

VALE NEWS

ISSUE 133 AUG/SEP 2026

FROM THE EDITORIAL TEAM

Thank you to all our regular contributors. Ideas for new columns or one-off articles are always welcomed.

Please note the copy deadlines as follows:

15th September for October/November

15th November for December/January

Please email copy to whittinghamvalenews@gmail.com

Jean, Sandra and Helen

HIGHLIGHTS PERFORMANCE

The following Highlights Rural Touring Scheme performance has been booked to perform at **Whittingham Memorial Institute** in Autumn 2026;

Sunday October 11th 2026 at 7.30pm,

"The Mystery of the Pirate Lagoon"

(Ragged Edge Productions)

"The Mystery of the Pirate Lagoon" is a Comic Radio play presented live on stage. This daft and entertaining show gives you the chance to release your inner pirate, make the sound effects and take part in scenes in a special edition of the play. It's a fun night out!

A pirate comedy, told in a fresh and inventive way with lots to join in with – without any of that painful "participation". You also get to learn a bit about how radio plays are made.

Bring your friends or family along – this one's for everyone. It's one to enjoy, one to remember.

Tickets can be reserved for this performance on

01665 574384 or www.highlightsnorth.co.uk

EARLYBIRD tickets are £12 for a limited time period; Otherwise - Adults £15; Concession for under 25's/in receipt of disability or unemployment benefits £10; Child £8 (under 18).

As usual there will be a licensed bar run by our local Scout group. There will also be a Raffle.

Maureen Blakey –

Whittingham Memorial Institute Highlights promoter



Whittingham Show

Horticultural • Sheep Show • Falconry Display • Steelband • Dog Rally

Refreshments & Bar • Slaters Funfair • Ice Cream Van

Highland Cattle • Coconut Shy • Stalls & Crafts

Face Painting • Pineapple Exotics creatures

Children's Sports • Musicians • Archery

Tug of War • Raffle

**Saturday,
August 15th 2026**

Gates open 12:00 | Adults £5 | U16s FREE | Dogs welcome

Follow signs to the show field by Whittingham Lane, NE66 4RJ
www.whittinghamshow.co.uk find us on facebook

The Parish of Whittingham with Edlingham and Bolton Chapel

SERVICES

St. Bartholomew, Whittingham

Parish Communion

Every 1st and 3rd Sunday

9:30am

BCP Eucharist

1st Sunday of the month

8:30am

Occasional services also take place at St John the Baptist, Edlingham and Bolton Chapel.

For baptisms, funerals, weddings and other enquiries,
please contact Rev'd Rich Townend, Vicar
01670 719470

CATHOLIC CHURCH SERVICES

Sunday Mass:

9.00 a.m. at St. Ninian's, Wooler;

11.00 a.m. at St. Mary Immaculate, Whittingham.

Holy Days: 10.00 a.m. at Whittingham;

6.00 p.m. at Wooler.

Traditional Latin Mass: Tuesdays at 6.30 p.m. and
Saturdays at 9.30 a.m. (both at Whittingham).

Parish Priest - Fr. David Phillips 01665 574240



Bishop Helen-Ann with Rev'd Rich and Zoey for the
Thanksgiving of the Edlingham Gateway.

VIEWES FROM THE VICAR - A tale of two parishes...

Dear friends,

One of the confusing things about English village life is that we use the word "parish" in more than one way. There is the civil parish, with its parish council and responsibility for local civic matters. Then there is the ecclesiastical parish, centred on the parish church, worship, pastoral care and Christian service.

Here in Whittingham, things are perhaps even more confusing! The civil parish is Whittingham, Callaly and Alnham, but the Church of England parish does not include Alnham. Instead, the ecclesiastical parish includes Whittingham, Edlingham and Bolton, with churches at St Bartholomew's, St John the Baptist, and Bolton Chapel (but Callaly and Glanton are also within the boundaries of the ecclesiastical parish!). Have you got all that?!

