

MATFEN COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

No. 16 – July - August 2022



Schools are closed until September, the village green is looking splendid, and it's a race to keep up with all the ripening fruit and vegetables in the garden. We're being constantly reminded to drink plenty of water, and at the same time being told to watch how much we use – it's definitely the height of summer and I hope you are enjoying the sunshine when we have it. Welcome to Newsletter number 16, and apologies for the slight delay in its arrival.

On a sad note, I wanted to mark the death of Warren Scott, grass cutting contractor for the Parish Council, who died suddenly on Saturday July 30th. Mandy Senior, PC Clerk, writes that the PC were very shocked and saddened to hear that he had died. Warren was also the gamekeeper on the Matfen Estate. His father was the Estate Keeper in days gone by and Warren was brought up in Woodman's Cottage at Standing Stone Farm until he moved to Corbridge. Our sympathy goes out to his family.



Matfen village hall is looking very spruce and neat after all the maintenance work that's been carried out inside to the windows and ceiling. It's recently hosted quite a few private events, and if you're thinking of having a children's party, a christening reception or any other family event, you can find out more and make a booking via the website, at www.northumberlandvillagehalls.org.uk/matfen-village-hall or by email: matfenvillage@gmail.com or phone: **07817 375237**



There are also some new community activities starting up soon in the hall – local fitness expert, **Jo Stichbury**, is offering free taster sessions on **Mondays, August 15th and 22nd**. From 9.30 in the morning and then from 6pm, you can try out 'Legs, Bums and Tums' and 'Body Flow' with Jo. Then, from September, she'll be starting up regular classes, which can be paid for at £7 a session or £35 a month. Get in touch with Jo by phone or email to find out more and book your place on the taster sessions: jostichburyfitness@gmail.com tel: **07855247063**.

From what is up on the hall website, there are other sessions starting up soon too – Pilates on Wednesday mornings beginning at 10am and later in the day, Yoga at 6 pm. You can find out more details on the hall website or village email.

Matfen Karate Club are thrilled to announce that they had a successful candidate at Seikenryu's black belt grading in June, which took place in Stamfordham village hall. Eve Harris was awarded her black belt first Dan and was highly praised by our chief instructor for her performance! Well done Eve. She looks very happy in the photo, which shows her and Senseis Andrew Waters and Steve Reed. New students are always very welcome at the club, which carries on right through the summer, meeting every Friday from 6-7pm in the village hall. Please contact Harry Waters if you're interested, on **07775 726240** or matfen.srka@gmail.net



The **Jubilee Garden Refurbishment** is making steady progress at the east side of the village green. The site looks a lot neater than it did and work will be ongoing for a while. The next step is to plant ground cover plants. The project is co-ordinated by the Parish Council and the call is out on the PC website for volunteers. If you're interested, get in touch with the PC through the clerk, on matfenparishcouncil@gmail.com.



Heddon and Upper Pont Churches are holding their next fund-raising Sunday lunch at Matfen High House on **Sunday August 21st**, 12 noon for 12.30, hosted by Struan and Jenny Wilson. The price of £15 includes a roast beef dinner with all the trimmings, a dessert and the first glass of wine. There'll also be a raffle. These lunches are always lovely occasions and the organisers look forward to welcoming you again – everyone is very welcome. To book your place, please email: r.scheffer@newcastle.anglican.org

Another event, organised by the churches, is taking place in Stamfordham and sounds like an opportunity not to be missed:

Following the extensive restoration to the beautiful stained-glass windows, St Mary's Church, Stamfordham are lucky to have been offered a fascinating talk by Arts Society Lecturer, Colonel Dick Bolton. **'A likeness of Paradise: Stained glass, the sublime art'**. Dick is clearly an expert on his topic, being a Blue Badge guide and a Canterbury Cathedral guide for 40 years.

This will take place on **Thursday 1st September** from **7pm-8.30pm** in **Stamfordham Village Hall**.

There's an entry fee of £5, which includes cheese and wine, and will help raise funds for St. Mary's Church and Stamfordham Village Hall. The organisers are hoping that you will come to what will be a most enjoyable evening with cheese and wine and other refreshments included in the £5 entry fee.

Please book ahead if you can to help with the catering (pay on the door) by contacting either:

Sue Bolton 07809 461899, email susanbolton658@gmail.com or **Reverend Rachel Scheffer 01661 886853**, email r.scheffer@newcastle.anglican.org

And, continuing the topic of food, the Friday evening meals are as popular as ever at **Dulcissima Coffee Shop**. They take place on the first and second Fridays of the month, and always book up well in advance. Drop by the shop or phone **01661 886202** to reserve your places for September, or even further ahead if you don't want to miss out. The coffee shop is open 10 am-3 pm every day for breakfast and lunch, or just one of those delicious tray bakes or cakes that are always available.

