



SLALEY NEWS MARCH 2026



***"March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb"
or so the saying goes!***

This month we have welcome news that the Parish Council can now resume its regular meetings in the Hall. And there is a list of special celebrations this month at the Rose & Crown to mark their first year at the heart of the village.

Our regular contributors include of course the WI, Karen's gardening notes, the Community Shop and the Local History Society.

The Carpet Bowls Club and the Leek Club are continuing their regular sessions, and the Film shows in the Hall had a very successful February!

Ladycross Nature Reserve are hoping to start some walks around the reserve in the Spring.

The editor has a brief explanation of why some articles occasionally need to be altered to fit in, and there are a few appeals for help: with organising prescriptions from Corbridge, and for occasional assistance with the audiovisual system in the Commemoration Hall.

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

***Contributions for the April edition by Tuesday March
24th or earlier, please!***

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

Parish Council Report



Your Parish Council has continued to be in regular contact with each other and you all via email and phone.

We're very pleased that Parishioners have stuck with us through this tricky period but we're now very much looking forward to re-establishing our face to face meetings in the Hall from March.

We are very grateful indeed for the incredibly generous donation from a Parishioner which is allowing for these meetings to restart. We're also delighted that our fantastic community shop could provide a grant to replace the defibrillator pads for the village machine. Thanks also to the Hall Committee for offering us free meeting space too.

What a great community we have and we all look forward to getting back to our regular programme once our Precept is paid at the end of April.

Thanks also goes to our Parish Clerk who has continued to support the Council as much as she can.

Matters of interest during the past month have, as usual, included planning and highways and we continue to work with the County Council over these issues.

We are also looking into postal deliveries as several parishioners have asked about the current seemingly erratic postal service! The power cuts have also raised concerns and we are following this up too with Northern Power Grid.

We'll be deciding on the spring Parish litter pick soon where we ask you all to go out on a particular day and help clear the verges of the rubbish people driving through our Parish continually insist on throwing out of their car windows! More details to follow.

*Our next meeting is at 7pm, 16th March 2026, at the
Commemoration Hall.*

Anne Livesey 07803 610077

March 2026 gardening column-

Karen Melvin

I was planning the garden, deciding where to put new trees and shrubs, I would consider the view from windows overlooking the garden, and put garden canes in the ground in different positions, so I could see the space that they would fill. The new kitchen extension (still thought of as new 20 years later) required me to plant new shrubs and trees to balance the view from a big picture window so it wouldn't look like the back side of the garden. I put in a second winter flowering cherry, to frame the mid distance from my favourite seat. These trees don't seem to mind the poor soil in what was the old tip. They have both started to half flower in January, responding to fleeting sun and warmth. The branch structure is very dainty, hardly casting any shadow, so they easily blend in in the summer when the blossom has faded. I also planted a butterfly cherry in front pruned to look like a dwarf tree. The multi-stemmed trunk is kept free of green shoots to expose the twisted main trunk gaining a more dramatic appearance with increasing age. Next to it is a lily of the valley shrub framed by a dark green clipped yew and golden clipped balls, showing up the cherry flowers and the bright magenta growth of new *Pieris Japonica* leaves, an easy evergreen shrub with bright leaves and white spring flowers. The maple, acer mandshuricum, has bright red petioles and new leaf growth.



Pieris maple

A brand new addition to my new view is a flowering *Cornus* - a climate change experiment still surviving. It is now about 5 feet tall, not quite big enough to flower. Unfortunately the deer love eating the leaves and are keeping it pruned around its lower branches. I have another large flowering *Cornus* in the lower sheltered garden. When it flowers I invite friends around to see it, quite a spectacle, it often coincides with the summer open garden so dramatic and surprisingly vigorous for this altitude. It has a magnolia on either side, both of which have survived fallen power lines burning them and breaking branches - tougher than they look.

