



## **SLALEY NEWS SEPTEMBER 2025**



### **Welcome to our September Newsletter!**

We have lots of news for the Autumn, beginning with a report on the very successful Slaley Show, and the forthcoming Leek Show on the 13th September.

We have news about the Commemoration Hall, who have welcomed Andrew Coney as the new Chair, and more details from the Parish Council about the Precept, which affects all households. They are also looking for two or more additional councillors!

On a lighter note, another engaging account from Geoff Brewis-Levie of his journey to success in marmalade making. And the Rose & Crown have two announcements: about a wedding and Christmas Day . . .

Film shows start up again, beginning with a comedy on Friday 19th September.

And our usual regular contributions from the Community Shop (who want your views), Karen Melvin, and the Women's Institute.

**And following a number of queries about defibrillators and emergency procedures, there is a separate insert with a handy guide to heart attacks and using a defibrillator. Keep it in the house, pin board, kitchen drawer or car so you can grab it in an emergency.**

And finally our thanks once more to Hextol who print, staple and fold these newsletters, to the Parish Council for funding it, and to the team of volunteers delivering them to all the households in the Parish!

*Contributions for the October edition are due by Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> of September or earlier, please!*

*Send by email to [slaleynews@icloud.com](mailto:slaleynews@icloud.com), or with images to [michael@elphicks.myzen.co.uk](mailto:michael@elphicks.myzen.co.uk)*

## **Slaley Show 2025**

It is often said that when going gets tough the tough get going. And the show's management committee demonstrated its resolve when, hardly three weeks before show day, it sat down to identify exactly what had still to be completed,

The administrative omissions they uncovered included the revelation that the number and size of the show field marquees had still to be confirmed.

These challenges followed the sudden resignation of the secretary just days earlier. But acting chairman Gemma Common, and new secretary Laura MacDonald, were up to the task.

They were backed by, among others, horticultural and floral art secretary, Margaret Ogle, mother and daughter partnership Margaret Rowell and Catherine Myers in the industrial section, the treasurer Caryl Nobbs, chief scribbler Vicky Pepys, Anne Holmes, Richard Ferguson and Janet Cain.

They sat in a huddle for more than three hours checking papers, sending emails, making telephone calls, exchanging notes, identifying other omissions and listing what had still to be done

And when they agreed they had achieved all they could that evening they knew many more T's had still to be crossed and I's dotted before their emergency work was over.

The 4,000 people who came to the Townhead Field saw exactly what they had achieved and the Society's president Robert Forster, who had witnessed firsthand the coordination and cooperation needed to re-assemble the show that had been laid out for them declared it was a "miracle".

"Be in no doubt," he said, "this committee rescued it".

"And they have done much more than stage an event that was enjoyed by so many people. They have also, for the 163<sup>rd</sup> time, helped to underline the identity and strength of their local community, cement connections with other community organisations like the school, showcase the importance of farming and food production, encourage yet another generation of young farmers and score a big win for Slaley village and for rural life."

"Every one of the organisers should be pleased with quality and strength of their efforts and at the same time be in no doubt at just how much they achieved."

"I am certain that the committee will be buoyed by its success and acquired yet more confidence and skill. Under Gemma's continued leadership, Laura's ability as secretary and Caryl's as treasurer I am sure many more shows will still be staged and both Slaley's community and the wider public will enjoy them"

The drone picture (thank you, Kate Potts Photography) underlines the show's strengths.



Look how many sheep Gemma has assembled. (Just over three hundred in fact.) Look at the length of that industrial tent. (The longest among community shows in the North of England.) Look how much there is for children and grandchildren to see, touch and taste. (The place was, justifiably, swarming with them).

Kate's photo also shows the fields that were made available. Keith Robson owns the show field, Clive Weatherley its accessory – which was home to the dog show, Barry Dart and Jeff Kellett are their accommodating tenants and Nick and Rebecca Wilson own the main car park.

"I must once again thank each of them. Also everyone else who made the show possible. There are too many to list individually but the show-week volunteers, schedule advertisers and class sponsors must be praised just as loudly as office holders and section heads. It, quite simply, could not have worked so well without them," Gemma said.

