the Village Voice

Issue No 3, Volume 26

Lanchester, March 2026



Lanchester Cricket (back page)



EP (page 21)



KoGs meet the prison service (page 12)



The Watoto Children's Choir (page 22)

Young people have been very busy in Lanchester!



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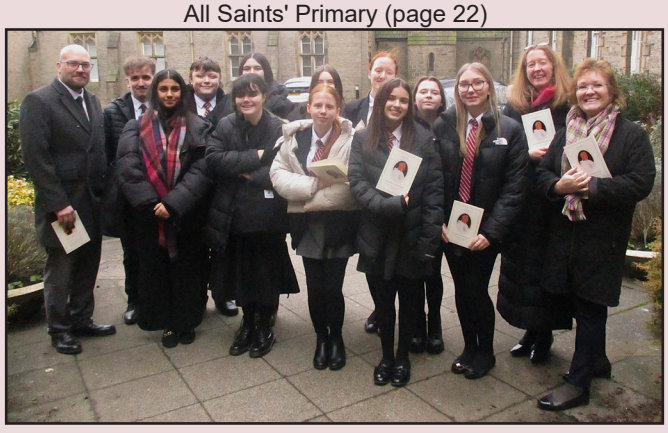
Boys' Brigade pancake chefs! (page 15)



St Bede's choir at Canon Spence's Requiem Mass (page 19)

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HAPPY EASTER

From Churches Together Lanchester and Burnhope

His hands were pierced, His sacred heart laid open, and His precious blood poured out for the fallen humanity.
He descended into the abyss of human pain and carried it into the boundless depths of Divine mercy.
His Resurrection is not just an event in history, but the living heartbeat of our faith; our unshakable assurance that suffering shall never prevail.
And because He lives, we live; because He rose, we rise. Let every Alleluia resound with Christ's victory over sin and death.
Christ is truly risen Alleluia!
We are Easter people and Alleluia is our song!!
May the joy of this season break every barrier in our lives. Happy Easter!!!

Fr. Vernatius

All Saints' Catholic Church

Palm Sunday 29th March
9.30am – Procession and mass
Tuesday 31st March
1.30pm – Benediction and mass
Thursday 2nd April
6.30pm – Mass of the Lord's Supper followed by Adoration
Good Friday 3rd April
11.00am – Stations of the Cross
3.00pm – Good Friday Liturgy
Easter Sunday 5th April
9.30am – Easter Sunday celebration
The cross in the church garden will be decorated after the service

St Theresa's Annfield Plain Catholic Church

Saturday 28th March
4.15pm – Procession and Mass
Thursday 2nd April
10.00am – Mass of the Lord's supper followed by Adoration
Good Friday 3rd April
10.00am – Stations of the cross
3.00pm – Good Friday Liturgy
Saturday 4th April
7.15pm – Vigil Liturgy of Easter mass

Churches Together Event

Easter Saturday 4th April 10.00am – 12 noon
Coffee Morning at Methodist Church

Parish of Lanchester and Burnhope

St John's Church Burnhope

Good Friday 3rd April
11am – Good Friday Liturgy

All Saints' Church Lanchester

Palm Sunday 29th March
10.30am – ALL TOGETHER Eucharist
Monday 30th March
7pm – Service of reflection
Tuesday 31st March
7pm – Service of reflection
Wednesday 1st April
7pm – Service of reflection
Maundy Thursday 2nd April
7pm – Eucharist with Washing of Feet
Good Friday 3rd April
2pm – Good Friday Liturgy
Saturday 4th April
7pm – Saturday Vigil in the Chapter House, with First Mass of Easter as night falls
Easter Sunday 5th April
10.30am – Easter Sunday Festal Eucharist with Easter Egg Hunt, followed by the thatching of the cross on the village green

Lanchester Methodist Church

Palm Sunday 29th March
10.30am – Morning worship
Good Friday 3rd April
10.30am – Good Friday worship
6pm – Circuit Choir at Annfield Plain Methodist Church – From Silence to Song
Easter Sunday 5th April
10.30am – Easter Communion Service plus Holy Communion
The cross in the church garden will be decorated after the service

CONTACTS

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www.allsaints-catholicchurch-lanchester.co.uk

Lanchester Methodist Church
Rev. Stuart Earl
01207 520604
www.lanchestermethodistchurch.org.uk

Lent cross at the Methodist Church

The Methodist Church has planted a Lent cross in the middle of the seated area at the front of the chapel. The hope is that you will have a look each week and maybe even sit and think or pray. Each week a different symbol will be placed at the cross to get us thinking about what life is all about. A message and prayer is posted each week on the notice board on the railing and on the board at the top of the path.
The Church has planned the seating to create a peaceful place at the heart of the village. Please make use of it.
There is a cross also planted on the village green, next to the Christmas tree. It stands there as a deliberate reminder of the beginning and "ending" of the Jesus story – though of course the cross is only the end of one chapter of the story…

Rev Stuart Earl
Lanchester Methodist Church



Lanchester Parish Council

Notes from the Ordinary Meeting held in Lynwood House on
Tuesday 10th February 2026 at 7.00pm

Minutes – Ordinary Meeting 13th January – approved.
Committees – Finance, Development & General Purposes Meeting 29th January - approved.

Lanchester Tree Planting Group
The councillors received a presentation from Lanchester's tree planting group about the group's mission and if there were any areas we could identify for tree planting. The councillors directed them to our Neighbourhood Plan and also advised them to speak to Burnhope and Greencroft Parish Council and Haystax Holiday Park.

Correspondence
Food Waste Collection – councillors were informed that a presentation was available about the food waste collection that is being implemented by Durham County Council – councillors decided a presentation was not necessary.

Police Report
No police report for the month of January. The Clerk informed councillors that David, our handyman, had cleaned up the excrement at the allotments.

Durham County Councillor
County Cllr A Gray provided an update on the areas she has recently been working on, these included:
- Lanchester Medical Centre – a meeting was held with Dr Kalra and the ICB's multidisciplinary team – any complaints are to be sent to the Practice Manager
- Further traffic regulations are being implemented around the Village, these include Front Street, Fenhall Park, Kitswell Road, Station Road and the A691 & A6076
- The School Crossing Patrol Officer that has been appointed outside of Lanchester EP School is still waiting on checks before they can start
- Meeting scheduled with Jane Davis regarding parking

Solar Planet Walk
Cllr A Gray was notified of the information planning need to approve our planning application. – Clerk to contact the contractors with this information.

Planning Applications
Councillors considered the following planning applications:
- Installation of a ground mounted photovoltaic solar development, electrical substation and associated infrastructure - DM/24/03466/FPA – Land To The South Of Wagtail Lane Craghead DH7 0DT
- Installation and operation of a ground mounted photovoltaic (PV) solar energy generation system (solar farm), electrical substation and associated infrastructure - DM/22/01769/FPA - Land East of Edge Lane, Maiden Law, DH7 0RY – information received

Social Media
Members were informed that a Facebook page for the Parish Council has been created. The Clerk will be the only person to update the page, and all comments will be permanently disabled. Clerk will update Councillors with how this progresses.

Christmas Window Display
Clerk to put on October Agenda.

Internal Audit Arrangements
Members considered and reviewed the policy. Mr Gordon Fletcher to be the internal auditor – approved.

Risk Assessment Schedule
Members considered and reviewed the policy – approved.

Financial report – approved.

Accounts for Payment – approved.

Chairperson's Announcements
The Chairman informed members of the following:
Lanchester Properties brought a legal case against the Forestry Commission regarding the Forest Development in Lanchester and the High Court ruled that a judicial review will take place
Jewitt Arboriculture has removed the high priority tree. Councillors approved Jewitt Arboriculture to carry out the rest of the tree works in the Village.
The fencing has been ordered for the Cricket Club and will be installed in the spring. Some councillors will visit the Cricket Club to determine if more fencing is needed to extend to Fenhall Park.

Meetings are every second Tuesday of the month, the next two ordinary meetings will be held on the 10th March and the 14th April.
Email for the Clerk: clerk@lanchesterparishcouncil.gov.uk

Lanchester WI March Meeting

Our meeting took place on 2nd March; 37 members and 3 visitors were welcomed. We listened to information about lots of upcoming events including our spring/ summer fashion show which will be held on Saturday 16th May, 2pm at Lanchester Social Club, £6 a ticket, always a fun event! Part of the proceeds will go to Willow Burn and St Cuthbert's Hospices so as well as having a fun afternoon we will be helping these two great causes.
We were then joined by Ann Muizelaar from Bushblades Farm. The farm has an established herd of Alpacas and Ann told us about looking after these delightful and friendly animals, from showing and breeding to spinning their wool to make lovely items. A very interesting presentation.
We ended the evening having a catch up with friends and a warming cuppa.
If you are looking for something new in 2026, please come along and join us, you will be very welcome. Visitors can come along and join us for £4 per visit, you can visit for three times before deciding whether to join us. Check out our Facebook page (Lanchester WI), or email lanchesterwi@talktalk.net for further details. We look forward to seeing you

Marie Murphy





Above: Ann Muizelaar demonstrating spinning Alpaca wool
Above right: some of her Alpacas



From the House

It was helpful to visit Holmside Hall recently to understand the full negative impact of the proposed solar farm on their equestrian business. I have submitted my own objection to the planning appeal as I feel it is important as a Member of Parliament to try to safeguard existing local businesses and protect North Durham's beautiful landscapes.