A few summers ago I had to go to the RVI three times a week and got a chance to walk around the nearby University grounds looking at the planting while waiting for buses. The University of Newcastle Quadrangle, (then a Durham College), was laid out in 1947 as a war memorial garden and later the planting was extended throughout the campus as part of Greening the Campus and Coherent Campus projects where consideration was given to seating, paths, planting and bedding. The head gardener, Paul Cowan, and manager Tom Vasey have done a splendid job. I was a student in the 60's and didn't notice an old *Eucryphia* and a handkerchief tree, both rarities up north. More recently two cloud pruned conifers (in the Japanese style) have made an appearance in the main quadrangle.



Cloud pruning!

The 'handkerchief's' are special; an effort made to go and see them is always worthwhile.

The Prescriptions Rota

Since the start of Covid, local residents have on a weekly basis picked up prescriptions from Corbridge Health Centre on a Friday and distributed them around the Parish, saving time and effort for those requiring them. Coordination of this activity is via a rota which has traditionally been managed by one person. Currently Katie Stevens coordinates it. As of August this year, Katie will no longer be in a position to manage the rota, so the search is on for a new custodian. If you think that could be you, please contact Katie at kcaswe@gmail.com.

What's On at the Rose and Crown in March!

Spring is shaping up to be a special one at the Rose and Crown, as we celebrate our first year at the heart of the village and look ahead to an exciting year two.

Mother's Day Sunday Lunch – Sunday 15th March

Join us for a special Mother's Day Sunday Lunch on Sunday 15th March. We'll be serving our traditional Sunday roasts alongside seasonal specials, all made with the quality local produce you've come to expect.

As a thank you to all the wonderful mums in our community, every mother dining with us will receive a complimentary glass of Prosecco. Tables are expected to fill quickly, so early booking is recommended.

St Patrick's Day – Tuesday 17th March

We'll be opening specially on Tuesday 17th March from 6pm to celebrate St Patrick's Day.

On the menu will be a hearty Irish Stew, perfect with a pint and good company. A vegetarian option will also be available, so everyone can join in. Please note that these St Patrick's Day specials will be the only food available that evening.

Come along, raise a glass, and enjoy a relaxed, friendly night at the pub.



One Year On – Anniversary Celebrations

It's hard to believe it's nearly been a year since Samantha and David took on the pub. We're incredibly proud of how far things have come, and we want to celebrate with the whole village.

Daytime Anniversary Forum – Saturday 4th April

During the day, we'll be hosting an open forum at the pub. This is your chance to tell us how we're doing, share ideas, and help shape the future of your village pub.

We'll also be officially launching our new menu and updated wine list, showcasing even more local produce, pub favourites, and exciting additions. This pub belongs to the community as much as it does to us, and your feedback genuinely matters.

Evening Anniversary Party – Saturday 4th April

On Saturday evening, we're turning up the volume for a proper celebration. Expect:

- Buffet nibbles
- Karaoke
- Games galore
- A lively, fun atmosphere

It's our way of saying thank you for the support, encouragement and loyalty we've received over the past year.

Anniversary Quiz – Sunday 5th April

To round off the weekend, we'll be hosting a special Anniversary Quiz on Sunday 5th April. Gather your team and join us for a fun, competitive evening.

Please keep your eyes open for full event details, timings and updates on our Facebook page.

And finally... Hawkstone, the now-famous Rose and Crown golden retriever puppy, has officially joined TikTok. Follow his adventures at @hawkstonepubdog for village life, pub mischief and plenty of puppy charm.

The Rose and Crown remains committed to being at the heart of Slaley – a place to meet, celebrate, debate, relax and enjoy good food and drink together. We look forward to celebrating with you all.

On editing the Slaley News

As the principal editor for these News, I thought it might be useful to describe the process that goes into preparing them.

These newsletters are composed and edited by myself & Catherine Lincoln, printed in Hexham by The Hextol Foundation, and those printing costs are paid by the Parish Council.

And we feel that it is still important to have a printed version delivered to every household, and that online versions are also available to all who use those services.

