

The Stanegate

Newbrough, Fourstones, Warden
and surrounding hamlets

Update from the Editors.....

To confirm, with effect from the May edition a limited number of printed copies of The Stanegate will be available at locations throughout the parishes, as indicated below:

SETTLINGSTONES :

by the notice board at the Settlingstones road end

ALLERWASH :

by the finger post road sign at the end of Church Lane

NEWBROUGH TOWN HALL : by the blue entrance door

NEWBROUGH C of E SCHOOL : by the door to main reception

FOURSTONES FILLING STATION :

to the right of the entrance door and also a small supply in the shop

EAST FOURSTONES bus shelter

WARDEN : by the door at Natural Therapies, Warden Chapel

Please don't forget, copies are also available in glorious technicolour on the village website : www.fourstonesdandnewbrough.co.uk

Several members of the community have kindly asked if they can make a donation or subscribe annually to Stanegate. Thank you. This is possible either by cash to a member of the Editorial Team, or bank transfer:

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Please send material or correspondence to the editorial team

Janice Baylis, Dave Spearman, Sophie Straker & Chris Tolan-Smith

at

thestanegate@hotmail.com

**the deadline for the May issue is
Friday 12th April 2024**

Reminders.....



**Nursery places
available for 3 year olds from April**
Mondays 7.45am – 4.30 pm
Wednesdays/Thursdays 7.45am – 5.30pm
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Recipes

If there are any recipes that you would like to share
or if you would like a suggestion for a recipe,
please contact Iain Bennett via e-mail at
iain-bennett@orchardkitchen.co.uk.

Calendar of Events

APRIL

- 9th Messy Vintage,
Methodist Chapel, 2.30pm
- 11th WI monthly meeting
Town Hall, 7pm
- 12th Methodist Chapel
Coffee morning,
11am – 2pm
- 18th Quiz at the Town Hall
7.30pm for 8pm
- 21st AGM of the Parochial
Church Council of Warden
with Newbrough (see p21)
- 22nd Earth Day (see p17)
- 26th Methodist Chapel
Coffee morning
11am - 2pm
- 26th Film Night at the
Town Hall
'A Private Function'
(see p8)
- 27th April–6th May
Haltwhistle Walking
Festival (see p3)

Bonus Ball Draw

FEBRUARY

3rd	Mr Weaver	46
10th	Tom Gradwell	34
17th	Kenny Robley	43

MARCH

2nd	Barry Dixon	28
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An apology from the Editorial Team

**The clocks most definitely spring forward at 1am
on Sunday 31st March**

Newbrough Cricket Club - Season 2024

Wes Foot

After nine months of what feels like permanent rain, a brief dry spell (otherwise known as Summer) is on the horizon. This can mean only one thing, that village cricket is back.

Newbrough Cricket Club had an amazing season last year reaching the Division 2 Cup Final and winning Club of the Year at the West Tyne League Awards.

New players, are always welcome, so come down on a training night and join in if you fancy giving it a go. Adult training (minimum age 13+) has started and normally takes place on a Tuesday night at 6.30pm down at the ground.

We are also looking for cricket enthusiasts of all ages to help run the club and make the 2024 season the best yet. Please email newbroughcricket@gmail.com if you can help with any of the following:-

- Playing
- Umpiring
- Scoring
- Grounds Maintenance
- Committee Members

For our younger members, our ever popular All Stars cricket programme (5 - 8 year olds) will be running again this Summer and we are also looking to run a Dynamos cricket programme for older children (8 - 11) although this will be dependent on numbers. Booking opens for both these programmes on 3rd April, so just visit <https://www.ecb.co.uk/play/> to get started.



The Mossy

It's good to report that work along the Mossy is now finished and appears to be a great improvement in terms of eliminating flooding.

Haltwhistle Walking Festival 27th April—6th May 2024

Information available via
www.haltwhistlewalkingfestival.org



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On World Book Day this year, each of our classes focused on a book, and the children had the option of dressing up as characters from their book. We had a really great day as Clare from Cogito Books in Hexham came into school and ran a pop up bookshop for us (with assistance from our Y5 and 6 children) as well as reading each class a story. We were also able to watch talks by different authors and illustrators and take part in lots of book- related activity.

Children in Nursery and Reception focused on the story 'Hamilton's hats' and made their own fantastical creations ; Class 2 read 'The Storm Whale' and dressed up as cats or whales or the little boy in the story, while Class 4 did an amazing job with some of them dressing up as melting arctic sea ice linked to their book, 'the Last Polar Bear'!

Our Year 3 and 4 children were reading 'The adventures of Sinbad' and so we had a myriad of mythical (and sometimes scary) sea creatures plus pirates and sailors in school. They then began to plan and write their own adventure for Sinbad. Although these aren't finished yet, I've been so impressed by their brilliant work that I decided to share some extracts with you.