*And a huge thank you to everyone who kindly donated prizes for the Slaley Show Tombola. It was a great success raising £182 for Show funds.*

## Slaley's Leek Club's Open Flower, Fruit and Vegetable Show

### Saturday 13th September 2025

On a somewhat smaller scale, the Leek Club's Open Flower, Fruit and Vegetable Show is also for everyone and it's not just leeks. The show's classes cover what any village flower, fruit or vegetable gardener would have in their garden at the beginning of September. Many village shows have folded over the past few years and so we are appealing to gardeners in the village to help to keep this tradition and community event alive. And if you're not a gardener, do please come down for tea & cakes at 3, then the hall opens to see who's won what at 3.30 pm.

#### ***Timetable***

10.00 am Hall open to exhibitors  
 12.30 pm Latest time for entries  
 3.00 pm Tea & cakes  
 3.30 pm Hall open to exhibitors  
 4.30 pm Hall closes

| Slaley Leek Club Members only Class  | Open Junior Classes   |
|--|---|
| 2 Pot Leeks , 6" or less to tight button, sound all round  | Pot Leek, sound all round<br>Vegetable Creature   |
| Open Vegetable Classes   | Open Fruit Classes  |
| 1 Intermediate Leek (between 6" to 9 ½" from button)<br>3 Onions as grown<br>3 Potatoes<br>1 Cabbage<br>3 Carrots<br>3 Parsnips<br>6 Tomatoes<br>Collection of Vegetables (3 types, 2 of each)<br>4 Courgettes<br>3 Turnips<br>3 Beetroot<br>1 Cauliflower | 6 Apples £3<br>3 Pears £3<br><br><div style="background-color: #d3d3d3; text-align: center; padding: 2px;"><b>Open Flower Classes</b></div><br>3 Flowers in a Vase (any variety)<br>Floral Arrangement (can include natural foliage)<br>Pot Plant (flowering or foliage)<br>Buttonhole<br>3 Dahlias<br>3 Chrysanthemums |

*Catherine Lincoln, Chair, Slaley Leek Club*  
*Mobile 0791 812 0125*

## Film Shows

Our film shows are starting again in the Hall, with our first show on Friday 19th September, with a comedy film.

Often referred to as the Film Club and led by Michael Elphick, Jim Bailey, Diana Mulholland and other volunteers, we show films on the third Friday of each month, from September through to April. No membership is needed; just turn up on the night! Doors open from 7 pm, and the show starts at 7:30.

Since 2024 we now show films under the MPLC Umbrella license scheme. MPLC is the “Motion Picture Licensing Corporation”, and for an annual fee of £450, the Film Club or any other group using the Hall can show films, as long as they don’t charge an admission fee or advertise it publicly outside the Hall. So we will ask for a donation of £6, which may include a tasty supper (or just “Bring Your Own”) in the interval. And we usually have a raffle as well.

*We advertise inside the Hall, and also maintain an email list, and if you join that we will let you know what the film is in advance. To join that, email [michael@elphicks.myzen.co.uk](mailto:michael@elphicks.myzen.co.uk).*

## Spuds To Being All Jammed Up

*By Geoff Brewis-Levie, Highfield House*

*How one aged green-fingered grower turned a courgette invasion into a jam fiesta*

Slaley is the sort of village where time drifts, not marches. Mornings arrive with mist over the hedgerows. Birds sing louder than traffic. People give you a cheery “Hello” as they head to the village shop for their morning paper. And if you stand still long enough, the seasons will roll gently over your boots like an old friend dropping by for tea.

It’s a place made for growing things. I’ve spent most of my life with my hands in the soil coaxing strawberries, rhubarb, blackcurrants, and potatoes from the ground like quiet little miracles. There’s something deeply satisfying about it. You dig, you plant, you wait expectantly, you hope... and eventually, something delicious appears. Food you grew yourself, long before anyone called it “organic” – and charged a tenner for the privilege.

