

FEBRUARY 2026



THE UNITED BENEFICE OF LORTON AND LOWESWATER WITH BUTTERMERE

**£7.00 PER ANNUM (LOCAL)
£15.00 PER ANNUM (POSTED)**

Letter from the Editor

Dear Link Readers

For those of a technical persuasion I hope you will be impressed to hear that I am writing this letter and editing the publication from the laptop in the car (I'm not driving) while using the hotspot linked up to my phone - who knew!

You must all have spent the festive break planning the next round of social and community events in the Valley as evidenced by the number of posters and articles received. The first event taking place in February, on the 6th, is the ever-popular wine tasting in Loweswater Village Hall. David Robinson tells me there are still a few tickets left. Do contact him ASAP if you would like to attend.. See the poster on page 34 for further details.

The Malthouse Club is trying something new - a social evening in Yew Tree Hall on the last Friday of the month - starting on 27th February. We have details for 2 coffee mornings - a Valentine Special hosted by Greysouthen Young Farmers on 14 Feb and the second on 14th March hosted by Curlews and Hedgehogs (otherwise known as the Melbreak Wildlife Group). The Tennis Club has been rather quiet on the social scene of late - but on the 28th Feb they are hosting a Spring Quiz plus live music and a hot supper. For the more energetic among us there is a Ceilidh at Ullock Village Hall on 21st Feb - also with a hot supper. If that doesn't appeal there is an evening of music and entertainment at LVH celebrating the comic genius of

Flanders and Swann. I'm beginning to think February weekends will be a doddle on the catering front - if I ever did any cooking that is.

The 77 Club is hosting a talk about the history of Jennings Brewery and there is a Garrden Club talk about a local flower farm. We have a golden oldie showing at the film night - A Roman Holiday - and of course don't forget to pop along to the Community Lunch.

Speaking of communities - there are plenty of ways to get involved with information this month about the volunteer transport group, a balsam bashing working party, volunteers to watch out for Curlews and an appeal for a pen friend from a lover of our beautiful area and information about various initiatives by the Cockermouth Churches. Also with regard to the great place we live in we have included a letter from The Lake District National Park Partnership inviting us to have our say about the future.

To round things off we have our usual contributors for Penny's Piece and Nature Notes along with a report from Nev about the great head shave and various other updates and regular contributors.

Included with this Link you will find the application form for your 100 Club Numbers and keep your eyes peeled next month for details about Link subscriptions
Rosemary Riley

Our front cover photo this month is of Crummock taken from Low Fell taken by Roger Hiley



'I Vow to Thee, My Country' is a 20th century British hymn by Cecil Spring Rice, set to a melody by Gustav Holst. '*I vow to thee, my country, all earthly things above, entire and whole and perfect, the service of my love,*' go the words. '*And there's another country, I've heard of long ago, most dear to them that love her, most great to them that know,*' they continue. It's a staple at Remembrance Day services and more puzzlingly at weddings like that of Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer in 1981. It's something of a 'marmite' choice – some love it for its haunting melody and emotional appeal, others are critical of it because of the way it links the Christian faith to more dubious sentiments of national loyalty and patriotic fervour.

Land has been much in the news of late as the president of the United States has turned greedy eyes on the territory of other sovereign countries including Ukraine, Canada and most recently Greenland. While some countries including our own are still making reparations for the wrongs we have committed in the past, the enslavement of individuals, the decimation of native peoples and the appropriation of their resources, it almost feels as though a new era of ruthless oppression and colonisation may be about to begin. How do we balance the competing rights of peoples and nations which all in the end desire the same thing – freedom,

prosperity and security for themselves and their children who come after them.

For those who want the opportunity to reflect more deeply on these issues I can recommend, 'Engaging Theology in Cumbria', an online discussion forum which is open to all interested participants. This year they are running a programme of seminars entitled 'Faith, Fear and Flags' with a range of interesting speakers. Go here to find out more <https://engaging-theology-in-cumbria.org>.

Our next Grasmoor Mission Community Gathering Morning on Saturday 9th May will also be exploring this theme – why not put the date in your diary. Meanwhile a line from Psalm 24 that helps keep these matters in perspective for me. '*The earth is the Lord's and everything in it, the world and all who live in it.*' We cannot go far wrong so long as we remember this and pledge ourselves to act accordingly.

With God's blessing.

Jane Charman

Grasmoor Mission Community Leader

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

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

ULLOCK VILLAGE HALL



Cèilidh

With Barleyhop Band

Saturday 21st February at 7:15 pm

Hot meal served at 7:30pm

Adults £12.50 Under 16 £5

Tickets: Margaret on 01946861458
Helen on 07786016670



BYO drinks!



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Loweswater with Buttermere PCC
100 Challenge Club

The prizewinners for the draw held on 1st Dec 2025

| | | |
|------------------|-------|--------------------|
| 1st prize of £25 | No 26 | Bethany Meadley |
| 2nd prize of £10 | No 67 | Miles Davies |
| 3rd prize of £5 | No 9 | Christine Walmsley |

The prizewinners for the draw held on 1st Jan 2026

| | | |
|------------------|-------|--------------------------|
| 1st prize of £25 | No 84 | Revd. Margaret Jenkinson |
| 2nd prize of £10 | No 43 | Jim Mills |
| 3rd prize of £5 | No 35 | Chris Judd |

Congratulations to the winners and thanks to all our supporters.

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burrow-environmental.com





Our Burns Night celebrations in January was a complete sellout and hopefully exceeded everyone's expectations. The hall was suitably decorated and the menu suitably authentic, with Haggis and Neeps, Cranachan dessert and a wee dram to celebrate the toasts. The wonderful meal was prepared by Ann Parry and her team.

We were royally entertained by our Scottish Piper George, Ken who 'addressed' the Haggis, our singer and poets, Nial and Harry and also by our local Club members, Chris who proposed toasts to Robbie Burns himself, David who talked of the Valley Lassies and Sheila proposed the toast to the Valley Lads in return. A great evening all round. My thanks to everyone who helped make the night a success.