" I lived for a while, enjoying the benefits of luxury. Before long, I felt the familiar longing for adventure so one fine day, I set off for port. It was not long before I discovered there was a first class ship docked at port. Travelling by sea was another enjoyment I had missed. The joy of the sun on my back; seeing the animals play in the waves. It was not long before the captain cried "Land ahead!" "

Jackson (Y3)

" Longing for adventure, I decided to feast my eyes on a ship that was worthy enough for a relaxing yet luxury voyage. Little did I know that it was not going to be the voyage I dreamed of. So far my voyage was going smoothly. After that, I ventured on deck, yet that was better than the galley. It was glorious- the sea shimmering and

gleaming and clear, blue water gently lapping against the clean galleon. The titanic vessel towering over the waves. I decided to sunbathe. All I could hear was the gulls, the sea and the ship. All of a sudden the lookout shouted "Land Ahoy!". I immediately looked up. Before me I spotted a lush, open isle nor did I know it was actually trouble! "

Jack (Year 4)

" The sea was as clear as diamonds, the sun as bright as a daffodil blooming. 'Land ahoy!' the lookout chanted. It looked like paradise. But little did I know what awaited us..

As I waded to the shore, I could already taste the fresh, ripe fruit. The sand on the beach felt as soft as a bean bag; the mountains were immense, green and tall. There was an extensive forest.. "

(Evie Y3)

" As we were on our way to weigh anchor, the sea turned and was suddenly dashing billows and monstrous waves. When we got closer, I saw it- it was paradise but little did we know what awaited us... Desperate to step on still land, I waded through the cool shallows and clambered ashore. It was beautiful; there was juicy fruit , colourful flowers, a lush green forest and best of all, there were waterfalls. Waterfalls so crystal clear you could drop a rock in the water and watch it fall to the bottom. "

(Thea Y4)

I don't know about you, but I can't wait to find what awaits our intrepid adventurers on their beautiful islands.

Maybe in future years, some of the Newbrough children will be among our featured authors on World Book Day- it wouldn't surprise me!

If you want to find out more about our wonderful school, you are always welcome to give us a ring and come and visit. We currently have places available for nursery children (from 3 years old) after Easter.

Jo Trotter
Head Teacher

Warden Parish Council (WPC) meeting held on Monday 4th March 2024 in Newbrough Town Hall

A parishioner had reported concerns regarding the A69 junction at Two Mile Cottages to Guy Opperman MP, and National Highways. NH to carry out an inspection and hold a public meeting. Although the junction is outside of the parish it was agreed that it would be beneficial if Warden Parish Council was represented at the meeting as the majority of residents use the junction on a regular basis.

The County Council Structures Engineer had advised that the drainage on the Mossy has been cleaned and additional gullies have been installed. Strengthening of road sides has also been undertaken. Surface dressing of the road from Warden Bridge to Fourstones has been included in the Local Transport Plan 2024-2025. The Plan also includes traffic calming measures for Hardhaugh that are to be finalized following a further speed survey in spring 2024.

Other issues discussed at the meeting included:

- The Clerk is to contact NCC to chase the installation of the new dog waste bin at Crossgates;
- Cllr Foot advised that a grant application has been submitted via Community Foundation for the repairs to the MUGA;
- Cllr Kay has agreed to purchase the equipment to run defibrillator training in the Parish. The British Heart Foundation is currently out of stock of the training equipment. Alternative suppliers will be contacted if required;
- It was noted that Fourstones Community Ventures Ltd had been dissolved. Concern was expressed regarding the continued deterioration of the Railway Inn building and environs;
- It was agreed that Parish Councillors will distribute the Crises Management Plan to all households between Easter and the end of April;
- The majority of the recommendations of the Storm Arwen Review have been implemented with the remainder in progress;

- The asset register, risk assessment, internal controls and insurance policy were reviewed and approved, and the appointment of an internal auditor was agreed.

The County Council has advised that “In response to new Government legislation, from 1st February Northumberland households can now dispose of limited DIY waste for free at our Northumberland Household Waste Recovery Centres (HWRC). From this date site users will need a pre-booked permit to dispose of their DIY waste at our HWRCs, to help us manage DIY waste disposal monthly. Households that are taking in other non-DIY waste such as general household waste, garden waste, old furniture etc to the HWRCs are not affected by the new permit arrangements.”

An information leaflet can be found at:

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Waste/Tip.aspx#householdwastepermits>

with permit booking at:

<https://wastepermits.northumberland.gov.uk/selfservice/Permit.aspx>

Detailed minutes of this meeting can be found via:

[Documents | Warden Parish Council
\(northumberlandparishes.uk\)](https://www.northumberlandparishes.uk/Documents/WardenParishCouncil)

The next meeting of Warden Parish Council will be held on Monday 13th May 2024 commencing at 7pm.

The first item on the agenda for all Council meetings is devoted to issues raised by members of the public. Please come along if you have any issues you would like us to address. Alternatively please contact one of the Parish Councillors whose details can be found via:

<https://northumberlandparishes.uk/warden/people>

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Town Hall News

Sheron Robson & Nick Springham
Joint Chairs

In April the Town Hall Committee meeting is going to change to a Monday at 5.30pm. We'd welcome new members, especially anyone who could support our social media or help with event promotion. We meet for an hour monthly so it's not a big commitment and you can choose how much you want to do outside that meeting.

