



SLALEY NEWS

APRIL 2026



A welcome to spring, with a lengthy report from the WI about making chocolate and “Notable Women of the North East” as celebrated by Baroness Joyce Quinn, and Karen Melvin’s gardening column illustrated with some attractive images.

The Parish Council has emerged from winter and can now regularly meet face to face.

The Rose & Crown are inviting everyone to an Easter weekend of fun, food and celebration of their successful first year.

The Rev. Diana Johnson reflects on how our churches in Slaley Healy and Riding Mill are viewed by people, and gives us an interesting poem by E E Cummings - with unusual spelling!

And another reminder of the Beer Festival in May, organised by Lucy Brain & Andrew Coney.

Slaley Film Club - not really a club - have our last film show until September on April 17th, with another hot supper provided for your donation of £6.

All we can advertise is that it will be a good old-fashioned Western!

If you are reading this in your printed booklet, delivered to your house, you will see that all the pictures are in greyscale. But if you would like to see them in full colour, then you can read a copy online by going to the front page of the Slaley website at www.slaley.org.uk.

*Contributions for the May edition by Friday,
April 24th or earlier, please!*

*Send by email to slaleynews@icloud.com, or
to michael@elphicks.myzen.co.uk*

Parish Council Report



Spring appears to have sprung and with it, your Parish Council has finally emerged from the winter and been able to meet face to face following the very generous donation of a Parishioner covering our meeting costs.

It was great to meet up again and we welcomed two Parishioners who came to the meeting to discuss various issues including the poor state of the Parish roads. Since the meeting, Northumberland County Council were contacted by Colin Horncastle and Anne Livesey and a survey of the Lead Road has been carried out and repairs scheduled.

If you wish to report any potholes, blocked gullies, fallen trees etc, please use www.fixmystreet.com which goes straight through the relevant County Council department and you will be updated as to progress.

Colin Horncastle updated the meeting of County Hall matters including squeezed budgets, redundancies and future housing developments. The Tyne Valley will be included in the Government's new housing plans, with development taking place near to railway connections. This means that Hexham and Corbridge are earmarked for new housing growth. Our Parish website now has more information on planning in the area. plus a link to the County Council website where you can check planning applications in detail.

Other issues discussed at the meeting included fly tipping, speeding, the Slaley Welcome Pack (available at the shop) and Wooley Grange adoption.

Fly tipping had been reported near to the Linnels bends which the County Council have cleared and an address found in the rubbish, passed on to the relevant authorities. It is an offence to tip any rubbish not in your bins or at the Council tip. This includes garden rubbish, even if you think it rots down. It needs to be disposed of correctly, not on the roadside. Following high profile flytipping cases covered by national news, it's a hot topic. You can use Fixmystreet for flytipping reports too!

Our next meeting is at 7pm, 20th April 2026, in the Commemoration Hall.

Get in touch in the usual way if you need us to help or support you.

Anne Livesey 07803 610077

Easter Weekend Celebrations at The Rose & Crown, Slaley



EASTER WEEKEND AT THE
Rose & Crown
Celebrate with us all weekend!

Good Friday ~ 3rd April
The Great Easter Egg Hunt Begins!

- Eggs hidden around the pub all weekend!
- Prizes include Creme Eggs, bottles of wine, vouchers & more!
- Not just for the kiddies

(Max 2 eggs per person per day)

Saturday 4th ~ Our 1 Year Anniversary!

2pm - 4pm: Community Open Forum

- Saley News Survey Feedback
- Meet the SCAL Board
- Membership Packs Available
- Q&A & Nibbles

Anniversary Party Night!
Karaoke • Games • Celebrations

Easter Sunday ~ 5th
Sunday Roasts Served 12 - 6

- Anniversary & Easter Quiz in the Evening from 8pm

Easter Monday ~ 6th
"How Many Eggs?" Competition Winner Announced

- Winner Receives a Large Easter Egg!

The Rose & Crown, Slaley
Call 01434 673996

The Rose & Crown is inviting the whole village to come together for a packed Easter Weekend of fun, food and community spirit – with something for all ages to enjoy.