Growing, I understood. Gardening was second nature. But cooking? That was always the realm of my wife and daughter – masters of the hob,

sorcerers with a spatula. Our kitchen always smelled of something marvellous. When I walked in, it mainly smelled of compost usually accompanied by, “Get those muddy boots off” I was more “sponge and hosepipe” than “saucepan and oven glove.”

Then came the Slaley Marmalade Competition.

I’m still not entirely sure what came over me. Possibly the oranges, sitting on the shop counter giving me that look. Possibly the suspiciously persuasive charm of the Slaley shopkeepers. Or maybe it was just the quiet whisper of a challenge. Either way, I soon found myself elbow-deep in peel and pectin, making my very first batch of marmalade.

It smelled heavenly, glowed like bottled sunshine... and had the consistency of reinforced concrete. The judges were kind. “Fantastic flavour,” they said, their smiles only twitching slightly as their tasting spoons bounced off the surface.

But what really caught my attention was my dear friends (well, fellow competitors on this occasion) being praised for their “excellent consistency.” Now they didn’t win – but in the jam world, that is what I’d call the Posh & Becks of spread-ability: marmalade that glides like a dream and never once requires a construction tool.

Still, I wasn’t disheartened. Quite the opposite, in fact. Posh & Becks stirred something inside me. Curiosity. A spark of, “ Well, what if I tried again next year? ”

Not to be outdone, I retrieved my mother’s copy of Mrs Beeton – dated 1930 – assuming her generation knew a thing or two about preserves. Over the course of three days, I prepared what I my expected to be a prize-winning jar. .. only for it to turn out like the Slaley river if we had one – in a jar.

After that.... the courgettes happened.

One minute I had a tidy vegetable patch, the next it was a full-blown green uprising. The courgettes grew, spread, overtook the raised bed, and started eyeing up the back door. Too many to eat. Too many to give away. Frankly, they were breeding like rabbits in green jackets. I roasted them. Grated them. Slipped them into everything short of a trifle. You can only make so much courgette soup before people start pretending they’re not home. I quietly left them in porches.

So in sheer desperation, I typed into Google: “Can you make jam with courgettes?”

**Yes. You. Can !!!**

And so began my journey from humble grower to accidental jammer. Courgette jam was the gateway. Slightly questionable, but surprisingly tasty. Then came strawberry and rhubarb, full of nostalgic summer

sweetness. Redcurrant jelly, bright and elegant. Blackcurrant jam, bold as brass. And now – gooseberry jam. Tart, old-fashioned, and absolutely marvellous on a toasted crumpet.

i won't pretend it's been smooth sailing. I've had runny batches, lumpy batches, and one particularly lively jar that exploded in the fridge like a fruity firework. I've burned sugar, boiled over pans, and glued up my kitchen worktop.

My mother's old cookbook – now stickier than a toffee apple left on a radiator – has become my trusted (if somewhat deeply cryptic) guide. The measurements are more like suggestions from a Victorian séance: “ *a pinch of this,* ” “ *a dash of that,* ” and my personal favourite – “ *cook until done.* ” Done what? Called the fire brigade? No idea. If anyone knows what “a goodly knob ” of butter actually weighs, do get in touch.

But every misstep taught me something.

Armed with that splattered old book, a very one-sided crush on Mary Berry (as my daughter gleefully points out), and the glorious chaos of YouTube and Google, I slowly taught myself the mysterious ways of the mixing bowl.

Because there's something deeply beautiful about it all – growing the thing, then making the thing. Soil under your nails in the morning, jam on your toast by tea. It makes you feel connected in a way that's hard to describe, but impossible to ignore.

So at 86, I've found something new. Something sticky, sweet, and utterly joyful.

I love growing. I love trying to master cooking. And I love that it's never too late to turn a glut into a gift – to discover a passion you didn't know you had.

If you fancy a taste, pop round. Just bring a spoon.....hopefully you won't need a chisel. And maybe – just maybe – I won't lower your expectations on spread-ability.

**P.S.** Now. .. my Mary Berry Christmas Cake?

That's just in another stratosphere Even the family go quiet when they eat it. I not saying Mary Berry should be worried, but she would see how she has brought pleasure to me and millions more.

