



SLALEY NEWS JULY & AUGUST 2026



We are hoping that everyone is managing to cope with the recent hot spells, and is prepared for those that will come in the future!

For this double issue, you are seeing it in full colour, thanks to generous donations from several anonymous readers.

Coming up in August is the Slaley Show, now in its 164th year, and with a new website at: www.slaleyshow.org

Please note the new web address does not have “.uk” at the end - the old version at www.slaleyshow.org.uk is still accessible, but not relevant now!

In this issue we have news from the WI, whose small team completed their walk to raise funds for MND. The Shop have their seasonal offers, and we are also featuring another tale of “behind the scenes” with the “Bake at the Shop” by Geoff B-L.

The Rose & Crown are increasing their hours, staying open every day from 13th July, and having a new Beer, Cider and Sausage Festival.

And you will find a list of Church services at the end of these News.

As always, we welcome contributions from anyone who has news they would like to share!

Contributions for the next September edition by Monday, August 24th or earlier, please!

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

Parish Council Report



At our June meeting, your Parish Council discussed and progressed the Grants Policy and Advertising Policy for the Parish. These should be completed together with a Grant Award Agreement form by our next meeting. We also looked at planning applications and amendments.

We have been in touch once more with Mark Mather (the Councillor with Highways Portfolio) over the long, drawn out affair of adopting Wooley Grange (which has been going on since 1998). He replied that this issue has now moved up to a national level discussion and they hope to progress it as quickly as possible.

Crime rates have fallen to zero in the past month in the local area according to the Police reports we receive. Our Facebook page Slealey News and Views, is a great way to let the Parish know if something suspicious has happened, and of course, you should ring the police if you're concerned about anything.

We have switched over to a digital system for our accounts which makes record keeping and reporting absolutely transparent, and faster for the Clerk, saving time and cost. We discussed the financial position which is now back on an even keel.

The Community Playground continues to be regularly inspected and a few repairs have been carried out. Please make sure this area is used for everyone's enjoyment and take your litter home with you.

We agreed the speed sign in the village requires fixing and we are investigating what that will involve. We also discussed wild flower verges but agreed that they're requiring quite a bit of maintenance, - currently we won't be progressing this but could discuss spring bulb planting, as a Parish effort. Grass cutting in the village was also clarified and agreed.

The Defibrillator at the Rose and Crown is monitored regularly and new pads have been purchased so we always have a spare set.

Take care on our narrow rural roads as our farmers are busy harvesting and grass cutting day and night on tight schedules. Keeping your speed down gives you a bit more time to pull over

out of their way! And of course, slow down passing cyclists and horses and avoiding the wildlife!

Please take care over the summer in the heat, but enjoy the long days and if you need to discuss any issues with us, all of us are happy to hear from you and do all we can to support you.

Slaley Show

Saturday 8th August

It's Show Time !! (well... it soon will be!)



Saturday 8th August is Slaley Show – we hope you'll come along. If you've never been before, below are some of the things you can see, and a guided stroll through the schedule (available in the shop and online).

Main ring attractions - Young Farmers' demonstration	A new farming experience area for children	Gun dog display and Fun Dog Show	Bar – with a post-show event from 4 pm, featuring the talented Jason Arnup
Cumberland & Westmorland Wrestling	Children's sports	Quoits competition – open to all	Vintage car and tractor parades
Craft marquee and lots of choices for lunch and tea and more!		Our amazing Industrial Tent – there are usually around 800 individual exhibits on show – an amazing spectacle	

- **Onto the schedule - available in the shop, and online. For those new to competing - if you have never arranged flowers, you could have a go at 77. in the Floral Art section - leaves and greenery, so no flowers!**
- **The industrial section (pictured below) includes many categories, in total there are 167 classes to enter. Entry forms are in the schedule, and online.**



- **The sheep section is a key part of the show, it includes traditional breeds common in Northumberland - Bluefaced Leicesters, Texels, the magnificent Suffocks, Swaledales and more. You can't imagine Northumberland without sheep grazing on the hillsides, and lambs in the spring time.**

- You're nearly at the end of the classes now – with the horse and pony section. If you ever desperately wanted a pony when you were 13, watching this will remind you why it looked such fun. They'll be in the main ring as well – with Mounted Fancy Dress at 1 pm and then Down and Out at 5 pm.



The section secretaries are keen to help and to advise newcomers to the Show. Contact details are in the schedule, with numbers and emails. Or contact Gemma Common or Laura MacDonald, details below.