Following that, our next event has a more local connection, when Phil Tattershall will give us an illustrated talk on the Cockermouth Jennings Brewery and it's 200 year history. The company started in Lorton but eventually moved to the Brewery site next to Cockermouth Castle. Production ended some years back at the Cockermouth site, but has now been bought back to life and re-opened by . . . well come along and hear the full story. "Cheers" I think is the expression. The event is free to Club Members and guests are most welcome for a small charge. Contact myself for full details.

Roger Hiley
Loweswater 07740 461059

**An illustrated talk by
Phil Tattershall**

JENNING'S BREWERY
its 200 year history

Tuesday 17th February at 7.30pm
Loweswater Village Hall

Free to Members, £5 for guests
Contact Roger Hiley on 07740 461059



A Melbreak Communities Event
hosted by

Greysouthern Young Farmers Club



Valentine's Day
Saturday 14th February
(raising money for Club Funds- raffle)

£4

A
day to
cherish
friendship
and
family

**COFFEE
AND
CAKE**



at the
Yew Tree Hall,
10.00-12noon

(Please park responsibly)



A great new website has just been launched for Yew Tree Hall!

lortonyewtreehall.co.uk

The site is being developed by Rachael Jennings, a direct descendant of John Jennings who built the original malting barn in 1828. Renamed Yew Tree Hall in 1909, the new website will have details of all the clubs that use the hall, updates on the development project and much much more!

LORTON NOTES

I do hope you all had a happy and restful Christmas and New Year and enter 2026 with a feeling of anticipation. The Christmas Fair, held jointly between St Cuthbert's and Friends of Lorton School was, as usual, a great success - raising almost £3000.00. Sales of St Cuthbert's Christmas cards and calendars raised approximately £500 for the Church. Many thanks to all who supported us - we will be back this year.

Some of you may remember that I leave my Christmas decorations up until Candlemas on the 2nd February. Traditionally the Crib continues to be displayed in Church until this date and this year we decided to leave our wonderful tree in place too - I hope you enjoyed seeing it.

Receipt of Eleanors Notes reminded me that Lent starts during February and St Cuthberts will hold the traditional service on Ash Wednesday. We will also be holding a Lent Lunch in YTH on Wednesday 4th March - see the poster elsewhere in the Link.

Two of our congregation are currently enjoying a holiday in Tenerife and they sent me evidence, shown below, of how far the net of Eco Church (the environmental award scheme for which St Cuthbert's holds a Gold Award) has spread. I thought I would share this interesting fact with you all.



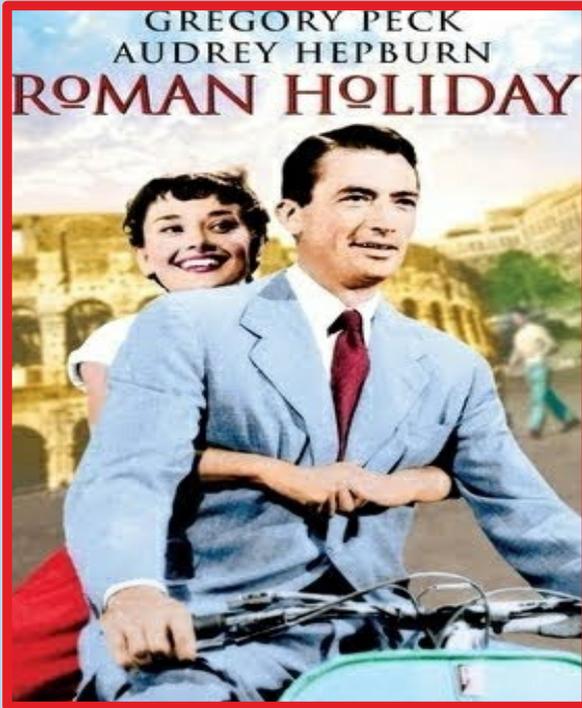
Many Years ago Lorton PCC created a Welcome Booklet full of useful information about the Lorton Vale and surrounding area. We have recently updated this and intend to distribute a copy to every house in the area (lilely to be parishes of Lorton, Loweswater, Buttermere and Blindbothel). Please contact me if you are willing to help with the distribution.

Rosemary Riley

P.S At the Harvest Lunch Auction in October last year someone bought a Linking Lives mug but then left it behind. Contact me to claim it.

LORTON FILM CLUB
at The Yew Tree Hall

Thursday 26th February
Bar opens 7pm - Film starts 7.30pm



£6

Oscars aplenty as princess Ann and pressman Joe slip away for a day of adventure and romance...





Fabulous Friday Social



Come and find us in the Supper Room, Yew Tree Hall

**Drinks, snacks,
games and chat
6.30-9pm**

STARTING FRIDAY 27th FEBRUARY

Last Friday of the month, social evening at Yew Tree Hall. High-quality banter, biscuits, barrel of laughs and drinks for every mood!

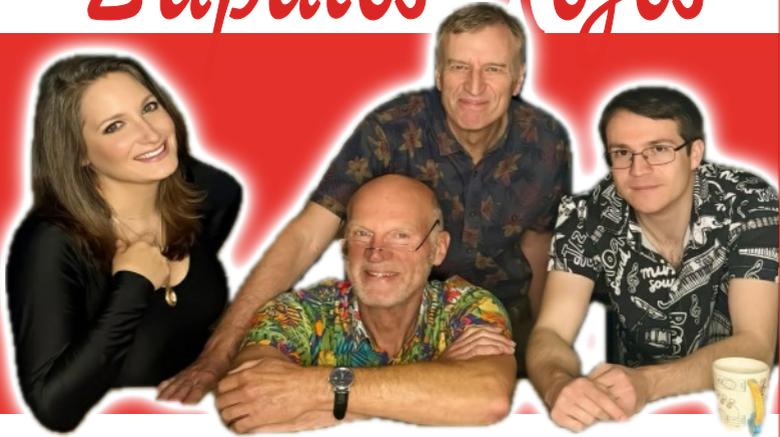
Lorton Tennis Club

Spring Quiz

Hot food and a cash Bar

with live music by

Zapatos Rojos



**Saturday 28th February
at Yew Tree Hall**

door open 6.30pm for 7pm start

TICKETS £15

**available from Julie Best
mobile 07803035446**

please park responsibly



LORTON 10K RACE



Fundraising for the Friends of Lorton School

Sponsored by:
Paramo

Saturday 18th of April 2026
at 10.00am
Lorton Primary School

Minimum age: 15.
All running abilities are welcomed.

