonderland Decorated Snowmen Poster





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Did you enjoy the recent snow in the valley ? Roger Hiley took the opportunity to get out with his camera and has beautiful, local snow photos from walks to Crummock and Loweswater on his web site :

http://www.loweswatercam.co.uk/210108_Winter_Wonderland_Crummock.htm



Deadline for March is Fri 19th February, all articles to lortonvalelink@gmail.com by this date.