WHEN LES HOLMES WAS made redundant from his farm tractor-driving job in 1992 he was at something of a loose end. At the age of 61 he wasn’t likely to get another full-time job and there was only so much part-time seasonal work available on local farms; although that kept him going for a few years. So when, in 2000, Laurence Goodfellow and John Wager at their garage in Bolton asked Les if he would be interested in doing a paper delivery round he quickly saw it had several advantages. It gave his days a routine; it brought some nice Christmas gifts from grateful customers and, with L&J’s being a garage, it meant he could keep his car on the road in exchange for the work. Fifteen years on he still does the round! John has long departed from the garage, but Laurence continues to run it as Goodfellow Motors and, on the rare occasions Les isn’t well, Laurence has to do the round himself.

As the oldest paper boy in our area, and probably in the county, his round initially was a daily 22 miles. He had deliveries in Whittingham and Glanton as well as some in Powburn, plus various isolated farms and cottages. As with all good delivery people Les was able to keep an eye out for anyone on his round who might be in need of help. On one occasion an elderly customer in Whittingham, who used to open her front window so he could pass the paper in, was obviously in distress and Les was able to raise the alarm so the paramedics could be called and the lady taken to hospital.

Les was born at Moor Edge Farm in Shiremoor. His father worked on farms and as Les grew up his dad got a job on Eliscope Farm near Sunderland from which Les went to school at Boldon. Les reached the school leaving age of 14 at the end of the war and it was almost automatic that he would start farm work.
He’d already learned to drive a tractor but the farm manager said that he wanted all school leavers who were starting on the farm to “start at the bottom”. Apparently that meant working with horses rather than tractors. So Les had to learn to work with the Shires and Suffolk Punch heavy horses. But he loved it and remembers those as the best days of his working life.

![Les ploughing with a pair of heavy horses](image)

In fact he was so keen that when he had some spare pocket money he would often spend it on horse brasses. Of course, it was just pocket money because he would hand his wage over to his mum and she would let him have 10/- (ten shillings or 50p) a week for himself.

So, after schooling at Backworth and Shiremoor, from the ages of 14-19 he worked at Balkwell Farm. This no longer exists because it was removed to make way for the enormous Nissan factory at Washington. Les later moved to the West Allotment farm and then again to Rising Sun farm. He remembers that he and the other two lads who worked with the horses often used to finish work, dash home to wash and change and then get the bus to Whitley Bay. They would go to the pictures and then on to Spanish City before finishing the evening with fish and chips and getting the last bus home.

At West Allotment he had met Betty. They married in 1951 at St Columbus Church in North Shields when Les was 20. Their daughter Linda was born in 1953.

Unfortunately in January 1954 Les had a dreadful accident with a baling machine and lost the fingers on his right hand. But he was young and resourceful and it wasn’t long before he was able to do with his left hand alone almost everything he’d previously done with two.

In 1956 he moved with the family to work for the Waltons at Roseden where he stayed for six years, specialising in tractor work. The only farm task he couldn’t manage was topping the turnips because one hand had to hold the root while the other sliced the top off with a sharp knife. He did try even to do that by strapping the knife to his right arm, but it made his arm bleed badly and he had to admit that he couldn’t cope with that task.

![Les driving a Fordson tractor in 1953](image)

Linda went to school at Roddam. It’s amazing now to realise just how many of our small villages and settlements had their own schools. While she was there the school closed and she had to travel
up to Wooler.

In 1962 they moved to Crookham Westfield and Linda remembers that it was not a happy two years. Relationships with the farmer weren’t particularly good and Linda had a very difficult time at school at Branxton where she was regarded by the other children as an outsider and made to feel unwelcome. On the other hand Crookham did their New Years in good style, with parties in people’s homes going on for a week.