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram
To enter visit: www.eventsupnorth.co.uk

Anyone from the community interested in volunteering
on the day with marshalling please contact
Catherine Armstrong via email at
catherine@terracefarm.co.uk



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Nature Notes - Habitat improvement at Strawberry How Farm



During autumn 2025, Cockermouth Climate Action Now (C-CAN) undertook a major project at Strawberry How Farm on the eastern edge of town. West Cumbria Rivers Trust (WCRT) had helped the young farmer, Hannah, apply for a grant towards restoring and improving the farm's hedgerows through the Countryside Stewardship scheme. This work forms part of WCRT's wider project in the Cocker catchment, since Tom Rudd Beck flows directly through the farm. C-CAN were asked to provide volunteer work parties to help plant the new hedgerows, and also - at Hannah's invitation - to plant standard trees every 20 metres or so.

In speaking to Hannah it is clear she is passionate both about farming (they have sheep and beef cattle) and also about helping wildlife to flourish on the farm. She has already fenced off a sizeable area of wetland. "It's impossible to drain it and the cows were always getting stuck in the mud" she told me. Hannah has also planted trees in existing areas of woodland using cactus guards, and the previous winter C-CAN planted small copses in a couple of areas of unproductive land at her request.

"We get all sorts of wildlife", said Hannah. "We see deer, pheasants, various ducks, oystercatchers, kingfishers, dippers, woodpeckers, swallows, barn owls, voles, wagtails and more". She hopes that, by restoring the hedgerows and planting trees, livestock will be provided with winter shelter and summer shade, and the farm will help to reduce flooding, enhance the landscape and provide habitat.

C-CAN organised nine working parties (some including members of Melbreak Wildlife Group), signing up volunteers at our autumn community lunch and repair café launch at Lorton Street Methodist church. The first two sessions had to be cancelled as the mild weather meant that the hedging plants could not be lifted, but by mid-November we were underway. There was an element of pressure since the funding required the work to be completed by the end of the calendar year. Luckily the weather was kind – only one session had to be postponed – and so on a series of weekends plus a couple of Wednesdays we had parties of anything from four to a dozen people of all ages out planting.

Thanks are due to Cockermouth Scouts who came to help with a couple of sessions, and also to the Rotary Club who joined in on one occasion. A big shout out too to the Woodland Trust who provided us with the saplings, stakes and tree guards to plant standard trees along the new hedgerows.

If you would like to see for yourself what has been achieved at Strawberry How Farm you need only take a stroll up the public footpath from Cockermouth to Slate Fell. Don't forget to take your binoculars – you never know what you might see!

Richard Watson



William Keith Campbell
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NOTES FROM ST BARTHOLOMEW'S AND ST JAMES'S

February already - it was nice to see so many people enjoying participating in our Carol services and other Christmas celebrations. Thanks to all who contributed to making these occasions so special, decorating the churches and particular thanks to Sue Ralph for the music and putting in so much work with the choir. Thanks also to John Scadding for coping with the Buttermere Carol requests.

February sees the start of Lent with Lent lunches, sharing soup, bread and cheese, and the Lent study group. Loweswater's lunch will take place on Wednesday 25th March. Dates for the study group haven't been decided yet and will be announced in church shortly.

We welcome some of the new residents in Loweswater namely the Fisher family who have come to live in Netherclose, Edna's granddaughter, and the Forbes family who will live in Kirkhead.

All around are the early signs of renewal with lengthening daylight, morning birdsong and of snowdrops. I conclude with a lovely

poem about the snowdrop by Kate McIlhagga a member of the Iona Community.

A green heart

Into a dark world
a snowdrop comes,
a benison
of hope and peace,
carrying within it
a green heart,
symbol of God's renewing love.

Come to inhabit our darkness
Lord Christ,
for dark and light
are alike to you.

May nature's white candles of hope
remind us of your birth
and light our journey
through Lent and beyond.

Eleanor Ella



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Looking for a pen-friend in Lorton Vale

A few months ago Loweswater Parish Council received an interesting call and follow-up letter from a lady who had recently visited Loweswater (from Sidmouth, on the south coast) for the first time. She has a keen interest in local history and would love to be able to share tales of country life - at opposite ends of the country - with a local pen-friend. (She is not on email or anything digital so letters would have to be posted!)

Might you, or someone you know, be interested in helping her do that? I have sent her a copy of last month's Lorton Link for her Christmas entertainment but I'm hoping that someone else might want to take up the baton in the New Year.

If you would like to do that, please drop me an email for her name and address.

Thank you, Lois
(community.chaplain.gmc@gmail.com)

Dear Mr Battrick

Further to my telephone conversation yesterday morning, I am wondering if you would be kind enough to give this letter to someone in the beautiful Loweswater area who might be interested in corresponding with me, perhaps a local farmer's wife or a member of the Women's Institute.

My family and I visited Loweswater in April this year. We enjoyed an excellent lunch at the Kirkstile Inn before going to your local country church. We then drove to Derwentwater for a short holiday and enjoyed every minute of it.

I particularly enjoyed looking at the old photographs of a farming family on display at the Kirkstile Inn. I live in Sidmouth, a pleasant Regency seaside town, fourteen miles from the cathedral city of Exeter.

Queen Victoria stayed in Sidmouth when she was a young child, and many years later she presented a splendid stained glass window to Sidmouth Parish Church in memory of her late father, the Duke of York.

We had our annual harvest festival at the parish church of St Giles and St Nicholas, Sidmouth, last Sunday, Sunday 28th.