The Town Hall continues to host regular groups in the hall, those that welcome new members include:

Yoga on a Monday at 6.30 pm

contact JJyoga83@gmail.com or check the Town Hall facebook page for details of the class and how to book. We've had a couple of new joiners recently, so if you've been considering it, it's a good time to start!

Art Club on the last Tuesday afternoon in the month.

Contact Lynne.garton23@gmail.com for details.

Bowls on a Wednesday at 7pm. For more details and to join contact Paula Hall on 01434 674 406.

Events in April include our regular quiz on the 18th, and on the Friday 26th we will be holding one of our regular Film and food pairing nights.



This time the film will be the A Private Function, a hilarious comedy that epitomises the best of British cinema. It stars Maggie Smith and Michael Palin and a host of familiar faces and will be paired with a two course meal (likely to feature pork so you must let us know if you are vegetarian or vegan!)

Tickets priced at £15 will be available on www.ticketsource.co.uk (search for Newbrough) and from Fourstones garage (where you would need to pay in cash). Doors open at 6.30pm. Food served at 7pm. Film starts at 8pm.

With spring in the air this only means one thing - **Warm Wednesdays** are drawing to a close. It has been another very successful year with hundreds of bowls of soup served by a hard-working band of volunteers to a loyal bunch of over 30 regular customers. Huge thanks to Carol, Dave, Dave, Denise, Robert and Diana for their dedication to making it a success but most of all an even bigger thank you to all our regulars. It is always a happy time, full of chat, warmth and laughter. We love it! We are already talking about next November when we start again.

But in the meantime, we could not let the summer go by without an opportunity for get-togethers. So we are putting on afternoon teas on the **First Wednesday** of each month starting in May. So watch this space. We don't yet know what to call these events. Any ideas? Let us know- text or call Nick on 07533 356443 with suggestions. There will be a prize for the winning name.

The spring also heralds the reopening of the Bunkhouse. Bookings are already coming in steadily for the summer, but we need more. This is a valuable source of income for the Town Hall and helps to fund events (and pay our spiraling costs), so please promote it if you can. It's good value, clean, comfortable basic accommodation - it gets 5 star reviews! So if you have family or friends coming to stay locally, please consider us as an option. Website address www.newbroughbunkhouse.co.uk



Question Time at the Abbey

Sarah Hall, Allerwash

I was lucky enough to be offered a last minute ticket to attend Radio 4's Question Time live broadcast at Hexham Abbey on Friday March 1st. I accepted immediately, having seen the BBC vans earlier and wondering what was going on.

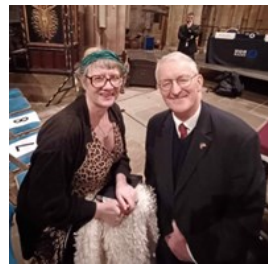
The itinerary was very specific, doors open at 6.30pm prompt and locked at 7.15pm. On arrival our bags were searched and we were offered a question card to fill in, I hadn't prepared anything but my sister Hazel made a suggestion so I took the punt. The 'auditorium' was full, many people had brought books, aware that the recording wouldn't begin for a while. We were entertained by a selection of the 'saved from the waves' selection from recent episodes of Desert Island Discs and a Q&A to test sound levels and warm up the crowd. We were then run through the housekeeping, which was a relief as were essentially trapped inside, then a BBC person detailed the running order of the show, encouraging audience participation.

The panel then arrived; Hilary Benn, Tina McKenzie, John Nicholson and Jacob Young introduced by the chair for the evening, Alex Forsyth.

After explaining her role, and her odd hand gestures to the sound team, the chosen questioners' names were called out and I was number 5! (I'll not repeat my reaction) I took up my place on the front row with a flutter of trepidation.

We watched the clock tick down like the old test card for those who remember, listened reverently to the pips then it began! The chair was so cool and very impressive, it's interesting to see the voices of radio in the flesh.

The time went quickly without any aggro from panel or audience. At 8.40 I thought I wouldn't make the cut but the microphone handler approached and told me that they were skipping question 4 in favour of mine! I ran through the instructions, say 'hello' rather than 'good evening' as it was being broadcast worldwide — no pressure! So in my best posh geordie I said, 'Helleau!' and proceeded with my question.

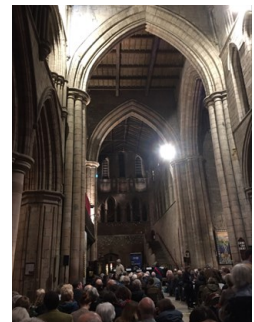


After the broadcast and Alex giving thanks to all involved, Hilary Benn came over to me and knelt down for a chat. (I was still seated, though he was welcome to genuflect!).

When answering my question he addressed me rather than the audience which was very endearing. He is now my number one parliamentary pin-up boy!

If you want to know what I asked, the edition is available on i-player. The response was good and rather moving. Unfortunately there were technical issues with the following day's Any Answers so the peoples' reaction is unknown, however, I am confident that I have made a small ripple in the big pond of current affairs.

