

# SLALEY NEWS DECEMBER 2025 JANUARY 2026!



### Welcome to our usual double month newsletter!

And for this edition we are delighted to have ALL these pages in full colour!

This is thanks to the generous support of several (anonymous) donors, who have offered to meet the additional cost of printing in colour!

In particular, Karen Melvin's gardening column benefits from the added colour!

For December there are lots of events, shows and invitations, and an insert from Ian Stevens advertises many of these.

The Parish Council now has a full complement of councillors, who were kept busy at the November meeting. However the next meeting will not be until February.

The WI have lots to celebrate in their report, and the Shop hope to open in the afternoons, as well as other changes.

Films will include a free matinee on the 14th for all to celebrate a "Wondeful" Christmas.

And for January a flyer from the Leek Club promises an evening of music, dance, craic and drink!

Our thanks go to all contributors, to the hard-working team at Hextol, to Nicky Jeffrey for sorting them out for our volunteers, who then distribute the News round all of our widespread households!

The deadline for the February 2026 issue will be Sunday 25th of January.

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

### It's that time of year!

(from Ian Stevens)

Christmas is just a few weeks aways now and to add a little extra sparkle this year organisations and members of our community\* have pulled together and created a calendar of events and activities to make this festive period just a bit more special for us all. You can find the calendar as an insert to this copy of Slaley News or at *slaley.org.uk*.

Things kicked off on 29<sup>th</sup> November with the launch of our toy 'gift drive' (collection points are in the shop and pub) and will end with the Christmas service at St. Mary's Parish Church on 23<sup>rd</sup> December (just 48 hours before the big day itself).

In between those dates we've got Santa making a test run through the village ahead of December 25<sup>th</sup> (courtesy of Tynedale Lions), the lighting of the Slaley Christmas tree and Helen and Phil's wedding reception at the Rose and Crown (all welcome) which will morph into a Christmas Karaoke party.

Publicity posters or information about each of the events or activities will appear around the village, on the parish website (*slaley.org.uk*) and in the Village Notes section of the Courant.

\* Those involved in sprinkling that little extra sparkle across the parish this Christmas include – the WI, the boards of the Commemoration Hall and Community Shop, the Rose and Crown, Slaley Community Assets Ltd., Slaley Film Club, Healey Estate, Fiona, Helen, Phil, Norman, Stuart, Dennis, 'Lady Gwen Slaley' and Ian. Our thanks to them all.

### **Parish Council Report**

Your Parish Council met in November, and we welcomed another new Councillor joining us, which means we are up to our full capacity of Councillors. This is great news. We all live in various parts of the Parish and bring different knowledge and experiences.

We were joined by 12 parishioners too who wished to voice their concerns over a planning application in the village. There was also a discussion about the electricity supply to the Parish.

Our budget discussion was a major part of the meeting too, as we are running low on funds now as we didn't receive any Precept this year due to the previous issues with the Council. We are therefore preparing our budget in plenty of time this year and will be applying for our Precept early next year. You will all see a line on your Council Tax demand which includes our Precept - an amount of money which is spent directly in the Parish.

During the winter months, with the weather and dark nights, it was agreed we would reduce the number of our meetings (we are all in regular contact and dealing with any issues via email and phone). Our next meeting will be in February 2026, and all are welcome to attend.

Other updates included the progression of adopting Wooley Grange which is now with the legal team at County Hall, rural crime support, and dangerous trees in the Parish.

County Councillor Colin Horncastle updated us on matters at County Hall, including information that we will all receive a new wheelie bin next year - black with a maroon lid - to increase our recycling capabilities. More information will be available from the County Council next year.

We wish everyone a safe and very happy festive season. Please do let us know if you have any issues we could help with, contact us in the usual way, and we all look forward to 2026.

Anne Livesey. 07803 610077

# **December & January Notes from the WI**

December promises to be a jolly month for the WI; not only are we joining in with the village community event on the 7<sup>th</sup> December at the Commemoration Hall but we also have our Christmas lunch on the 10<sup>th</sup> (as usual at the Travellers Rest) and we've got lots to celebrate: the poppy wall, the Christmas Fair and a whole year of interesting speakers and activities enjoyed by our growing number of members.

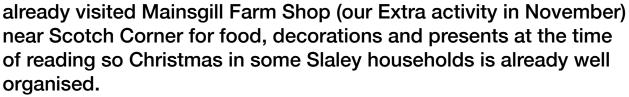
We'll be collecting glass festive decorations any day now after an engaging and creative workshop at our November meeting led by glass artist Phillippa Lee.