We begin with a file for an A4 document, currently created in Apple Pages, and then filled with notes, articles and images submitted by our contributors. The styling of text, headings and images is designed to produce a finished booklet that is easy to read for those (like myself) who have problems reading small print! At present the font used is Helvetica Neue, which we hope is a good choice.

One of the awkward things that is always a problem in finishing the document for printing is the need to end up with a multiple of 4 pages. These are then converted to double-sided A4 pages for then folding into the A5 size booklet printed by Hextol. If we are nearly at the multiple (or just over it) then we sometime have to omit an item or image rather than try to add another 4!

So you might occasionally find that your contribution has had to be edited to fit

Slaley Film Club

Slaley film shows (not really a club!) have been running since 2004, and we had a great turnout in February, with 36 enjoying a hot supper of mince & dumplings from the Rose & Crown! We hope to continue providing suppers, as this makes the evening a more convivial occasion.

Operating the audiovisual system is not difficult, and we are asking if one or more people might volunteer to assist. Detailed Instructions are provided in a booklet kept with the equipment and Michael would take you through the whole process.

Get in touch by email: michael@elphicks.myzen.co.uk or phone: 01434 673443.

The Community Shop



Welcome to this month's Slaley Shop update, and thank you, as always, for your support. Every visit makes a real difference to your community shop.

3rd Annual Marmalade Competition

We're delighted to announce this year's winners!

Congratulations to **Ruth Marlee**, first-time winner of the *Original* category, and **Toni Hargreaves**, winner of *Marmalade with a Twist*. A huge thank you to everyone who entered. The standard was incredibly high, and it's always such a joy to see so much local talent and creativity.

Bake@TheShop Treats

Thanks to our wonderful volunteer bakers, our counters continue to be filled with delicious treats every Thursday and Saturday; freshly baked cookies, traybakes and traditional Irish soda bread. They sell out quickly, so do pop in early if you can!

Bird Nesting Boxes & Feeding the Birds

With nesting season nearly here, we have bird boxes handmade by **Tynedale Men's Shed**, along with bird seed and fat balls in stock, to help you welcome more birds into your garden this spring. As we did last year, the shop has put out bird seed around the gardens to encourage more birds to visit. It's a simple way to support local wildlife and a lovely opportunity for children (and grown-ups!) to take an interest in caring for nature.

♻️ ReCYCLE@TheShop Now Up and Running

This new initiative helps give items a second life and encourages more sustainable habits within our community. Thank you to everyone who has already shown interest and support. We'll be sharing more details in-store, so pop in and visit the ReCYCLE Shed next time you're in.



Welcoming New Neighbours

With a few houses currently for sale in the village, we may soon be welcoming new neighbours to Slaley. If you know of someone moving in, please ask us about our welcome packs. They're a simple way to help newcomers feel at home and introduce them to everything the village, and the shop, has to offer.

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

 *Facebook: @slaleyshop*

 *Instagram: @slaleycommunityshop Every Day*
8:30-12noon

March News from Ladycross Nature Reserve

We hope to start some walks around the reserve in the Spring. These are for those who have never visited the reserve, and for those who would like to re-visit.

So that we can begin to organise the walks, we would like anyone who is interested in joining the walks to please send their name and contact - email/telephone – to me by jjewitt245@btinternet.com or 01434 673245.

We will sort out some dates and contact you.

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

Slaley Carpet Bowls

We are having a lot of fun at the bowls club this year. We regularly get 16 at the Tuesday club nights and are delighted with the way new members have worked out how to bowl and enjoyed a great night of competition, banter and good humour.

We started 2026 with a defeat at Riding Mill, it wasn't even close but as ever it was great fun and it was nice to see we had made the opponents so happy!!

At the end of January we played against the mighty Shire and amazingly won by 2 points with the game going down to the last few bowls. Add to that we had won at the Shire by 1 point in September! We are so chuffed with this because they are so good!!