## **Exciting News for Slaley – A Wedding & Christmas Day at the Rose and Crown!**

Slaley is set to celebrate in style this autumn as two very special announcements bring a buzz to the village!

First up, love is in the air!

David Elphick and Samantha Charlton are delighted to share the news of their wedding, taking place on Saturday 4th October 2025 in Hexham. Following the ceremony, the happy couple would love for the whole village to join them in celebrating their special day.

From 6pm onwards at the Rose and Crown, the bar will be open and there'll be a few nibbles to enjoy as friends, neighbours, and locals raise a glass to the new Mr & Mrs! Everyone is warmly invited to come along and help make it an evening to remember.

And if that wasn't enough, Christmas is coming!

The Rose and Crown Christmas Day Menu is now available – and bookings are officially open. Spaces are very limited, so if you fancy a truly festive feast without the washing up, get in touch soon!

*To book or find out more, email  
[info@roseandcrownsaley.co.uk](mailto:info@roseandcrownsaley.co.uk) call Sam or David on  
01434 673996, or simply pop in for a chat next time  
you're passing.*

## **Community Shop**

There's always something happening at your village shop. Here's the latest news, events and ways you can get involved.

### ***VOLUNTEERS CELEBRATION***

A huge thank you to everyone who joined us for our Volunteers Celebration in July. With 61 active volunteers covering 36 different duties, we truly couldn't run the shop without you. Your time, skills, and energy are what keep our doors open and our community thriving. We're so grateful to each and every one of you.

### ***WE CAN'T IMPROVE WITHOUT YOU - HAVE YOUR SAY***

We're delighted to see the shop growing, but we want to make sure it grows in the right way - for the whole community. Whether you shop with us regularly, occasionally, or not at all, we'd love to hear from you. Your opinions truly matter.

Please take just 5 minutes to complete our short survey. Every response will help shape the products, services, and ideas we bring in

Slaley Community Shop Annual  
Survey 2025





over the next year. The results will be shared at our AGM on Monday 30th September, 7:30pm at the Commemoration Hall (all welcome!) Don't miss your chance to have your say.

### ***BAKE@THESHOP - FOR SALE EVERY THURSDAY & SATURDAY***

Our fresh bakes remain a customer favourite, and we're proud to share that several of our bakers won prizes at this year's Slaley Show. Well done to all! If you'd like to get involved, drop into the shop on a Wednesday afternoon to meet the baking team. Or simply come along and enjoy their delicious creations, available every Thursday and Saturday morning.

### ***WINE TASTING - SAVE THE DATE***

We're planning a CHRISTMAS (yes Christmas!) Wine Tasting with Louise, our exceptional wine buyer. Please reserve Friday 24th October for an evening of individually selected wines and beers, perfectly paired with fresh baking, cheese and biscuits. Watch out for details in the shop and on our instagram and facebook pages.

### ***RECYCLING SHED***

This September, we'll be rebranding the Slaley Recycling Shed to encourage more people to visit the shop, while making the most of this great service. Have an idea to promote it, or would you like to help lead this project? We'd love to hear from you! Get in touch through the shop.

*Stay Connected! Open daily: 8:30am – 12 noon*

*Keep up to date with shop news, offers, and community events:*

 *Facebook: @slaleyshop*

 *Instagram: @slaleycommunityshop*

### **An appeal: Katie's fundraiser for Epilepsy Action**

For 21 years my wife, Katie Stevens suffered from epilepsy, a condition that affects 1 in 100 of the population. Every week she would experience at least one major seizure and many minor ones despite the use of powerful drugs to manage her condition. She has had a number of near death experiences and her life revolved around hospitals and city centre living due to being unable to obtain a driving licence.

In 2017 her life (and mine) changed completely when advances in medical science, part funded by the charity Epilepsy Action, meant that the cause

of her epilepsy could finally be diagnosed. Following brain surgery that year and a staged withdrawal from medication, Katie is now one of the lucky ones to be cured of this debilitating illness. We will be forever thankful of our change



of fortune and the opportunity it has afforded us to live here in Slaley.