For many centuries, civil and church life were much more closely connected. The parish church was not only a place of worship, but also one of the main centres of local life. Before modern local government, many practical responsibilities were organised through the parish, including care for the poor and the raising of local rates.

Today, the Parochial Church Council has responsibility for the worship, mission, finances and buildings of the church parish. That means caring for three historic church buildings and two open graveyards. This is a considerable task for a small rural parish.

We have worked hard at Edlingham, following the flooding of December 2023. We hope that the completion of the new gateway project, along with improved access and drainage, will help protect St John's from future flooding and keep the church open for generations to come.

In the same way, we will continue to care for the other churches as needs arise, including repairs to the stonework around the Lady Chapel windows at St Bartholomew's.

The church parish and the civil parish are no longer the same thing. But both still matter and exist to serve local people and strengthen community life. If anyone is interested in being involved in the life of the church, particularly for fundraising, grants and managing repair works, please let me know – it's always good to hear from you.

In faith, hope and love,

Rev'd Rich Townend (RevRichTea@gmail.com)

St Bartholomew's, Whittingham — Services in August and September 2026

Sunday 2 August

8.30am — Book of Common Prayer

9.30am — Service of the Word

Sunday 16 August

9.30am — Parish Communion

Sunday 6 September

8.30am — Book of Common Prayer

9.30am — Parish Communion

Sunday 20 September

9.30am — Parish Communion

GARDENING SLOT

The last few months have been as challenging as ever with the late frosts delaying the time for planting out tender seedlings. Time will tell, but my Hydrangeas and an Acer suffered badly, as did the Cornus Midwinter Fire. Hopefully they will recover eventually, though I think I have lost the Acer. On the plus side, the blossom on various shrubs and trees did very well and my Magnolia Stellata timed it perfectly, as it had finished flowering by the time the frost came.

We have a summer house at the top of the garden and underneath the protection of the overhanging roof I have a Clematis Armandii apple blossom. The protection afforded by the roof meant that it was untouched by the frost and I was able to enjoy it's perfume.

I also have a Wisteria under the roof protection on the other side. For those of you who have been reading my column for a while you might remember this was grown from seeds brought from the south of France when we returned to the UK. Originally, I had six seedlings but only three remain. The one under the roof is doing well, although so far there are no flowers. I don't know if there ever will be, but it was an experiment in germinating wisteria seeds!

Also, under the roof of the summer house, we put two artificial swallow cup nests last summer. So far none have taken up residence, but we have noticed a lot of interest with swallows flying around. Hopefully next year one pair make their home there. The clematis offers cover and the garden has plenty of insects, as do the surrounding fields so fingers crossed for next spring.

Despite the weather, everything in the garden is doing what it usually does getting on with things. I have grown a lot of salvias this year having never grown them from seed before, so I will report back on how they have performed in my next article.

Gwen Blackshaw

Coquetdale Repair Café

Jubilee Hall, Rothbury, 10am - 2pm

Saturdays:

19th September, 21st November

Book your repair at

<https://www.coquetrepair.co.uk>

WHITTINGHAM MEMORIAL INSTITUTE

VILLAGE HALL REGULAR USER GROUPS

	WEEKLY	
MONDAY (Sept – June)	INDOOR BOWLS	7 - 9pm
TUESDAY	TAI CHI	4 - 6pm
	PILATES	7 - 7.45pm
WEDNESDAY	BADMINTON *	7 - 8pm
THURSDAY	SCOUT GROUP	5.30 - 9pm
FRIDAY	PILATES	9.30 - 10.15am
	VALE ART GROUP	10.30 - 12.30
	MONTHLY	
3 rd TUESDAY	PARISH COUNCIL	7pm
1 st WEDNESDAY	KNIT & NATTER	2 - 4pm
3 rd WEDNESDAY (March – June, Sept – Nov)	ALN & BREMISH HISTORY SOCIETY	7.30pm

** Except History Society weeks*

As well as our weekly and monthly programme of classes and events, the hall also takes bookings for family occasions, birthday parties, small weddings and funeral receptions. To discuss making a booking please contact Maureen on 01665 574384

THE ALN & BREMISH LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Our Autumn programme begins with the following talks, which we hope you will find of interest:

Wednesday 16th September

Women in Anglo-Saxon Northumberland

We are delighted to welcome back Dr Chris Ferguson,
Director of Museum & Visitor Experience at Ad Gefrin

Wednesday 21st October

Dark Age and Iron Age Hill Forts

Michael Thomson

Talks start at 7.30pm at Whittingham Memorial Institute.
If you're a member, encourage your friends to come along.