Entry to the show is £15, with £12 pre-entry tickets online, 5-16 year olds £5, under 5's free.

Our new website is www.slaleyshow.org

Who to call?	Gemma Common Chairperson 07837 674 854	Laura MacDonald Secretary 07776 811 264
--------------	--	---

And finally - a call for volunteers. If you're wanting to help out in any way, even just for an hour, please contact Gemma or Laura. Help on the Sunday is especially welcome - we have to empty all the marquees on one day !

WI News July/August 26

They did it! Our group of keen walkers braved through sun, showers and downpours at the beginning of June to raise over £2,500 for the local branch of MND in honour of friends and family members who have been stricken with this awful disease.



With help and encouragement from three husbands and a back up catering vehicle supplied by Margaret and Shirley, the walk, along the Northumberland Coastal Path, started at Alnmouth in the early sunshine and finished nine and a half hours later in a heaven-opening downpour at Bamburgh. All five have made a speedy recovery largely due to the amount of training in and around Blanchland Fell and Slaley Forest but are not attempting to walk such a distance again....for a while!.

Our June speaker, Michael Gatherar, a former policeman and local historian has an abundance of specialist talks and regularly 'performs' around the region. We invited him to talk on 'Local Murders' which covered historical crimes from all over Northumberland which, amongst some gory details, highlighted how modern forensics has overtaken opinion and circumstantial evidence to make for highly accurate arrests. We heard that a historical local crime, which had been incorrectly described as a 'murder', was in fact a case of 'attempted' murder with the victim not only recovering but pleading for leniency at the perpetrator's

court case before a sentencing of six months hard labour in Durham Jail.

The Poppy Wall project is progressing nicely. Our treasurer Helen Colbourne, recovering from a knee operation (which sadly knocked her out of the sponsored walk), has used her 'resting' time sewing on knitted and felt blooms on netting which arrive in a steady flow. If all goes according to plan, we will be able to clothe the left-hand side of the church wall which will look even more spectacular in November. Wool and patterns are still available in the Village Shop and thank you to the anonymous knitters who continue to drop off their contributions.



Our involvement in the Cookery, Handicrafts and Countryside sections of the Industrial Tent of Slaley Show continues, with Catherine Myers and Mum Margaret as long-standing secretaries and many of our members acting as stewards on the day itself. We have a special WI class (163a) 'piece of decorated' pottery for members to enter following on from our July meeting on Wednesday 8th July which will see us paint 'blanks' of mugs, jugs, tiles and ornaments using coloured glazes in association with iPots in Hexham. Here's hoping the firing process goes well!

Our August meeting on Wednesday 26th August will be rather spectacular with a display of approx. 30 hats and a talk from the designer Margaret Woodliffe Wright aka The Northumbrian Milliner. From an initial training in ceramics followed by an HNC course in Couture Millinery from Leeds College of Art and a fashion career in Fenwicks, Margaret has built a successful business in Alnwick and Newcastle with bespoke commission pieces and seasonal collections.



The Northumbrian Milliner



Chi Onwurah MP

Commissions have included a vintage style 'perching' trilby for Newcastle MP Dame Chi Onwurah's investiture (DBE) in the 2025 Birthday Honours list at Windsor Castle, to accessorising an outfit by Newcastle College University Centre's MA student Lamin Gibba. This introduction to Lamin has progressed to Margaret creating special denim headpieces and accessories for his recent 'Shy Bairns Get Nowt' Gambian heritage and Geordie Culture inspired catwalk presentation at Newcastle's Boiler Shop under his design label 'Jerry J Clothing'.



Margaret has also received commissions from Lucy Winskill OBE, the Lord Lieutenant of Tyne and Wear and participates in regional 'Support the Maker' and artisan craft exhibitions and fairs

throughout the North and the Borders. We will be joined at this event by Whitfield and Hexhamshire WI's as our special guests. The 'extra' trip in June to Thornton Hall Gardens will be reported on in the September issue.

July's 'extra' on the 22nd is a visit to see the Chillingham Cattle.

For further details please contact President Catherine Myers on 673 023 or Secretary Vicky Pepys on 07802 572326

Linnels Bridge: a traffic observation

We're not talking about the face-off when you meet someone in the middle, or the odd HGV which thinks the signs don't apply to them. No, instead it is the hairy wood ant.