1964 brought a very big storm to our area and that coincided with the family moving to the farm cottage at East Bolton where Les and Betty still live. To say the family is close-knit is putting it mildly, because Linda and her husband, Stephen Foster, live next door. Les worked for Danny Moralee who ran East Bolton and North Charlton farms. He spent most of his time at North Charlton, doing all the tractor work. Linda did a few months at Bolton school, but by then she was 11 years old and moved to the Secondary Modern school in Alnwick.

Les stayed with the Moralee farms for 28 years, which brings us back to 1992. His main interest since his formal retirement has been gardening. The four East Bolton cottages have a quarter each of the large walled garden that is part of the farm and Les’ main speciality is onions which he often shows, along with some leeks, at the annual event at the Queen’s Head in Glanton.

Quite how much longer Les will continue with his paper round can’t be known, but there’s no immediate sign of him giving up his ‘Oldest Paper Boy’ title yet.

Richard Poppleton

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OFTEC Reg. No. 27118
Hedgeley Women’s Institute

AS THE WOMEN’S INSTITUTE celebrates its centenary year, it seems only fitting to give you an update on our local Women’s Institute at Hedgeley.

Hedgeley Women’s Institute was created in 1929 and, as you can imagine, has seen and been involved in a lot of social history and change throughout the years. After a period of declining membership (we were down to 10 members in 2008) there now appears to be a resurgence generally within the movement. Certainly Hedgeley has experienced this with membership now up to 18.

“As the largest women’s organisation in the U.K. we aim to offer women the best opportunity to make an impact in their communities, to influence local, national and world issues affecting the social, economic and environmental life of families and communities and to learn new and traditional skills.”

For us, this means we meet once a month to discuss local and national business and listen to a speaker of our choice, followed by a homemade supper with tea or wine depending on your preference. We also have the opportunity to visit other WIs, attend courses and events both locally and nationally, enter competitions and have enjoyable social events. It is a great way of meeting other women in the area.

This year, working with other local organisations, we have planted a tree in the Powburn Community Garden to celebrate 100 years of the Women’s Institute. At our meeting in July, one of our members, Cath Ingledew gave us a demonstration of how to use the community defibrillator. As you will see from Cath’s article on pages 12-13 this is a vital piece of equipment for the village but not much use if you do not know how to use it! Our annual trip was a tour of the BBC studios which was very informative and provided much hilarity when we were let loose in the recording studio making a very short TV and Radio programme.

All our meetings are held at the Breamish Hall and are open to the general public, both men and women, to come along and listen to our speakers at a small cost of £3.00. The speakers for our next 3 meetings are:

- 13 Oct 15: Jane Virginia, ‘Introduction to Tai Chi’
- 10 Nov 15: Chris Chann, ‘Floral ideas for winter’
- 8 Dec 15: Nicky Morton, ‘Jewellery Making’

If you’re interested please come along: you’ll be very welcome! If anyone would like to join Hedgeley WI or would like to come for a ‘taster session’ please contact May Wilson (President): 01665 578576.

Thanks for your support!
The Tea in the Garden event (20 Jun 2015) raised £78.76 from the raffle, sale of Pimm’s and a donation. This will be put towards the new floors required in the Breamish Hall.
HEDGELEY ANTIQUE CENTRE

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NPORS approved

Powburn couldn’t afford the latest defibrillator upgrade but we got this little beauty off eBay!
HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED who is responsible for Breamish Hall and what goes on there?

On 26 Sep 2002 West Hedgeley Jubilee Hall became Breamish Hall; a registered charity. A committee of local volunteers fundraises to ensure the hall is maintained at an appropriate standard and adheres to all health and safety regulations, insurance and licensing requirements. In Jan 2015 a survey was commissioned, as several defects had appeared in the building. The resulting report gave a 5-year plan of necessary maintenance and repairs. To date we have:

- Inspected roof valleys and mineral felt roof coverings – all in good order.
- Checked cast iron rainwater pipes and gullies and repaired broken gutter.
- Cleared blocked drain in kitchen.
- Cleared moss from footpaths.
- Filled potholes and patched areas of drive with tarmac.
- Installed new fire doors.
- Replaced sealant in kitchen.
- Painted kitchen.
- LPG cooker serviced: new gas burner head fitted; connectors repaired.
- Small electrical appliance tested.
- Arranged for hall to be deep cleaned.
- Conducted asbestos survey: identified a form of asbestos in some floor tiles in small hall. This is safe and will only become an issue if it is broken up.