The Question Time team are always on the lookout for venues that can hold an audience of 100. I think our lovely Town Hall would be perfect. What do you think?



There was good attendance at the March meeting which was chaired by Judith Kirby, President. After singing Jerusalem, Judith gave updates on the group meeting and competition which is to be held on 18th April. Teresa Bessant, Secretary, read out various events organised by the Federation : a John Lewis event, a Spring craft money raiser and a Netherton circular walk.

Treasurer, Val Johnston, and her deputy, Dorothy Sowerby, are to attend a Treasurer workshop refresher at Cresswell House. There was an invitation for four members to attend Hexhamshire WI's 100th birthday party on 3rd April. Val has been one of four lucky members to win a Betty's cookery school bursary.

Judith welcomed local speaker and engineer Chris Baylis who entertained us well. He was accompanied by Janice, his wife. Chris worked for Nissan in Sunderland and Cranfield and was instrumental in the design of many cars and different types of electric machines such as

Formula e cars and robots. He explained the different types of electric cars, energy storage and lithium batteries on the market.

Since retiring he has led members of the Hadrian's Wall Rotary Club in working with our local schools for children to design, build and drive their own electric vehicles. This is a very successful and worthwhile project.

Chris was thanked by Judith who said how much we had enjoyed his talk.

Judith won the Easter themed decorated egg with an Easter bunny and Lucy Fisher was second with an Easter flower. Judith also won the raffle.

The next meeting is on 11th April and is about pressed flowers by our President Judith. Hostesses are Ann Wodzinski and Maureen Carr. The raffle is to be organised by Catherine Grant and the competition is the best item produced on the night. Prospective new members welcome as visitors.

Featherwatch

By early March rooks had already built untidy looking tree-top platforms to hold clutches of their eggs, while musical robin song, fluting black-birds and piping song thrushes were audible signs of their upcoming nesting season.

On a grey 6th the bubbling of skylark song cascaded down into a field at West Boat, while a pair of kleeping' oystercatchers sped upriver and fifty fieldfares facing into a chill east wind sat motionless in the tops of spindly trees bordering the railway line.

A return to Thornton Towers on March the 7th found that the previously reported: 'handfuls of nests' in the rookeries in mid-February had grown in size to around a dozen nests on the east side of the lane and up to two dozen or so on the west side. The new nests were no doubt largely built from twigs and branches from nests blown to the

ground by winter storms. Rooks continued to make their daily commute to forage in fields abutting the Long Bank. Foraging flocks consist of randomly dispersed individuals, but in Harpers Hill on the 8th of March they gathered in a distinctly orderly formation. Apart from a few stragglers, the flock was lined up in three parallel rows, around twenty yards or more apart. One straight row of perhaps seventy or eighty birds stood almost shoulder to shoulder at times, while the other rows were more loosely arranged. This seems to have been a form of the mythical rook 'parliament'.

A similar assembly took place over forty years ago in the field opposite the small plantation before the entrance to Park Shield farm. Then, two serried ranks of rooks faced each other across 'the floor of the house', with three, or perhaps more, rows behind them standing in less disciplined lines towards the back.

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Green Notes

Climate Action Newbrough and Fourstones

Whatever happened to the 'Gulf Stream'?

Malcolm Newson

It is often said that our planet should be called Ocean, not Earth. The 1968 NASA photos of our home from space impress with the blue of water and the white of cloud; together they operate a kind of climate engine powered by the sun.

Do you remember being told in school Geography how Britain enjoys a temperate climate because the Gulf Stream, a massive current in the Atlantic, brings warmth in winter and coolness in summer? It was added, 'if we were this far north in Canada, we would freeze all winter'!

We cannot escape the Atlantic climate influence; the difference is that *it* can no longer escape *our* influence! Climate change is controlling key factors such as the temperature and salinity of the Atlantic and the strength of the winds, especially the Jet Stream, above those changing waters. Yes, we are used to 'the westerlies', but they seldom ganged up on us in strings of 'named storms' - so what's going on?

As early as 1994, my colleagues at Newcastle University identified big historic floods on the Tyne driven by changes in the Atlantic air circulation. By 2017 flood records on twelve large rivers across Britain were linked to these Atlantic fluctuations. The 'North Atlantic Oscillation' of our atmosphere is, like El Niño in the southern hemisphere, related to the currents in the ocean beneath it.

The main current (the Gulf Stream) is part of AMOC (Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation) which is *now our main worry!* The potential for the AMOC to 'shut down' and create weather havoc was elaborated and exaggerated in the movie 'The Day After Tomorrow' twenty years ago.

Why 'overturning circulation'? The Gulf Stream cools as it heads north and the cold water of the Greenland ice sheet makes it sink and return south under the surface. However, too much fresh (less saline) water from melting ice will weaken and stop the overturning circulation (try this in the bath!). Our climate derives from the global heat engine and the precise way the cogs fit together determines what we get used to as 'normal'.