When my daughter was small my husband and I spent a number of happy holidays in Sidmouth and used to enjoy all the nearby villages.

One of my interests is exploring old country churches. My daughter and her husband live in Oxfordshire, and my son-in-law is a bellringer at their local village.

With kind regards
Yours most sincerely



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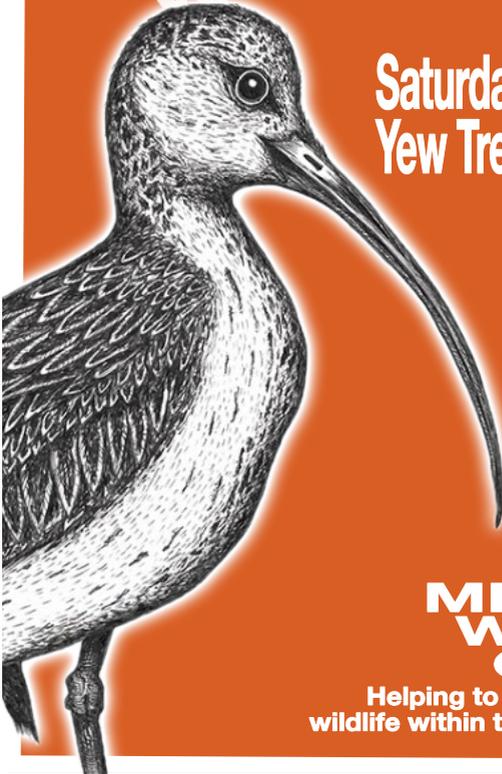


A Melbreak Communities Initiative



Coffee and Cakes ^{£4}

Saturday 14th March
Yew Tree Hall, 10.30-12.00



hosted by
**MELBREAK
WILDLIFE
GROUP**

Helping to support and celebrate
wildlife within the Melbreak Communities.

please visit Melbreak Communities website for details of forthcoming events

please park responsibly, thank you

The Dastardly Deed - Nev's Hair

There sat I with sweaty palms, bracing myself for Chelsea and her spinning wheels of steel. "What's was left" of the hair stood no chance of survival. The buzzer hummed a tune of follicle doom, my sinews tightened and contorted. Then came the reveal, the mirror's cold glare, on a dome buffed so bright, it gave Chelsea quite a scare!



Thank you one and all, this noble bald deed has raised £350 towards the funds that we need for the hall's redevelopment. Now, where is the plaque they promised? That gold-plated sign? - **"Nev's Hair Died Here So This Hall Could Shine."** To ensure this grand gesture I need your help to lobby the Redevelopment Committee for a golden plaque in the main foyer. or at the very least perhaps NEV's MEMORIAL WING .

Inscribed "Dedicated to the brave follicles of Nev's hair, which were selflessly surrendered in the Great Shearing of 2026. His hair fell so that these walls could rise. Please do not touch the plaque, it is already more reflective than his head".

As a part of the continuing fundraising, a Scalp Interaction Fee has been suggested..... **Gentle Pat: £2.00 or a High Five to the Dome £5.** Please note "Prized Offcuts" of these golden locks will be auctioned at the forthcoming Coffee Morning.



A Care and Maintenance Sheet provided by Chelsea, includes the following guidelines.... To maintain the Grand Gesture aesthetic appearance the head needs to be buffed to a mirror finish every morning. A soft microfibre cloth **or a very enthusiastic squirrel** is recommended.

On sunny days your head is classified as a Class 4 Laser Hazard. So, to prevent unacceptable dazzle, there's a requirement to wear a bobble hat featuring the Yew Tree Hall logo.

A final word of warning from Chelsea , *"you will be moving significantly faster in high winds. So on such occasions its advisable to wear Doc Martins Boots fitted with extra heavy metal trim, which will hopefully act as stabilisers".*



Loweswater Carols 2025 – in aid of NSPCC -



We enjoyed another round of Christmas Carols, organised in Lorton by Ann Roberts and by myself in Loweswater. As a result of collections made, we have been able to make a joint donation of £554.00p to the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (the NSPCC) to help fund child and family support projects here in the UK.

A big thank you to those that took part, to those who donated and to the many individuals and Loweswater Village Hall who offered hospitality on those cool evenings prior to Christmas.

Thank you Roger!

Your donation of £554.00 is helping build brighter futures for children and young people all across the UK.



STEP 1
Your details

STEP 2
Donation type

STEP 3
Keep in touch

STEP 4
Payment

STEP 5
Donation completed

Rob & Nick Steal, bungling burglar brothers, last job was a right botchH, ENjoyed their time off. They were recounting their last saGA, “TEamwork; we need to be better”, said Rob, after they’d had a right BARNey, just handBAGS really, about who was the better TWIN. “ENough” said Nick. “We don’t do weekendsS”. HE’D always liked a read of ‘The Tale of Peter RABBIT’ then. Rob said it was an opportunity they couldn’t keep P IGNoring. “We need that jeWEL. LIES have been told about it but I know where it is!”

“Where is it?” said Nick. “It’s in the fosSIL, Old, I mean, folks home in that well to do area where even the dogs live in CHIC KENnels.” Replied Rob. “How d’you know?” said Nick. “My girlfriend, Theve, overheard that the manager put it in the safe.” Said Rob. “So Theve told you did SHE? EPic.” Said Nick. “Theve’s very resourceful actually.” Said Rob. “The staff, the oldieS CARE CROWd, there’s less of them at the weekend”.

“Ok, let’s plan. But first, food.” Said Nick. “A bit of lollo rosso OR CHARD, Swiss, with an avocaDO Garnish and a paSTA BLEnded with baSIL, AGEd in the Italian way. It’s like a meal in a bisTRO.” “UGH!” Said Rob. “We’re hardened criminals! I don’t need a caFE EDucation.” “It’s brain FODDER” said Nick, “I’m always thinking.” “That’s TYypical” said Rob, “yes, always thinking... of food and drink, you could absorB ULLswater you drink so much.” “Let’s drive BY, REgard the layout, we can dROP Everything else.” Said Nick. “I also need a coffee. And I’d like to see Beatrix Potter’s house – I can have a moCHA IN SAWrey.”