We would like to thank Reg Wilson, Robbie Burn, Michael Wealleans and Sid Smailes for giving their time and effort to help with some of the above tasks. If anyone else can help occasionally with small DIY tasks we would appreciate it. Names can be given to May Wilson.

The big issue we currently face is the state of the floors in the small hall and kitchen: they are showing visible signs of damage. Until the floors are lifted we are unable to ascertain the extent of the damage. We have sought builder’s quotes for the worst case scenario of fully replacing both floors.

As you see, the hall upkeep is quite costly. Therefore we will be fundraising in earnest and hope you will support our efforts. We will keep you appraised of events via the community noticeboards and website (www.breamishvalley.com). If you’d like to be informed of events by email, please send your email address to Doreen Burn: doreen.burn@gmail.com.

Several residents have become ‘Friends of Breamish Hall’ donating £5 each month by direct debit. In return they receive free entry to events organised by the committee. If you would like more information please contact Mary Wealleans (Treasurer): 01665 578499.

Breamish Hall is for the benefit of our community and relies totally on voluntary donations. We’d like to see it used to its full extent. If you can help by organising a fundraising event, hiring the hall for a
private function or you want to start up classes on a regular basis, please contact any of the committee members.

The hall is used regularly by Powburn Bowling Club, Hedgeley Women’s Institute, North Northumbrian Spinners, Powburn Show Committee, Cheviot and Berwick Canine Society, The Ben Robson Line Dancers and a weekly exercise class.

**Bolton Village Hall (NE66 2EE)**

Our present Committee functions very much as a team. Chairman Richard Gee continues to apply for funding grants to help bring the hall up to date. The hall recently received a grant of £10,000 to improve the heating system. A concrete base has been installed for the Calor Gas tank, which arrived on the 26th August. New heaters are scheduled to be fitted on 14 September, so we should be warm and cosy this winter. This important project is being overseen by Richard, with the assistance of John Herriman; John is also our treasurer and keeps the accounts in order. Pat Herriman (John’s wife) can be contacted with regard to hall bookings. John and Pat run a monthly Sequence Dance at the hall. Rosie Smith runs a monthly prize draw; this raises money to help run the hall. Margaret Drummond, Rosie Smith and Jen Armstrong all help with organising and running events. Sylvia Gee (Richard’s wife) runs a Keep Fit class every Wednesday morning, as well as helping with events. Benita Robson is the secretary, taking minutes and helping at events as needed.

Recent events have included: Gardeners’ Questions Evening, Wine Tasting and a Ceilidh. Cath Beale from Rothbury will be running another...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Ceilidh on 19 September 2015</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>7:30-10:30pm</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>pooled supper</td>
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<tr>
<td>(tea, coffee &amp; soft drinks provided)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bring your own alcohol</td>
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<tr>
<td>£5.00 adults/£3.00 under 18s</td>
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<tr>
<td>(pay at the door)</td>
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<tr>
<td>The hall is always filled with music, dancing and laughter during these evenings and it’s suitable for all ages.</td>
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</tbody>
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**A final note:** new committee members are always welcome. Don’t hesitate to contact us for more information about regular classes, dances or special events.

Benita Robson: 01665 574043.

Residents of Bolton and surrounding area are invited to look at the Bolton Village notice boards for information about an event that will be taking place in the next few weeks. The mystery will be explained in the next issue of Cheviot Views for all who can’t attend!

**Committee members:**

May Wilson, Mary Wealleans, Doreen Burn, Noreen Birnie, Steve Griffiths, Pat Hindhaugh, Jean Givens, Gillian Hogg, Dean Wilkinson, Joyce Frater.