It's Phillippa's third visit to us and it has become something of a pre-Christmas tradition. This year's workshop allowed us a choice of three options, painted birch trees on glass, fused glass penguins and Father Christmases and 'off-piste' brooches.

Phillippa always supplies an abundance of glass shapes, colours and finishes which really do require dexterity and concentration in putting together. Much like pottery and glazes, we are never sure how our efforts will turn out after 10 hours in the 800-degree Celsius kiln heat. Neither is Phillippa! (see some of her work at Jaspah in Blanchland).

Another tradition we look forward to, on 3rd December, is wreath making with Fiona McKendrick who inspires us every year with new techniques and themes. We all supply our own chosen foliage and off we go! A few of us will have



Looking forward to January in the New Year we have another creative class to look forward to, hand painting pre-formed ceramic pieces from IPots in Hexham. Collectively as a group we have

difficulty in organising group daytime events, so we are bringing some IPots pieces (which stands for Inspired Pottery) along to the WI eve meeting on the 14th to have a go ourselves. We'll have a variety of functional tableware to decorative ornaments to choose from, plus stencils, stamps and sponges with various colour glazes to play with. Better bring a pinny!

Our 'extra' meeting on 28th January, willow work, is weather dependent and if anything like last year can only be decided a few days earlier. Everyone who is interested will be informed as soon as a decision is made.

And something to mull over.... we're thinking 'what can we do in 2026?'. Much of our thinking is always about 'community' and it's challenges. We're asking all members to think of and bring ideas in the New Year, for group and personal challenges to be our overall theme. Some of us are already thinking about personal athletic challenges to benefit local charities and as WI members we have access to a wide variety of online courses for personal and professional development and interests. All ideas are welcome and will be discussed at length. The National WI organisation 2026 Resolutions are also up for discussion with voting will take place in February. They include 'more accessible public toilets' (and indeed more public toilets generally); 'women's homelessness' and 'befriending children in care'. Lots to talk about.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all our members and to everyone in Slaley.

As always anyone wanting to join us or just come along to any of our meetings as a 'try before you buy (membership!)' please contact President Catherine on 01434 673023 or Vicky Secretary on 07802 572326

## **Slaley Show!**

The 2025 Slaley Show in August was a great success! The sun shone and there was a good turnout of visitors who appreciated the interesting attractions, trade stands and exhibits. Sincere thanks go to all involved - the Committee, the many volunteers and of course the exhibitors.

We want to take this opportunity to invite you to come along to the 2025 AGM which will be on Thursday, 4th December, at 7.30pm in

the Commemoration Hall. An important part of this will be the appointment of the Committee for the 2026 Show and we will be looking for new committee members. In particular we need a new Treasurer, Children's Section Secretary, Flower Section Secretary and help with the Trade and Craft.

If you are interested in helping with any of these, or just want to get involved generally, please do come along. If you have any questions beforehand please contact me on <a href="mailto:secretary.slaleyshow@hotmail.com">secretary.slaleyshow@hotmail.com</a>.

Gemma Common, Vice-chairman.

# Slaley Community Shop Festive Greetings from Slaley Community Shop

Thank You for Your Survey Feedback

Thank you to everyone who completed our Annual Customer Survey. We've already begun acting on your suggestions as we work to attract more customers and extend the support we offer the village.



New Products and an Updated Eco Shed With several new volunteers joining the team, we've expanded our range of products to include delicious locally sourced cheeses, chocolates and chutneys. Our ECO Shed has been updated, and we plan to extend the

recycling opportunities, helping raise funds for local good causes. Why not drop by and explore?

### **New Opening Hours**

From January, we intend to be open 3–5pm to support the village school run. A huge thank you to the volunteers who have stepped forward to cover Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays; training is underway. We're still looking for support on Mondays and Tuesdays; without this we may not be able to offer the full extended

opening hours. If you can spare a little time, we'd love to hear from you.

### Help Us Build a Repair Hub

Customers told us they are keen to see a Repair Hub that connects residents with local skilled artisans.

We're now looking for a small volunteer team to develop this idea and bring the initiative to life.



Festive Treats, Wines and Beers
This Christmas, we're excited to offer a range of festive treats and seasonal deals. Our enhanced Wine Offer has been specially curated for your Yuletide

and New Year tables. Silver and Gold wine boxes can be ordered in-store, or choose any six bottles to receive 10% off. Beer lovers will also be pleased to see our expanded range of Allendale beers.