Membership is excellent value at £10 per annum.

Visitors £3 per meeting.

1st WHITTINGHAM INDEPENDENT SCOUT GROUP

This summer has been full of adventure with coasteering, surfing, hiking, canoeing, climbing, fishing, fire lighting, cycling, athletics, river dipping and woodcraft. Some marvellous opportunities for the young people in our area.

The cubs enjoyed a weekend with a cub pack in Wigton, with a fabulous visit to an old munitions factory, and lots of WW2 cookery over open fires. A wonderful chance to get to know other cubs. The Senior Scouts spent a weekend in the College Valley Estate creating new paths down to the river for their educational visits, and hiking in the hills.

Our group is applying for its own DofE licence, which we hope to have in place from September, so that we can deliver the DofE for all those in Year 9 and over. Do get in touch if you would like to start your Bronze, Silver or Gold Award which is fabulous for your job or higher education applications!

To provide these activities, we would like to recruit some additional leaders to join our fantastic team. Volunteering is hugely rewarding, improving wellbeing, making new friends, being part of a team, gaining new skills and qualifications and boosting confidence. You'll also enjoy the satisfaction of seeing young people grow and succeed. Please contact me if you would like to discuss these opportunities.

Ninette Edwards – Group Scout Master –
1st Whittingham Independent Scout Group

ninette@alinsideassociates.co.uk Mob. 07843 587476



Plea from a local farmer

It would be appreciated that dogs are kept on a lead at all times when using the local footpaths where livestock are in the fields. Also, please ensure dogs cannot escape from gardens – this happened recently, sadly resulting in the killing of a lamb.

Thank you.

St Bartholomew's Churchyard Nature

 **is Working!**

Churchyard Nature is thriving at St. Bartholomew's this summer! Come along and join us on:

Saturday 8th August

Thursday 20th August

Saturday 5th September

Thursday 24th September

1.30-4.00pm or any part of the time. All levels of support welcome. Bring strong gloves and stout footwear. Refreshments are provided.

Sonia Ritter (soniaritter@outlook.com)

NEWCOMERS

Northumberland was a county that I knew very little about. My wife Pat, on the other hand, was very familiar with the county and adored it, particularly the coast. When I retired at the end of 2023, we decided that the county ticked many of our retirement boxes, so following a few reconnaissance trips in our camper van, we set about house hunting.

We always said that we would never buy another listed property and would only move to a village if it had a shop and pub. However, when we drove into Whittingham for the first time and saw the village green, surrounded by lovely stone cottages, and the Pele Tower, we thought what a lovely spot. The Old Court House sealed the deal, and here we are, having moved in during January.

We've got to know most of our neighbours, as well as familiar dog walkers who use the path down to the river, and we have found that everyone has been helpful, straightforward and friendly.

Pat and I met many years ago when we both worked at the BAE satellite division in Stevenage. I was quite a local being from St. Albans, whilst Pat was from Leicestershire. We lived for 27 years in a small rural town called Pottton in Bedfordshire.

We both got fed up with our satellite careers, so Pat moved into software and I retrained to become a Clinical Scientist in the NHS, spending 20 years working at Addenbrooke's Hospital in Cambridge.

We don't have any children, but we have loads of friends, the majority of whom seem to have visited us during the last couple of months! Great fun, but very tiring – running a B&B must be hard work.

Pat has joined a choir in Alnwick and I have been getting to know the Cheviot Hills. Our aim is to get more involved in village life, and as we now have the house roughly where we want it (don't mention the garden), you should all hopefully start seeing a bit more of us.