Doreen Burn

Benita Robson

Jen Armstrong
LAST ISSUE I WROTE about the apparent decline in willow warbler numbers this year in our area. There now seems to be a consensus among birdwatchers that it has indeed been a poor season for these tiny migrants in Northumberland. I based my own observations entirely on the number of birds which I heard singing throughout the spring and early summer which suggested that there were a lot fewer birds than usual. Other summer visitors have had a much better year with blackcaps and redstarts being very much in evidence throughout the area. Swallows too seem to be having a good summer. Many pairs have had at least two broods with young still being fed in the nest at the end of August. The pair which have nested on the corner of Hedgeley Services under the eaves of the building have not been put off by the people and vehicles which pass regularly within a few feet of their nest. These youngsters will not fledge before September arrives which is when these visitors usually leave for warmer climes. How will these late broods fare I wonder?

Other resident species seem to have coped well throughout the year. Our garden has been home for many young birds this year. The first to appear were a pair of young woodpigeons in early March whose parents must have started nesting in February. They have been followed by several broods of house and tree sparrows throughout the summer with the last appearing well into August. These have combined into one flock with young and old totalling around forty birds while foraging on the ground under our feeders. Young wrens, robins and dunnocks have also added to the diversity with a pair of young nuthatches becoming our least expected visitors so far.

Along the riverside the sandmartins have long since gone, along with oystercatchers and common sandpipers and the riverside seems to be a much quieter place for their going. August visits from migrating greenshanks and green sandpipers kept the magic of the riverside alive as did the appearance of probably a second brood of kingfishers during late July just when summer seemed to be about to slip away as quietly as thistle down on the whisper of a breeze.

Hugh Tindle
The man on the corner

Tha's a man on the corner
Who knars what gans on
Aal the Rothbury oots and inns.
He's a smile and a nod for everyone
And he'll finn'd oot aal o'their sins.

Aal the near misses
When folk gan ower fast
Some vexed when they cannit cross ower.
And tha's them that just torn
And divent bother to warn,
Ralph's the one smiling face 'mangst the sour.

He's a grand little shop
For bairns young and owled
Mind, he's not one for summer,
He prefers the cowled.
He's nets tae catch tiddlers
Ootside the door
A room full o'fine toys and
A back room wi' more.

He says, "Howay in, and
See what I've got!"
I says, "A've nowt on iz."
He says, "That matters not."

Wey, tha was elephants and fairies
Aal lovingly made,
Some soldiers on horseback,
And some on parade.
Some French and some German,
Some from farther afield,
And what strange lookin' weapons
The darker ones did wield!

There stands the proud guardian
O' this magic land,
And he mebbe knars us
Like the toys in his hand.

He hears every word,
And every woe.
Folks's aalways in a hurry,
ever time for a blow.

But tha's nowt seems to phase him,
"I've seen it aal", says
The man on the corner,
Aal o' Rothbury's ways.

闩 James Tait
So, what do we know about this ubiquitous and often pestilential plant? First, it’s a fern – perhaps the classic fern – and it is thought to have the widest world distribution of any fern. As a fern it doesn’t produce flowers but instead reproduces primarily by spores. When you look at the backs of the fronds of many ferns you can see small structures called sori that contain the spores. With bracken you won’t find any of these because the sori are underneath the edges of the leaflets (see photo opposite) which are rolled so they largely conceal the sori. When spores land in suitable places they germinate to produce very small green structures which produce sexual reproductive structures and after fertilisation new fronds grow up.

Unfortunately bracken also spreads very effectively by tough underground rhizomes which help patches to expand gradually outwards.

Historically bracken was once valued and harvested for use as animal bedding, for tanning, soap and glass making, and as a fertiliser. However, in recent times most of these uses have ceased and bracken has become an invasive nuisance. It dominates open moorland and out-competes heathers, bilberry and moorland grasses. It is poisonous to grazing animals, pigs, horses and dogs. Although animals will avoid eating it, so that moorland sheep don’t poison themselves, it greatly reduces the value of much moorland grazing land. When far more cattle were grazed on moors their trampling helped to keep bracken under control, but changes to grazing regimes since the foot-and-mouth outbreak of the early 2000s have removed much of this natural control.