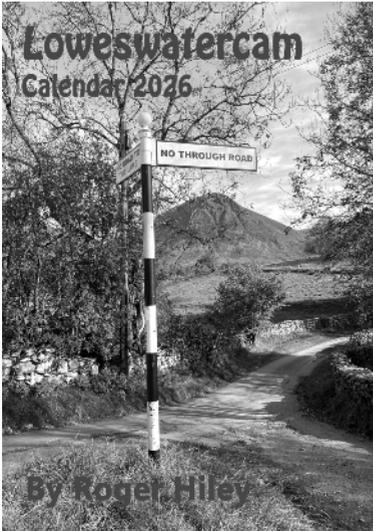
Friday night, the manager’s office. “A photo in front of the safe?” Whispered Rob. “No, I abHOR SElfies” Nick retorted, “it’s a heavy inSTALLation, open it up.” “I’ll use a bit of explosive that Theve got.” Said Rob. “ParDON! KEY!? You did bring it?” Hissed Nick. “I said opener,” mouthed Rob “I’ll use HER DYnamite; it’s ok, it’s miCRO.” “PSychic am I? HA! You said opener. What a fiasCO! Why did I agree to this, you’re a maniaC ROOkie!” Fumed Nick. Rob lit the fuse, a flash bang, the blaST RINGing in their ears, enough to deaFEN. CEment dust, clothes tattered, hair on end, “You’re *not* supposed to blow th bloomin’ door off!”

“Grab the jewel bag, to the car, get going!” Urged Nick. “Won’t start, we’ll have to geT RAC TO Recover it!” Exclaimed Rob. “Are you mad!?” said Nick, “Quick, escape in that dinghy, down the river COCKER, ELse we’ll attract laW, HEAT we don’t need. It’ll be prettY ARDuous!” Cold and dishevelled, they paddled off.

At Brewery Lane bridge, Constable McCuffs was waitinG UNder with a hook. “Evenin’ all” she said chuckling, “I’ll take that thank you. You look like pirates, look at your hair! Run a COMB IN EH!” “AR! VEST ERadicates cold” croaked Rob, “but mine got a bit charred”. “Nice try boys, idioticC AT best,” laughed Constable McCuffs, “you’ll be spending Christmas behind bars.” “Bah’s indeed. And humbugs.” Sighed Nick. Happy Christmas!

Out of the correct entries received, Lee in the shop drew out **Chris Winder** as the winner! Congratulations, a cup on its way! **Alex Baker** was 2nd and **Jane Cruickshank** was 3rd. The winner of the wooden spoon was **Sandra Meier**. Well done to everyone that got all 42 answers correct and many thanks to everyone who took part this year!

The Loweswatercam Calendar 2026



After another successful year, I was able to donate £650 to the chosen charities of Mountain Rescue and Air Ambulance. *With some match funding and gift aid that equated to **£900.00p** to our Cumbrian Rescue Charities.*

Full details on my web page
https://www.loweswatercam.co.uk/2026_Calendar_Results.htm

Many thanks to all who made this possible, by buying the calendars on-line or via Lee and Arwen in the shop in Lorton.

Meditation Group

Some may be aware of our meditation group which has been taking place in my home, Whiteside, Lorton for four years now.

Others, new to the valley, may not be, so I am writing to extend an open invitation to anyone who would like to join us. We meet every Thursday morning beginning at 9.30 am with contemplative music, readings (from a variety of wisdom sources) and a period of silent meditation and ending with coffee and chat.

I think I can speak for all of us when I say that we go home enriched and encouraged.

We live in turbulent times and each of us also experiences our own personal crises and challenges. We long for peace.

I believe this peace is not something we can earn or something we lack, but a sacred treasure already within us, waiting to be discovered. A contemplative practice such as meditation is one way of discovering this.

It is transformative, not just for our own lives but for the world around us, deepening our awareness and compassion and energising our care for each other and our precious world. It is a path to peace, community and oneness, a way of clearing a space to encounter the divine nature of life.

Do get in touch if you would like to explore this further or come along and share the silence and companionship with us.

Sue Pexton
07864 165037

Loweswater Village Hall



Magnificent Melbreak Showcase

Saturday March 7th - 7.30pm

Come and enjoy an evening of entertainment, showcasing the talented performance skills from within our own community:-

* Music and Songs *

* Stories and Recitals *

* Novelty Acts and Comedy *

£5 Entry, at the door - to include refreshments. Performers free

Licensed Bar from 7.00pm & at the interval

loweswatervillagehall.co.uk

Charity Number 526856

Lorton Lent Lunch

(Money raised is in aid of church funds)

Wednesday 4th March
Yew Tree Hall, Lorton



Enjoy homemade soup
with bread, followed by
cheese and biscuits

Served 12-2.00pm

**Please come and enjoy a simple
meal in the company of friends**



New Project!



Community Balsam Bashing Group

We need volunteers – would you like to join up?

First Meeting Yew Tree Hall Thursday February 19th 7:30pm



Good news! West Cumbria Rivers Trust has secured Lottery funding to help us set up a Community Balsam Bashing Group. We will meet each week from about June onwards to tackle this invasive species which damages watercourses and wildlife. Many people have noticed the recent huge spread in the valleys.

Izzie Mullin (WCRT) will be speaking about invasive non-native species affecting our area, including Himalayan balsam and mink and how they can best be dealt with. See the poster in The Link.

This will be followed by explaining how the Community Work Group will operate and information for **volunteers** who would like to sign up - the more the better! We are also looking for 6 people who could receive strimmer training in April. Please contact Debbie about this.

Come to the free talk and meeting to find out how you can help.

Refreshments provided!