A recent research project suggested the collapse of the AMOC could occur between 2025 and 2095 unless Arctic warming/melting can be slowed by policies such as Net Zero. If collapse occurs there will be international climate impacts but Western Europe will have more storms and falling temperatures. We remain very uncertain about this kind of 'tipping point' (rapid catastrophic change) where each of the complex controls needs identifying and monitoring. One thing is certain: it would not feel much like 'global warming', even though that's the direct cause!

Just Passing Through

If the ongoing roadworks solve the age-old problem of flooding on the Mossy Bank, users will breathe a collective sigh of relief, but the meantime the six week closure from the 19th of February has led to temporary inconvenience and no doubt some grumbles from those having to take the long and round-about Highways signed diversion to Hexham and back via Wall and Acomb.

However, Homers Lane between the Boatside Inn and Walwick Grange has become a popular unofficial alternative, which has turned the usually little travelled local byway into a rural rat run, with vehicles of all shapes and sizes passing through; including at least one Ramage's lorry. The effect of much increased traffic has been for multiple tyre treads to cause extensive damage to its roadside verges, particularly along the narrower sections. These will recover in time, perhaps with some help, but in the meantime lower speeds and little driver consideration by users would spare the verges avoidable harm.

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West Northumberland Primary Care Network practices are; Branch End Surgery, Bellingham Practice, Burn Brae, Corbridge Medical Group, Haltwhistle Medical Group, Humshaugh and Wark Medical Group, Prudhoe Medical Group, Scots Gap Medical Group, Sele Medical Group and White Medical Group. Although not members of the PCN, Adderlane Surgery and Riversdale Surgery receive services from our PCN therefore patients registered with these surgeries, are very welcome to join the Patient Group.

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'The Herd' by Emily Edwards



I was put off reading The Herd for a while because I wasn't attracted to the title. What a mistake to make! Just goes to show you should never judge a book by its cover.

The Herd is a very emotional, topical and engrossing book.

The story focusses on two families living in the same street. The wives, Bryony and Elizabeth are polar opposites - Elizabeth is very controlling, organised and confident, while Bryony is more laissez-faire and less assuming.

Elizabeth has three children, the youngest, Clemmie, has some health issues. Bryony has one daughter and an autistic brother who has been in a home since he was 16. This background is essential to the story and the controversial stances of to vaccinate or not to vaccinate. The trouble starts just before Clemmie's birthday party when Elizabeth sends an email requesting that all children attending the party are vaccinated. However Bryony had never admitted to Elizabeth that that her daughter Alba hadn't been vaccinated and still sends her to the party,

Then a measles epidemic rages through their comfortable community and many of them begin to fall ill. Clemmie succumbs to measles and Elizabeth is furious when she discovers Bryony's anti-vaccination stand. Their friendship is destroyed and Elizabeth needs someone to blame for Clemmie's life changing condition after her dose of measles. She takes Bryony to court which changes all their lives irrevocably.

This was a very powerful, intense and well written book which was unputdownable at times. It explored lots of issues, especially the intense friendship between Elizabeth and Bryony and their differing views about vaccinations. The author does a very good unbiased job of showing sympathy to both sides of the argument but retains a clear sense of what is proven and what is not. Some of the book group have had personal experience of antivaxxers and the distress they caused in families.

This story is about choices and how those choices can affect others around us and how we in turn can be influenced by others. There is a really good twist at the end but you will have to read the book yourself to find out.

The Herd was a very good read. It provoked lots of discussion in our group, something quite unusual for a book every body enjoyed.

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Recipes from an Orchard Kitchen

Iain Bennett

Easter is upon us and eggs are on everybody's minds. Eggs are one of the most complete foods that are available. They come in their own packing, contain all vitamins except C and are very nutritious with only a low calorie (70cals) input to the diet. Contrary to popular belief they do not contribute to bad cholesterol and a large egg only contains 1.5 grams of saturated fat and no trans fats.

Shelled eggs are laid by all birds, some reptiles and one mammal - the duck billed platypus. They have been a source of food for all of human history and fowl were one of the first animals to be domesticated. There is evidence of hens being domesticated as long as 4000 years ago although initially the main interest in hens was for cock-fighting! The modern hen is descended from the Red Jungle Fowl which is found in South East Asia and there is historical evidence that the first domestication of these birds was by the Indians.

Eggs in catering have many uses, they add lift to foods by trapping gas bubbles, enrich flavours and give structure to items such as cakes. They make savoury or sweet sauces such as hollandaise, mayonnaise, crème patisserie and custard. Finally, they contribute to that gold standard of British cuisine - the full English breakfast!

Also, I mentioned Easter and with that in mind I am looking at a Scandinavian Easter tradition, semla or semlor buns. Another peculiar Swedish Easter tradition is that the children dress up as Easter witches and go door to door wishing people a happy Easter in exchange for sweets. Some of the boys dress up in a black suit with a top hat and a fake moustache and call themselves Easter Old Men. It is linked to the belief that when Judas betrayed Jesus the witches all flew off to dance with the devil.

Another tradition at Easter is chocolate and so I include a recipe that is a take on a hot cross bun with chocolate and orange.