To give something back to the charity that helped and supported her for so many years, so that it can support others like her, Katie will be skydiving

from 15,000 thousand feet on 28 September to raise money for them.

It would be wonderful if you could support her by making a donation (large or small) to Epilepsy Action via her Just Giving page which can be found by scanning the accompanying QR code with a smartphone.

Thank you!

### ***And Ian also has an offer!***

We've just had two dry stone walls built in our garden from lovely Ladycross quarry stone. We have some left over, as you can see from the photos. We would be happy to donate some or all of it to anyone with an upcoming outdoor project.



If you are interested please call Ian on 07395 566997. We are not in a position to deliver the stone so you must be able to collect it.

### **A bridge to lots of fun**

Way back in time before COVID a gang of 6 of us from Slaley decided have a go at learning Bridge. There was a course offered at Hexham Bridge Club and we were taught in a class of about 24 how to play this most intriguing game.

We were all quickly aware of how much we'd lost the art of learning .... listening, homework, practice etc, but it was the same for everyone and there was a collective joy at our failure to remember simple things.



Alongside the fun though we all became captivated by the will to win as well as learn.

During lockdown we played online and continue to do so. We have now all graduated to playing regularly at Hexham and Corbridge Bridge Clubs, with mixed success, where we have made lots of new friends.

So if you are looking for a fun challenge or just want to refresh your card playing skills why not give it a try!

*The new programme will start on Tuesday September 16th 2025 7-9pm, at the Chrysalis Centre, Dene Park, Corbridge Rd, Hexham NE46 1HN. For further information you can contact Brian Wilson on 673043 or Dianna Mulholland on 673256, or you can email [contactus@hexhambridgeclub.org.uk](mailto:contactus@hexhambridgeclub.org.uk)*

## **Parish Council Report**

Now a lot of the administration and catch-up discussions have been agreed, your Parish Council can start to focus on the issues which are important to all Parishioners.

One of our main concerns is the Precept. You will normally see a line on your Council tax bill for the Precept. This is funding the County Council collects on the Parish Council's behalf so we can then deliver services locally such as grass cutting, the community playground inspections, insurance, etc. Because of the gap in normal Parish Council operations, the Precept was not collected for this year. We have looked at our budget and made as many savings as possible. Sadly, we won't be able to offer any grants this year, nor support our wonderful community businesses. However, we will maintain our essential services within the Parish. We are still discussing the Precept with Northumberland County Council with the help of our local County Councillor Colin Horncastle and our MP, Joe Morris, and we are all hoping we might have better news in the next few months.

The maintenance of the defibrillator at the Rose and Crown is now up and running thanks to Councillor Cole and you will find information about procedures in this newsletter which we hope everyone will find useful as we have had a few queries about actually what to do if you think you might need the use of a defibrillator. We have also discussed the possibility of having more defibrillators around the Parish.

The Council also discussed planning applications and outcomes, the Parish website, and the school's interest in an outdoor classroom and potential funding.

New signage is going up at the school, and the Community Playground is once again being inspected and maintained with a few small repairs underway.

We still are after two more Parish Councillors, so if you could spare some time to help with local issues and are interested in becoming a Councillor, please do get in touch with the Clerk, or Chair.

*Our meetings are held monthly, and last no more than two hours, at the Commemoration Hall. Any Parishioners are more than welcome to attend, we'd like to see you and hear your thoughts, so please do feel free to come along. If you'd like to raise something with the Parish Council then you can contact the Clerk, Samantha Dalglish at [slaleypc@gmail.com](mailto:slaleypc@gmail.com) and she can add an agenda item for our next meeting, or contact the Chair, Anne Livesey on 07803 610077 [annielivesey@googlemail.com](mailto:annielivesey@googlemail.com).*

### **Wars and Rumours of Wars: A letter from the Rev'd Diana**

For months now, Israeli forces have been bombing parts of Gaza in response to an abominable attack by Hamas: events in a far-away country to most people in Britain. And then there is Ukraine: war on European soil. According to a recent YouGov Poll, 41% of Britons think that a world war is likely in the next 5-10 years: "*Wars and rumours of wars*," in the way of Matthew's Gospel. Much has been said in the press and on the radio and television about what is happening, and some of it has been said by church people. Much has also happened. Indeed, much has changed in the wake of events, these last few months. As Christians, we are expected to let our faith influence our reactions to these events. As citizens, we must all respond in our own ways to the events of the world.