You may have heard that Ian and Tracey have put the business up for sale, after almost five years and a lot of work to bring it to its current successful position. They're not expecting anything to happen straight away, but are thinking ahead and hoping – perhaps over the next couple of years – to find the right person to take over the premises and build on the changes they have made.



A couple of weeks ago, **Great Whittington and Matfen WI** had a well-subscribed and very enjoyable outing to Barnard Castle, followed by a guided tour of Raby Castle. Lunch was taken in the Morritt Hotel at Greta Bridge, in between the two. This turned out to be a hidden gem – a fascinating setting with an interesting history, good food and great service.

The WI have an interesting programme of events coming up in the next few months, which started off with a very successful ‘foodie night’ last Tuesday. Coming up are a talk on local birds and bird watching and an amateur drama show – watch this space for further details. Meetings are on the first Tuesday of the month, beginning at 7.30 pm, in Great Whittington until October, and then in Matfen. New members and visitors are always welcome; get in touch via: contehjean@gmail.com if you’d like to know more.



As noted in the last newsletter, **Community Action Northumberland (CAN)** have two energy advisers, Leanne and Brian, who hold weekly online or phone energy surgeries to give advice on how to keep your home warmer and spend less on energy. They can also explain the measures introduced by central government to help reduce costs, which can be somewhat confusing, to say the least. Leanne and Brian are available on Wednesdays and Thursdays between 10 am and 4 pm every week. You need to book a time slot, which you can do using any of these contact details:

Leanne Shipley: email – leanneshipley@ca-north.org.uk tel - 07724 867010

Brian Watson: email – brianwatson@ca-north.org.uk tel - 07715 408343



The Great Northumberland Forest is another CAN project, with plans to plant millions of trees by 2030. The aim is to create more and more diverse wooded landscapes across the county. The project offers a free service to explore what planting could do for you and your community or business and discuss the opportunities for tree planting, as well as how the planting can be funded. The Great Northumberland Forest would like to hear from you if you have land and are interested in tree planting. This might be land that you own or land you manage on behalf of an owner, who is happy to support planting. The Great Northumberland Forest team can also discuss the management of any existing woodland you may have. For more information please contact the team at enquiries.forest@northumberland.gov.uk, call 01670 623416 or visit their website at www.nland.uk/GNF

CAN can also provide access to funding for **village hall groups involved with children and young people**. Working jointly with Northumberland CVA, the Ballinger Charitable Trust and the National Lottery Community Fund, they can provide grants for youth activities to be run by small volunteer-led groups. CAN will manage the very simple application process, supporting volunteers at village halls to apply for funding for their groups, usually between £500-£1,000. The funding can be for a variety of activities including equipment or the costs associated with an event or trip. Applicants will be asked to complete a short expression of interest form and those shortlisted will be invited to an informal meeting to speak to the awarding panel about their project. For further information and an expression of interest form for Village Halls, please contact Tracey Morgan traceymorgan@ca-north.org.uk, tel 01670 517178 or view the website: <http://ca-north.org.uk/news/FundingChildrenYoungPeopleGroups>

And, while thinking about the environment, just a quick reminder about **Sarah Greaves’** project on **swift boxes**. Sarah is PC Councillor in Ingoe, and is hoping to get funding from the NCC Community fund for swift nesting boxes, in plenty of time to be erected for next year. Please consider hosting a nest box or two, if you have a home that would suit this. There has already been some interest, and if you would like to know more about this let her know – her email is sarah.a.greaves@gmail.com



History Corner



This edition’s photo from Keith Atkinson is another one from the Collier collection, which you can see in the Heritage Centre in Bellingham. W.P. Collier took this photograph of Matfen, looking west along North Side. School House, on the extreme right, had become the home of a new headmaster of Matfen School in 1912, T. W. (Tommy) Richardson. The post office next door was the home of Keith’s father prior to his marriage in 1934. He was a pupil teacher at Matfen School from 1914-1918 and a great friendship developed between him and Tommy Richardson. Together, they attended the Oval Test Match against Australia in 1930, travelling to London by sea. Beyond the *Black Bull* stands the high gable of the *Blackett Arms* Hotel, which was built to support the temperance movement – perhaps to allay any concerns about the influence of the pub. By the early 21st century it had become the Matfen Estates Office, and it’s now a private residence.

And, to close thanks to all the contributors to Newsletter number 16, and to Rev Rachel for distributing it by email. Keith will be stepping down from his role as resident historian after the next edition, so if there’s anyone out there who is interested in digging out historical snippets for future editions, please get in touch. As ever, any comments, suggestions and contributions for future newsletters are very welcome. If you know of anyone who would like a paper copy, please let me know – contehjean@gmail.com. The next newsletter will come out in mid-September.