Semla Buns

Strong White Bread Flour	325g	Whole Milk	125ml
Caster Sugar	50g	Unsalted Butter	100g
Salt	½ tsp	Cardamom powder	1tsp
Egg	1 Medium plus one for egg wash		
Fresh Yeast	25g or 2 sachets of dried yeast		

Filling

Ground Almonds	100g	Cardamom powder	½ tsp
Vanilla extract	1tsp	Water	4tbsp

Vanilla Cream

Double Cream	200ml	Icing Sugar	1tbsp	Vanilla extract	1tsp
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Place all the ingredients for the buns in the bowl of your electric mixer and fit a dough hook. Mix on slow speed until all the ingredients are incorporated then increase the speed until as a soft sticky dough is formed. Place this in a greased bowl, cover with a clean shower cap, cling film or a floured tea towel and place somewhere warm for one hour.

After an hour divide the dough into 9 pieces, approx. 73g each, and roll into balls.

Place them on a lined baking sheet, cover with a floured tea towel and leave for an hour.

After ½ hour put the oven on to heat up to 200C, Gas 6.

When the hour is up lightly brush the buns with the egg wash and put in the oven for 12 minutes.

Take them out and leave them to cool on a wire rack.

Make the filling by blending all the ingredients into a smooth paste. Whip the cream until it is stiff enough to spoon or pipe. Cut the buns in half and spread the filling on the bottom half. Pipe the cream on top and replace the lid. Dust the top with icing sugar and serve.

Nature Notes

Wild garlic leaves, like those of wild arum, bring welcome splashes of spring green to drab mid-winter days. A fresh clump stood in beech litter at the north end of Crow Wood on the 27th of January, a little earlier than seen last year and at a time when the renowned but now sadly waning snowdrop drifts were nearing full flower.

The single glossy, yellow-petalled lesser celandine that shone out in a sloping roadside verge near the top of Church Lane on the 19th of February joined snowdrop flowering, wild arum and hawthorn leafing, plus cherry plum blossoming, in a growing Nature Notes list of earliest recorded appearances; all triggered by the extraordinarily mild February weather.



Sunshine-yellow coltsfoot¹ is another wildflower that appears before traces of winter are past. The first half-open flower was noted in a verge near the Park Shield farm entrance on the 1st of March; a rather wintry first day of the meteorological spring.

This was a week later than last year and 2021, which share the Nature Notes joint earliest record of the plant. Until the last few years its more usual first appearance was in mid-March.

After its Butt Bank debut on the 10th, February warmth ensured that pure white cherry plum blossom broke out quickly in hedges and on trees across the parishes. Irregular patches of its star-like flowers punctuated hawthorn hedges along Homers Lane by the end of the month. Cherry plum trees can be rather straggly looking, but towards the northern end of the lane one graceful tree was an explosion of incandescent blossom.

In the second week of March sections of hawthorn hedge along the upper part of the lane were becoming more thickly leafed green ribbons, while leaves in most hedges elsewhere were just breaking out.

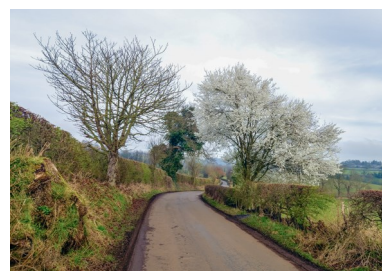
Cherry plum blossom can be mistaken for blackthorn blossom, but their different blossoming times helped to tell them apart. Cherry plum blossomed in March and blackthorn in early April after cherry plum blossom had faded. But this year they might have been confused because blossoming coincided to some extent. A sprinkling of blackthorn blossom was noted in a hedge at Park Shield on the 8th of March; adding another entry to the Nature Notes roll of earliest recorded dates.

At the same time bright yellow gorse was an optimistic sign of spring on the move in a still largely dormant natural countryside. In keeping with the old saying: *When gorse is in bloom it's a kissing month*, gorse can flower in every month of the year. Hereabouts, the usual main flowering season is in April and May, but like cherry plum and blackthorn it was early this year. In very early March the gorse bushes in the field to the left of the side road that winds its way up to Whinny Hill from East Fourstones were in full bloom.

After a fine show of multicoloured crocuses in February, neighbourhood gardens continued to stage a colourful display into March. Those along 'The Front' in Fourstones were home to daffodils, many miniatures among them; winter flowering heathers, custard-yellow primula and intense blue scilla or squills, while white and purple aubretia draped front garden walls. Daffodils stood tall in the Newbrough Town Hall and War Memorial planting containers in the second week of March after first flowering well before February had ended.

¹ Like many wildflowers it provided ingredients for traditional herbal remedies and was used in the treatment of sore throats, coughs and respiratory conditions.

Spectacular cherry plum on Homers Lane



Photos courtesy of Kevin H. Hilton

'Margot'

by Karen Eaketts

Local Author of a Crime novel, Karen lives in Fourstones and her book is available only through Amazon.

One member of our yoga group is raising money to fund the 55+ GB Basketball team to compete in the championship in Italy this June and she has found a "Novel" way to do it!

Rather than just asking for cash Karen has written a crime thriller and with each copy sold a percentage will be given directly to the team.