Pride in Place has been occupying my mind lately, the £20 million funding for Stanley South is significant and we are in the process of selecting a chair. Once the chair is in place, we will appoint the members of the Neighbourhood Board, which will make decisions on how the money is spent.

This month I will be hosting a visit from Baroness Hilary Armstrong from the Independent Commission on Neighbourhoods to Stanley. We will meet with local stakeholders and hold a public meeting on Pride in Place.

Finally, I used a recent question at Prime Minister's Questions to ask the Prime Minister whether smaller communities could be considered for the next round of funding, as many of them are currently too small to qualify. I was pleased to hear him confirm that not only will the next round include a further 169 neighbourhoods, but they will include smaller areas.

Finally, I was pleased to see Durham County Council receive additional funding from central government, which meant they have not had to raise core council tax for residents this year. This will make a big difference to many families across North Durham."

Luke Akehurst, MP for North Durham

House of Commons



From our Councillor

Dear Residents,

I hope this finds you well as we move into spring. As I write the crocuses on the village green are looking amazing and remind me why this is such a lovely place to live.

I was recently invited by Dr Kalra and his team to Lanchester Medical Centre to hear about the steps they are taking to improve the provision at the surgery. I was joined by the Strategic Head of Primary Care for the Integrated Care Board, which will provide a team to monitor the provision over the coming months before another CQC inspection by the end of May. I will continue to monitor the situation.

I met with Mrs Davis, head of Lanchester EP school, to discuss the parking situation around the school. She explained that plans for a new school building are being discussed. In the long term, I sincerely hope that proper provision for school drop off will be made. In the short term please park safely and use designated parking at the Club and Community Centre where possible. Residents can upload videos of dangerous parking via the Parksafe scheme. Hopefully the new barrier will be erected outside the school entrance soon.

A parking consultation will also take place shortly to consider new measures on Front Street, Station Road, Fenhall Park and Kitswell Road. I will share on social media as soon as it is available.

As we move into the new financial year the Government has given around £50 million extra to Durham County Council which has enabled the council tax rise this year to be set at 1.99%. In addition, the Chancellor has for the first time given details of the financial settlement for the next three years which is helping the council to plan its finances more effectively. The Government has also confirmed it will underwrite 90% of the council's SEND debt.

In July we will be moving out of County Hall which is being decommissioned. Full council meetings will move to Spennymoor Leisure Centre which was used during the pandemic. Whilst the building is very old and in a terrible state of repair, I will miss the council chamber which is beautiful.

Many of you have raised issues of littering and I will be joining the Lanchester Partnership in their litter pick to give the village a spring clean.

As always if I can help with a council related matter, contact me on 07469 105096 / 03000 260 683 or email me on alison.gray2@durham.gov.uk

(Please avoid messenger if possible as these messages can be easy to miss)

With very best wishes,

Alison Gray

All Saints' Catholic Church is visiting Ireland. Do you want to join them?

Four places available. This will be part of their centenary celebrations.

All Saints' Catholic Church is visiting Ireland on 25th May for 4 nights. We will visit the Titanic museum in Belfast, The Holy Shrine and Basilica Knock, County Mayo. We will also visit the village of Cong where The Quiet Man movie was filmed. We are travelling with Gillinghams Coaches. There are 4 places available if you are interested. For further information call

Michael Quigley on 01027 528488 or Lestrine Kelly on 01027 521494

Lestrine Kelly

Ladies who lunch

Last time out found us at the Kingslodge Inn in Durham, part of the Innkeeper group, another easy to reach venue with ample parking. It was toasty warm - lovely on a cold afternoon in February. Water was quickly brought to the table as we sat perusing a quite extensive menu.
The staff were very pleasant, but the service did become somewhat relaxed as we were ready to order our meal and then waiting for it to be served. One menu choice didn't arrive as ordered and had to be sorted out.
So eventually, when we were all suitably sorted out, we found our meals to be quite delicious, particularly the venison casserole with dumplings and vegetables. Other main courses were - cheese and onion and potato pie with mashed potatoes and vegetables; roasted chicken supreme and leek fricassee with mushrooms, whipped potatoes and chicken sauce; Cumberland sausage and mash with vegetables and gravy; scampi and chips with mushy peas and tartare sauce. Desserts were vanilla cheesecake; berry cheesecake; spicy apple, pear and berry crumble and custard; sticky toffee pudding; bread and butter pudding.
The world was again put to rights as we enjoyed a really good natter.
We shall be out and about next month, looking forward to another special meal spent among friends.
A return to Kingslodge would possibly not be top of our priority list at this point in time.

The Gourmet Girls



Thursday Club

Jane Nattrass gave a very moving talk about her fundraising campaign for cancer research following the death of her 11 year old son, which happened fifteen years ago. She is a very good ambassador for this cause and has made several improvements to the care of junior patients who are in hospitals throughout the country. Actors come to the wards and perform funny stories to lift the spirits of the listeners and some do pottery crafts which can supply mementos for the bereaved families. She did ask that other people holding events might decide to support her very worthy charity.

Henry Dancer Days
Supporting Children with Cancer

Our next meeting is 19th March when we are holding our very own version of the 1% club competition. Hope to see you ladies there.

Jan Vasey.

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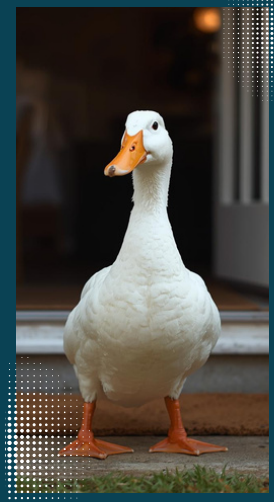
THE FIRST SET OF KEYS



I did not grow up assuming I would own a home.

I was born on a council estate in Scunthorpe, where money was tight and life felt unsettled, and we later moved to Langley Park into a blended family where stability was not something I took for granted.

Home ownership felt like something other families did, people with clearer paths and fewer complications. Then in 2012, Lauren and I collected the keys to our first 'owned' home. I still remember the weight of them in my hand and the quiet when we opened the front door to empty rooms and fresh carpet. We had no furniture, no grand celebration, just a picnic on the living room floor and a couple of glasses of prosecco. It was simple and slightly surreal, but it felt enormous. Buying your first home is not just a transaction, it is a shift. It is the first time you realise you are building something that is yours, the first time you look at a wall and think, this is ours.

That moment became a platform. It anchored me and gave me confidence I did not know I was missing. If we could do this, what else might be possible? It shaped the way I see property forever, because behind every valuation, every viewing and every set of keys there is a story. Parents wanting more stability for their children than they had, couples taking a leap, someone deciding they are ready for a fresh start.



When I sit at a kitchen table now, I do not just see square footage and price, I see nerves, hope and potential. I see the same mixture of fear and excitement I felt in 2012. For some, a house is an asset. For many, it is the foundation from which everything else grows. I will never forget sitting on that carpet, glass of prosecco in hand, thinking quietly, we have done it.

Not extravagantly, not perfectly, but honestly, and that first set of keys changed the direction of my story.

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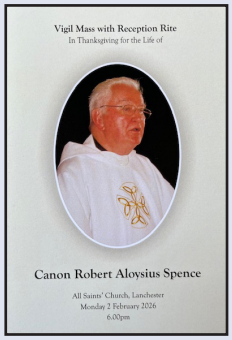
Canon Spence



On the evening of the 2nd February, we came together to celebrate the life of Canon Robert Aloysius Spence, 'Father Bob', at All Saints' Catholic Church at his Vigil Mass of Reception. With the church full to capacity, just under 300 people came to pay their respects to a well-known and well-respected member of our village community. The mix of all faiths, and none, in the pews spoke volumes of who he was. Using the talents of our parish community we listened to the accomplished singing voices of James Draper for the psalm and Rebecca Symonds for a beautiful post communion reflection.

After Mass we enjoyed some food and drinks in the parish centre to share precious memories with members of Fr Bob's family.

Fr Bob was a Priest and Canon of the Church in our diocese for 62 years. From his teaching days at Ushaw, to his chaplaincy at Newcastle University, to the parish of St Augustine's, Darlington and then in 1998 here at All Saints. He 'retired' in 2017 to live at Ushaw College, but in truth he never did retire. Celebrating a weekly Friday lunchtime Mass that was always well attended, and still is, he was so determined that Ushaw would remain a spiritual home rather than just an historic property to visit. Even when he then moved to Holy Cross Care Home, Sunderland, he celebrated Mass every day with the residents and other retired priests living there.

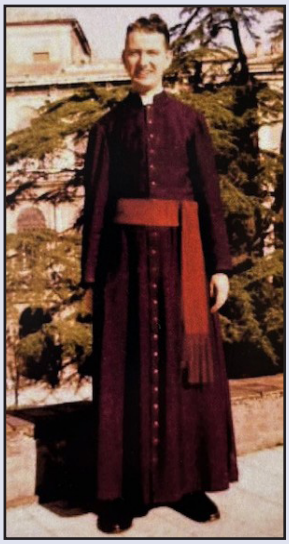
In his 19 years with us here in Lanchester he was a very good priest, leader, someone who actively encouraged lay ministry, promoted social justice, and was also a great advocate for our three Christian communities in our 'Churches Together'.