Contact: Debbie Watson beech.lane35@yahoo.co.uk

Glenis Postlethwaite glenis@borderhydro.co.uk

WEST CUMBRIA
RIVERS TRUST

The Melbreak Communities

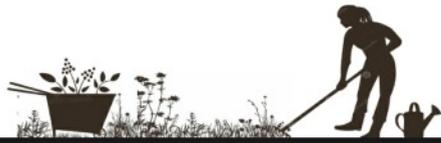
Invasive Non-Native Species in the Cocker Catchment

Thu 19 February, 7.30pm
Yew Tree Hall, High Lorton, CA13 9UQ

INNS are animals or plants that have been introduced and now pose a threat to the environment, people or economy.

We invite you to join us and hear about West Cumbria Rivers Trusts work on mink and learn how you can get involved in the fight against Himalayan balsam.

A presentation by West Cumbria Rivers Trust INNS Project Officer Izzie Mullin followed by Q&A.



Winter Programme of Talks

The Fellside Flower Farm

The Fellside Flower Company is a family run farm growing British seasonal flowers, wildflowers and foliage in Lohg Marston, near Appleby..



Emma Greenshaw

Thursday 5th February
Yew Tree Hall at 1.30pm

please park responsibly, thank you

Loweswater Ladies December & January Report

In December, we met for our Christmas Dinner at Hundith Hill. This was open to members, partners and friends and was well attended and enjoyed by all. Our thanks to the staff for a delicious meal and excellent service.

Our January meeting was also the AGM with nomination of officers for the year.

Our Chairman, Jenny, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Loweswater Ladies had a successful year in 2025 with new members and guests attending the meetings. The Cream Teas were popular as in previous years. Jenny thanked the bakers and customers for their continued support. Loes and Eleanor were thanked for organising the programme. The Summer Outing to Levens Hall was well attended, with sunny weather and a delicious lunch!

The Treasurers report was given by Lyn, detailing a financial year with increasing

membership, guests, cream teas and raffles adding to funds. Lyn also thanked Val for giving her time free of charge.

Subscriptions were taken for the coming year and the new Programme handed out. If you would like to join us, as a member or occasional guest, please contact Jenny on 01900 85980.

Following the AGM, a selection of Board/Table games, old and new, were played (and thoroughly enjoyed!). Some of us had forgotten how much fun they can be! Looking forward, our Birthday Dinner at the Kirkstile Inn will be on 11th February 2026 – 6.30pm for 7.00pm. Names and menu selections to Jenny or Lyn please.

Sue Severs - Secretary

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Penny's Piece

Finally, I have a new pair of binoculars! This means I can see more than a brown blob in a tree. True, it might turn out to be difficult to definitively identify which bird it is, what is known as a little brown job-LBJ, but at least now I can see if it has a funky eyebrow or flash of colour on it somewhere. Combine it with Merlin (the bird app not the wizard) and it is quite exciting. The other bonus of these binoculars is star-gazing. The cold weather at the start of the year and the full moon provided some excellent views of the night sky. True, I wasn't out long as I would have needed to wear half of my wardrobe to be out longer than ten minutes. It slightly blew my mind how clearly I could see the craters on the moon- especially since I have just spent half a term teaching about the Space Race of the 1960s and the first moon landing. Then I turned my gaze to Jupiter. Previously this was a bright smudge but now I can see some of the moons. If you want awe and wonder or just to marvel at the world, get some good binoculars and look up, day or night. Remember, the key to seeing any of the meteor showers, if we have clear skies, is to get your sun lounger out. You can look up without hurting your neck or accidentally falling over and you are sat down. Always a bonus.

My other big win of Xmas was socks. Specifically thick, long, woolly socks. If I choose the right top, on cold days it is only my knees to top of calf that only has a one-layer covering. Toasty.

Can we talk about 'classic' films? Things like Ben Hur, Cleopatra, Gone with the Wind etc. I sat and watched, for the first time, the whole of Lawrence of Arabia (I was doing a jigsaw at the same time). I appreciate that the cinematography is truly epic, but why are all these films so long? Once I've seen a two-minute panoramic sweep of an expanse of sand, do I need more of these throughout the film. I get it. He's in the desert. The continual presence of sand in the background and the fact they are often on camels maintains this fact. The same with Life is Beautiful. For some reason we decided to watch the unabridged version. Again, chunks could have been lost without losing the message- the abridged version probably does this. After I had finished Lawrence, I did a bit of googling to find out more and ended up becoming a right nerd. I discovered The History Guy on YouTube and watched a 40-minute video where he tore the film to historical shreds. Very informative if you like that kind of thing and it

also made me wonder. An agreement was made with the Arabs about what to do with the land at the end of that war. But in between Britain and France signed a Treaty to divide it differently. I wonder if they had not, and the agreement up-held, if the Middle East would be at war now? Somewhere down this rabbit hole the way I also found the Map Men. They have some great videos and I particularly enjoyed one about the counties of England- especially the fact that there is no South Yorkshire and what is the point of Rutland? They have one about twinned towns and cities I need to get around watching. I know Cokermouth used to have a good link with Marvejols in France (probably still does) but other places do seem a little random. How does all that come about? Do towns send an attaché from the council to try to present the place as lovely (Siddick?) in the hope the potential twin likes the sound of it? What do places actually get out of it? In the past I could see it as valuable for trade or I would understand it if it was a twin with the place of the same name somewhere else in the world. I think Whitehaven would love to be twinned with Whitehaven Beach in Australia. I'm not sure there would be a winner between Birmingham here and Birmingham Alabama but you never know. Perhaps they nominate an area and just stick a pin in the map and then send the place a letter saying they are now a twin. I suppose it is the same as Pen pals. How did the first contact with a school in France or Germany happen? Was it directly linked to the wars/ post war years? Did it all happen from as far back as the wealthy going on their grand tours? Or even from when we first deported criminals to Australia? Who knows. But even though communication hundreds of years ago could take months, we have still been communicating round the world all this time. It blew the kids minds when I told them President Nixon on earth spoke to Neil Armstrong on the moon. A few weeks ago, we joined a webinar with scientists in Antarctica, which is so much better than listening to me and they see the place in real time. This is technology at its best.