The novel is 'Margot' by Karen Eaketts, and it is set in rural Northumberland. Karen uses her local knowledge and previous experience as a Police Officer to good effect in this crime thriller.

The main character is a hairdresser named Margot, on finding her marriage very suddenly on the rocks, takes a radical and very drunken step to join the Police Force.

The story is an engaging and very funny story about Margot's inept [but strangely effective] way of stumbling across major clues in solving a serious crime investigation of a serial killer.

This book is wholly recommended, not only are you going to enjoy a rollicking good story but you'll be supporting the 55+ GB team in Pesaro, Italy.

What's not to like?
Judith Kirby

I bought the book thinking it was a good thing to do, to support Karen in her fundraising efforts, however when I sat down to read the book I was totally engrossed in it.

The at times incompetent Margot, totally lacking in self confidence, was such a great character and the issues she struggled with very relatable with a crime story of twists and turns, it was a case of I must find out what happens next. I was willing her on and also wanting to shout -'don't do that.'

I await with interest the next novel from Karen Eaketts.

To buy or download, just check out Amazon and type in Margot by Karen Eaketts

Norah Phipps

What is Earth Day and how is it celebrated?

Earth Day in 2024 is observed on Monday 22nd April. This annual event, founded in 1970, serves as a day of education about environmental issues and encourages global action to protect our planet. The theme for Earth Day 2024 is **Planet vs Plastics**, emphasising the urgent need to reduce plastic production by 60% by 2040.

Co-ordinated by the Earth Day Network, 193 countries around the world have their own version of celebrations. In many places, Earth Day forms part of Earth Week: a longer period of climate awareness that includes activities and campaigns.



Monday 22nd April 2024

February Weatherwatch

The record for the mildest Park Shield February jointly held by the Februarys of 2019 and 2023 was short-lived, as this year's February was a whisker warmer.¹ In a wild start to the month blustery north and north-easterly winds blew almost throughout the first six days, bringing many gale force gusts of forty miles per hour and more. But apart from a slight wetting of rain early on the 6th the spell was otherwise dry. With daily maximums after the 1st ranging from 10.4C to 11.7C it was also a warm, although it felt degrees colder in the wind.

The temperature dropped steadily over the 6th and into the 7th, which brought a light early morning air frost. In the cooler conditions fine snow drifting down in mid-morning turned to bigger, wetter flakes before petering out after half an hour or so. The -3.7C frost the next morning was Park Shield's February minimum and the 8th also supplied the month's lowest daily maximum of 1.7C. Some wet snow also fell after eleven o'clock and again after two-fifteen. But amber weather warnings of heavy snowfalls issued by the Met Office proved to be overly pessimistic as these two days were as wintry as February weather got.

The daily highs and lows were a degree or two above the seasonal average from the 9th to the 14th. Rain fell each day, with the month's highest daily amount of 5.4mms falling on the 9th. Including a day either side, the spell accrued more than half of February's Park Shield rainfall. The warmest week of the month followed from the 15th to the 21st. Four days recorded daily maximums of over twelve degrees Celsius, with the 15th registering the February maximum of 14.4C. This fell well short of the remarkable 17.3C Park Shield record of 2019, but it was still enough to make it the second warmest February maximum. There were morning frosts

on the 24th, 25th and 27th, but daytime maximums were still rose to above average. This was a result of a continuing and extremely unusual southerly airflow that started streaming north from the 12th. It was this that was very largely responsible for February's record-breaking warmth.

Although there were only two rain-free days from the 16th to the 29th rain was often negligible so that Park Shield February total only amounted to 35.2mm. This made February, reliably, the fourth driest in a twenty-six year series. Other parts of the country were less fortunate as some suffered more than double their average rainfall. Southern England recorded its wettest February; while flooding and disruption were widespread.

February Weatherwatch Factfile

Temperature. Park Shield mean monthly maximum: c.9.0C. Mean monthly minimum: c.3.0C. Monthly mean: c.6.0C and about 2.5C above average.

¹Four of the top six warmest Park Shield Februarys have occurred in the past six years. E&NE England monthly mean: 6.7C and 2.6C above the 1991-2020 average. UK maximum: 18.1C (64.6F) at Teddington (Middlesex) and Pershore (Hereford & Worcester) on the 15th. UK minimum: -13.7C at Altnaharra (Sutherland) on the 8th.

Rainfall and sunshine. Park Shield average rainfall: c.65mm. Rain days : 24. Butt Bank total: 35.8mm. E&NE England 143% and 77 % of the 1991-2020 average respectively. *Erratum.* Last February's E&NE England rainfall and sunshine should have read : 41% & 134% respectively and not vice versa. *Winds.* Strong and north-easterly in the opening six days. Butt Bank maximum gust: 50 mph on the 4th. Park Shield maximum gust: 42mph on the 3rd and 4th. UK maximum gust: 72mph at Capel Curig (Gwynedd) on the 21st.