As I reflected in my homily "It didn't matter who you were, Bob would soon get to know you and all your family connections. He wasn't perfect, indeed a bit of a rebel, but he was very astute and intuitive. His 'encouraging' and persuasive personality often led to people volunteering to do things without realising they had actually done so, me included. I suspect there will be some here tonight who know exactly what I mean. He had a real talent for identifying peoples' strengths, their gifts, and helping them to develop those skills for the good of the community.

"Bob also loved his social life and was an avid Newcastle United fan, a season ticket holder, along with Aidan his nephew. Bob was following his dad's instruction to never miss Mass or a match. This love of Newcastle began back in 1947 when he went to St James' Park for the first time with his dad. To quote his good friend, Sir Bobby Robson, Bob was 'that small boy clambering up the stadium steps for the very first time, gripping his father's hand, gawping at that hallowed stretch of turf beneath him, and without being able to do a thing about it, falling in love.' That love lasted a lifetime, even when he found out that Sunderland were actually above them in the premier league. I'm not sure that his love of ecumenism stretched that far!"

We will remember Fr Bob with great love and affection, for his ministry, his friendship, and his love of village life. Bishop Stephen Wright and Bishop Emeritus Seamus Cunningham, along with another 35 Priests, celebrated Fr Bob's Requiem Mass the following day at Ushaw, again full to capacity. Fr Bob was then laid to rest in Lanchester Cemetery. Rest in Peace Father Bob.

Deacon Peter Smith, All Saints Catholic Church.





Above left : Father Bob as a young Priest in Rome
Above right: A small display on the altar at his funeral

Peter Harrison

The family of Peter Harrison would like to thank all family and friends for their compassion and kind words following Peter's sudden passing on 30.01.26. Peter passed a day before he was to celebrate his 85th birthday, following a very short illness.

Peter led a full life, serving 25 years in the Royal Navy, followed by 10 years on the North Sea oil rigs, before retiring to full time life in the village he had lived in for 60 years.

Everyone will have a different memory of Peter, some seeing him at the allotments in past years, others will remember him as an active member of Lanchester Bowls Club where he would join his team for competitions. Others might remember him from Lanchester Social Club where he would go on a Sunday for a game of pool. Maybe it was as a good neighbour and friend for which he will be remembered. For us, his family, our memory will be of a wonderful and loving husband, dad and grandad.

Peter spent his last four days on ward 2 at UHND; the kindness we were shown by staff led us to raise funds to help them purchase a convertible chair/bed. This will enable families to stay with loved ones at end of life. With the kind donations left at the celebration of Peter's life along with monies raised at a coffee morning this means we are able to donate £750 towards this.

Peter Harrison's family



Remembering

Brenda Gibson



Brenda Gibson was a stalwart of the Red Cross who died on 20/01/2026. A special window display was set up in the Red Cross Shop, and the following notice appeared on it:
“This window is dedicated to Brenda Gibson. Her tenacity and spirit had a lasting effect on the team here in Lanchester, the wider organisation and community.
From teaching the Red Cross Youth to starting the Red Cross shop here in Lanchester, her unwavering dedication and support of over 45 years led the way for us all.
We are deeply saddened by her loss and will carry her memory with us always. We have a book of condolence in the shop, and we invite you to take a moment to share a memory or message to the family as they process their tremendous loss.”
As it happens a Communities in Focus team photographer was in the village and posted the following:

“On a bright, sunny morning on 23rd February, a funeral car paused outside the Red Cross shop in Lanchester — a quiet and touching tribute to the late Brenda Gibson.
Brenda was well known and deeply respected in the village, particularly by the staff and volunteers at the shop she helped establish more than 45 years ago. She was instrumental in setting up Lanchester’s first Red Cross shop and dedicated many years to teaching first aid to local young people.
In her memory, a special window display had been created at the shop. As the flower-filled funeral car stopped outside, staff stood together to pay their respects.
The procession then continued to the local church for the service, where friends and family gathered. Church bells rang out as sunlight streamed over the building and spring flowers brightened the village green — a fitting farewell to someone who gave so much to her community.”



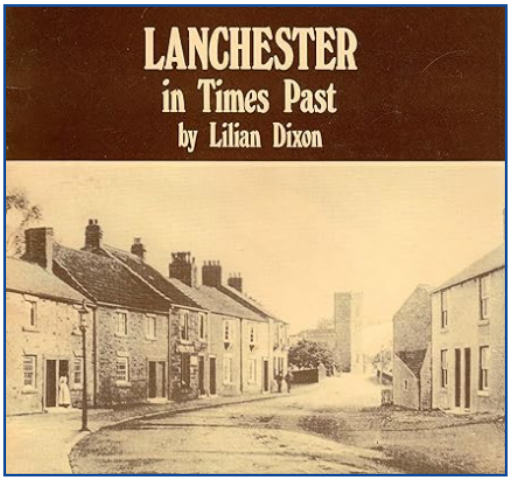




Top left: volunteers stand outside the shop as a mark of respect for Brenda
Left: scene as the funeral cortege passes the Red Cross Shp
Above: the window display dedicated to Brenda's service in the Red Cross

Lilian Dixon

Since we published the article in the February 2026 Village Voice about Lilian Dixon's 90th birthday celebrations we have been informed that Lilian has sadly died. The Village Voice send its condolences and best wishes to the family. We hope to include a fuller reflection on Lilian's life next month.



One of Lilian's books on Lanchester



Poppy's walks

Good day readers. This month's walk takes place eight miles from Lanchester in a hidden gem which I wager most of you will not have discovered.

Carrs Nature Reserve at Pity Me is an oasis of wildlife between housing estates and businesses.

Yet it is easy to drive by without having any idea of its existence. Fortunately, the Humans had been told about the reserve, which is not far from the Arnison shopping centre, not that you would find me venturing there.

As you will know, I am Poppy a Patterdale Terrier who shares with you the walks I lead my Humans on. But I do need them to drive me to some of these walks. From Lanchester we drove towards Durham but turned left at Lanchester Road Hospital then right towards New College, Durham. Past that we turned left and drove past Framwellgate shops. Just after a sign which said we had entered Pity Me we found a parking space on our left next to an electricity sub-station. We parked there and I was led across the road towards a sign which said Public Footpath. We followed the path which soared above the land to both our left and right.

To the right we could see the playing fields of Framwellgate School, and to the left an expanse of ponds, marshland and footpaths. This was the nature reserve.

We passed other dogs and their Humans as we walked along the concrete footpath. After ten minutes or so we came to a junction where we could have followed paths to our right or our left.

By going right, we encountered a red doggie bin which proved useful, but after that we entered a modern housing estate. So we turned round and followed the left hand path which proved to be much more interesting as it led onto the nature reserve. We followed a footpath which led past a fenced off wilderness of savannah grass on our right but there were fields and paths amongst the trees to the left which I was able to explore. There was an abundance of ponds and footpaths around them. Luckily it would have been difficult to get lost because the housing estates and business parks on the edge of the reserve provided a reference point.



While it would have been rather wet near the ponds, the grass in the centre of the nature reserve was pleasingly firm and enjoyable for me to run around. When we came to a gate which led into another housing estate, we turned away from it and headed diagonally across the reserve which brought us back to the original junction with the doggie bin.

There were seats aplenty for the Humans to sit and enjoy the views, but on the occasion of our visit there was a biting wind, and it was too cold to sit around. We therefore retraced our footsteps along the path which rises above the nature reserve, and we could look down on the area where we had walked. Not that I am one for admiring the views, I prefer to explore the undergrowth.

Meanwhile there were information signs dotted about for the Humans to peruse. And apparently an abundance of wildlife.

One theory about the name Pity Me is after the French 'petit mere' which means 'small lake'. Ponds and marshes support frogs, newts, damselflies and dragonflies. How do I know this? It said so on the information board, that is how.

The walk around the site took us about an hour but we could have spent longer there had the weather been kinder.

Spring into action!

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Lanchester Flower Club

It had been agreed at our last Flower Club meeting any monies left in the account would be donated to Willow Burn. On Tuesday 24th February Helen Tomlinson and Lestrine Kelly met with Ali English, the fundraiser at Willow Burn Hospice. A cheque for £1,000 was handed to Ali from the members of Lanchester Flower Club. It was fitting that Helen should be the one to present the cheque; she was an original committee member at the start 52 years ago. Quite some commitment. Helen was herself a National Association Flower Demonstrator for many of those years. She was also a qualified judge for the National Association of Flower Arrangers,even teaching flower arranging in her local area.
I think it would be a fitting note to finish with, a big thank you to Helen from all who have enjoyed the meetings and demonstrations at Lanchester Flower Club over so many years.

Lestrine Kelly



Cheque being presented to Ali English of Willow Burn by Helen Tomlinson (left) and Lestrine Kelly (right)

Blossom Makes You Smile! Lanchester Orchard Blossom Trail Coming Soon...

In 2025, The Nation Trust commissioned a YouGov poll to survey people's response to nature and the outdoors. The poll found that 'the majority of UK adults, 94%, feel happy when seeing blossom in bloom on trees or in hedgerows' (Nation Trust press release March 2025). This spring, make yourself smile and pay a visit to the Community Orchard during the blossom season. Take your blanket or chair, sit under the trees and enjoy! Watch out for the Blossom Trail notices on Newbiggen Lane.

Eleanor Johnson, Lanchester Community Orchard
www.lanchesterorchard.org





Photos from last year - of course!

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Durham County Council

WHAT'S ON - April 2026 and beyond

Lanchester Wildlife Group
Geoff Kilner: "A year along the Derwent". Tuesday 14th April, 7.30pm, Lanchester Community Centre. Celebrated wildlife photographer Geoff Kilner will be sharing some of his excellent experiences with us, focusing on the Derwent Valley. As always, all are welcome and there is no charge.