Kicking things off on **Good Friday (3rd April)**, the pub will be launching its **Great Easter Egg Hunt**, with eggs hidden around the venue throughout the weekend. There are plenty of prizes up for grabs, including chocolate treats, bottles of wine and vouchers – and importantly, it's *not just for the kiddies*. Whether you're young or simply young at heart, everyone is welcome to join in the hunt (with a friendly limit of two eggs per person per day).

Saturday (4th April) marks a particularly special occasion as the Rose & Crown celebrates its **first anniversary**. The afternoon will feature a **Community Open Forum (2 pm–4 pm)**, offering residents the chance to hear feedback from the Slaley News survey, meet the SCAL board, pick up membership packs and take part in a relaxed Q&A session over nibbles. It's a great opportunity for locals to have their say and stay connected with the future of the pub and village.

The celebrations continue into the evening with an **Anniversary Party Night**, complete with karaoke, games and plenty of opportunity to celebrate what has been achieved over the past year.

On **Easter Sunday (5th April)**, the pub will be serving traditional **Sunday roasts from 12–6pm**, followed by an **Easter & Anniversary Quiz** in the evening from 8pm – a perfect way to round off the day with friends and neighbours.

Finally, **Easter Monday (6th April)** will see the much-anticipated announcement of the **“How Many Eggs?”** competition winner, with a large Easter egg prize awaiting the lucky guesser.

Throughout the weekend, the Rose & Crown aims to bring the community together in a relaxed and welcoming setting, celebrating both Easter and a successful first year at the heart of village life.

*For more information, or to book a table, contact the pub on
01434 673996.*

We look forward to celebrating with you all.

WI notes for March

Our March meeting was a huge success with our members but also with visitors from the village and Hexhamshire WI; a lot of us love chocolate it seems and Adam Allinson from The Canny Chocolate Company was an amusing speaker and demonstrator. We were shown the technique of using 'tempered' chocolate in moulds to create shells and told of the various combinations of their best-selling truffle lines as well as how the company started: boredom, frustration and a discounted online course during Covid!



We learned that the science and combination of top-quality chocolate ingredients is so very different to mass market chocolate production which uses palm oil; it goes a long way to explaining the high cost. Crops can be wiped out by drastic weather and global warming so...you get what you pay for. We've been pleased to learn that the company was awarded 'silver' in the recent Northeast Tourism Awards for 'best experience' for their workshops. 'Well deserved' we say.

We had a selection of a 'cut above' raffle prizes at this meeting to benefit the national WI. As an organisation the National Federation of the WI needs to raise funds at a national level to ensure it can

‘support all members and extend its reach and continue to make ‘a huge social input into our campaigns’ they say. We were able to contribute our raffle takings to this cause.

Two of the prizes available were signed books by the Rt Hon Baroness Joyce Quinn written in conjunction with Moira Kilkenny: “Angels of the North: Notable Women of the North East” Parts 1 (2018) & (just published) 2 who we were delighted to meet at a special event on International Women’s Day last month at the Northumberland Regional office.

When asked which women’s stories she admired most in her years of research she gave some surprising answers: Susan Mary Auld had a naval architecture degree from Durham University and became the only woman shipping designer on Tyneside working at what would become Swan Hunter. She was part of the design team who built landing vessels; 2 servant girls c 1400’s who defied the rules of the time and dressed as men to approach the shrine of St Cuthbert at Durham Cathedral, a forbidden to women act; Bella Reay, a WW1 munitions worker and footballer with the Blyth Spartans who played for charity.



She scored 133 goals one season; Mabel Philipson, a former Gaiety Girl and the first working class woman to sit in parliament as MP for Berwick; she helped raise national standards in nursing homes. Two Quaker sisters Anna and Ellen Richardson who, as Anti Slavery Campaigners led a campaign and fundraised to buy slave Frederick Douglass his freedom. He became a ‘towering figure in the Abolitionist movement and his home in Washington DC is now a national monument. Constance Leathart of Low Fell was the first woman in the Northeast to hold a pilot’s licence and who, single handedly, flew supplies to the Greek Islands during WW2 and Mary

Greaves from Whitley Bay, a polio victim, who, with her family 'invented' an early wheelchair and became a national disability rights campaigner. Fascinating reading.