Talking of technology. I you want to book tickets for Arts Out West 'Another drop of a hippopotamus' please email: loweswaterevents@gmail.com or phone 07766888102- not the landline number as it won't exist soon. Cheers, Penny.



SAVE OUR CURLEWS

Volunteers Needed



You can make a difference

Whether you can give 5 mins or 5 hours!
Outdoors or from home! Use existing skills and learn new ones!
Make new friends and be part of a community!
Help Curlews thrive in the Cocker Valley and beyond.



Find out how...

YEW TREE HALL
Monday 9th March
at 7-9pm

(Free event and buffet)

To help us plan the evening, please let us know if you're likely to attend. And if you can't come along but want to find out more, contact Karen for further details. karenbatrick@live.co.uk

An initiative of the Melbreak Communities



Valley Wheels - Transport for locals (Formerly Melbreak Wheels)



***Anxious about night driving? Has your car gone in for service and you need a lift?
Don't have a car? We can help!***

Thank you to volunteers, Melbreak Wheels WhatsApp group has been running very successfully this winter. We are changing the name to **Valley Wheels** and it will now run as an informal locals group (separate from Melbreak Communities for insurance purposes.) Nothing else changes! The aims are to:

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

Update – We now have 26 in the group. People who needed a lift have posted on the group and volunteer drivers have responded. Creative lifts this winter were recycling trips to the tip and also collection of fish from Maryport! Shared car trips to cinema and theatre were fun. Icy road updates from different parts of Buttermere, Loweswater and Lorton valleys have been very helpful.

Minibus – Lorton School has a minibus that could be hired for trips and regular journeys - arrangements ongoing. **Please contact me if you would like to become a trained driver.**

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

Buttermere Hydro

This is to let you know that due to continuing legal problems for the landowners involved in the hydro project, we will be unable to secure the right of access over land for the scheme. So we have had to take the decision to close down the project and in due course dissolve our Community Benefit Society, Melbreak Community Energy.

This is very sad for all of us in the hydro group, having been working hard for the project for a number of years. We are very grateful to everyone who has supported us. On the positive side, the beck is still there and the project is still financially viable. So there is always the possibility it could be revived in the future.



COMMUNITY LUNCH DATES

February and March

February 9th

March 9th

Lunches held at Lorton School
Served promptly at 1.15pm. Everyone is welcomed

Booking essential
call Helen on **07790 459064**

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



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COMING UP FOR SPRING IN THE COCKERMOUTH CHURCHES

Wednesday 25 February to Wednesday 20 May, Christ Church Cockermouth

Caring for the Carers, Family & Friends Hub

Led by professionals from the NHS Mental Health Team

1pm-3pm on Wednesday afternoons. Free peer support, information sharing and skills sessions on different topics, week by week, for anyone supporting anyone else with mental health issues.

For more info: www.cntw.nhs.uk/services/family-and-friends-hub/

Saturday mornings in March and April (tbc), Christ Church Cockermouth

Skills for Community Volunteering training sessions

Run by Grasmoor Mission Community and partner agencies.

Sponsored by Cockermouth Town Council

Topics including: Digital Inclusion, Mental Health Support and Listening Skills

For more info: www.grasmoormc.church/community

Saturday 21 March, Cockermouth URC

Drop-in Launch of the Cockermouth Community-Led Plan Process

10am-2pm, with activities, information stalls and artwork from local schools on:

Getting Around, Living Here, Our Environment and Work and Play.

Drop in any time to find out more and share your hopes and fears for the future of Cockermouth.

For more info: www.cockermouth.org

Tuesday 31 March to Thursday 2 April, Christ Church Cockermouth

New Easter Holiday Club for Reception to Year 5

Run by Churches Together in the Cockermouth Area

Creative activity sessions from 9am-12pm during Easter week.

For more info: www.staidanscumbria.org/holidayclub

There is currently a consultation about the Lake District National Park Partnership Plan which is a consultation on the future of the Lake District.

The Lake District National Park Partnership would like to hear from you as they develop their 5-year Partnership Plan — the joint management plan for the Lake District National Park and World Heritage Site. Whether you live here, work here, or visit, your views will help shape priorities for the Lake District over the next five years.

Complete the short survey and you'll also have the chance to enter a prize draw to win a £100 voucher, redeemable at one of the following:

Honister Slate Mine

Keswick Brewery

Coniston Boating Centre

Hawkshead Relish

(T&Cs apply)

Find out more and take part here:

<https://www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/PartnershipConsultation>

Meet in person:

The Partnership Team have already held three Partnership Plan roadshow events — at Muncaster Castle, the Marchesi Centre Windermere, and Keswick Tourist Information Centre — which provided great opportunities to engage with a wide range of audiences about the Plan and the consultation.

If you have any questions about the Partnership Plan or the consultation, please contact: PartnershipPlan@lakedistrict.gov.uk

Thank you for your support and for helping shape the future of the Lake District.





loweswatervillagehall.co.uk

Thank you to everyone who joined us for a festive Christmas Gathering on December 16th. A good number turned out for heartening food, warming mulled wine, a pre-Christmas chat and some rousing carols.

Our Spring offering from Art Out West on Saturday February 21st brings a light-hearted and nostalgic perspective, with a performance of "At the Drop of Another Hippopotamus" by two local musicians and performers Bob Pritchard and Mike Ames. This celebration of the comic genius that was Flanders and Swann will take you back to memories of The Gnu, The Gasman Cometh, A Transport of Delight, not forgetting the unforgettable chorus of "Mud, Mud, Glorious Mud" from The Hippopotamus Song and many more! Suitable for all ages, so whether you're old enough to remember the golden lyrics and music first time around or young enough to learn them from new, come along to this magical sing-along evening. For full details please see the poster in this edition of the Link. Tickets are available from Penny on 07766 888102.