Social Club
4th April Danielle Hurst
11th April Michael Carr
18th April Ellie Romano
25th April Andy Max

Local History Society
Just to remind everyone that we won't be meeting in April as the date falls on Good Friday and we agreed not to meet. Our May meeting will be May 1st which is also the bank holiday weekend. Richard Pears will be coming to speak; his subject will be 'The buildings of William Newton 1730-98'. He is responsible for building over 40 assorted structures across the North East. These include Howick Hall, famous at this time of year for the snowdrop walks and the Newcastle Assembly Rooms. Starting out at 13 as a joiner William grew into a well respected architect. Join us at 6.45 for a 7.00 start in the Community Centre.

WI
April meeting, Monday 13th - speaker Marie Thorne, 'Dramas in Pyjamas'.
May meeting, Monday 11th – speaker Dr Heather Lawrence, 'Photo Journalism'.
Saturday 16th May, Fashion Show, Lanchester Social Club, 2pm – tickets £6 – Get your tickets early for this fun afternoon!

Paradiso Club
Sunday 12th April 2026: AMMONITE (2020)
"Ammonite is an absorbing drama that sensationally brings together two superlative performers: Saoirse Ronan and Kate Winslet… Francis Lee's sensational biopic of palaeontology pioneer Mary Anning reimagines her erotic encounter with a woman trapped in a stifling marriage" (Peter Bradshaw, The Guardian). In 1840s England, once acclaimed fossil hunter, Mary Anning, now searches for common fossils to sell to tourists to support herself and her ailing mother. When a wealthy visitor entrusts Mary with the care of his wife she cannot afford to turn his offer down. Mary initially clashes with her unwelcome guest, but despite this an intense bond begins to develop, compelling the two women to determine the true nature of their relationship. Lanchester Community Centre, 7pm refreshments and raffle. Film starts at 7.30pm
Members: £4, Non-members : £5. Annual membership: £5

Musical memories goes to the musicals
Join us for music from your favourite musicals, refreshments and fun activities. And a treat from the Easter Bunny. 1st April 2026 at 2pm, Lynwood House, Durham Road, Lanchester.
Musical Memories is a fun, friendly and stimulating music group using the ability of music to improve your brain activity, wellbeing and mood. We welcome people living with conditions that affect memory. For further information email lanchesterdfc@gmail.com

Library
Library Book Clubs are on the 4th Monday and 3rd Thursday monthly. Books are supplied by the library. If you would like to participate in either of these friendly and informal group chats, pop into the library and speak to the librarians.
Thursday Book Club will meet on 16th April from 4-5pm. The group will be reviewing 'After the Fall', by Charity Norman. An intense read with a compelling story line full of surprises and twists (Amazon Kindle).
Monday Book Club will meet on 27th April from 2.30-3.30pm and will be discussing 'The Dressmaker of Dachau', by Mary Chamberlain about "a brilliant English dressmaker caught in Germany...a gripping, powerful read" (Goodreads).
Pins and Needles meet on 1st Thursday monthly. The next meeting is 2nd April from 10-11.30am. If you like knitting or crocheting, bring along wool, thread, needles and patterns and get friendly advice and support.
Scrabble Group meets 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month from 1.30-3.30 pm. Build words and add points according to the letter tiles value.
Rummikub Group meets on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month from 1.30-3.30pm. A strategic, yet simple game with tiles that are constantly changing.
Lego Club is on offer every Saturday from 10-11.30.
Toddler Time group is on Tuesdays from 2.30-3.00 (term time only) and includes stories and nursery rhymes for your child/ren to enjoy.
Children's crafts are available every afternoon and Saturdays. Different craft ideas and materials are provided, so pop along with your children for some creative fun.
And remember, a book opens the doors to many different worlds, experiences and cultures. Come and explore new and exciting genres of books and join in the activities on offer. Your library is waiting for you to step inside.

City Theatre
"Duets" by Peter Quilter (comedy) is on at The City Theatre, Durham, DH1 3RA from Sunday 19th April until Sat 25th April. One man and one woman alone in a room, 4 times over. 4 situations. 4 couples. 4 times the entertainment!
Tickets from Durham Gala on 03000266600 (closed Mondays) or www.durhamcitytheatre.co.uk and follow the link for tickets. £9.50. Concessions £8.50 Sun/Mon/Tues. Performances Sun and Sat 2.30pm, Mon-Fri 7.30.

Thursday Club
April 14th is our trip to the seaside. Seaham in fact, to see Tommy the replica soldier and enjoy fish and chips then back to Dalton Park for some retail therapy. Some spare places on the bus. Apply via the Community Centre.

Lunch club/cuppa and a chat
The next meeting of the lunch club held at Lynwood House will be Tuesday 14th April 12pm start, all welcome.

Lanchester Male Voice Choir
Meets every Monday evening 7.00 - 9.00pm in Croft View Hall. We are a small, friendly, supportive group who would like to welcome new members. There is no requirement to have sung before or to be able to read music. For further details email Peter Bridgewater, tootspeteb@live.co.uk

Friends of Longovicium Group (Lanchester Roman Fort)
Visitors and new members are always welcome at our meetings. Meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of the month (excluding December), 7.30pm at Lanchester Community Centre. For further information about membership please contact: Rodney Hawkins Tel: 0191 4103472 - Email: hawkins_15@sky.com or Mrs M Williams Tel: 01207 520063. Follow us on Facebook (Friends of Longovicium). Please have a look at the group's website which is the culmination of decades of research and contains a wealth of information about Longovicium Roman Fort: https://longoviciumcouk.wordpress.com. Friends of Longovicium is part of the Lanchester Partnership.

Sewing Group
Every Wednesday, 1-3pm at Lanchester Community Centre. We are a small friendly group with space to grow into. We enjoy sewing, knitting, crochet, embroidery and cross stitch - as well as having a cuppa and a biscuit and sometimes cake! There is chatting and a laugh. For more information ring Elaine 01207 520063. No reply, please leave your name and number and Elaine will get back to you. Looking forward to meeting you and for you to join us.

Acappella Choir
(singing without musical accompaniment)
This is held in the Chapter House of All Saints church every Monday between 10.30 and 12. New members are always welcome. No previous choir experience necessary. We sing a wide variety of songs, lead by Sheila Trow, and are open to both men and women.

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

Wellbeing Walk
Every Monday at 1pm on the village green next to the war memorial. Walk lasts up to 90 minutes, all welcome. To book please visit www.durham.gov.uk/walkdurham or call 03000 262539.

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



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

Lanchester Hiking Group
Meets fortnightly on a Wednesday at 10am. Walks are between 5-6 miles long within a 30 minute radius of Lanchester – lifts provided. For further details please

call Helen Thomas on 07712425623 (or email hdbthomas@live.com).

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

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

Vintage Tractor Club
The April meeting will be on Tuesday 7th April. From May onwards we will revert to meeting on the first Wednesday of the month in the Social Club.

Paste Egging. Easter Monday 6th April. 10am.



No charge. Meet in car park behind the Green School
Every Easter Monday morning, come rain, snow or hail, young people and their parents celebrate Easter by dyeing eggs with natural materials then bouling them down Paste Egg Bank. The tradition goes back into the mists of time but died out sometime after WWII. However, when Lanchester Wildlife Group conducted its survey of the important hedgerows around the village, they discovered a field that was called Paste Egg. From its slope they knew what its former use was immediately and decided that the custom should be revived. That was over forty years ago and now parents bring their children because it's something they did themselves as kids.



Paste Egging is a local corruption of the word Pascal, meaning associated with Easter. In some places in Co.Durham they jarp their eggs, which is a bit like conkers without strings but Lanchester has always been a place for bouling.
Starting at 10am sharp in the car park behind the Green School, everyone is shown how to collect cow parsley leaves and wildflowers to dye patterns on their eggs. The colour comes from onion skins. The eggs are then set to boil in a giant pot whilst the children go on an Easter Egg hunt. On their return, the Paste Egging song is sung and the eggs are carefully unwrapped. The eggs are judged and the best win prizes. After that we climb up to the top of Paste Egg and boule them down the bank. The winner is the egg that travels the furthest without breaking. The event is free although participants are encouraged to donate towards the purchase of the following year's prizes. All are welcome – but don't forget to bring your own raw egg to take part. For further information contact Noel Jackson on 0778 633 2465.

Noel Jackson



Community Centre News

Did you know that all the money that we raise is used for the costs of running the centre? A few of our projects have been replacing old fire extinguishers, improving the CCTV, installing secure door access, decorating halls, new window blinds, fixing some car park defects. These are just a few things carried out, but the centre is a large and very old building and maintenance is costly and ongoing.
If you are interested in becoming more involved with your Community Centre you should consider joining our committee which meets around 5 times a year. Or you can volunteer to provide cover for the office on weekdays between 4.30pm until 6.30pm, please call in or give us a ring, your help will be greatly appreciated.

Other ways to help your Community Centre:

Donating and buying books from us
In 2025 we managed to raise £971.21 from book sales that is up from 2024 by 67%, amazing! We always welcome donations of books and we resell them for 80p.

Loose change boxes
In 2025 you donated £296.78 through loose change boxes. Although that figure is down from 2024 by 20%, we are extremely grateful for your help. Loose change boxes are available to take from the reception area, please remember to return them to us when you are finished collecting.