After our recent victory at Corbridge we move on now to play Snods Edge.

We have decided to keep on bowling every other Tuesday throughout the summer and in next months news we will confirm the dates.

New bowlers are welcome at our club nights every Tuesday starting at 7:30pm for a guaranteed 2 hours of unrivalled fun.

Contact Karl Beckett (07914 693199) if you want any more detail.

Healey & Minsteracres Local History Group
Quakers and the Lead Mining Industry of the North Pennines

By David Penn

Monday 23rd March 2026

7.30 p.m. Slaley Commemoration Hall.

£4 adults 50p anyone in full time education.

In September 2025 the Hexham Courant carried a photograph and article entitled “Book reveals religion’s ties to local lead mining”. The Book was launched on August 23 during a weekend of celebrations marking the 200th anniversary of the construction of



Nenthead Mining Village by the London Lead Company in 1825. David Penn was the author and I got a copy of his book from Cogito in Hexham.

The photograph below is the 1760 Coanwood Quaker Meeting House and Alex (my daughter) and I attended a Christmas Fair inside this small building on a very wet morning of Sunday December 7th 2025.

According to David “Quakerism emerged from the turmoil of the English civil war (22/8/1642-3/9/1651), first taking root in the upland areas of northern England.” *Page 5*

As a group we have briefly heard about local Quaker practices in September 2019 when Hugh Richardson gave his ‘Wheelbirks’ talk and during my ‘Healey’ talk in November 2024 when the Blanchland meeting house and gravestones were discussed. The Lead Trade has never been far from our talks being as we were involved with the Smelters and Carriers Project and live so close to Dukesfield Smelt Mill.

David’s talk will combine the two subjects, Quakerism and Lead Mining. We already have a little knowledge so the talk should lead to lots of discussions.

For more information contact Pat Wilson 01434 673388, email: pat.wilson28@outlook.com

Slaley Leek Club - It’s not just a Leek Club

Leek growing in the Northeast is deeply rooted in its mining history and competitive growing continues to be popular. The Slaley Leek Club is proud to keep that tradition alive and is always on the lookout for others who wish to keep some of the past in the present. If you fancy turning your hand to planting a king Richard or Giant Musselburgh and seeing how it fairs against other leeks locally at our annual show, why not get in touch with Ian Stevens (at ian.stevens686@gmail.com) to find out more.

Whilst the showing, known as ‘benching’, of leeks at the show is restricted to club members, the Show itself celebrates the growing of other vegetables as well as fruits and flowers. So, as you start to venture out to your favourite garden centre perhaps consider growing a few Dahlias or Chrysanthemums, some carrots or tomatoes with a view to showing them in September. We look forward to seeing you there.

So don’t forget the Slaley Leek Club’s Open Flower, Fruit and Vegetable Show on 12th September to be precise - everyone welcome to enter produce from your garden in one of the many show categories. Plus a chance to see potatoes put to very good use as vegetable creatures by Slaley First School pupils.

St Mary's Slaley

Betwixt and Between

Transition times can be exciting: the movement from winter to spring, or summer to autumn – or now, as Spring blossoms around us and we run through the solemnity of Lent to the approach the joy of Easter. I like twilight and the dawn, too. Standing on the shore, betwixt and between, especially here with the Northumbrian coast just down the road, is an immersive way of inhabiting a liminal space. Of being on the edge.

In the Gospel accounts, Jesus is often elusive and transitional. Jesus moves from the land, to a mountain, to the open water, to the shore. Jesus fluctuates from being with others in a crowd, to being alone, to being with his chosen disciples. There is constant movement in the Gospel story. Jesus surprises, challenges, terrifies even... and sometimes mystifies.

I've not always been that comfortable with transition myself – contrary to what you might think! Moving house, retiring, leaving friends behind, a new posting, becoming a parent: these can be scary as well as exciting. For me, the news that I will be settled with you as Vicar for three more years was a welcome gift of stability as well as of enjoyment.