You may have noticed the big nest near to the gate, but if you slow down (for a very brief moment!), and look at the downstream side of the bridge, you will see these endangered ants busy in their trek over to the other side of the bridge, and back again. You may not like ants, but this particular species is a "keystone" species (acting as natural pest controllers and supporting over 100 other dependent species), with conservationists are actively working to protect them.

Catherine Lincoln

The Community Shop

☀️ **Summer BBQs Made Easy** ☀️

Spontaneous garden gathering? No problem!

We've got charcoal, eco firelighters, local sausages, Northumbrian cheeses and ice cream, along with a tempting selection of wines,

beers and snacks. Whether you're planning a family barbecue, entertaining friends or simply making the most of a sunny evening, you'll find everything you need for a relaxed summer get-together right here in the village.

Slaley School Uniform Swap

If your children have outgrown items that are still in good condition, please consider donating them. Equally, if you're looking ahead to September, do pop along and see what's available. It's a simple way to save money, reduce waste and help local families.

Work Experience Opportunity

Here at the shop we are committed to supporting the young people in our community. Do you know a young person aged 16+ who would like gain some work experience while contributing to the local community as a volunteer? If so, do get in touch with us either by calling into the shop or by emailing slaleyshopinfo@gmail.com

Bake@TheShop Treats

Thanks to our wonderful volunteer bakers, our counters continue to be filled with delicious homemade treats every Thursday and Saturday. From freshly baked cookies, muffins, carrot cake and traybakes to traditional Irish soda bread, there is always something tempting to enjoy. Why not try fresh warm scones on a Saturday or a slice of our special ginger bread recipe. They do tend to sell out fast, so pop in early if you can!

Stay Connected

*Open daily: 8:30am – 12 noon
Keep up to date with shop news, offers, and
community events:*

 *Facebook: @slaleyshop*

 *Instagram: @slaleycommunityshop*

Thank you, as always, for supporting Slaley Shop. Every visit helps keep your community shop thriving.

And another tale of behind the scenes with the “Bake at the Shop” by Geoff Brewis-Levie.

Wednesday Afternoon in Slaley - one and a half years later

Every Wednesday in Slaley, a quiet but momentous transformation occurs. The village shop - normally a place of milk, newspapers and mild gossip - becomes something more ambitious, a bakery.

At 2 o'clock an unlikely alliance assembles. It's not a secret society, although there are some strange rituals. It's not a support group, although some members feel they need one. It is simply a set off "bakers" who produce cakes and delicacies for the village shop, with a level of seriousness that is usually reserved for international diplomacy.

This weekly spectacle is masterminded by five retired gentlemen who until recently, thought baking was something that was done for them, rather than something they could do. Their collective previous experience in the culinary arts, could be generously described as "owning an oven".

The gentlemen arrive in varying degrees of readiness, with confidence far exceeding competence. Discussion follows on the problems facing Newcastle United football club's latest match or maybe an in depth analysis on how to gain a prize at the Slaley show with tomatoes. Donald Trump doesn't get a look in but England cricket or the goings on at the pub are eagerly debated.

But then, Ann arrives. Her shopping basket shouting knowledge and experience, even a qualification in the art of baking. Really, she knows she has the unenviable task of producing another glossy, delicious chocolate brownie but she is the go to authority on all things culinary.

Order is restored and the schedule announced. This inevitably leads to chaos. Hugh, the mastermind of the organisation, dives for his black folder of recipes. Some, view these as "experimental methodologies" as it depends whether they have remembered their reading spectacles. If not, freehand measuring may follow with the hope that a bake is not emotionally dense or indeed delayed.

The "bakers" have developed, since the venture started, skills in particular products. Norman, for instance, week in and week out produces a Bakewell Tart of supreme consistency that Mary Berry would be proud of. As he finally, and lovingly. Places the flaked almonds on, you can almost detect he has developed a Derbyshire accent.

George, a former Communication guru, comes with precise skills for the carrot cake. That is always assuming that he doesn't forget to put the carrot in the mix. His new Bake@theShop apron recently swelled with pride when a pre order for a whole carrot cake was placed.

Coffee is taken before 4pm usually with a piece of test bake lovingly prepared in advance. Birthdays are celebrated appropriately - but enough said.