Becoming a Friend
This is a great way to help out by donating a regular yearly amount.
In 2025 this helped to raise £2,804, which is up by 6% from 2024.

Reminder!
Saturday 21st March - Bee's Cafe will be opening its doors. Opening times will be Wednesday to Saturday, 9am-2.30pm and Sundays, 9am-3pm.
The office is staffed Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9am-1.15pm. On Tuesday and Thursdays, it's 9am-3pm. If you have any enquiries about any of the brilliant activities or clubs available please get in touch on 01207 521275.
To keep up to date with what's going on check out our Information Point; follow us on Facebook 'Lanchester Community Centre' or check out our website, details above.

Marie Murphy

KoGs

Hello Village Voice Readers!
We've been so busy the last few months. We're organising a Coffee Morning and Shopping Experience, putting together our very own cookbook (more information below) and of course our usual Monday night activities.
On Monday 19th January we had a visit from Jane Nattrass from the Henry Dancer Days Charity to share with us Henry's story and information about what the Henry Dancer Days Charity provides.
On Monday 9th February we were joined by Richard East from the Prison Service to talk about what it's really like to spend life behind bars!
Monday 16th February we had a pancake feast alongside our usual crazy KoGs games.
KoGs Cookbook!
We are in the beginning stages of putting together our own KoGs Cookbook not only to raise money for our group but as a memory to look back at for our members.
We are asking all our church family members, and village voice readers, with our own KoGs members / parents/ grandparents/ friends /family members for their favourite recipes.
Everything from: cakes, soups, traybakes, smoothies, main meals, desserts, starters - we want it all! Please email or send recipes with members ASAP!
We are hoping to have this ready to sell between Summer/ September.
We are very pleased to say we are teaming up with the Henry Dancer Days charity and will be donating some of our money raised to them.
For those who don't know:
Henry Dancer was a past KoGs member and Henry Dancer Days is a charity that was started to keep Henry's name alive after he sadly lost his awful battle with Osteosarcoma (bone cancer) at the age of 12.
Henry Dancer Days supports children and their families who are suffering with the devastating effects of childhood cancer.
If you'd like to send us a recipe, please email us at kidsofgod@hotmail.co.uk and remember to include your name!
Who are we?
KoGs (Kids of God) is a Christian based youth group that meets in the Methodist Church on Monday Evenings and is open to everyone inside and outside of the village from all and any religious backgrounds including those with no religious background at all!
We offer a range of activities including: 2 course meals, games, messy games, day trips, evening trips, residential weekend trips, crafts, drama, cell sessions and much much more!
We start at 5pm to 7.30pm, Mondays during school terms.
The cost of the sessions is £3 per person but your first week is free!
(All activities and your weekly meal are included)
For more information contact Laura & Peter Cole on 07428500059 / 01207 654291 or email kidsofgod@hotmail.co.uk
We also have a Facebook page if you'd like to see more or get in touch with us that way, www.facebook.com/kidsofgodlanchester

Laura and Peter Cole



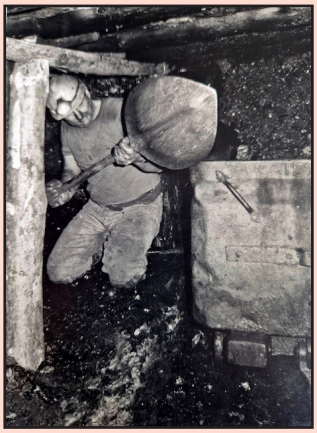




Left: Laura & Pete with Jane,
Centre: KoGs group with Jane Nattrass,
Above: KoGs listening to Richard's Talk
Cover: KoGs group with Richard East

Lanchester Local History Society

We met on Friday 6th February to hear from Rick Smith about "Granite coal and ice- a geological slice through Lanchester". This part of his talk was a quick introduction to coal in the valley and his illustrated talk about the day in the life of a miner.
Rick worked in minerals, coal exploration and mining for nearly 50 years including going underground with his work. In his talk he covered 'the ring of fire', the volcanic activity which occurred in the area during the Devonian period. Lanchester is on a rising land mass like the Himalayas. He described how our valley was created by glacial activity rather than through erosion by water. Over the millennia layers get deposited and eroded in various cycles and our limestone and coal deposits all come from this activity. This led to his illustrated talk "A day in the life of a collier in the nineteenth and twentieth century." His pictures were mostly from his trips underground in the local area. Mining in the Busty Seam of the Woodside drift. Pictures of workings in Burnhope Anne pit. Many of the pictures showed the progressive development of technology from hand picks, through windy picks to larger automated chainsaw machines. The evening was well received by all who attended and Rick answered many questions before we closed the meeting.





Marian Morrison

Communities in Focus

The Communities in Focus team has been out and about in Lanchester as you will have seen on Facebook. As a reminder the team are photographing the community over the coming year with the aim of producing an exhibition of their work in the village at the end of the year. These are three of their first shoots. Words by George Ledger,Communities in Focus.

Ged Peaden - Lanchester Hardware



Every village or town needs a proper hardware store, somewhere that can give you the washer without having to buy the whole kitchen sink, as supplied by the big multinational companies.

For the past 44 years, Jed Peaden has been exactly that for the community, running Lanchester Home & Garden Hardware and supplying customers with everything they need… and quite a few things they didn't realise they needed too.

Ged started work there on a Youth Training Scheme in 1981. He took over the business in 1990 when the previous owner retired and stepped naturally into the role. With a dry sense of humour and sharp business sense, he grew the shop and later expanded to a second premises in Langley Park.

All businesses face stiff competition from supermarkets and online sales, but Ged has a simple philosophy, have the goods at the right price, keep a good stock and offer good advice. It does work and during my visit to the shop every customer knew him by name and listened to any advice he could give.

Every business needs good support, and Ged is assisted by brother Barry and other family members who keep the shelves filled and the customers coming back.

Support local. It really does make a difference.

Marjorie Gray - British Red Cross Shop Volunteer

The British Red Cross is a volunteer-led charity helping people in crisis, in the UK and around the world. Its work helps people prepare for, cope with and recover from life's toughest moments — all funded by donations and charity shops.



One of those shops is in Lanchester, where every donation or purchase of pre-loved clothes, books and homeware helps change lives locally and globally.



The shop has a very special supporter in 98-year-old Marjorie Gray, its longest-serving volunteer. A familiar face for decades, Marjorie still pops in weekly for a chat. She's known for her love of dancing, gardening and birdwatching — and believes dancing has kept her nimble well into her 90s.

For Marjorie, the best part of the shop is the people. From fellow volunteers to the shop team, it's a place of friendship, laughter and community — and a perfect example of the spirit of the British Red Cross.

Lanchester Litter Pick

Litter is more than just an eyesore. Discarded packaging, plastic bottles, cans and other waste can harm wildlife, pollute waterways and make communities feel neglected.

Lanchester Partnership held its annual village litter pick on Saturday 7th March with a fantastic turnout. More than 60 volunteers, including 12 brilliant young helpers, collected over 50 bags of rubbish, eight of which will be recycled.

Most litter was found along the main roads and around the secondary school. Unfortunately, volunteers can't safely collect further out along busy rural roads, where litter is often even more visible.

Community litter picking has been part of village life in Lanchester for over 20 years, and the village can be proud of that tradition.

A huge thank you to everyone who gave up their time to help keep Lanchester looking its best.







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Our clinic will operate every Friday morning for the next six weeks (except Good Friday), starting the 20th of March to the 24th of April. Just come to reception in Park House, Station Road, the big black door!

Also available will be PSA (prostate) tests for men from a blood sample – please see our website for pricing.



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chXhealth® is part of the Durham Genome Centre, a biotechnology enterprise based in Lanchester, Co Durham.

The Durham Genome Centre, Park House, Station Road, Lanchester, Co. Durham, DH7 0EX
Telephone +44 (0) 191 543 9386 • info@chxhealth.co.uk • www.chxhealth.co.uk

Boys' Brigade

We were treated to a display of 3D printing by Arnaud, one of our Senior Boys, who explained the process and made a locking together tree for each lad. It was great to see the interest the rest of the boys showed in this form of science. Arnaud did a full presentation of the science involved and showed us all the machine actually working while he talked.

This was followed by our yearly participation in the International Games for Juniors and the Top Team Challenge for Company section. The International Games are a set of games that all BB's worldwide can participate in from their own meeting place. We had: bounce a ball into a bucket, three legged race, dribble around cones, memory game, catching a ball one handed and carrying a pyramid of cups on a tray around cones. These were all against the clock with three minutes allocated to each attempt. All the boys tried extremely hard to achieve the best result and this was also done under the watchful eye of George Ledger from "Communities in Focus", who was photographing the boys for a feature on our Boys' Brigade. [George's photo feature will appear in a later edition]

Company and Senior section had a much harder challenge. They were given an envelope with the details of 6 challenges, then 10 minutes to read and plan the way forward and 50 minutes to complete the tasks. Each leader was in charge of one of the tasks but could not help or advise, it was up to the lads themselves and several of these were against the clock. In addition, there were two challenges that they could complete during the 50 minutes, a set of anagrams and recognising 12 flags and then pairing the countries that shared a border.

One of our leaders had received 20 gingham bandanas, 20 children's aprons, 2 boxes of small jars of jam and 5 pancake race prizes with the compliments of Bonne Maman. This made our pancake making evening even more special. Each boy received a bandana and an apron then competed in pancake races as well as making pancakes which were quickly devoured with their own assortment of fillers. A great end to our sessions before a week's break for half term to recharge our batteries ready to go again.