Mary Greaves would perhaps be pleased that our regions most popular 'resolution' so far to be voted for at the forthcoming WI National Annual Meeting in early June is improved accessibility to disabled toilets (and indeed availability to public toilets per se) with 41,000 votes followed closely for Action on Women's Homelessness with 24,000 votes. We'll be discussing this at a meeting at Head Office on April 8th.

On the same day and in complete contrast, our next meeting in the Commemoration Hall will be much more peaceful when we all have a go at Hatha style Yoga in a special class devised for us by Hans Bartholdi. The style of yoga he teaches incorporates static postures and breath work – 'it's a slower paced style of yoga' he says.

Hans is well known in the village either as a volunteer in the Community Shop or at his regular early morning yoga class. Some of our members are regulars there so there'll be plenty of instruction and advice. Hans will be dividing the meeting into those who would like to do chair or floor work, mats can be brought if ladies have their own, but he will provide a few spares. Hans qualified as a teacher 14 years ago and has also taught in India as well where he is a regular visitor and participant in the art.

Preparations are in full swing for the charity coastal walk challenge in June, to support MND with 4 of our fittest members now in training doing loops of Slaley Forest and to and fro's to Blanchland on a regular basis. Others hope to join in at some point doing 'part' of the route with a few standing by with flasks and blister plasters! The additional trip organised for the end of last month is to Beamish. Full report next month.

And a reminder that £5 tickets are still available for the Moorland Group Fashion Show on 15th May at Hexham Mart. Please contact President Catherine Myers for further details. Telephone number on back of this publication

April 2026 gardening column-

Karen Melvin

I had a week in southern Spain, missing a week of rain here, taking a small sketchbook to draw local flowers. The town was on the coast, about the size of Hexham with lots of low rise apartments down narrow beautiful cobbled lanes, lots of benches, cafes and places to linger - but hardly any plants. I was annoyed to see how they mauled their town trees, mostly citrus, fashioned into tight lollipop shapes, where a wide spreading tree would have provided welcome shade. An ancient Ficus tree had all of its branches sawn off, even though there was adequate space for it in a school playground. What were they thinking? This unnecessary intervention shows a totally different attitude to civic trees and plants than we are used to here.



Dombeya x cayeuxii

However, an avenue with botanic specimens in Malaga was beautifully conceived and maintained. A surprise was a Dombeya tree from Madagascar, with huge dangling pink hydrangea-like flowers.

Walking in a nature reserve in the foothills above the town I saw asphodels amongst the flowery grass and stunted old pines some of which had succumbed to drought on the exposed hillside. I have an asphodel in the garden and noticed that it now forms a nice

clump, forgetting that it has been here for 50 years; things are quite slow up here.

Six years ago I was in Dorset and was minded to buy a paperbush shrub that really wants to bloom in February - what was I thinking? It never really prospered. I tried to dig it up this spring but its roots were too firmly anchored.

Now this same shrub, *Edgeworthia chrysantha*, is in full flower managing even a snowfall last week.



Asphodelus



Edgeworthia chrysantha

The shrub is highly scented and carries the perfume round the whole front of the garden in the warm spring air. The stems are bendy with no bark, more like something from the tropics. It is in fact from China and the Himalayas and is related to the scented daphnes. The stems start to peel with age and in Japan they are used to make paper, hence the name.

In April I always make a pilgrimage to Evenley Wood Garden near my daughter's home in Northamptonshire. The garden has an unusual band of acid soil in the middle supporting a fine botanical collection: mature magnolias, camellias, a growing collection of many varieties of spindlewood, also many *Styrax*, *Nyssas*, and rare *Halesias*, or snowdrop trees, in amongst carpets of spring bulbs,

some bred here. The plantings are expanding with new things to see with every visit. Here is a view of the magnolias.



The Commemoration Hall

We hope that you will have seen the recent improvements carried out with the fitting of new kitchen cupboard doors and a repainting of the kitchen, committee room and the entrance area. Fundraising continues to enable us to make repairs to the roof and refurbish the main hall floor, and therefore a reminder that the Slaley Beer Festival takes place on 9th May and tickets are available via lucykbrain@gmail.com

Following a recent situation whereby a large vehicle could not pass the hall on the road, a neighbour has asked that all users of the Hall please avoid parking directly opposite another parked vehicle keeping access clear, especially for emergency services, deliveries and agricultural vehicles.