So, I thought it might be helpful to review the help we might have from the church in doing so.

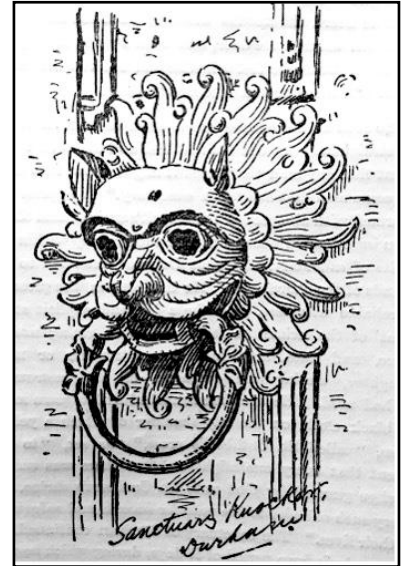
The Anglican Church starts from a place that might well be characterised in the words of novelist Alice Walker, "War will stop when we no longer praise it and no longer give it any attention at all. Peace will come whenever it is sincerely invited". Yet the news is that the Church of England General Synod is thinking of what the church's role would be, if serious warfare were to be visited upon us. God forbid.

I believe that is the right approach. For it is imperative on all of us to think, to imagine and maybe to pray through what our part should be in both

steering away from war - and responding to events if war does happen in spite of all we hope.

## Sanctuary

Chine McDonald of the Theos Foundation, in a thought for the day that triggered my own thinking on this subject, recalled that the church - although imperfect and often rightly perceived to be so – has given sanctuary through the centuries. Although Sanctuary no longer has any legal meaning, as a place where fugitives can find immunity from arrest, it has retained a spiritual meaning. Sanctuary in its original Latin meaning describes a place where holiness, or holy people, are kept in. Kept safe. A church as a place of sanctuary is a place that keeps the world, which in times of war is a place of great violence and horror, out. And offers a place of peace; a safe haven in a world that offers only destruction.



Sanctuary Knocker, Durham Cathedral

Retreating to a place of quiet safety does not just mean blocking out the realities of the world, either. In the wake of Thomas Becket's murder, Rev'd Fergus Butler-Gallie on Radio 4 described how Canterbury Cathedral became symbolic of a place where the difficult and violent and traumatic were not shied away from. Here, he said, by facing the wickedness of the world, one could find healing. The Church as Sanctuary is a place where we could possibly reframe our mind; to imagine a world of peace and not violence. To imagine. And to think. And maybe to pray, too.

It is 80 years since the UNESCO Charter was written in the wake of the trauma of World War Two. Its opening words ring true still *"since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed;"*

*Imagine. Think. Pray.* We need a safe space to allow our minds to do those things. To construct the *'defences of peace'*.

So may we make our churches, here in Slaley, Healey and Riding Mill, *Churches of Sanctuary* for the whole community in the troubled days ahead. Places to imagine. To think. To pray.

We open the churches to all. In the time ahead, when the news seems too grim to bear, consider these buildings yours to use for thinking, for reflection and yes, perhaps, for prayer too.

## **Messy Church**

Our next Messy Church is on Saturday 27th September from 09.30 to 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.



## **The Commemoration Hall**

*The Hall now has a new committee, with Andrew Coney as Chairman, Karl Beckett as Vice Chairman, Jim Bailey as Treasurer and Pat Wilson as Secretary*

## **Exercise To Music**

The 2 groups, sponsored by Age UK Northumberland, will recommence on Monday 1st September. New members are welcome.

The first group is for those able to move around freely, although some of us may have some minor ailments! This group is held between 9.30am & 10.30am on Mondays.

The second group is for those who are limited in the amount of standing exercise they can manage. It runs from 10.45am to 11.45am on Mondays.