### Gifts, Crafts and Local Produce

In our newly refreshed back room you'll find a lovely mix of gift ideas, including pieces from *Vintage@theshop*, our Children's Stationery range, and a new pop-up collection from *Kreative Arts* in Wooley. We're also pleased to stock a new selection of bird and hedgehog boxes handmade by the Tynedale Men's Shed, which sit perfectly alongside our ever-popular bird seed and fat balls. And if you fancy something sweet, why not try our seasonal chocolates from *Davenports*, a master chocolatier based in Pelaw?

## Supporting 'Slaley Christmas'

Slaley Community Shop is delighted to support this year's events, helping bring our community together at this special time.



### Bake@TheShop

Our team will continue baking on Thursdays and Saturdays, and will also be at the Big Light Up on 7th December at the Community Hall with festive treats and mulled wine.

### Festive Opening Hours

We're looking forward to seeing you over the Christmas period. Our usual opening hours remain in place, with the following changes:

Christmas Day: Closed Boxing Day: 8:30 - 10:00am New Year's Day: 8:30 - 10:00am

### Films in the Hall

Film shows are continuing in the Hall, with our next show on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> of December at 4 pm, which will be a "Wonderful" free matinee! Nibbles, popcorn and drinks will be provided.

And our last film this year will be on Friday December 19<sup>th</sup> at our usual time of 7 pm, celebrating old age in a rather dramatic way.

### The Rose & Crown

David & Sam at The Rose & Crown would like to wish all our customers a very Happy Christmas and a wonderful New Year! We'd also like to say a heartfelt thank you to all our customers and our amazing staff for their support since we took over in April – it has meant the world to us.

Our Festive Menu is running throughout December, and we've got some fantastic events lined up. On \*\*Friday 13th December\*\*, join us for our Christmas Karaoke, which will also double as \*\*Helen & Phil's wedding party night\*\* – a celebration you won't want to miss!



On \*\*Saturday 21st December\*\*, we'll be hosting our \*\*Christmas Quiz & Bingo Night\*\*, perfect for getting into the festive spirit with friends and family.

We'll also be ringing in 2026 with our \*\*New Year's Eve Party\*\*, running from \*\*9 pm until 1 am\*\* – come and see the New Year in with us!

And we have plenty more planned for 2026, starting with our \*\*Burns Night Quiz on Sunday 25th January\*\*.

Thank you again for your fantastic support – we look forward to celebrating the season and the year ahead with you at The Rose & Crown!

David and Samantha Elphick

### **Carpet Bowls**

Slaley Bowls Club had mixed fortunes in the recent matches.

We played at Snods Edge on the 21st October, losing the game 69-45. It was a very enjoyable night. Snods were very strong with a home advantage. Looking forward to the rematch in New Year at Slaley. Next up was Haydon Bridge at home a victory 63-40. Well done to all the team.

Unfortunately the match at Catton on the 19th Nov was cancelled due to the snow and ice.

We play at home on the 2nd of December.

Practice nights continue on a Tuesday in the village hall.

Hazel Clarke

# December 2025 gardening column Karen Melvin

This warm dry year has given us a mast year with bumper crops of acorns and nuts. A mast year creates an excess of seed that overwhelms seed eaters. Masting trees are oak, beech, ash, larch, hawthorn, blackthorn, maple, but not Scots pine. Walking in ancient woodland down south I saw carpets of huge acorns and picked up pocketfuls to grow up here. I have one pedunculate oak grown from seed, now big enough to climb. Our northern sessile oaks tolerate poorer thinner soils and have a more upright shape. Even up north local sweet chestnuts seem to have set bigger seed this year than we have seen before. It could be a climate-managing

choice to grow the southern pedunculate oaks up here, along with sweet chestnut and tulip trees. I sowed a few chestnuts last year from our Christmas supermarket purchase, now foot high plants. It is a mast year also for acers, some maples in gardens being laden with winged seeds. And Berberis berries have been stunning in gardens around Hexham.

How do trees know how to synchronise setting fruit in a mast year? There are weather cues, like a warmer spring - good for pollination - but this year trees were stressed by prolonged hot dry spells. There might also be chemical signals in the air, in



**Berberis** 

pollen, or in the root mycorrhizal fungi, as researchers have suggested.

Also covered with fruit now are the Spindlewoods. I grow them even though they prefer chalky soil and have 5 different ones; one less this year as a storm felled a big branch on top of a mature one. Luckily it suckers readily from the roots and may recover. The usually pink spindle fruits open like popcorn dangling and spilling the bright pink/red/orange seeds, very Christmassy. Spindles are an ancient woodland indicator and are named after their straight twigs which were used for wool spinning spindles, toothpicks, skewers and needles. Older names were prickwood, skewerwood, pincushion shrub. Now the twigs are sometime processed for artists' drawing charcoal.