Eric Hepplewhite









Above: Arnaud explains 3D printing to the boys
Centre above: the pancake race!
Right and far right: it's getting hot in the kitchen!

Dear Village Voice

I'm delighted to share an update on the footpath along Ford Road. After numerous complaints to the council on their do it online link and having no response or avail, I decided to send an email to the council help desk listing all of my previous requests along with concerns about traffic speed on this narrow, busy stretch of road, also linking the Parish Council into this.

The council have sent a team who have dug the path back to the fence and wall. They've tidied up the rubble that was spewed over the walkway. I stopped to chat to the two gentlemen who were working this morning and thanked them for their hard work. Hand dug,. no machinery involved.

Please see the before and after photos.

Kind regards

Sharon Gardiner





Above: before
Right: after

Lanchester Patient Participation Group

Health Matters

Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) – an overview:

There is certainly nothing glamorous about living with IBS. This common digestive condition affects how the gut moves and functions. The “poo taboo” accompanied by smell and noise from the gut, makes IBS hard to live with and hard to talk about.

It can cause tummy pain and cramp making you feel bloating and gassy, changing your normal bowel habit to diarrhoea, constipation or a mixture of both. Going from problems passing urine to a sudden urge to wee. It can make you feel tired, lacking in energy and feeling sick.

There may be days when your symptoms are better and days when they're worse (flare-ups). These may be triggered by food or drink.

What can trigger symptoms of IBS?

For no obvious reason, symptoms can be triggered by alcohol, caffeine, certain fatty or spicy foods. Taking regular antibiotics, stress and anxiety can contribute to a flareup.

Non glamorous symptoms of IBS:

+ Unpredictable excessive wind
+ Unpredictable diarrhoea
+ Unpredictable cramping pains
+ Need to be close to toilet
+ Social anxiety & isolation due to fear of flare- up in public
+ Impact on physical & mental wellbeing
+ Daily challenge of dietary needs
+ Difficult to diagnosis & treat



What can help?

Avoid your known trigger factors which often differ in individuals.

Dietary: take regular soluble fibre such as oats and linseeds. Include probiotics such as yogurts and supplements containing micro-organisms in your diet. As well as drinking plenty of water, try a soothing drink of peppermint tea.

Don’t skip meals or eat too quickly.

Regular Exercise: around 150 mins of moderate activity weekly. This also helps to calm the nervous system.

Reduce Stress: Yoga, Pilates, breathing exercises and walking have been shown to help.

Sleep: 7-9 hours of quality sleep is an all-around healer.

Seeking medical advice.

Symptoms vary from person to person, and not everyone experiences every symptom, nor will everyone have a diagnosis of IBS. If you suspect you might have IBS, consulting with a healthcare professional will get an accurate diagnosis and develop an appropriate treatment plan.

Understandably the non-glamorous symptoms associated with IBS make it a difficult topic to discuss, but no one should have to suffer in silence! Speaking openly about IBS is the first step to raising awareness, as well as finding support and effective ways to manage symptoms.

Ref:

nhs.uk

https://www.nhs.uk › ... › Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) 17th March 2025

Living With IBS - Explore Our Factsheet

Guts UK Charity

https://www.gutscharity.org.uk/information/ibs

How a Village Voice feature helped one of our readers

The Patient Participation Group made the following Facebook post after hearing about one reader’s experience after he read our feature on prostate cancer.

Just to share with you that a Village Voice article written by our own Nancye Carr, alongside an associated personal article from Adam the Gardener re his own diagnosis of prostate cancer, has made a significant difference to a Village Voice reader.

The gentleman concerned saw the prostate article in the January 2026 edition and thought, "this is me" as he worked his way down the list of symptoms.

After consultation with a GP, he was seen on the two week cancer pathway, which confirmed cancer and is starting his treatment. We wish him well.

Thank you to Helen Gardiner and Anita Petty also who are now working on our behalf to submit articles, however I will save the last word for Nancye who for many years has submitted articles on the PPG's behalf.

I recall Nancye saying, as she retired from the Village Voice work, that if it had benefited one person then that made it all worthwhile. I think we can safely say to Nancye that your efforts have made a significant difference to many, and we are all grateful for your contributions over the years.

Thank you, Nancye, from us all.

Sue Graham

Lanchester Wildlife Group present

Geoff Kilner "A year along the Derwent"

Tuesday 14th April. 7.30pm. Lanchester Community Centre

Celebrated wildlife photographer Geoff Kilner will be sharing some of his excellent experiences with us, focusing on the Derwent Valley. The evening is sure to make you go "aaaah" (and certainly not "Arrggh") and wish you were better at taking photographs yourself. You may also find out some things about the Derwent Valley that may prompt you to revisit this important wildlife corridor.

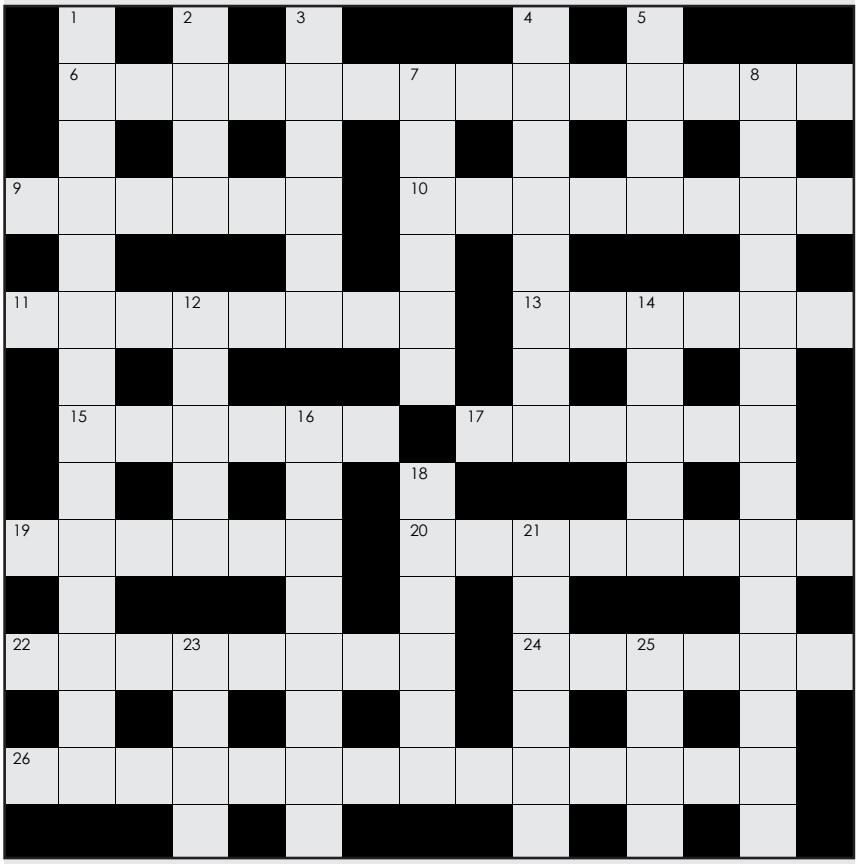
As always, all are welcome and there is no charge.

Noel Jackson



Photo: curlew

CROSSWORD 217



Clues

Across

6. Sacriston's most famous son (3,5,6)
9. Load (6)
10. To remove poisons and other harmful substances (8)
11. Card game (8)
13. Vertical distance from bottom to top (6)
15. Dodges (6)
17. To judge the value of (6)
19. Pay no attention to (6)
20. Spiny little mammal (8)
22. Capital of Jamaica (8)
24. To cause slight worry or annoyance (6)
26. Dairy product associated with the north and west of the country (8,6)

Down

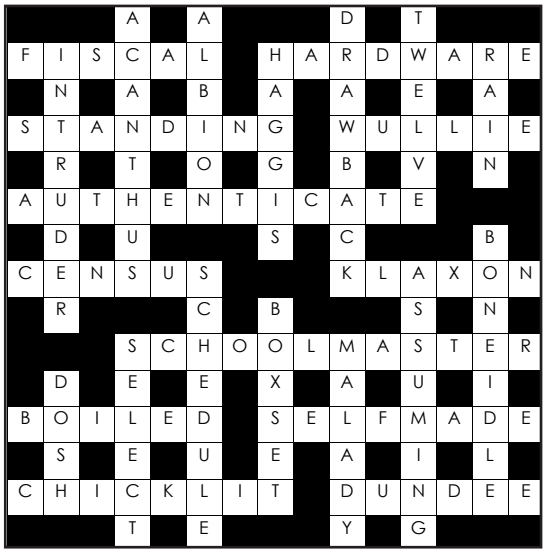
1. Way of speaking associated with the south east … "innit" (7,7)
2. You are filling one in (4)
3. Membrane covering the front of the eyeball (6)
4. American term for trousers (8)
5. Type of wild goat (4)
7. Nocturnal mammal (6)
8. Style of dress made popular by Brigitte Bardot (3-3-8)
12. Comic featuring Dennis and Gnasher (5)
14. Forename of Ms. Handl who starred in 'For the Love of Ada' (5)
16. Description of a tense or exciting atmosphere (8)
18. Become different (6)
21. Small boat (6)
23. Breathe in sharply (4)
25. Got bigger (4)

Name:_____

Address: _____

_____

Please send your completed entries for the £10 prize draw by **Tuesday 7th April 2026** to the Village Voice, c/o Lanchester Community Centre, Newbiggen Lane, Lanchester, DH7 0HY



Solution Crossword 216

There were 25 entries of which 23 were correct.
The winner, drawn out of the hat is Pat Nesbitt.