*If you think you might like to take a look, why not join us to try a session? If you would like more information,, call Carol Ferguson (01434 673585)*

## **Carpet Bowls**

Slaley Carpet Bowls Club meets in the Commemoration Hall every Tuesday from September to April from 7.30pm to 9.30pm.

During the summer months of April to the end of July we meet every other Tuesday at 7.30pm.

Slaley News contained some details of our bowls last season and it is fair to say our results were a bit mixed. Here are the slightly painful details.

During the season we played 14 fixtures against other local villages in the area. These are all friendly matches with only a small competitive under current!!

The season for 2024/5 started last September and ended in April. Our season record was 4 wins and 10 defeats.

Some of the games were village carpet bowls at their very best with 4 games decided by a win of 15 or less points, amazingly close considering over 500 bowls are bowled on the night by each team!!

It was a very good year, club nights were well attended, new players came and tried the game and some have stayed with it and are now regular bowlers. We enjoyed the winter bowls so much we did 'Carry on Bowling' every other Tuesday.

We have over 20 members ranging in age from 16 to 80+, men, women, children, ranging from beginners to superstars and everything in between.

We start the new season of matches on 9 September against our dear friends and rivals from Riding Mill, so 2 September we'll be furiously practising , do join us!!

*Give it a try you will love it and have great fun!!*

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

### **Easy fundraising for the Hall!**

Slaley Commemoration Hall was registered on **easyfundraising** in March 2020. Since that time 12 members of the management committee have registered and £588 has been raised through the FREE donations.

In the last 12 months the donations have been

|               |       |
|---------------|-------|
| May 2024      | 27.46 |
| August 2024   | 19.25 |
| November 2024 | 34.65 |
| February 2025 | 47.69 |

Thus giving SCH an annual donation of £129.05

### ***How does it work?***

Simply register with easyfundraising with Slaley Commemoration Hall as your chosen charity and every time you make a purchase on line a tiny percentage of your total spend will be allocated to SCH. Names like Go Compare, Mountain Warehouse, Screwfix, Tesco, Amazon and Ebay.

Information taken from their website:



Slaley Commemoration Hall are registered on #easyfundraising which means you can raise free donations for them when you shop online! Over 8,000 retailers will make a donation to Slaley Commemoration Hall on your behalf when you shop with them. All the big names like Sainsbury's, M&S, Argos, Just Eat and more are ready to donate at no extra cost to you. Sign up here: <https://join.easyfundraising.org.uk/slaleycommemorationhall/2fzavv/s2s/HaYZKgsX/SE894/facebook/>

If you don't already support a charity through easyfundraising, can we please ask that you register today and help with this FREE fundraising?  
Pat Wilson, SCH Secretary

## September 2025 gardening column

**Karen Melvin**

I have been sending pictures to a fellow gardener in New Zealand, Elizabeth Wilks, who is writing a book on natural gardening. She notices all sorts of details in the wild natural environment, as she gradually develops her ideas on naturalistic design. Some plants are strong competitors, others stress tolerators, plants that grow slowly in response to bad conditions - useful in our climate change scenario. Some plants will grow in the most stressful conditions. In the driveway under my hungry yew hedge, I had snow-in-summer which spread rapidly, then died out, and acaena then romped along the whole length. This is now starting to thin and clumps of geraniums and Caucasian crosswort, *Phuopsis stylosa*, are taking over. In the wild garden I like large patches of the same plant to offset the shapely shrubs and small trees like a woodland underplanting.



*Inula hookeri*

Elizabeth particularly mentions the degradation of habitats by humans as we extract every ounce of profit from the environment. Natural gardening



is a way to rebalance our relationship with the world and “to be more sympathetic to the wild heritage of a place”. This brings up how we view wild planting designs, which to many of us can look unkempt and messy. A good way to manage wild meadow grassland type plantings is to add an “orderly frame”, Elizabeth's term. We did this on our wild bank in 2019, which had started as a mess of thistle and nettle and hedgerow grass. Joe mowed for some years then only mowed a neat path all around it. There are large species roses and mahonia on one side of the path and tall trees on the other so it will never be a meadow, just a glade. An early idea was to dot my huge split clump of Hooker's fleabane, *Inula hookeri*, through the grass. I was surprised when this grew one huge mass of flowers totally swamping the grass. A few years later the clump died in the middle and I am planting other rampant things, like dark blue monkshood which I no longer want in the border, and phlox, comfrey, geranium. There is a mix of other wild flowers from seed collected locally to raise plug plants for this area.