**Euonymus cornutus** 

The leaves of the winged spindle *Euonymus alatus*, (burning bush in the US), colours bright magenta in autumn. These spindles have tiny flowers and corky growth along the stems, but are grown for the bright autumn colour of their leaves

Spindles range over most continents, from North America to Australia and China. *Euonymus cornutus*, native to Tibet and China, has long flimsy stems that let the seeds swirl like butterflies in the breeze. There is a beautiful collection with many rarities at Evenley Wood. *Euonymus myrianthus* native to China has bright orange fruits and *Euonymus wilsonii*, also from China, has yellow fruit. Wandering around this woodland garden and spotting these small trees at this time of year is like finding natural Christmas tree decorations, a joy.



Euonymus myrianthus



**Euonymus Wilsonii** 

# The Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin, Slaley The Rev'd Diana Johnson Only Connect

Christmas and New Year are a time of celebrating connections which stubbornly remain, even as society seems more and more fragmented. The photo reminds me of the huge project that the knitters led by Catherine Myers, and supported by the WI, School and others have completed - together - to cover a wall next to our

war memorial this year for Remembrance Sunday: the 'civic service' which connected children and adults in thoughtful serious contemplation of the cost of war.



Many of those involved in this extraordinary project of knitting hundreds of poppies tend to shy away from the limelight, but I want to do a huge shout out for them now. For their Remembrance display is all about connections. I suspect that each poppy represents, for the person who made it, some deep connection to someone or something. The process of making the poppies, however, has also created *new* connections and brought people together in the present, for the future.

What an investment they have made in our community. Projects like this tell us that the desire to be part of something bigger - to join our poppies to others, if you like to think of it that way - is not at all dead.

I don't know if you were also following Radio Two Sara Cox's emotional Autumn journey on foot across the north of Britain; she was carrying a Pudsey bear to real life Pudsey for the BBC's Children in Need appeal, doing 5 marathons in 5 days! Her efforts as 'a woman of a certain age' to raise money galvanised so much of the nation. Huge numbers came and found her on the Yorkshire moors to cheer her on. Schools brought children out and farmers brought animals out, to witness her journey. Radio Two was peppered with voice note messages of support and interviews with her along the way. If you tuned in to that channel at the time, you couldn't help but be swept into the drama of her quest. She raised an astonishing £9.5 million for Children in Need... and more than that, she gave such hope to the country and proof that the desire to connect, in a compassionate way, was very much alive and kicking.

I hope you'll allow those two stories of Autumn - the story of our

communal celebration of Remembrance and that of Sara Cox's epic journey - to encourage you as we battle with Winter now. To encourage you through December and January. And perhaps let them spur you on to finding new ways to connect, and to show your support for community.

'Only connect' - it does make life beautiful - and each of us, no matter how much we've lost, can find a way. And, what better time to practise connecting with others than Christmas and New Year:

"It being Christmas eve, there was, as I had foreseen, a great deal of revelry and what not."

P.G. Wodehouse, Jeeves and the Yule-Tide Spirit

### **Services**

Services at Slaley Church are at 11.15am each Sunday. Everyone is welcome, whether a regular churchgoer, or not. Slaley Church is there for the whole community.

Dates to particularly note are:

23<sup>rd</sup> December 5.30pm Carol Service at St Mary's, Slaley
 24<sup>th</sup> December 6.00pm Carol Service at St John's, Healey
 25<sup>th</sup> December 11.15am Family Communion Service at St Mary's

Rev'd Diana Johnson

### **Snack & Chat!**

The next date for Snack & Chat is a Christmas special on 9 December!

Come to the Commemoration Hall between 12.30-2 pm for a light lunch and friendly chat.



### **Wreath Making Night**

Monday 8th December at 7.30pm in Slaley Commemoration Hall £20 a ticket which includes refreshments All proceeds go to Charity.



To book please email fionamckendrick@googlemail.com 07817 773767

Following booking you will be given details about what you need to bring

## Looking forward to January and beyond!

### Ladycross Nature Reserve update.

2025 has been a strange year for LXNR.

We were unable to hold our usual walks – Woodcock and Nightjar. In the past we have also had Butterfly/Dragonfly walks, Bat and Moth evenings as well as walks around the reserve at different times of the year.

But it is becoming increasingly difficult to find people to lead the walks. However looking to 2026 we hope to organise some of these walks again.