IAN SAYER
Roofing Specialist
Mobile: 07947 542570
e-mail: Iansayerroofing@btinternet.com
7 Angelica Close, Consett, Co Durham. DH8 6 GF
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Re-Skims, Ceilings, Concreting, Pointing ... etc
Over 20 Years' Experience. All Work Guaranteed
BILLY CARR PLASTERING
Free Estimates. No Job Too Small
QUALITY WORK AT AFFORDABLE PRICES
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St Bede's Catholic Secondary School and Sixth Form Centre

Students at St Bede's continue to excel, demonstrating outstanding resilience and commitment to their academic studies and personal growth. We are incredibly proud of the determination and positivity shown across our school community this term.

Ash Wednesday and the Start of Lent

We began Lent together with a Celebration of the Word delivered via Teams and beautifully prepared by our Student Chaplaincy Team. Throughout the day, students were invited to receive ashes, marking the beginning of this important season of reflection.

Lenten Bake Sale Success

Our Lenten Bake Sale was a tremendous success — the trolley was full, and every bake sold out! Staff, students, and visitors enjoyed a fantastic selection of cakes and biscuits.

A huge thank you to our wonderful staff team and their student helpers who baked such an amazing variety of treats. All proceeds will go directly to our Lenten charities.

Year 11 Mock Exams

Good luck to all Year 11 students who have begun their mock examinations. Our Spanish students have made a particularly impressive start, with some outstanding performances in their speaking exams — well done to everyone involved!

Year 11 also enjoyed a Sixth Form taster day, where they experienced lessons in their chosen subjects and sampled the fantastic food available in the Sixth Form canteen.

A Special Musical Contribution

It was a great privilege for members of our school choir to be invited to perform at Canon Spence's Requiem Mass at Ushaw College.

We are deeply honoured to have been part of such a significant occasion. Canon Spence served our school community with remarkable dedication over many years, leaving a lasting legacy cherished by students, families, and parishioners. Many in our community hold fond memories of his support and commitment to St Bede's.

A group photograph was taken on the day, along with an additional photograph beneath Bishop Wilkinson's portrait.

Introducing: Friends of St Bede's

We're excited to launch Friends of St Bede's, a new group dedicated to strengthening our school community and enhancing enrichment opportunities for all students.

Our aim is to bring together staff, families, and the wider community to raise funds that directly support pupils — from clubs and resources to events and experiences beyond the classroom.

We're inviting colleagues who would like to help shape this new initiative. Getting involved doesn't require a large time commitment, but may include:

- Attending half termly meetings
- Sharing fundraising ideas
- Supporting fundraising events
- Acting as a voice for our school community

If you're interested, please email friendsofstbedes@stb.bwcet.com. Together, we can create something truly special for our students and for the whole St Bede's family.

As we continue through the Lenten season, we look forward to sharing more about the activities and events taking place in school. Thank you for your ongoing support.

Catherine Hammill, Head Teacher





Above: the choir under the photo of Bishop Wilkinson
Right: order of service for Canon Spence's Requiem Mass
Cover: the choir at Ushaw

Friends of Longovicium Group (Lanchester Roman Fort)

An interesting Roman find from Lanchester in 1700

Over many years The Friends of Longovicium collected information about historic finds from the fort at Lanchester and their current whereabouts. This research has now been placed in an online finds catalogue as part of the Friends of Longovicium website. One of the interesting finds in our catalogue was a sculpted stone figure of Fortune from the 3rd or 4th century, approximately 58cm high, seated, but with a missing head. In her right hand is the cornucopia, at her left foot is the wheel, at her right foot is a globe indicative of her wide-spread dominion.



Figure of Fortune, which is now housed in Durham Cathedral.

The basketwork of her chair appears on the upper part of the front edge of one side, where it curves around her. There is no Roman inscription; the letters on the pedestal are modern, intimating that the stone was found in the year 1700 by one Henry Ornsby, whose wife's name was Elizabeth. CURRENT LOCATION: Now on view in the Monks' Dormitory, Durham Cathedral.

Other documented finds from the fort of Longovicium and the Lanchester area can be found on the Friends of Longovicium website. We are always interested in information regarding previously unknown or lost Roman finds from the Lanchester area.

Visitors and new members are always welcome at our meetings. Meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of the month (excluding December) 7.30pm at Lanchester Community Centre.

For further information about membership please contact. Rodney Hawkins Tel: 0191 4103472 - Email: hawkins_15@sky.com

or Mrs M Williams Tel: 01207 520063

Follow us on Facebook (Friends of Longovicium)

Please have a look at the group's website which is the culmination of decades of research and contains a wealth of information about Longovicium Roman Fort. https://longoviciumcouk.wordpress.com

Darin Smith

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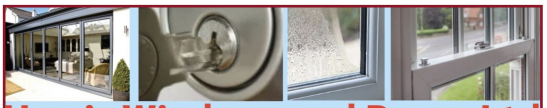
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Lanchester Endowed Parochial School

We are very fortunate to be able to extend our learning for some of our children to different continents! We took eight of our Year 5 & Year 6 children to Delhi in January for a once in a lifetime adventure - this is what they had to say:
On Thursday the 15th January we were lucky enough to travel to India with our school as part of the Turing Scheme. We flew from Newcastle Airport to London Heathrow, before boarding a flight to Delhi. We had the most amazing time when we were away; this was a once in a lifetime opportunity. We visited the Taj Mahal, the Lotus Temple, a Gurdwara and a Sikh temple. The Taj Mahal was stunning – so much prettier in real life than in the photographs that we have seen. We went to an Indian farm, where we watched a puppet show, rode camels and dressed up.
We also spent time with friends from our Indian Partner school – Kulachi Hansraj Model School. We had an amazing welcome where they dressed in traditional clothes, and they put on a musical and dance performance for us. We ate lots of spicy food and curry and enjoyed a wide range of Indian cuisine. We also had traditional henna body art drawn onto our hands.
Everyone was so welcoming and kind to us – we were treated like royalty. We will remember this experience forever.

SCHOOL HOLIDAY CLUBS
It has always been our vision to be able to provide some kind of childcare during holidays for our families. Up until this year, we used an outside provider. However, our staff are keen to run holiday clubs themselves during the school holidays. The first holiday club took place in February half term and this was a resounding success with over 80 children attending over two days. Due to this overwhelming success, we are now able to offer a holiday club during the second week of the Easter holiday and open it up to all children in the village and local areas. This will run daily from 8am until 5pm every day from Monday 13th April to Friday 17th April.
During the day, we will be organising a wide range of activities for the children, including visits to Forest School, baking, arts and crafts and organised games. These were all a great success during February half term. Just look at these photographs – happy children having great fun!
Our prices are £20 for a full day and £12 for half a day. If you would like to book and your child does not attend our school, please just contact the school office on: school.office@lanchesterep.net.
Mrs J Davis
Head Teacher







At the Taj Mahal







Above eating at the Gurdwara and below being greated at the airport.

These photos are of the children at the holiday club





All Saints' Catholic Primary School

On Thursday 29th January, all our Year Six pupils enjoyed an inspiring and highly successful day trip to London, marked by exemplary behaviour and memorable learning experiences. The day began early at Durham Station, where the group gathered before boarding the 06:09 train to King's Cross. Spirits were high as pupils arrived in the capital shortly after 09:00, ready to immerse themselves in a day of culture, history and discovery.

They set off on foot through Bloomsbury, passing notable landmarks including the British Library, Russell Square and several historic university buildings. Their morning destination, the British Museum, provided an enriching exploration of a range of collections which supported our ambitious History curriculum. Pupils engaged eagerly with the Egyptian, Anglo Saxon and Viking exhibits with Sutton Hoo being a favourite amongst the children! We also spent some time admiring the Elgin Marbles.

After leaving the museum, the children enjoyed a picturesque walk through the West End and Piccadilly Circus before reaching Buckingham Palace.

The afternoon continued with a short tube journey from Green Park to Westminster. We arrived at the Houses of Parliament for our scheduled tour and workshop; the pupils were lucky enough to witness live debates in both the House of Commons (the rise of antisemitism) and the House of Lords (linked to the super intelligence of AI). Pupils left with a deeper understanding of parliamentary processes and even got to ask our M.P., Luke Akehurst, several questions.



Buckingham Palace



Above: in the Houses of Parliament
Below: on the tube



After the workshop concluded we had an enjoyable evening meal at Pizza Express; the final stretch of the day involved a walk back to King's Cross in time for the return train to Durham, where pupils arrived tired but delighted after a full day of meaningful learning.

Overall, the trip was a resounding success, offering pupils a rich blend of cultural, historical and civic education. The children represented All Saints' with pride and maturity throughout…a fantastic time was had by all…all for only £40 each!

Frances Stephenson, Head Teacher

Watoto Children's Choir Saturday 14th February

Wow wow wow!!! A big thank you to all who came and supported the Watoto Children's Choir on Saturday 14th February either in person or online. We all enjoyed a wonderful experience of worship, dance and testimonies from the choir and the most exciting part, that some people made a commitment to follow Jesus. We raised almost £1000 including money raised from the church coffee morning. More children and women received sponsors which we know has such a significant impact on their lives and futures and a number of the beautiful handmade giraffes and elephants have found themselves new homes in the north east. One lucky family were able to meet one of the children in the choir who they have been sponsoring for a number of years and spent time with him hearing what a difference it has made to his life to be a part of Watoto.