I recently visited RHS Bridgewater in Salford where Tom Stuart-Smith has redesigned the eleven acre Weston walled garden where a variety of interconnected spaces and habitats are created, from Asian to Mediterranean.

The Paradise Garden has a large central pond beyond which are a collection of plants adapted to dry conditions. A mulch of gravel reinforces the feeling of aridity as well as providing an overall background with grasses mixed through. There is a glorious sense of movement throughout the planting with ever repeating large swathes of plants. The colours complement and contrast in beautifully airy meadow-like patterns.



## September Slaley Notes from WI

It's September and we are back to 'normal' with our meeting dates. The summer months were pleasantly disrupted by Slaley Show. With many of our members so closely involved with the running and stewarding of the Baking, Handicrafts and Photography side of the Industrial Tent. Catherine Myers and Margaret Rowell (our president and Vice President respectively) welcomed and were not in the least bit overwhelmed, by nearly 700 entries.



We kept enough space in the tent for a display of the on-going Community Poppy project which gave some indication of what the final project will look like in November, on the church wall. The current total is nearly 400 and realistically, we realise that we probably won't hit our target of 1,000. So, this becomes a project that can be added to over the next few years. We've realised it takes quite a lot of time to sew and tie the poppies onto the net so until October we'll be trying to split our spare time into not only knitting but also attaching, as we build up to Remembrance Sunday. Wool is still desperately needed, as it looks hopeful that we are still attracting new knitters; nearly 30 patterns were collected from the display at the Show.



Well done to the First prize winner in Class 163a (open for WI members only) Mary Pitkethly, 2<sup>nd</sup> prize to Hilary Porteus and 3<sup>rd</sup> prize to Sandy Hatton.

We also found time at the end of July to visit Raby Castle and visit the newly opened gardens which was simply 'Fabulous!' says Catherine Myers....and to further 'feed' our interest in all things gardening, many of us are piling into coaches, organised by our collective Moorland Group to Harrogate Autumn Flower Show on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> September. Full report next month. We'll also be able to report on our late August meeting, a talk from Sophie Kirkup of Todburn Soaps who produces a range of skincare products using home bred Goats Milk (allegedly the wrongly attributed 'asses' milk in which Cleopatra bathed).

We are welcoming Maureen Haney, a member of Langley WI, on Wednesday September 10<sup>th</sup> who will be giving us a demonstration, maybe letting us have a go ourselves? and we hope a tasting! of sushi. Maureen has become a bit of a dab hand at the art of finely rolling rice techniques and has been demonstrating for several years.

Our big event this month is the Macmillan Coffee morning on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> September. The coffee morning has been a firm date in the WI Calendar over the past couple of years. As we are a charity ourselves it's important to say that we are 'hosting' the morning to raise money for this worthwhile charity and so we bake and organise and hope for support from the Slaley Community to raise as much as we can. Open from 10am to 12 noon, last year's event raised £730, we hope to surpass that this year. Please come, all welcome.

As always, we welcome new members and those who would like to attend on a 'just for interest' no-obligation visit to any of our meetings in the hope to increase our numbers. More members equals more friends! Please contact President Catherine Myers on 673023 or Secretary Vicky Pepys 07802572326



I'm hosting my Coffee Morning to raise money for Macmillan.  
There's a cuppa with your name on it.

When: Friday 26th September 10am to 12 noon

Where: Slaley Commemoration Hall

RSVP: Just come along and bring your friends!

From: Slaley WI

More info: Catherine Myers 01434 673023



**MACMILLAN**  
CANCER SUPPORT

## USEFUL CONTACTS-1

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