There are two Geoffs in the group who are identified by their former occupations. Geoff the farmer is the expert in choc chip cookies. He weighs out the cookie dough as precisely as he were feeding his sheep. 50 grams per cookie, evenly spaced on the baking tray as neatly as a ploughed field and timed to exactly 15 mins at 160degree C fan. The second Geoff is the author of this script, otherwise Geoff the Dentist, or the Drizzle. Champagne celebrated this item as it reached the top 10 of the most sold item in the shop coinciding with my birthday.



Geoff's birthday!

Hugh, however control the ovens, (yes we have three thanks to the generosity of the shop board) , although there are times when multiple timers tend to interfere with our activities. Bread, scones and gluten free cookies are his specialities that add to the selection on the counter.

There are mishaps of course. Flour clouds can rise like dramatic weather systems, someone will forget a vital ingredient, a little extra might be added just in case, and yet despite everything by 5pm cakes, bread and little delicacies emerge , packaged and labeled and priced at £1.75!

In this world of terrible uncertainty, there is at least one thing our village can rely on; slightly unpredictable cakes and cookies made with great enthusiasm and effort, on sale every Thursday morning, which we hope add to the enjoyment and talk of morning coffee or afternoon tea across Slaley and the Shire.

Geoff B-L (otherwise the Drizzle)

A brief update!

In my June article on “Keeping in touch” one other obvious thing missing was “Word of Mouth! ”

Probably the oldest method of communication. Just talking, discussing and passing on information in person is something that has always existed, and in Slaley, the Shop, the Hall and Churches are all places where we can meet and talk.

Michael Elphick

From Ladycross Nature Reserve.

Spring walks - we had a good response from people wanting to come on a visit to the reserve.

Colin and Karen took 2 groups around LXNR – one in an afternoon and one on an evening. The weather was kind to us on both occasions. They pointed out various natural and also the “man-made” features and their links to nature, and answered questions. Everyone showed a great interest and some commented on the fact that they had no idea about the reserve. It was good to hear people adding their observations and comments.

We hope to have another walk – probably in August.

To be added to the list please send your name and contact to me by email on jjewitt245@btinternet.com or phone: 01434 673245.

Those people who were unable to come previously I have kept your contacts and will add you to the list.

When we have a date I will contact you.

Everyone is welcome but unfortunately no dogs (except guide dogs).

The Rose & Crown

An Exciting Summer Ahead at the Rose & Crown

David and Sam Elphick are delighted to announce a number of exciting developments at the Rose & Crown for the summer months, with plenty for villagers and visitors alike to look forward to.

Open Seven Days a Week – With Food Served All Day!

From Monday 13th July until Sunday 6th September, the Rose & Crown will be open seven days a week.

Even better, throughout this period we will be serving food all day long, making it easier than ever to drop in for lunch, an afternoon bite, an early dinner or an evening meal.

Our kitchen will be serving food continuously from **12 noon until 8.30pm every day**, giving everyone greater flexibility to enjoy a meal whenever it suits them.

As an added summer treat, we will also be serving **breakfasts from 10.00am every Friday and Saturday morning** throughout this period. Whether you're looking for a full cooked breakfast before a day out or simply a leisurely start to the weekend, we'd love to welcome you.

The First Ever Rose & Crown Beer, Cider & Sausage Festival

One of the highlights of the summer promises to be our inaugural **Rose & Crown Beer, Cider & Sausage Festival**, taking place over the **August Bank Holiday Weekend – 29th, 30th and 31st August**.

We're planning a fantastic weekend packed with entertainment and activities for all ages, including:

- Live Music
- Comedy
- Open Mic Sets - music, comedy or a talent !!
- Karaoke
- Barbecue
- Traditional Games and Competitions
- Family Entertainment
- A wide selection of guest beers and ciders to sample
- Plenty of delicious sausages and festival food

Full details will be announced soon, but we're already looking for local musicians and performers who would like the opportunity to take part.

If you've got a musical talent, perform solo or as part of a group, we'd love to hear from you. Get in touch and we'll happily give you the chance to showcase your skills.

England World Cup Matches Live

Finally, don't forget that as long as England remain in the World Cup, we'll be showing every England match live on our big screen.

Whether you're a lifelong football fan or simply enjoy the atmosphere of cheering on the national team with friends and neighbours, the Rose & Crown is the place to be.

David and Sam would like to thank everyone in Slaley and the surrounding area for their continued support since taking over the pub. We look forward to welcoming you throughout what promises to be a busy and enjoyable summer at the heart of the village.