Pat and Graham Miles

Love Northumberland Sustainability Award

As previously reported in The Vale News, as part of our school's Climate Action work, Mrs Marsden set up the 'Walking Bus'. This has the aims of reducing traffic congestion at school drop off time and currently runs weekly on a Wednesday. Already we have many children that use this service and this work has been recently recognised by Mrs Marsden and the school receiving a Love Northumberland Sustainability Award! Well done and thank you to everyone that supports this service, particularly our parent helpers Jayde and Melissa.

*Neil Charlton, Deputy Head Teacher
Whittingham C of E Primary School*

Whittingham C of E Primary School

A message from Headteacher, Belinda Athey;

As we come to the end of another successful year at Whittingham C of E Primary School, I am incredibly proud of all that our children, staff and wider school community have achieved together.

This year has been one of growth, opportunity and collaboration. Our children have continued to demonstrate kindness, courage and a love of learning, embracing every opportunity both inside and outside the classroom. From sporting events and educational visits, to performances, residential experiences and community involvement through Church services, performances, sports day and our Open Mornings, they have represented our school with enthusiasm and pride.

Our dedicated staff have worked tirelessly to provide high-quality teaching and memorable learning experiences, while our governors, parents, church and local community have continued to offer invaluable support. Together, we have created a nurturing environment where children feel happy, safe and inspired to succeed.

As we say goodbye to our Year 6 pupils, we thank them for their contribution to school life and wish them every success as they begin the next stage of their journey.

Thank you to everyone who has supported our school throughout the year. We look forward to building on this year's achievements, including an exciting plan to expand our provision for 2 year olds to offering care from 9 months old, and to welcoming everyone back in September for another exciting year.



Year 6 leavers

Have you heard of OLIO?

OLIO is a free app that helps reduce food waste by connecting people with surplus food that would otherwise go to waste. Food can be shared by local residents, businesses and volunteers, giving perfectly good items a second chance to be enjoyed rather than thrown away.

As a local OLIO volunteer, I collect surplus food from local stores throughout the week and make it available through the app for anyone to request. Items vary from collection to collection and may include fruit, vegetables, meat, bakery products, chilled foods and store cupboard essentials. As we do not have a shop in the village, it also gives local residents the opportunity to collect food here without needing to drive to a supermarket.

The app is free to download and use and is open to everyone. It can be a great way to save money, try new foods and help reduce food waste at the same time. You do not need to be struggling financially to take part. The aim is simply to ensure that good food is eaten rather than discarded.

To get started, simply download the free OLIO app from the Apple App Store or Google Play and search for "OLIO". If you have any questions or would like a hand getting started, please feel free to get in touch.

Sarah Trushell (mrstrushell@hotmail.co.uk)



What & Where?



Thanks again to Paul Bartlett for this issue's mystery photograph. It's an important part of Whittingham village... but what and where is it?

Revisiting the Archives

During my second visit to the archives at Woodhorn museum I became fascinated by the Parish Council minutes from earlier years. Then, as now, the minutes record decisions made and requests from parishioners, not discussions, and with several issues, they could have been written yesterday.

In 1933, the wooden footbridge over the AIn needed attending to and it was also noted to be in a dangerous condition in 1941. There has been a recent request for NCC to repair our footbridge. We have three footbridges now, but I am guessing the minutes refer to the footbridge in the centre of the village. It was also noted that the styles for various footpaths were in bad condition. This issue is always ongoing as this appears again in 1939.

There was also a request for a bus timetable in the village. This was before a bus shelter was thought of; the bus shelter was completed in 1946. In 1942 the buses were overcrowded, which left me wondering how that was dealt with.

In 1934 there was a plea for a speed limit in the village. I don't know what happened in 1934, but the new 30 mph speed limit was noted in minutes from 1952.

In 1933 there was also a request for a notice to stop villagers from dumping rubbish down the riverbank, luckily this habit seems to be long gone. Sadly, there was an outbreak of Para Typhoid in the village in 1948. There was also a new sewage scheme which would have done a lot to prevent more outbreaks.