It also causes other problems. The spores, produced in their billions in July and August, may be linked to certain human cancers. Bracken also conceals ticks, which can pass on Lyme disease to humans if bitten. I’ve removed three ticks from my legs so far this year; they crawl up your trouser legs!
It would be wrong to say that bracken is universally horrible. Some plant species do benefit from the shade it creates and some birds like a brackeny habitat. If used as animal bedding (e.g. in parts of Cumbria and Wales) the resulting mixture of bracken and dung makes a good mulch and fertilizer. But you probably won’t want to do as the Japanese do, which is to collect and cook the young unfurling fronds, called croziers after the tip of a bishop’s crook (photo opposite). They eat them as part of certain traditional dishes – which is thought to contribute to higher than normal levels of stomach cancers in that country.

If your land has bracken problems you can take steps to control it, but almost all require significant effort and cost. Cutting or crushing by rolling has to be repeated twice a year for at least three years to become effective. You can also poison it using a fern-specific weed control, but again this is expensive and needs regular annual repetition.

There you are then — The Magic of Bracken!

Richard Poppleton
A life with heart

Cath Ingledew is a Community Heart Failure Specialist Nurse who recently conducted Basic Life Support training, incorporating use of an Automated External Defibrillator, for Hedgeley Parish residents. Here she tells us a little more about herself and her work.

AS A CHILD I lived in Fenham. My mother was from Northern Ireland and moved to Newcastle to complete nurse training at the General Hospital. There she met my dad, an oil salesman from Byker, who was a patient. I have fond memories of mam singing Irish ballads such as ‘Star of the County Down’ whilst doing her daily tasks. I have an older sister and two brothers.

I happily attended the local convent school. Alongside hard work and education, school discos were held at the local church hall. The boys from St Cuthbert’s joined us – under strict supervision! School introduced a life passion: the guitar. Mam took me to Windows Music Arcade and bought me one bigger than me. Walking to school with it strapped to my back, I looked like Maria from The Sound of Music.

Family summer holidays were spent in Ireland at the McGuigan family farm in Southern Derry. As children, the journey to Stranraer, to catch the ferry, seemed to take forever. Dad would hand my brothers and me ‘Barley Sugar’ sweets to suck. On a hot August day, by the time we hit Hexham our tongues were stuck to the roofs of our mouths! As a teen, I spent weekends at my sister’s riding school in Ponteland. I adored helping with the horses, tacking up and mucking out, in return for lessons and going on hacks.

Following my A-Levels, my nursing career began in Newcastle. I trained at the RVI, qualifying in 1989. During training, I faced some quite difficult situations. However, it was in my personal life that the hardest lessons were learnt. Soon after I started training my mam was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma. Treatments and hospital admissions took place at the RVI. This meant I could visit her and receive support from friends and colleagues, a number of whom were involved in her care. Sadly mam didn’t win the fight and she died within the year.

I have worked in Cardiology since 1992 when I moved to North Tyneside General Hospital. I was promoted to Sister in 1998 (a proud moment for my dad) and I co-ordinated the Cardiac Rehabilitation Programme. This was a truly rewarding time. I could follow patients on their journey from admission to Coronary Care Unit – a stressful time, as you can imagine – to discharge back home. They
would then attend a community cardiac rehabilitation programme in one of the local gyms, participating in supervised exercise, education and relaxation.

In later years, having gained my degree (during which time my lovely dad died peacefully in his sleep), my scope of practice expanded. I undertook other roles, such as holding outpatient clinics for patients following heart attacks. I also assisted patients undergoing coronary angiography: a procedure in which dye is injected under x-ray to highlight blood flow through the coronary arteries. This identifies narrowings which may be amenable either for stent insertion to open up an artery or for coronary artery bypass (open heart surgery).