And a surprise: brought in by a customer, this old picture shows the village pub as it was in 1888:



July & August gardening column

Karen Melvin

In springtime I am mindful of the awakening of trees, their strategies for survival and reproduction; I have a different mindset in summer when flowering is full on then the impulse to tidy and organise is in full force. Looking after the flowers for the wonderful

spectacle they make in the garden I become immersed in colour and form. My garden is framed by trees in leaf and swards of grass zigzagging around with a paint box of flower colour. The views are dynamic with stone seats and low walls. Plants are in all stages of growth; bud, full flower, fading to seed - some seed heads left for structure and the birds. I move through the spaces, looking and tending what there is, refilling holes from dead plants and finding spaces for new ones. The lower garden requires more vigorous attention - armfuls of rampant comfrey, double celandine and blue alkanet just have to go.



I love the planting at Wordsworth's House in Cockermouth, meadow style annuals together with cottage garden stalwarts. In my garden I use a related colour palette, favouring complementaries and secondaries with lots of tonal shifts. I am not so keen on clashing primaries (red, blue, yellow) - too strident like cheap advertising. Some colours are repeated throughout the garden; violet pink and blues with complementary apricots, reds, and orange. A friend gave me some poppy seeds which I sowed not realising that they were of the huge oriental poppy. I wouldn't

have planned this but they make a gorgeous warm contrast of apricot next to cool blue and violet irises and polemoniums. More of these poppies are next to orange geums and magenta geraniums, even more beside silver grass, cool opium poppies and the grey leaved *thalictrum*. Another imposing plant, *geranium splish splash*, with blue and white veins, has seeded in 5 places and is entertaining a riot of buzzing bees, bees which are not neglecting the violet blue catnip, *nepeta magnifica*, and wallflower *Erysimum Bowles mauve* nearby. (Both of these like poorish well drained soil that suits my garden spaces that don't get topped up with compost).

Recently on the coastal walk north to Bamburgh Castle I saw lovely wild flowers, geraniums, lupins, and the same semi wild gladiola that I have in my garden which I always thought to be very exotic and difficult, but there it was growing in the sand dunes. I'd never seen it before and now realise that *gladiola Byzantium* likes sharp drainage. It is not native but has become naturalised, mostly down south, so I was lucky to have seen it here.



Iris cantina, Gladiola Byzantium and Rhododendron Wardii

What doesn't quite manage in my soil, even when I top it with compost, are the fancy irises that I bought during lockdown. I saw them at Carolside and Thornton Hall and purchased quite a few,

but they have mostly disappeared, while the equally tall and dramatic original three bearded irises from Frank Lawley at Herterton, have spread around the garden delightfully.



Poppy and Iris from Herterton



Iris at Carolside, Scotland

Slaley Film Shows

The Film Shows in the Hall will start again in September; however in view of overall costs, we may decide to increase the amount requested as a donation from £6 to perhaps £7. This would allow those providing suppers to consider something apart from mince or sausage as key ingredients. It would also provide a buffer against the increasing hall costs and for those months when attendance might be lower.

To help us we will be asking those people on our mailing list to mark films you would like to see in our next season, from a choice of titles.

Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin, Slaley *Services in July & August, 2026.*

July

5th Fifth Sunday after Trinity

11.15am Holy Communion Rev'd Marie Beard (Methodist)

12th Sixth Sunday after Trinity

11.15am Parish Worship – Service of the Word

7.30pm St James' Taizé worship – in the Church Cottage at Riding Mill

19th Seventh Sunday after Trinity

11.15am Parish Worship – Service of the Word

5pm Holy Communion at St John's Church, Healey

26th Eighth Sunday after Trinity

11.15am Parish Worship – Service of the Word

August

2nd Ninth Sunday after Trinity

11.15am Parish Worship – Holy Communion

9th Tenth Sunday after Trinity

11.15am Parish Worship – Service of the Word

7.30pm St James' Taizé worship – in the Church Cottage at Riding Mill

16th Eleventh Sunday after Trinity

11.15am Parish Worship – Service of the Word

5pm Parish Worship – Service of the Word at St John's Church, Healey

23rd Twelfth Sunday after Trinity

11.15am Parish Worship – Service of the Word

30th Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity

11.15am Parish Worship – Service of the Word

And some other dates for your Diary

4th October: Harvest Festival

8th November: Remembrance Sunday

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	clerk@slaleyparishcouncil.gov.uk	
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