Finally benches. My favourite subject. More seats were requested in 1950 and more seats were installed in 1951. No idea where! The minutes don't always provide that level of detail, but I would guess the bus shelter and the village green.

Elidh Gardiner

Quote

"I like gardening — it's a place where I find myself when I need to lose myself."

- Alice Sebold

A Tick in Time...

why checking for unwanted guests may save nine!

A recent trip to Thrunton Woods with the dog brought back nine deer ticks in search of a meal. They didn't bother her but my skin crawled.

It is a good example of convergent evolution, that arachnids (ticks), insects (fleas, bedbugs, midges, mosquitoes, horse flies) mammals (vampire bats, humans), fish (lampreys) and even worms (leeches) have developed their own solution to tap into the blood of another as food. For as long as there are hosts to feed on, blood is a plentiful, renewable, and year-round resource, rich in proteins, lipids, water and minerals.

Blood is also a problematic foodstuff for parasites: too much ingested iron and oxygen radicals can be toxic, and it lacks some essential dietary ingredients. Also, hosts have evolved strategies to guard against blood loss, including coagulants, and antibodies, and sensory nerves that alert of attacks. Parasites have co-evolved counter-measures against these too.

The deer tick lifecycle is remarkable. After a final feed a female detaches from its host to lay 1500 - 3000 eggs, then dies. Six-legged larvae emerge, which latch onto small hosts, such as birds and mice. The larvae drop off to pupate, emerging as eight-legged nymphs, which latch onto larger hosts e.g. hedgehog, pheasant, deer. After feeding, these too drop off, pupating to the adult stage, which is where deer, dogs and humans encounter them and are subjected to their phlebotomy skills. It's amazing any survive to adulthood.

Females need several days for their final meal, which is where we might find them. Though the amount of blood an adult tick takes is small relative to its host's capacity (perhaps 0.3 ml), apart from the ick factor, the main risk for us is pathogenic bacteria that exploit the tick to bypass our immune system, and infect us, most notably *Borrelia* sp. - the cause of Lyme disease.

The tick usually takes a few days to complete its meal, and *Borrelia* transfer happens mainly at the end, so check yourself/dog regularly and remove early. If you find one, use a tick fork or tweezers around the mouthpart then steadily prise it out, without squeezing the body. Squish inside a tissue, then wash your hands.

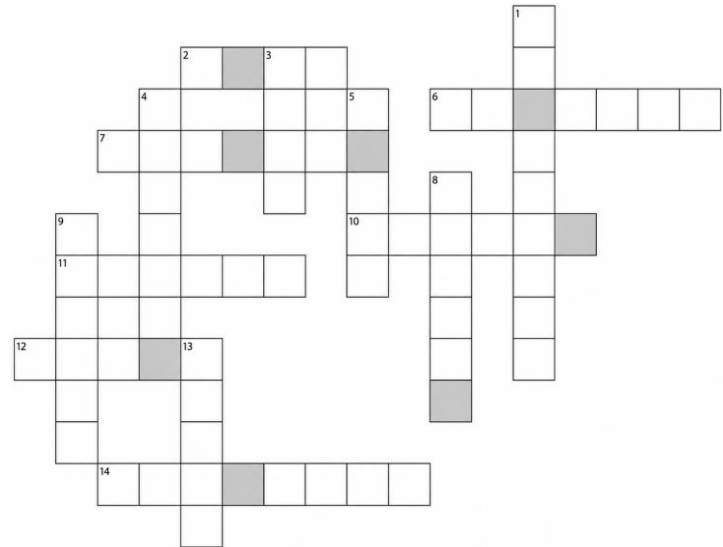
David Moon

(Note from the editors – check your cats too!)

COFFEE BREAK CORNER

CROSSWORD

Rearrange the shaded letters to reveal something that's right under your nose...