In 2009 my partner John, an IT Test Manager, and I bought our home in Crawley Dene. Initially it was a holiday home but we started spending more time in Powburn. Coinciding with this was the chance to change jobs; entailing a move from the hospital setting into the community, based in Alnwick. Since 2011 I have worked as a Community Heart Failure Specialist Nurse for Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust. The geographical area I cover is North and West Northumberland. The area is mainly rural, with a population of around 500,000. I hold regular clinics in local hospitals and provide home visits for those unable to access the hospital.

Heart failure is characterised by the reduced ability of the heart to pump blood around the body. Coronary Heart Disease accounts for 70% of all cases. Typical symptoms of heart failure include increasing exertional breathlessness, swollen ankles and fatigue. Most patients are diagnosed using an echocardiogram: a non-invasive ultrasonic imaging of the heart which provides information regarding its function and structure.

Treatment of Heart Failure aims to relieve symptoms of breathlessness, reduce fluid overload whilst ensuring adequate blood pressure, and control heart rate. Medications are invaluable in treating not only the symptoms but also in delaying progression of this chronic disease and ultimately saving lives. As an Independent Nurse Prescriber I now prescribe cardiac medications. Involving patients in their treatment, providing relevant information, and allowing them and their families to make informed choices about treatment is key to my role. Recently there have been advances in specialist pacemakers. People with certain types of heart failure may have a mini Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillator (ICD) fitted. This recognises life-threatening rhythms and delivers a shock to restore a normal heart rhythm. The decision to proceed with an implant is not easy and requires guidance.

For some patients, heart failure is a life-limiting condition which may progress. They become palliative and require active supportive care. I establish with patients and their loved ones what their wishes are and adhere to these. I have close links with MacMillan Nurses and District Nurses to ensure, for example, that patients are cared for at home and admission to hospital avoided. I feel honoured to be present at this very sad but poignant time.

© Cath Ingledew
Local walk: Breamish Valley hillforts

Short walk, strenuous in places with a 335m total height gain

| Distance: | 4.5 miles; 7.4 km (short route 2.5 miles; 4 km) |
| Duration: | 3 hours | Refreshments: Valley Cottage Café, Ingram |
| Map:      | OS OL16 | Start: Bulby’s Wood car park (NU0078 1636) |

A. From the car park cross the road and follow the distinctive path up the hill to your right towards the woods passing two benches, keep to the right of the woods.

B. At the fork in the path at the top of the hill bear right onto Brough Law Hillfort. Retrace your steps and follow the broad path again.

C. Upon reaching the waymarked junction you can turn left here to point J to do a shorter walk. If you wish to do the longer walk carry straight on.
D. At the second waymarker bear left up the brow of a hill passing next waymarker until you reach the corner of a fence.
E. Keeping the fence to your left follow it, ignoring a stile in the middle of the fence.
F. At the end of the fence cross the stile and follow the track down.
G. At the fingerpost beside Middle Dean Hillfort turn sharp right and down through the bracken on a small path into a deep gorge passing through two stiles and following the path uphill.
H. Upon reaching the summit, Cochrane Pike Hillfort, turn left at the marker through grass tussocks onto the track and follow the waymarkers to the left of Wether Hill Hillfort.
I. Follow the track down Wether Hill to the next visible waymarker. Go down the steep hillside keeping a narrow gulley to your left. Go through a gate and head up a path to a waymarker that is visible on the top of the rise. Follow the track ahead to the next waymarker and straight on through a gate and over a small stream. Carry on through the ferns.
J. Join a grassy track and turn right following it down to the road.
K. At the road turn left back to the car park.

 Robbie Burn
The Hedgeley connection

Marcus Leigh and his partner Kim Smith are both writers who live in the vicinity of Beanley. Northumberland has been a major part of their lives for over 20 years and they have been permanent residents of the county since 2010.