Raspberry canes looking for a new home

They are autumn fruiting and I had a good crop last year.

email Christine Blunt : chriscornerstones@icloud.com



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Church Pages

Who's Who

Church of England : appointment pending

Meanwhile Reverend Jane Penn is helping out during the time of vacancy

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tel: 07747 865747

Methodist

Reverend Michael Holland
Tynedale Methodist Circuit
Fern House
Catton
Hexham
NE47 6QS

Tel: 01434 683732

Roman Catholic

Parish Priest : Fr Jeffrey Dodds
Assisted by Fr Paul Kilduff
St Mary's Catholic Church
Hencotes
Hexham
NE46 3EB

Tel: 01434 603119

From the Registers

February

There were no Christenings, Weddings or Funerals in the Parish during February.

Interment of Ashes

If we have been united with Christ through baptism into death, we will certainly be united with Him in resurrection.

On Tuesday 27th February at St. Michaels and All Angels, Warden :
Maurice Geoffrey White of Wentworth Grange, Riding Mill (formerly of Warden)

Please note : until 14th May 2024 any enquiries relating to Baptisms, Weddings or Funerals for St. Peter's, Newbrough should go to Churchwarden Reuben Straker at reuben.straker@btinternet.com

and for St. Michael's Warden, to George Benson at office@chesterestate.co.uk

St John of Beverley, Haydon Bridge

If you have any queries about service times please contact:

St Mary's Catholic Church, Hencotes, Hexham

or call 01434 603119

Fourstones with Warden Methodist Church

Preachers for April

- | | |
|------|--|
| 7th | Local arrangement |
| 14th | Steven Talbot |
| 21st | Reverend Michael Holland
(Holy Communion) |
| 28th | Norman Fullard |

All services at 10.30am
Everyone welcome

Appointment of a new Vicar, the Reverend Oliver (Ollie) Dempsey

As Lay Chairman of the Parochial Church Council of Warden with Newbrough, I am delighted to announce the appointment of a new Vicar, The Revd Oliver (Ollie) Dempsey, as from 08.00 on Sunday 3rd March 2024.

His Institution/Licensing will take place on Tuesday, 14th May 2024 at 19.30 hrs, venue to be decided. In addition to our Parish he will be Rector of St. John Lee and Priest in charge of Haydon Bridge.

Ollie has written "I feel a great privilege to have been called to serve as the next Rector of St. John Lee, Vicar of Warden and Newbrough, and Priest in charge of Haydon Bridge. I am looking forward to beginning this role early in the summer, sharing in the ministry across the three parishes, and discovering the ways in which God is at work in the people and places of Tynedale."

Ian Bell

Annual General Meeting of the Parochial Church Council of Warden with Newbrough

This meeting will take place following the 10am service on Sunday 21st April 2024
at St Peter's, Newbrough

Fourstones with Warden Methodist Church

April Coffee mornings

Friday 11th April, 11am - 2pm
Friday 26th April, 11am - 2pm



Soup and cakes
All are welcome



Messy Church
Tuesday 9th April, 2.30pm
All are welcome
£1 entry fee

Fourstones Methodist Chapel is usually open 6 days a week.
We can offer comfortable seating, a kitchen, carpeted floor and easy access.
If you are interested in hiring the premises for one day, six days or longer
please phone 01434 674207

Letter from Father Paul.....

Dear Friends,

As we move from the cold dark nights of our wet winter this year, into the warmth of the spring, with the lengthening of days, and hopefully the promise of more sun, we are reminded of the changing of the seasons and the circle of Life. Our trees are bursting with buds and blossom, our fields planted and sown, and our hills grided with sheep, and our trips to the garden centre are in full swing. Life is in full swing.

And so with our faith. We too have in our recent Lent observances learned to remove those obstacles which hold us back, we have died with Him, and have laid in the ground with Him like the grain of wheat.

But through His Resurrection, we too now grow His Light, our hearts are warmed by His Love, we bloom in His Spirit. His creatures sing for Joy to the Creator. Through water and the Holy Spirit we are baptized into your Life.

Come Lord Jesus come! Let us praise the Lord.
You care for the land and water it;
you enrich it abundantly.
The streams of God are filled with water
to provide the people with grain,
for so you have ordained it.^[a]
You drench its furrows and level its ridges;
you soften it with showers and bless its crops.
You crown the year with your bounty,
and your carts overflow with abundance.
The grasslands of the wilderness overflow;
the hills are clothed with gladness.
The meadows are covered with flocks
and the valleys are mantled with grain;
they shout for joy and sing.

Fr Paul Kilduff
Assistant Priest
St Mary's Hexham
St John of Beverley Haydon Bridge
St Oswald's Bellingham

Parish of Warden with Newbrough

Church Services for April 2024

Sunday 7th	Easter 2	10.00am	St Michael and All Angels, Warden
Sunday 14th	Easter 3	10.00am	St John Lee
Sunday 21st	Easter 4	10.00am	St Peter, Newbrough
Sunday 28th	Easter 5	10.00am	St John Lee

Evening Prayer at 4.30pm on Wednesdays at St Aidan, Fourstones has now resumed.

Enquiries regarding Church Services to Ian Bell, Verger
01434 674653