The choir has asked us to pass on their sincere thanks for all the hospitality they received and making them feel so loved and welcome.

They will be visiting the north east again in 2027!

Mark and Julia Lloyd



Pictures of the choir (below and cover) and (right) the Nesbitt family who met their sponsored child at the concert.





An appeal has been launched to recruit more volunteer flood wardens in Lanchester.

The Environment Agency held a drop in session for residents of Lanchester at Lynwood House on Thursday, February 19 where spokeswoman Jamie Grant stressed that the local knowledge of volunteers played a vital role in reducing the flood risk in the village.

She said: "Lanchester is a close-knit community. People look out for each other which is absolutely brilliant. But we need more volunteer food wardens. They live in the community, they are its eyes and ears and know the priority risk residents."

Would-be volunteers should contact the parish council.

One volunteer flood warden, Eric Hepplewhite, said local knowledge also helped to pinpoint where drains needed to be unblocked to reduce the risk of flooding. But he added that despite heavy rains during February the village had not been badly affected this year.

"You can never say for certain, but I am more confident than I ever have been that we will not have as many floods as we have had in the past."

Durham County Council has carried out work to improve drainage in the village centre, but Mr Hepplewhite stressed that keeping drains free from leaves and debris was vital to prevent flooding.

Ms Grant also pointed out to residents concerned about house insurance that there was a contact, FloodRe(Insurance) www.floodre.co.uk which householders who had contacted them reported a "significant" reduction in premiums.

Neil McKay



Jamie Grant holding the drop-in session at Lynwood House

If anybody wants to find out more about the flood group they can contact engagement_northeast@environment-agency.gov.uk or contact Laura Dodd, Clerk of Lanchester Parish Council, or lead Flood Warden Eric Hepplewhite.

Please report blocked drains/gullies to Durham County Council https://www.durham.gov.uk/Flooding

Please report any main river issues to the Environment Agency. https://www.gov.uk/report-flood-cause

Sign up for Flood Warnings if eligible: https://www.gov.uk/get-flood-warnings

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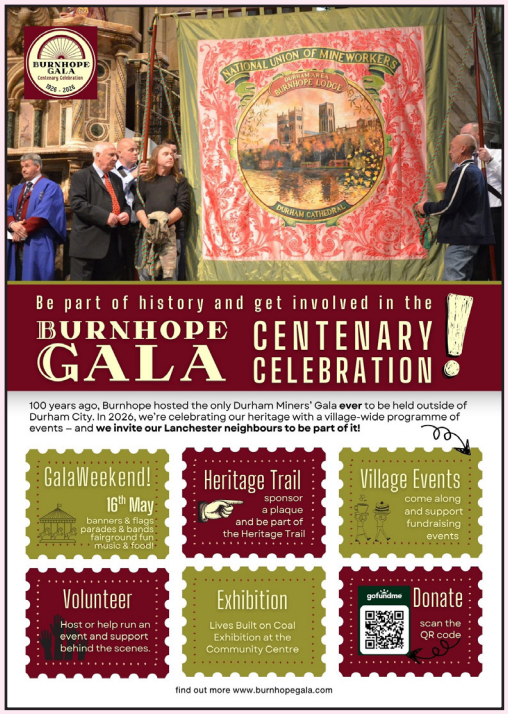

Lanchester Villagers Invited to Burnhope Gala Centenary Celebration

In May 2026, Burnhope will mark one hundred years since the village hosted the “Forgotten Gala” of 1926, held during the General Strike.

Burnhope holds a unique place in County Durham’s history — it is the only village where the Durham Miners’ Gala has ever been staged outside the city of Durham.

Contemporary reports recorded 40,000 people marching into the village with their banners and brass bands, and miners’ leader A.J. Cook was famously smuggled in on a farmer’s cart before delivering a memorable speech!

A century later, Burnhope is commemorating this important moment in local history with a weekend of celebration — and Lanchester residents are warmly invited to join in.

Friday 15 May will see pupils from Burnhope Primary School march through the village to St John’s Church, Burnhope, accompanied by a brass band, where banners will be blessed by the Dean of Durham Cathedral.

Saturday 16 May is Centenary Gala Day itself, beginning with a parade of visiting lodges, banners and brass bands marching from the Burnhope Wheel to the War Memorial and culminating at Burnhope Cricket Club (road closures will be in place during the parade).

The cricket field will become a lively showground featuring children’s fairground rides, traditional games, a magician, face painting, food and market stalls, ice cream, live music and guest speaker Dr Joe Redmayne. The licensed bar will be open in the Cricket Club.

For full details and updates, visit:
www.burnhopegala.com

We hope you’ll join us for this special centenary celebration in our shared local history.

David Brockington

The Bridge School goes greener

A Lanchester school is to go greener, thanks to a £5,000 grant. As well as brightening up the surroundings, teachers at The Bridge School say students will also benefit educationally. Staff at The Bridge, behind the bowling green in Durham Road, succeeded with a grant application of £5,000 to the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) which will be used to plant a bog garden next to the tennis courts and a green area by the school entrance.

Project leader Nic Jones said the wetland project should attract wildlife, as well as providing an educational tool for the students there.

"It will teach them about science, art and geography as well as making the surroundings more attractive by adding to the bio-diversity.

"We are also going to build a green space by the school entrance using seasonal plants."

The school has also been supported by The Woodland Trust and is due to take delivery of 240 tree saplings to plant in the school grounds.

Neil McKay

The Village Voice will document the progress of the project in photos over the year.

Lanchester Bowling Club

At the end of January, the club lost its longest serving member when Peter Harrison sadly passed away after a short illness just one day short of his 85th birthday. The club was formed in 1981 and Peter joined in 1984 and served with distinction both on and off the green. He was a career Navy man joining at the age of 15 and rising to become a Chief Petty officer. After the Navy he worked on submarines in Rosyth and then on oil rigs in the North Sea. A dedicated family man, he married Jean in 1966 on the same Saturday that England won the World Cup. They did not miss out on the national celebrations however as they honeymooned in London. They afterwards moved into the village where they raised two daughters. Peter enjoyed his bowls and also was a keen local golfer. He will be missed by all who knew him. (Peter's obituary is on page 6.)

The winter thankfully is finally drawing to a close and there is a definite feel of spring in the air with the usual burst of flowers about, especially on the village green and areas surrounding the bowling green as we prepare for the start of the forthcoming bowling season. The green officially opens on the 10th April and the first matches at the end of the month, Tuesday 28th North West Durham League and Wednesday 29th in the South West Durham League. Most matches, on a home and away basis, take place on an afternoon and take 2-3 hours.

We have a strong committee once again spearheaded by Chairman Mike Stoddart and Vice-Chair Joe Newton, with Secretary Stuart Lee, Treasurer John Halsey, and Competition Secretary Christine Monaghan in support. Christine and husband Paul have served the club well for a number of years in official capacities and both are past club champions. Stuart is in his second stint as Secretary taking over from Richard Hall who had two years in post. Thanks go to Richard for his sterling work and efforts during his tenure.

We enter the new season with a strong membership based on last year's numbers, in the region of 30 male and 10 female members which is very encouraging in comparison to some clubs which are struggling to turn teams out. The game is a great leveller with our lady members more than holding their own against us gents.

The club sends best birthday wishes to Malcolm Laverick on his recent 80th. Malcolm's wife Sally, of Parish Council and Tennis Club fame is also a member and a very good bowler.

New members are always welcome and catered for as regards equipment and tuition. Annual fee is £35 with new entrants paying £15. So come along and join us and get some fresh air, good competition, friendly banter and social interaction.

You know it makes sense Rodney!

Adrian Evans

Cricket Round up

The under 9 boys team are a force to be reckoned with! They have won the competition that was run at Ryton over a three week period and remained unbeaten throughout. They play softball cricket with six players, however Lanchester were able to turn up with nine players and rotate those that played, to the envy of the other teams present. In a round robin competition, they beat teams from Greenside, Lintz, Shotley Bridge, Swalwell and Whickham, racking up scores of over 100 on three occasions. They then faced Whickham a second time in the Final and won by 11 runs. Lanchester scored 65 runs from their 45 balls and Whickham scored 54. The squad featured- Charlie Harrison, Ossie Holden, Dan Dobson, Tom McHugh, Kasper Somerville, Fahren McPhail, Finn Jones, Dom Hanlon and Elliott Grady. The attached photo features six of the squad, with apologies to those not featured, there wasn't a picture with all nine in it. It would be great if they could stick together and play through the years but that remains to be seen.

The Club is hoping to have a new system fitted in the bar ahead of the season starting. It would replace the current one which has been cooling the beers for a number of years and save a great deal of time on the cleaning of the lines as this would come as part of the service. That would also see a change in the lagers and ciders provided. The space provided in the cellar would allow the purchase of some fridges to keep bottled wines and beers in ahead of transfer to the bar area.

Andrew McConnell

Cover: photo of under 9 boys team

Deadlines and contact information

Articles, letters and photos by Thursday 2nd April to lanchestervillagevoice@yahoo.co.uk
Adverts by Thursday 2nd April to lanchestervvadverts@gmail.com or phone Paul 07957 871106 (advertising only)
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