A LITTLE OVER A year and a half ago we moved house by accident. That is to say, at that time Kim and I had no plans whatsoever to leave our home just over on the other side of the A1, in the not-so-distant village of Christon Bank. However, while out on a walk around Beanley Plantation one balmy and, as it turned out, momentous September afternoon, we noticed a For Sale sign. Within moments of stepping over the threshold for a first ‘what-on-earth-are-we-doing?’ viewing of the property, both of us knew instinctively that this was where we were meant to be. There was something that felt immediately, undeniably and intuitively right: not just about the cottage with its adamant stone walls and eccentric interior, but also about the surrounding woodland with its venerable facade of ancient beech and oak trees. Within just three months of that first viewing we had sold up and become the most recent incomers to Hedgeley Parish. In hindsight it all happened so quickly and so effortlessly it felt very much as if the house had chosen us, rather than the other way around.

The move itself took place on Friday 13th December, and had we been superstitious types we might well have wondered what we were letting ourselves in for. After all, the house has no mains electricity and was powered exclusively by an indomitable diesel generator located in a sooty, claustrophobic outbuilding (and neither of us is in the least bit mechanically minded). It is a spot which, according to several visitors, is so off the beaten track it’s positively disconcerting. And back then we hardly knew anyone locally. However, even had the date meant anything portentous to us, we really needn’t have worried. Not only has our feeling of belonging been enhanced by everything we have seen and discovered around our new home, it has also been amplified by the many new friends and acquaintances we have made. And as a result, the sense of place, the sense of connection we have here is already so strong it’s positively tangible.

One of the most potent facets of that sense of connection is to the past. Looking across the gently undulating fields towards the Cheviot Hills it is a view that will have changed little for centuries. The generations of woodsmen
and their families who preceded us here at Beanley Wood Cottage would no doubt have stood and gazed westwards at distant, incandescent sunsets in much the same way that we do now. It’s almost as if we see through the same eyes. Yet in the woods behind us, as well as in the surrounding countryside, the undeniable thread of human presence can be traced back far further than a mere few hundred years.

The Ringses on Beanley Moor and the iron-age fort in Beanley Plantation are, of course, both highly visible reminders of the people who, millennia ago, also called this place their home. Look more closely, however, and that connection with the past becomes ever-more palpable. Decorated rocks, outcrops and escarpments litter the landscape around us from Beanley Moor to Titlington Pike and beyond, while here and there long-forgotten earthworks can still be spotted emerging enigmatically from the ground before plunging once again into the gelid earth. (One seemingly passed through where our back yard now stands.) Finally, raise your eyes to the sky on a clear, moonless night and the connection to former times is impossible to ignore. Sadly, for most people these days only the brightest of stars are now visible, the rest being shrouded in a veil of light and air pollution. But not here. Looking up at the canopy of starlight which glimmers and twinkles over our heads is not only humbling but also incredibly reassuring in its permanence, in its enduring bond to those who have stood here before and wondered, just as we do.

Our move to Hedgely Parish may have been unplanned and unexpected, but we wouldn’t wish to be anywhere else in the world. This, it feels, is where we were meant to be. This is where we are connected. Thank you to all those, both present and past, who have helped make it so.

Marcus Leigh

First year in office

I WAS ELECTED AS Northumberland County Councillor for the Longhoughton ward just over a year ago in July 2014 and it has been a jam-packed whirlwind of a first year in office. It is a privilege to be able to represent the residents of the region in which I was born, brought up and educated. My background has afforded an intrinsic understanding of the many challenges faced by families living in this part of rural North Northumberland. The steep learning curve has been challenging and enlightening. Having the ability to assist residents on a diverse range of matters at
both parish and county level is hugely rewarding. Responding to residents with diverse opinions brings its own challenges; I do my utmost to be open, honest and transparent in all dealings with organisations and individuals. I have built good relationships with other councillors of all parties for the best interests of this area.

I have addressed issues such as local services, planning, education and a wide range of transport challenges including access to schools, speeding, parking, and safe and sustainable travel on rural roads.