ACROSS

- 2. Rabbit; run quickly (4)
- 6. Story about the past (7)
- 7. Farm flier (4,3)
- 10. Bird seen circling low over wetlands (6)
- 11. Building where one might take a pew (6)
- 12. High structure showing power? (5)
- 14. Hills, or hardy sheep (8)

DOWN

- 1. Former coaching inn (6,3)
- 3. Knight's neighbour, at the start (4)
- 4. Unfortunate place to be put out to (7)
- 5. A sheepish crowd (5)
- 8. Crossing that's also a card game (6)
- 9. Place to learn about fish? (6)
- 13. Drivers hide a flower? (5)

Thanks to Sarah Trushell for compiling.

SUMMER WORD SCRAMBLE

- 1. TECDASLNSA (10)
- 2. SELSUSANGS (10)
- 3. MALEDONE (8)
- 4. IPLPLOFFS (4-5)
- 5. RECEAMIC (3, 5)
- 6. UBERCABE (8)
- 7. NIRADEGNG (9)
- 8. BUNTINGASH (10)

Whittingham, Callaly and Alnham Neighbourhood Plan - July Update

As reported in the last Vale News, the WCA Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has worked over recent months to develop a set of draft objectives and a draft vision statement for the Neighbourhood Plan based upon your responses to the 2023 Community Consultation.

We'd like to understand if these draft objectives and vision statement still reflect the strength of feeling expressed in 2023 and to canvas for any additional thoughts from individuals, local businesses and community groups. This is your chance to further play a part and have a voice in how the parishes will be shaped over the coming years.

We'll be dropping survey documents through letter boxes over the next couple of weeks for you to have a read through and send them back completed. The more responses we get back, the better the representation will be from all three parishes.

Survey drop off points

Please drop off completed responses at any of the following locations up to the 30th September:

Alnham Church (secure box inside)

Whittingham Church (secure box inside)

Dene House, Callaly (post box by front gate)

Survey Q&A sessions

If, before completing the survey, you'd like to ask some questions, get clarification, or are just curious, we'll be having three drop in Q&A sessions:

Whittingham Show (15th August, Trade Tent 12 - 4pm)

Alnham Church (22nd Aug, 10am - 1pm)

Whittingham Memorial Institute (29th Aug, 10am - 1pm)

Come along and see us, we'd love to see you.

Once we have all the responses, the draft objectives and draft vision statement will be refined and prepared. These will then give us direction as to which local planning policies should be developed and is an important milestone in your Neighbourhood Plan's journey.

Clr. Paul Bradley, Chair
WCA Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

WHITTINGHAM APPLE DAY

Join our village APPLE DAY - celebrating all things apple!

Whittingham Memorial Hall on
Sunday October 4th
11 - 2pm

Entry by donation, proceeds to St. Bartholomew's Church



- Tea, coffee, cake and appley products
- Apple press - bring your own apples to make juice, and learn how to make cider
- Kids' crafts and activities

Bring washed apples (no windfall if wanting to store juice), clean containers e.g. milk containers, bags to take away pulp for composting.

Donations of baked appley goods gratefully received.



COQUETDALE ART GALLERY

Community Gallery in ROTHBURY, above the library,
open EVERY day
mid March to mid December

Monday to Saturday 10.30 - 4, Sunday 1 - 4
Large range of local arts and crafts
07701 236753
www.coquetdalearts.co.uk

ANSWERS:

WHAT & WHERE: The AED (defibrillator) at Whittingham Memorial Institute

CROSSWORD: ACROSS 2.Hare 6.History 7.Barn Owl 10.Curlew 11.Church 12.Tower 14.Cheviots; DOWN 1.Castle Inn 3.Rook 4.Pasture 5.Flock 8.Bridge 9.School 13.River

WORD SCRAMBLE: 1.Sandcastle 2.Sunglasses 3.Lemonade 4.Flip-Flops 5.Ice Cream 6.Barbecue 7.Gardening 8.Sunbathing

PRIME MINISTER VISITS WHITTINGHAM (Issue 132): The Whittingham establishment hosting the then Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald, was The Bridge of Aln. Winner: Tony Henfrey. Wine donated by a reader of Vale News