In the Spring, we hope to have some walks around the reserve in small groups. Ideal for anyone who has not visited before. But everyone will be welcome. I will put details in the Shire magazine and Slaley Notes.

We also hope that Martin Davison will come up with another of his entertaining and informative talks. Those of you who have been to any of Martin's talks know how good they are.

We at LXNR wish everyone a very Happy Christmas and New Year.

### **Messy Church!**

Our next Messy Church is on Saturday 24th January 09.30-11 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 01434 673845.

### Dib, Dib!

1st Tynedale (Corbridge) Scouts are currently looking for adult volunteers to support it's Beavers, Cubs and Scouts sections as well as trustees to help run the group.

Cubs meet on a Thursday and Scouts/Beavers on a Tuesday. Trustees meet once every six weeks. Training is provided by the Scout Association for all roles, most of which is delivered on-line.

The Scouting movement is all about helping those between the ages of 4 and 25 develop skills for life. Being part of that as a volunteer can provide a real buzz but it also provides you with the opportunity to:

- Make new friends
- Try new things and challenge yourself
- · Get outdoors and get stuck in
- · Positively impact your community
- · Create vital opportunities for young people
- · Make memories that will last a lifetime

If you think you could help in any capacity, please contact Matthew Fenney at matthew.fenney@northumberlandscouts.org.uk.

## Slaley, Healey & Minsteracres Local History Group

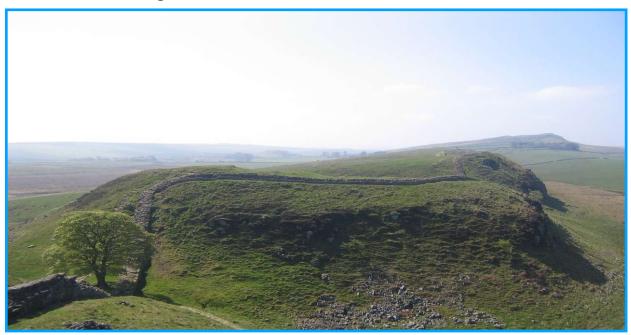
Our last talk in November, by Keith Dyson on "Newcastle and Beyond" attracted over 70 people, and raised £281, which will be split between the MS Society and the Hall.

# Coming up in January we have a talk on Hadrian's Wall by Peter Carney

Monday 26th January 2026
7.30 pm in Slaley Commemoration Hall.

The illegal felling in 2023 of the Sycamore Tree on Hadrian's Wall brought the Word Heritage Site to the attention of people far and wide. However, it is not a late 19th century Sycamore tree which is the subject of our January history talk but the Wall itself with it's milecastles, forts and museums.

Begun in 122 AD and 73 miles in length, Hadrian's Wall affects most of what makes our area of Northumberland special and of interest to people from around the world. It's reused stone, it's archaeological digs, it's appearance on TV history programmes and tourist marketing literature, Hadrian's Wall is the "emblem" for the North East of England.



The Wall was inscribed as a UNESCO Word Heritage Site in 1987 and in 2005 it became, with it's component parts (Vallum, Ditch & Military Way), part of the transnational "Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Site". It represents the most substantial and complete Imperial Frontier anywhere within the Roman Empire.

Peter Carney is a summer guide on Hadrian's Wall and his talk will interest our group who take the presence of the stone wall, almost on our doorstep, very much for granted and part of our landscape.

For more information contact Pat Wilson 01434 673388, email: pat.wilson28@outlook.com £4 adults 50p anyone in full time education.

And to complete our show of colour, a final picture of a Japanese Maple from Karen Melvin!



# SLALEY BEER FESTIVAL

**SLALEY COMMEMORATION HALL** 



# SATURDAY MAY 9<sup>TH</sup> 2026 NOON - 11PM

TICKETS £8 IN ADVANCE or £10 ON THE DOOR (INCLUDES 1 FREE TOKEN)

EVENT SPONSORS WELCOME PLEASE CONTACT LUCY BRAIN OR ANDREW CONEY

FOR TICKETS EMAIL; LUCYKBRAIN@GMAIL.COM







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### **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

# So farewell to 2025 . . .

# AULD LANG SYNE



SHOULD auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to mind?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And auld lang fyne!

Chorus—For auld lang fyne, my Dear,
For auld lang fyne,
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang fyne.

And there's a hand, my trusty fere!

And gie's a hand o' thine!

And we'll tak' a right gude-willie waught,

For auld lang fyne.

For auld, &cc.

And best wishes for the New Year!