Much of my effort relates to casework raised by residents. I am particularly concerned about road safety on the A697 and the problems caused by HGVs passing through small villages. The council commissioned consultants, AECOM, to produce a report on hazards and to prioritise mitigation measures. This is welcome but I am of the opinion that intervention measures should be more radical than those proposed. I will include the safety of the A697 on my Local Transport Plan list of priorities and push for action to address the problem of speeding vehicles on this stretch of road.

With particular reference to the dangers of HGVs I have been pressing the Council at strategic level to specify in planning conditions and procurement contracts a new national standard ‘Construction Logistics and Cyclist Safety’ (CLOCS) for managing HGV road risks, which has been designed and adopted by the construction industry. The scheme covers vehicle technology, driver competence and management of operations. I am delighted that in response the standard has been referenced in recent planning decisions for Bedmax in Detchant. The operator has in turn committed to adopt the standard in the site traffic management plan in order to protect vulnerable road users, such as cyclists, pedestrians and horse riders.

The county council has proposed the closure of Branton First School in its preferred option consultation document. Parents, carers and governors of Branton First School have launched an impressive and professional campaign and I am providing support and applying influence wherever possible. In June I addressed Council Cabinet on behalf of campaigners to ensure a clear voice went direct to the heart of the decision making process. This is one of the most important current issues of the year, and I will continue to represent the views of the school community at every opportunity.

In the recent annual council reorganisation of elected member roles I was appointed Chairman of the Corporate Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee, a significant and challenging position that I accept with conscience and commitment. I continue to serve on the AONB Partnership; the Walking and Cycling Board; Arts, Leisure and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee; and Local Services (Rural).

**Contact details**

I am always happy to raise any concerns you may have with the Council and other organisations. Please feel free to contact me if I can be of any assistance:

kate.cairns@northumberland.gov.uk

Kate Cairns
Cheviot Views Committee Vacancy

After almost 7 years acting as Secretary/Treasurer, Richard Poppleton has decided to take a well-deserved rest. Consequently, we’re looking for someone to take on this role. If you’re interested please contact Richard to discuss: Tel: 01665 578346 email: richard.pop@btinternet.com
Recipes for success

WONDERING WHAT TO DO with those late-summer apples? May Wilson shows us how to make a delicious cake. This recipe will soon feature in the National Trust’s ‘Autumn Cookbook’ which will be used by all the Trust’s catering outlets. Well done May!

Spiced Toffee Apple Cake

Ingredients: 12 portions

- 200g dates
- 200ml milk
- 250g margarine
- 280g self-raising flour
- 200g light brown sugar
- ½ tsp baking powder
- 4 large eggs
- 1 tbsp mixed spice
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 3 apples
- Squeeze of lemon juice
- 1 tsp icing sugar

Method:

1. Heat the oven to 160C fan/gas 4.
2. Grease and line a 9inch round tin.
3. Put the dates and milk into a small pan and bring to simmer, remove from the heat and set aside to cool.
4. Whizz the date mixture to a smooth purée in a food processor or blender, scrape into a large bowl.
5. Tip in the margarine, flour, brown sugar, baking powder, eggs, mixed spice and vanilla then set aside while preparing the apples.
6. Quarter and core the apples, then finely slice and add the lemon juice.
7. Beat the cake ingredients with a whisk until smooth, then place in the prepared tin.
8. Arrange the apple slices, overlapping neatly on top of the mixture.
9. Bake for 45-50 minutes, check with a skewer to see if it comes out clean.
10. Cool in the tin.

Toffee Sauce (130g):

1. In a small pan, gently heat the ingredients until melted and golden in colour.
2. Sprinkle the cake with icing sugar then drizzle with toffee sauce.

May Wilson

CONTACT THE EDITOR
Graham Williamson, 3 Crawley Dene, Powburn NE66 4HA
Tel: 07969 133201
Email: graham@breamishvalley.com
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