I wonder how you feel about change and transition? We seem to be facing our fair share of disruption in the world around us, don't we? Changes to our external surroundings or circumstances, to our well-known reference points in our lives, can challenge our identities. Who am I, really, when all around me is in flux? What is at the core of my identity? Where do I feel safe?

John's Gospel encourages us to believe, that our stability and safety is to be found in the unbreakable bond of love and unity that exists between the Father and the Son (John 17).

Luke expresses it in the charming narrative way that Luke always does, with a story of the child Jesus, in his Father's house, teaching the teachers, and sending his parents into a spiral of anxiety due to his disappearance.

“Why were you searching for me?” he asked. “Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?”

Luke 2:49

For Jesus, God the Father was his 'fixed point'.

For all of us, not just Christians, this might be a good time to ask ourselves:

What is my central characteristic, what defines me?

Where might God expect to find me, if he were looking?

When all around me has changed, what is at the core of my being?

Rev'd Diana Johnson

(Ultreia et Suseia!)

Slaley WI Notes for March

We celebrated our 103rd birthday last month with a slap-up meal at the Travellers Rest. Good food, good company and good craic. Thankyou to all ladies who attended and many thanks to Jed and Lucy for the 'by invitation only' event.

How different to the first birthday meeting on Jan 9th, 1924, with forty-one members listening to a Mr G.P. Dunn of Corbridge who gave a lantern lecture on 'Derwentwater and the '15 rebellion'. It is noted that he 'very ably manipulated the lantern' (note to selves; we really must make more effort to learn how to operate the current 'lantern' facilities in the hall!)

Learning something new will be on every WI member to-do list this year with the launch of a brand-new online Learning Hub which we can all access on the national WI website. With so many free courses across so many interests it's going to be hard to choose with Digital Art, Languages, History and Travel and Health subjects on offer. There's lots of interest currently for Decluttering and Repairs.

We are looking forward to our meeting on the 11th at the Commemoration Hall. Adam Allinson co-founder (with Kevin Reay) of The Canny Chocolate Company from South Shields will be doing a live demonstration and talk about the history of the company and the rise of their success which sees them already



shortlisted for 'the 'experience of the year' award at the forthcoming Northeast England Tourism Awards this month. The workshops they offer are increasingly popular enough to be overbooked so it's a great opportunity to have a taster (literally... there will be samples) of what they offer; there's a book in the pipeline too.

We've opened this meeting up to all Slaley ladies...there's no catch; there is no obligation to join the WI and no charge. It's been a long, wet winter and we all need cheering up and let's face it; we all love chocolate! Non members please RSVP by Sunday 8th March to Secretary Vicky Pepys on 07802 572326.

We've now got a spin-off walking group with its own What's App group where members are suggesting a charity coastal walk (approx. 20 miles) to support MND in June. Walking is becoming a regular extra WI activity, particularly for members with dogs and these often take place at the end of each month but of course are weather dependent.

Our Moorland Group Fashion Show event on 15th May at the Hexham Mart is currently being promoted amongst our 6 groups (Langley, Hexhamshire, Whitfield, Shotley and Catton). Tickets are £5 and available from President Catherine. Our extra event at the end of this month is a trip to Beamish planned for the 25th. More info will be available on the 11th at the regular meeting.

Some of us are going along to our regional head office to celebrate International Women's Day on Saturday 7th March. We will of course be acknowledging the pioneering efforts of the Suffragists and Suffragettes in getting us the vote but on this day, we are learning about and meeting women who have made a difference in our local and wider community. Again, there's always something to learn.

*As always please contact President Catherine Myers
or Secretary Vicky Pepys for more information.*

SLALEY BEER FESTIVAL

SLALEY COMMEMORATION HALL



SATURDAY MAY 9TH 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



BEERS. ZERO BEER. CIDER. WINE. SOFT DRINKS. CAKE.

LIVE MUSIC FROM

**BOYS OF
BRASS**

FOOD BY



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