Slaley, Healey & Minsteracres Local History Group
The Families of Wallington Hall
by Elizabeth Finch
Monday 27th April 2026



In October, 2025 Elizabeth gave us her Northumbrian Jacobite talk and she is returning by popular request

7.30 p.m. Slaley Commemoration Hall.
£4 adults 50p anyone in full time education.

A Fundraising Event!

Hexham Rotary Club is organising an inspiring fundraising talk to be given by Jasmine Harrison, a 26 year old Rotarian from Yorkshire.

Jasmine, at 21, was the youngest person to have rowed single handed across the Atlantic and the following year she swum from Lands End to John O'Groats, She has now completed a solo circumnavigation of the world under sail.

This event will be held in the **Tynedale Mart Function Suite on the evening of Wednesday 13th May.**

Rotary
Club of Hexham

**BE INSPIRED BY A REMARKABLE
YOUNG BRITISH ADVENTURER**



Jasmine Harrison is a British adventurer who loves to travel and tackle new challenges. In 2021, she achieved world-wide recognition when she became the youngest female, aged 21, to row solo across the Atlantic.

The following year she swam the full length of the British Isles and will, by now, have sailed single handed round the world – proving that age, gender and background are no barrier to a positive mindset.

**ROTARIAN JASMINE HARRISON
GIVES TALK IN HEXHAM**

WED | 13TH | MAY
7.30pm (Bar Open from 6.30pm)

**TYNEDALE MART
FUNCTION SUITE,
HEXHAM**

TICKETS Adults: £18.00
Students: £12.00
To buy tickets email Rotarian Andy Pryor
at hexhamrotary@wea1898.co.uk

Proceeds from the evening will be donated to the Hexham Rotary Club Disaster Fund

PLUS Q & A session after Jasmine's Talk
Chaired by BBC's Carol Malia.

OVERLEAF **READ MORE ABOUT JASMINE...**



Spring@TheShop 🌞

Spring is in the air, isn't it nice to see the blue sky again!

We're celebrating the season with delicious seasonal treats, and a range of community events to help bring everyone together.

Gardening 🌸

With the arrival of spring, many of us are eager to get back into our gardens. Beautiful primroses are now on sale at the shop, perfect for adding a pop of colour to your flower beds.

We're also gearing up for our **Annual Seedling Swap**. More details will be posted on the plant stand beside the Re-Cycling Shed, but in the meantime start thinking about what seedlings or plants you might like to bring along and share with others.

Easter 🐣

Easter is just around the corner, and we have some chocolate treats arriving in the shop, including Easter Eggs, Montezuma and Tony's Chokoloney Bars. Look out for our Bake@TheShop goodies, including Hot Cross Buns freshly made by our wonderful volunteers. Pop in on Thursday or Saturday mornings and treat yourself to something special.

*Stay Connected - Open: 8:30 am - 12:00
noon, every day*

*Don't miss out on the latest shop updates,
special offers, and community news:*

Facebook: @slaleyshop

Instagram: @slaleycommunityshop

As always, Slaley Community Shop is here for you - run by the community, for the community. Thank you for your continued support, and we look forward to welcoming you into the shop this spring. Whether you're picking up everyday essentials, a seasonal

treat, or simply stopping by for a chat, we always love to see a friendly face.

Messy Church is back!

Save the date! Our next Messy Church is on Saturday 16th May 09.30-11.00 in Slaley Commemoration Hall.

As usual, it will be a fun morning with a Bible story, crafts, games and of course some food.

All families welcome!



*For more information, contact Sandra Innes
on 07710 726338*

St Mary's Slaley About our churches

E. E. Cummings (1894-1962) was born and brought up in Cambridge Massachusetts, and is remembered above all for his startling innovations in syntax and typography. As I sat in the churchyard at St John, Healey, one frosty, sunny morning at the end of March in the days of Passiontide before Easter, I pondered one of his poems. It had spoken to me of the place our churches of Slaley, Healey and Riding Mill hold in our communities.