Following the success of our first Magnificent Melbreak Showcase, where we were delighted to discover the varied and sometimes hidden performance talents from within our own community, we are very pleased to be presenting another Showcase on Saturday March 7th. If you can play a musical instrument, sing, dance, act or perform, either on your own or with a group of friends or class mates, we would love to hear from you. If you would like to take part, please contact Val Bell on 07918 882175. For full details please see the poster in this edition of the Link.

Once again it is our pleasure to invite you to treat Mum to the Mother's Day Afternoon Tea on Sunday March 15th. Mums, with families of all ages are invited to enjoy a sumptuous, traditional afternoon tea in stunning surroundings. Advance bookings only. This is a very popular event, so book early to secure your table. For booking details please see the poster in this edition of the Link.

Details of all events are also available on our website, (loweswatervillagehall.co.uk), and Facebook page.

Loweswater Village Hall Committee will be holding its Annual General Meeting on Wednesday March 18th at 7.30 in the village hall, to which members of the community are warmly invited. An agenda for the meeting will be posted on the village hall notice board and website before the meeting.



**Bob Ditchard and Mike Ames
present**

AT THE DROP OF ANOTHER HIPPOPOTAMUS

**celebrating the comic genius
of**

FLANDERS & SWANN



Loweswater Village Hall



Saturday 21st February

7:30 start, doors at 6:45pm

Tickets: Adult £12, U18 £6, Family £25

loweswaterevents@gmail.com tel: 07766 888102.

Light refreshments at interval and licensed bar.

Yes, the Hippo will be there, as well as the Gnu, the Spider and the Whale, slow trains, transports of delight, cannibals, songs of protest and ballads of unrequited love.

Loweswater Village Hall: Registered
Charity No.: 526856





**Treat Mum to a sumptuous
Mother's Day Afternoon Tea
Sunday March 15th - 2.00 to 4.00**



**At Loweswater Village Hall
Adults - £15, Under 11s - £8
Why not add a glass of Prosecco!**



Advance Booking Only

To book your table, please contact Lyn Furniss on 07970 218239

or alloyslyn@btinternet.com

loweswatervillagehall.co.uk

Wine Tasting - 10th Anniversary

7pm Friday 6th February 2026

Loweswater Village Hall

Finger buffet to accompany

Reservation required

£17 per ticket, available from

David Robinson

0190085234 david@loweswater.net



Proceeds to Loweswater and Buttermere churches

DIARY DATES

FEB

- 6 Fri [Loveswater Village Hall - Wine Tasting](#) - David Robinson LVH 7pm
- 5 Thu [Lorton Garden Club](#) YTH 1.30pm. Talk by Emma Greenshaw! Fellside FlowerFarm.
See poster
- 7 Sat Recording Nature Workshop. YTH 9.30am to 1.30pm
- 9 Mon [Community Lunch at Lorton School](#) - Lorton served 1.15 pm prompt
- 14 Sat [Coffee and Cake](#) YTH 10am to 12 noon. Hosted by Greysouthen Young Farmers. See Poster
- 17 Tue [Loveswater 77 Club](#) talk - Jennings Brewery - LVH 7.30pm
- 19 Thu [Balsam Bashing Talk](#) - YTH 7.30pm
- 19 Thu Crafternoon - LVH 2-4pm. All welcome.
- 21 Sat [Arts Out West](#) - Celebrating Flanders & Swan - LVH 7.30pm
- 21 Sat Wildlife Data Recording Workshop hosted by Melbreak Wildlife Group & Cumbria BioDiversity Centre. YTH 9.30am - 12.30am
- 26 Thu [Lorton Film Club](#) "Roman Holiday" YTH at 7.30pm. See Poster
- 27 Fri [Malthouse Club 'Friday Social'](#) 6.30 to 9pm. See Poster.
- 28 Sat [Spring Quiz & Live Music Evening](#) YTH 7pm Lorton Tennis Club all welcome . See Poster

MAR

- 4 Wed [Lent Lunch](#), YTH, 12 noon - see poster
- 4 Wed Lorton Parish Council meeting 7.30pm YTH
- 5 Thu Loveswater Parish Council 7.30pm Loveswater Village Hall
- 5 Thu Cumbria's First Farmers, L&DFLHS talk, 7.30 pm, YTH
- 7 Sat [Magnificent Mellbreak Showcase](#) - LVH 7.30pm
- 9 Mon [Melbreak Wildlife Group 'Volunteers' meeting](#) - Save our Curlews YTH 7-9pm See Poster
- 9 Mon [Community Lunch](#) at Lorton School, promptly at 1.15pm. See Poster
- 11 Wed Loveswater Ladies - LVH 7:15pm - Walking Pilgrim trail in Japan
- 14 Sat [Coffee and Cake](#) YTH 10.30 to 12. Hosted by Melbreak Wildlife Group. See Poster
- 15 Sun [Mothers Day Tea](#) at Loveswater Village Hall - LVH 2 pm
- 17 Tues Loveswater 77 Club Lunch meeting & talk - Hunday Manor 12.30pm
- 19 Thu Crafternoon - LVH 2-4pm. All welcome.
- 25 Wed Lent lunch, LVH, 12 noon
- 27 Fri Malthouse Club 'Friday Social' 6.30 to 9pm. See Poster.

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

Communities diary page - www.melbreakcommunities.org.uk

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

The United Benefice of Lorton and Loweswater with Buttermere

Church Services February 2026

| | | |
|---|--|----------------------|
| 1 st February 4pm | Candlemas Candlelight evensong (BCP) and celebration of Barbara's licensing | Loweswater |
| 8 th February 10.30am 3pm | 2 Before Lent Morning Prayer Holy Communion | Lorton Buttermere |
| 15 th February 10.30am | Next before Lent Holy Communion | Loweswater |
| 18 th February 7pm | Ash Wednesday HC and Imposition of Ashes | Lorton |
| 22 nd February 10.30am 3pm | Lent 1 Holy Communion Evensong | Lorton Buttermere |

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



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MARTIAL ARTS

Deadline for March is Friday 20th February all articles, photos(especially for the front cover), funny stories, letters to lortonvalelink@gmail.com by this date. Thank you

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