I had been reading a piece in the Economist, called '*The battle for the soul of the Church of England*' which asserted:

The Church of England prides itself on its inclusivity: everyone, regardless of their faith, belongs to a parish and has the right to be baptised, married (if heterosexual) and buried by the church. The church has been as much a part of the fabric of national life as Marmite and "The Archers": language is shaped by the Book of Common Prayer and the King James Bible; church towers anchor country landscapes. As Linda Woodhead, professor of sociology at King's College London,

puts it, the church was "bound up with what it is to be English".

What part, I wondered, should our churches in Slaley and Healey play in our places, at this time, for the communities? It was at that point that I turned to *E.E. Cummings*:

i am a little church (no great cathedral)
far from the splendor and squalor of hurrying cities
-i do not worry if briefer days grow briefest,
i am not sorry when sun and rain make april

my life is the life of the reaper and the sower;
my prayers are prayers of earth's own clumsily striving
(finding and losing and laughing and crying)children
whose any sadness or joy is my grief or my gladness

around me surges a miracle of unceasing
birth and glory and death and resurrection:
over my sleeping self float flaming symbols
of hope,and i wake to a perfect patience of mountains

i am a little church(far from the frantic
world with its rapture and anguish)at peace with nature
-i do not worry if longer nights grow longest;
i am not sorry when silence becomes singing

winter by spring, i lift my diminutive spire to
merciful Him Whose only now is forever:
standing erect in the deathless truth of His presence
(welcoming humbly His light and proudly His darkness)

E E Cummings

I should be interested to hear your thoughts on that description of a rural church. More tangibly, I would love to hear suggestions of what objects best sum up our churches to you: some have said it's the lychgate at Slaley; another said the bust of John Wesley; one suggested the pilgrim shell of St James in Riding Mill; I wondered about the stained glass windows in Healey. What do you think?

Rev. Diana Johnson



Coming soon!

Slaley Beer Festival is fast approaching on May 9th! Buy your tickets NOW to benefit from the early bird price. You can buy them by emailing lucykbrain@gmail.com or search on Eventbrite

This year's raffle is £3 a ticket and with only 200 tickets you have a 1:4 chance of winning!

Our prizes:

- A Barbour jacket worth £169
- Afternoon tea for 2 at The Lord Crewe
- Afternoon tea for 2 at Slaley Hall
- 7 day leisure day pass for 2 at Slaley Hall
- A voucher for The Manor House Inn

USEFUL CONTACTS

Badminton Group	Fran Pugh	673429
Carpet Bowls	Karl Beckett	07914 693199
St Mary's Parish Church	Rev. Diana Johnson	682768
St Elizabeth's Catholic Church	Father Emmanuel Kabinga	673248
Commemoration Hall	Chairman: Andrew Coney	07990 041324
	Bookings	slaleych@gmail.com
County Councillor	Colin Horncastle	618259
Dial-A-Ride	A.D.A.P.T.	600599
Electricity	Power cut?	105
Film Club	Michael Elphick	673443
Friends of Slaley School	Andrea Foster	634865
Hexham Hospital		0344 811 8111
Ladycross Nature Reserve	Joan Jewitt	673245
Leek Club	Catherine Lincoln	07918 120125
Local History Group	Pat Wilson	673388
Mobile Hairdresser	Linda Johnston	673196
Northumberland CC	Report faulty Streetlights/ Potholes	0345 6006400
Parish Council	slaleypc@gmail.com	
Post Office Van	Martin Nichol, Stocksfield Post Office	01661 842110
Police	For non-emergency calls	101
Rose & Crown Pub	David & Sam	673996
Slaley Community Shop	Shop enquiries	673201
	Sandra Innes (Chair)	673845
Slaley First School	Head: Mrs. Hayward	673220
Slaley Parish Website	www.slaley.org.uk	
Slaley Show	Vice Chair: Gemma Common	
	Secretary: secretary.slaleyshow@hotmail.com	
The Travellers Rest	Lucy & Jed	673231
Women's Institute	President: Catherine Myers	673023
	Secretary: Vicky Pepys	07802 572326